

rather than saving lives. Political expediency, political cover and political posturing must not be the guiding principles on how we proceed in Iraq. Instead, we must be focused on the men and women we put in harm's way.

And everyone in this Chamber should be haunted by the fact that Congress has acquiesced too many times in one of the worst foreign policy blunders in United States history. Over 3,000 American military personnel have been killed in this war. Are we going to stand here next January and talk about the 4,000 or 5,000 who will have died? Well over 22,000 American troops have been wounded, some injured for life, and over tens of thousands of Iraqi men, women and children are dead.

It is long past time for this Congress to accept responsibility for having given this President a blank check and a free pass for nearly 4 years.

It is simply false to argue that placing any restrictions on funding for this disastrous war somehow shortchanges our troops. Redeployment from Iraq does not shortchange our troops. Bringing them home to their families does not shortchange our troops.

I will tell you what shortchanges our troops. Making them serve two, three or possibly even four tours of duty in Iraq, that shortchanges our troops. Failing to provide the veterans of this war with health care, that shortchanges our troops. Increasing by more than five times the backlog on veterans' disability claims so that those injured in Iraq and those suffering from PTSD don't get the help they need when they return home, that shortchanges our troops, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, there is no military victory to be had in Iraq. It is time George Bush ended his war and brought our uniformed men and women home. To do that, we must change the dynamic in Iraq. We must end our occupation, let the Iraqi people determine their own destiny and engage the countries of the region and the international community while we withdraw.

We can start by voting not to escalate this war, even if that means conditioning or withholding funds. I, for one, Mr. Speaker, will not vote for any so-called emergency supplemental appropriations bill that escalates the war in Iraq, that fails to offer a clear plan for when our troops will be coming home.

Mr. Speaker, the American people get it. They are far ahead of the politicians in Washington. They want leadership. They want us to do what is right. They want us to end the war.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. Sires). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

TRIBUTE TO CORPORAL JASON L. DUNHAM, UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mr. KUHL) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. KUHL of New York. Mr. Speaker, it is with honor and pleasure that I rise to recognize Corporal Jason L. Dunham, United States Marine Corps. Corporal Dunham will posthumously receive our Nation's highest award for valor tomorrow, on January 11, 2007, from our 43rd President, George W. Bush.

Corporal Dunham grew up in my congressional district in Scio, New York. He was known for his prowess in basketball, baseball and soccer at Scio Central School. He was also well known throughout the entire community, not just for the good-natured pranks that he pulled but for being a young man of enthusiastic yet humble spirit, someone who genuinely cared for others and could always be counted on if someone was in need.

He enlisted in the Marine Corps in July of 2000, because the Marines were known to have the toughest training but also the strongest brotherhood. He also felt a personal challenge to complete basic training and to do it well.

Following his first duty assignment with the Marine Corps security forces in Kings Bay, Georgia, Corporal Dunham was assigned to the Fourth Platoon, K Company, Third Battalion, Regimental Combat Team 7, First Marine Division.

Having quickly proven himself as a capable and conscientious leader, Corporal Dunham was assigned as a squad leader and therefore was entrusted with the training, welfare and the lives of nine American sons. He soon earned the reputation for his unwavering commitment to his fellow Marines. He had a caring, a respectful and a humane style of leadership and believed above all in leadership by example.

On April 14, 2004, while conducting a reconnaissance mission in the town of Karabilah in Al Anbar Province, Corporal Dunham and his men heard rocket-propelled grenades and small arms fire erupting two kilometers to the west. Their battalion commander's patrol had been ambushed while en route to visit L Company at Camp Husaybah right on the Syrian border.

Realizing that his unit was in a position to assist, Corporal Dunham ordered the vehicles of his combined anti-armor team to link up with his dismounted squad and advance towards the engagement to provide reinforcement.

Upon reaching the sight of the ambush, they were quickly barraged with enemy fire. Corporal Dunham ordered the vehicles to dismount and led one of his fire teams into the village to neutralize the ambush.

After having moved several blocks south into the village, they discovered seven Iraqi vehicles in a column at-

tempting to depart to the east. Corporal Dunham ordered his Marines to block their movement and check the vehicles for insurgents.

As he approached the second vehicle in the column, an insurgent leaped out and attacked Corporal Dunham. In the ensuing hand-to-hand struggle, Corporal Dunham wrestled the Iraqi insurgent to the ground and immediately noticed that the insurgent was holding a live grenade.

Corporal Dunham alerted his fellow Marines and, aware of the imminent danger but without hesitation, he removed his helmet and covered the grenade, absorbing the brunt of the explosion and shielding the fellow Marines from a blast in a selfless act of bravery that most certainly saved the lives of a minimum of two of his Marines.

By his undaunted courage, intrepid fighting spirit and unwavering devotion to duty in the face of certain death, Corporal Dunham gallantly gave his life for his country, thereby reflecting great credit upon himself and upholding the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service.

Corporal Jason L. Dunham epitomizes the selfless devotion to duty that our young men and women have displayed time and time again in Iraq and Afghanistan, Africa and numerous other places around the world. Our Nation is blessed to have a military full of Corporal Dunhams who are serving with great distinction.

My heart certainly goes out to his family, to the townspeople of his hometown, Scio, New York, and the Marines, for they have lost one of America's finest.

NO ESCALATION OF THE WAR IN IRAQ

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, in a few hours the President will address the Nation and talk about his plan to escalate the war in Iraq, to try and salvage the abysmal failures of his administration and the unnecessary war which they sold to the Congress and the American people.

Now, in leading up to this, just last month the President said, "It is important to trust the judgment of the military when they are making military plans. I am a strict adherer to the command structure." President Bush.

Well, I guess he is, because he is the commander-in-chief, and he is ignoring the advice of the uniformed services. The President's chief military advisers oppose this escalation in the war.

General John Abizaid, who was then head of all U.S. forces in the Middle East, testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee November 15, "I met with every divisional commander, General Casey, the corps commander, General Dempsey. We all talked together. And I said, in your professional

opinion, if we were to bring in more American troops now, does it add considerably to our ability to achieve success in Iraq? And they all said no."

But the decider wasn't listening. The reason is because we want the Iraqis to do more. It is easy for the Iraqis to rely on us to do this work. I believe that more American forces prevent the Iraqis from doing more, from taking more responsibility for their own future.

The President didn't like what he had heard, the decider being an adherer to the military chain of command, so General Abizaid is being shown the door. As a Lebanese American who is fluent in Arabic, I think his understanding of the region far exceeds that of any of the advisers that the President may be depending upon to make this misguided proposal to escalate the war.

General Casey has also been removed as commander of U.S. forces in Iraq. It started with General Shinseki, who told the President he would need 500,000 troops to occupy the country and avoid the abyss into which we have fallen, a civil war, insurrection, insurgency. He also was fired because the decider didn't believe his advice.

It is time to change course in Iraq.

And the President is not only continuing a failed policy and sending more U.S. troops to a mission that is very unlikely to succeed, according to the advice of his uniformed commanders, who he is ignoring, he is also going to undermine the effort in Afghanistan.

Things are going bad in Afghanistan. Remember, that is where Osama bin Laden planned 9/11. That is where the Taliban supported and harbored al Qaeda and Osama bin Laden. We, with NATO and the world behind us, decided to take them out. Remember that? Osama bin Laden, dead or alive; dead or alive. You don't hear that from the White House much anymore.

But Osama bin Laden is still planning attacks on the United States, and the one-eyed Omar is coming back to Kandahar. They are planning a spring offensive. They didn't withdraw this winter. The NATO forces are ineffectual. And what is the President's response? He is going to withdraw U.S. troops from that region.

So we have the heart of darkness, Afghanistan, and the President is ignoring that problem to continue his failed policies in Iraq. No escalation of the war in Iraq by the adherer-decider, President Bush.

SUPPORT THE SAFE ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. McCARTHY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. McCARTHY of New York. Mr. Speaker, earlier this week, unfortunately, violence has struck our schools again. Unfortunately, this has been an increasing trend. In the past several

years, we have seen countless incidents across the Nation.

School violence is not limited to urban areas. Acts of bullying and other violent crimes occur in schools across the Nation on a daily basis. We must do something to stop this growing trend.

Our current reporting system on school violence is severely flawed. Under current law, school violence stats are collected through surveys and self-reported data. This data is not the most current data available and does not provide an accurate view of the situation.

The FBI has developed a system of reporting that is both comprehensive and up to date. This system is referred to as the NI-BERS System. It collects the data, details of crime incidents, and is a much greater tool to prevent school violence. Accurate data is valuable to addressing this issue. It allows our school administrators to see the true impact of school safety programs and it provides the basis for need-based school funding.

In response to these issues, I have introduced the Safe Schools Against Violence in Education Act. My bill, referred to as the SAFE Act, moves reporting data from surveys to real crime stats in the NI-BERS System. This move will allow schools to accurately address school safety issues.

It will also ensure that funding is allotted to the schools that need it the most. Our schools do not have the resources that they need to combat school violence. President Bush has constantly cut funding for the Safe and Drug Free Schools Program. These cuts have left our already-overburdened schools without the money needed to stop school violence.

The SAFE Act will restore funding for our schools through a need-based grant program. Schools that do not have a safe climate will receive grants from the Department of Education. That money will be used to update school safety programs to curb the needless acts of violence and make our schools safer for our children. If we are serious about school safety, we must not only implement new reporting measures but must fully fund our schools.

The SAFE Act is endorsed by the National Parent and Teachers Association, the American Federation of Teachers and the National School Safety and Security Services.

Congress has sat and watched as schools across the country have attempted to deal with school violence with insufficient data and little to no funding. We tried to correct this in Leave No Child Behind. So as we reauthorize Leave No Child Behind this year, I am hoping we will be able to implement a better program. We have an opportunity to change the way we handle school violence in this country and truly make our schools safe.

We see and hear every day about the violence, when our children are in

school and do not feel safe, and I have talked to so many teenagers and middle school students that say that many times they do not feel safe in school. We can do something, but we need a better way of reporting it.

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The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. SHUSTER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. SHUSTER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

SECURITY FOR AMERICANS AT HOME AND ABROAD

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the House passed H.R. 1, a bill instituting the 9/11 Commission's recommendations. I am proud that the Speaker made this her first priority. It was an important first step. It was a step to strengthen America's security.

Another step we can take to provide security to Americans at home and abroad is to bring our troops home from Iraq. It is what I have been saying for several years now. In fact, this is my 176th 5-minute special order on Iraq. And it is what the American people demanded on November 7.

From the very beginning, our presence and continued occupation has brought strong opposition and violence to Iraq. The Vice President promised we would be greeted as liberators, that the troops would be hailed with cheers and flowers. Instead, the sad thing is our troops are being greeted with snipers, with rocket-propelled grenades and with roadside bombs.

Tonight, the President will announce an escalation in the occupation. He wants to send over 20,000 more troops to Iraq. In fact, we have learned just today that those troops are already arriving in Baghdad. He wants to put over 20,000 more troops in harm's way. And for what?

Tonight, the President will not announce an exit plan. Tonight, the President will not talk about benchmarks. Tonight, what the President will do is support more of the same. This is just "stay the course." Let's call it what it is: an escalation.

A majority of Americans support bringing the troops home. In fact, a recent poll showed that a majority of men and women in uniform support an end to this occupation. And yet the President wants more troops and refuses to put forth a plan to end our military presence there.

Well, the American people and the Congress have waited long enough. Mr. Speaker, for the Commander in Chief to do his job. So, on Friday, the Progressive Caucus and the Out of Iraq Caucus will host a forum with former