

who assured her he'd press the Mexican government for a thorough investigation and offer the assistance of the FBI.

Miss Kaptur said she also could call for a special investigation, which is allowed through the North American Free Trade Agreement, which would engage the labor departments of both the United States and Mexico.

She said the investigation provision in NAFTA, though, does not provide for sanctions.

"Right now, they need to do the basic policing work," Miss Kaptur said. "Our government is engaged and I wanted [Mr. Heartney's] assurance on that. You see how NAFTA is contributing to this endless stream of people who are so vulnerable to exploitation.

"There are no worker protections under NAFTA. When [FLOC] does try to take the illegality out of what's going on there, this sort of horrendous tragedy occurs. It will be taken note of on a national level here."

Mr. Velasquez said his union workers have been harassed there before for organizing workers and helping them obtain legal documents to work in the United States.

He said he believes that people running illegal operations to move Mexicans into the United States see FLOC as a threat.

"We're actually fighting the corruption that's prevalent in this area," Mr. Velasquez said via phone call from Monterrey. "There's been 10 policemen killed here in the last year. We've educated the workers not to be taken advantage of and some people here don't like that, but we have to carry on the work."

Mr. Velasquez said Mr. Cruz's body will be returned to Puebla, Mexico, where the majority of his family is located, for a funeral. He said arrangements for the funeral have not been made yet.

He said Mr. Cruz's work with FLOC, which dates to his arrival to Toledo in 1998, made a difference in the union.

"He had a heart for the people," Mr. Velasquez said. "He spent his extra time consulting people, teaching them how not to get cheated and ripped off by phony promises by people who said they could get papers for undocumented folks, and he would explain any proposals out there for immigration reform.

"Basically, he wouldn't allow people to be duped by other people wanting to take advantage of people's ignorance. He was very effective at that."

Mr. Velasquez and Miss Kaptur said the murder investigation is still in the early stages and both said they plan on following the results closely.

WE JUST MARCHED IN (SO WE CAN JUST MARCH OUT)

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

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, all the reasons given to justify a preemptive strike against Iraq were wrong. Congress and the American people were misled.

Support for the war came from various special interests that had agitated for an invasion of Iraq since 1998. The Iraq Liberation Act passed by Congress and signed into law by President Clinton stated that getting rid of Saddam Hussein was official U.S. policy. This policy was carried out in 2003.

Congress failed miserably in meeting its crucial obligations as the branch of

government charged with deciding whether to declare war. It wrongly and unconstitutionally transferred this power to the President, and the President did not hesitate to use it.

Although it is clear there was no cause for war, we just marched in. Our leaders deceived themselves and the public with assurances that the war was righteous and would be over quickly. Their justifications were false, and they failed to grasp even basic facts about the chaotic, political, and religious history of the region.

Congress bears the greater blame for this fiasco. It reneged on its responsibility to declare or not declare war. It transferred this decision-making power to the executive branch and gave open sanction to anything the President did. In fact, the Founders diligently tried to prevent the executive from possessing this power, granting it to Congress alone in article I, section 8, of the Constitution.

Today, just about everyone acknowledges the war has gone badly, and 70 percent of the American people want it to end. Our national defense is weakened, the financial costs continue to drain us, our allies have deserted us, and our enemies are multiplying, not to mention the tragic toll of death and injuries suffered by American forces.

Iraq is a mess, and we urgently need a new direction. But our leaders offer only hand-wringing and platitudes. They have no clear-cut ideas to end the suffering and war. Even the most ardent war hawks cannot begin to define victory in Iraq.

As an Air Force officer, serving from 1963 to 1968, I heard the same agonizing pleas from the American people. These pleas were met with the same excuses about why we could not change a deeply flawed policy and rethink the war in Vietnam. That bloody conflict, also undeclared and unconstitutional, seems to have taught us little despite the horrific costs.

Once again, though everyone now accepts that the original justifications for invading Iraq were not legitimate, we are given excuses for not leaving. We flaunt our power by building permanent military bases and an enormous billion-dollar embassy, yet claim we have no plans to stay in Iraq permanently. Assurances that our presence in Iraq has nothing to do with oil are not believed in the Middle East. The argument for staying to prevent civil war and bring stability to the region logically falls on deaf ears.

If the justifications for war were wrong, if the war is going badly, if we can't afford the costs, both human and economic, if civil war and chaos have resulted from our occupation, if the reasons for staying are not more credible than the reasons for going, then why the dilemma? The American people have spoken and continue to speak out against the war, so why not end it?

How do we end it? Why not exactly the way we went in? We marched in and we can march out.

More good things may come of it than anyone can imagine. Consider our relationship with Vietnam, now our friendly trading partner. Certainly we are doing better with her than when we tried to impose our will by force.

It is time to march out of Iraq and come home.

SITUATION IN IRAQ

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, before I begin I would like to just have a moment of silence for the fallen students of Virginia Tech and our colleagues, who were with them today, the people of Virginia, and the people of the United States of America.

Thank you.

As I begin this 5 minutes, I believe it will be the challenge of this body to find a way to confront the issue of violence through physical acts and violence through words. Many of us will propose new gun legislation, some of us will look to outreach, but we will also seek understanding. That understanding I think leads me to join with the Chairwoman of the Congressional Black Caucus as I acknowledge the outstanding women of the Rutgers University basketball team, to thank them for their dignity, their diplomacy, and their excellence; and to speak, just a very short brief word, of my agreement with the final action on Imus and his unfortunate and destructive words.

Many of the first amendment advocates, of which I happen to be one, are up in arms. Many have said the punishment was too harsh. But I use the age-old teaching tool for those of us in constitutional law classes around the Nation. And though the first amendment is pure, the right to association, the freedom of religion is pure, but it is qualified by the Supreme Court that indicates that we cannot call "fire" in a crowded theater. And so it is obvious that unfortunately what Imus did with these words, these women athletes, these academically excellent students is that they cried "fire." And fire cannot be allowed to burn, and the fire had to be extinguished, and Imus and his ugly words had to be taken off of the public airwaves, wishing him well for hopefully a reformation and a rebirth so that young people all around America can, one, not be subjected to the violence of words, and they cannot be subjected to the brutality, the violence of guns.

Let me move, Mr. Speaker, quickly to an additional cause for my standing here today. And that is to salute my colleague, Congresswoman LYNN WOOLSEY, who tonight will give her 200th statement in opposition to the war in Iraq. I join her today, sadly, because again young people, valiant, patriotic young people are on the front lines of Iraq. They have not protested, they have not said, I will not go, but they

look to their leadership, policymakers to have the courage of conviction.

My friend from Texas is right, this is an unending and unsuccessful political action; 3,309 are dead, the violence over the weekend has been unspeakable. The cleric, al-Sadr, has taken out his ministers from the government. That means the coalition government is on the brink of collapse. Why? Because the prime minister is stubborn and will not sit down with his cabinet and parliament and ask in a respectful and collaborative way for the United States to be thanked for its valiant work of its military and asked that we stand down so that Iraq can stand up.

What a tragedy: ego over common-sense. What a tragedy: the continued loss of life over big egos.

And so I say to the administration, we will not give you an unending mandate to continue the terrible loss of life of our troops, and the reason we will not do that is because we declare a military success.

I wear on my lapel the flag of the POWs, the celebration and commemoration of men and women still lost at war, still missing in action, some now who have come home, soldiers that are lost. There is a military success, a legislative initiative of H.R. 930 that I have declaring a military success, the discovery of no weapons of mass destruction, disposing of Saddam Hussein, and many other valiant efforts of our military. And then we must now move to diplomacy.

It is time now to recognize lives and patriotism rise stronger than egos and bluster and the sadness of the debacle in Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, as a proud member of the Progressive and the Out of Iraq Caucuses, I rise to speak about the current situation regarding the Iraq War. But before I do, let me express my condolences to the families and friends and neighbors and loved ones who suffered such horrific losses yesterday. I speak of Virginia Tech University, one of the Nation's great land grant colleges, where we witnessed the most senseless acts of violence on a scale unprecedented in our history.

Neither the mind nor the heart can contemplate a cause that could lead a human being to inflict such injury and destruction on fellow human beings. The loss of life and innocence at Virginia Tech is a tragedy over which all Americans mourn and the thoughts and prayers of people of goodwill everywhere go out to the victims and their families. In the face of such overwhelming grief, I hope they can take comfort in the certain knowledge that unearned suffering is redemptive.

The war in Iraq has also caused a lot of unearned suffering in Iraq and here at home. This is the same war, Madam Speaker, whose proponents misrepresented to the Nation would last no more than 6 months and likely less than 6 weeks. This same war in Iraq, we were led to believe by the Administration, would cost less than \$50 billion and would be paid out of the ample revenues from Iraq's oil fields. The war in Iraq, the American people were promised, should have ended years ago with Americans troops greeted as liberators by jubilant Iraqis throwing rose petals at their feet.

As I and my colleagues in the Progressive Caucus and the Out of Iraq Caucus forecast at the time, the starry-eyed, rosy scenarios laid out by the President, Vice-President, and Defense Secretary Rumsfeld would come to pass in fantasy land, but not in the cold, hard world of reality which they refused to live in.

To date, the war in Iraq has lasted longer than America's involvement in World War II, the greatest conflict in all of human history. But there is a difference. The Second World War ended in complete and total victory for the United States and its allies. But then again, in that conflict America was led by FDR, a great Commander-in-Chief, who had a plan to win the war and secure the peace, listened to his generals, and sent troops in sufficient numbers and sufficiently trained and equipped to do the job.

As a result of the colossal miscalculation in deciding to invade Iraq, the loss of public trust resulting from the misrepresentation of the reasons for launching that invasion, and the breath-taking incompetence in mismanaging the occupation of Iraq, the Armed Forces and the people of the United States have suffered incalculable damage.

The war in Iraq has claimed the lives of 3,309 brave servicemen and women (64 in the first 16 days of this month). More than 24,600 Americans have been wounded, many suffering the most horrific injuries. American taxpayers have paid nearly \$400 billion to sustain this misadventure.

The depth, breadth, and scope of the President's misguided, mismanaged, and misrepresented war in Iraq is utterly without precedent in American history. It is a tragedy in a league all its own. But it was not unforeseeable or unavoidable.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 1591, the U.S. Troop Readiness, Veterans' Health and Iraq Accountability Act the House passed last month provides real benchmarks and consequences if the Iraqi Government fails to live up to its commitments. First, it requires the President to certify and report to Congress on July 1, 2007 that real progress is underway on key benchmarks for the Iraqi government. If the President cannot so certify, redeployment of U.S. troops must begin immediately and be completed within 180 days. If the President fails to certify that Iraq has met the benchmarks on October 1, 2007, a redeployment of U.S. troops would begin immediately at that time and must be completed within 180 days. In any case, at the latest, a redeployment of U.S. troops from Iraq must begin by March 1, 2008, and must be completed by August 31, 2008.

I have to say, Mr. Speaker, the Iraqi Government is not off to a good start. The Green Zone surrounding Baghdad remains insecure. Earlier this week, a suicide bomber managed to penetrate the security perimeter of the Iraqi Parliament and detonated a bomb that killed at least three members of the Iraqi parliament and wounded scores of others. Additionally, the market represented by Senator McCain as an example of the improved security situation in Iraq was turned into a killing field within days after Senator McCain's visit.

And yesterday we learned that radical Shiite Muslim cleric Muqtada al-Sadr has reasserted his political power by yanking his loyalists from the Cabinet, a move aimed at showing his supporters he retains his credentials as an opposition leader and which increases the pressure on Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki to loos-

en his embrace of the U.S. occupation, which many Iraqis blame for violence in the country.

These developments, Mr. Speaker, illustrate the wisdom of requiring benchmarks the Iraqi Government must meet to justify continued American blood and treasure in Iraq. Moreover, because those benchmarks are established pursuant to President Bush's policies, it is passing strange indeed that he would threaten to veto the bill since it necessarily means he would be vetoing his own benchmarks for the performance of the Iraqi government. He would be vetoing his own readiness standards for U.S. troops. The President demands this Congress send him an Iraq war bill with "no strings." But the only "strings" attached, Mr. Speaker, are the benchmarks and standards imposed by the President himself.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to the enormous financial cost, the human cost to the men and women of the United States Armed Forces has also been high but they have willingly paid it. Operation Iraqi Freedom has exacerbated the Veterans Administration health care facility maintenance backlog; placed an undue strain on the delivery of medical treatment and rehabilitative services for current and new veterans; and exacted a heavy toll on the equipment, training and readiness requirements, and the families of the men and women of the United States Armed Forces.

The emergency supplemental acknowledged the sacrifices made by, and the debt of gratitude, we and the Iraqi people owe to Armed Forces of the United States. But more than that, it makes a substantial down payment on that debt by providing substantial increases in funding for our troops.

The supplemental includes a total appropriation of \$2.8 billion for Defense Health Care, which is \$1.7 billion above the President's request. The additional funding supports new initiatives to enhance medical services for active duty forces and mobilized personnel, and their family members. Included in this new funding is \$450 million for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder/Counseling; \$450 million for Traumatic Brain Injury care and research; \$730 million to prevent health care fee increases for our troops; \$20 million to address the problems at Walter Reed; and \$14.8 million for burn care.

Unlike the Republican leadership of the 109th Congress and the Bush Administration, the new Democratic majority is committed to America's veterans. What's more, we back up that commitment by investing in their well-being. For example, the supplemental bill we passed included \$1.7 billion above the President's request for initiatives to address the health care needs of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans and the backlog in maintaining VA health care facilities, including \$550 million to address the backlog in maintaining VA health care facilities so as to prevent the VA from experiencing a situation similar to that found at Walter Reed Medical Center.

We provided an additional \$250 million for administration to ensure there are sufficient personnel to support the growing number of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans and to maintain a high level of services for all veterans; \$229 million for treating the growing number of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans; \$100 million for contract mental health care, which will allow the VA to contract with private mental health care providers to ensure that Iraq and Afghanistan veterans are seen in the most timely and least disruptive fashion, including members of

the Guard and Reserve; and \$62 million to speed up the processing of claims of veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan.

Mr. Speaker, when American troops are sent into harm's way, America has an obligation to do all it can to minimize the risk of harm to the troops. That is why it was so important that we included additional funding above the President's request to support our troops. We provided \$2.5 billion more to address the current readiness crisis of our state-side troops, including ensuring that they are better equipped and trained. We included \$1.4 billion more for military housing allowances and \$311 million more for Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicles for troops in Iraq. And there is included in the supplemental \$222 million more for infrared countermeasures for Air Force aircraft to address the growing threat against U.S. air operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Equally important, Mr. Speaker, the supplemental contains language directing the President to adhere to current military guidelines for unit readiness, deployments, and time between deployments.

In the supplemental we passed, the Defense Department is required to abide by its current Unit Readiness policy, requiring the chief of the military department concerned to determine that a unit is "fully mission capable" before it is deployed to Iraq. The President may waive this provision by submitting a report to Congress detailing why the unit's deployment is in the interests of national security despite the assessment that the unit is not fully mission capable.

The Defense Department is also required to abide by its current policy and avoid extending the deployment of units in Iraq in excess of 365 days for the Army and 210 days for the Marines. The provision may be waived by the President only by submitting a report to Congress detailing the particular reason or reasons why the unit's extended deployment is in the interests of national security.

Mr. Speaker, to reduce the incidence of combat fatigue and enhance readiness, it is important that our troops have sufficient "time out of the combat zone and training between deployments. That is why we require the Defense Department to abide by its current policy and avoid sending units back into Iraq before troops get the required time away from the war theater. The President may waive this provision by submitting a report to Congress detailing why the unit's early redeployment to Iraq is in the interests of national security.

Mr. Speaker, the American people spoke loudly and clearly last November when they tossed out the Rubber-Stamp Republican Congress. They voted for a New Direction in Iraq and for change in America. They voted to disentangle American troops from the carnage, chaos, and civil war in Iraq. They voted for accountability and oversight, which we Democrats have begun to deliver on; already the new majority has held more than 100 congressional hearings related to the Iraq War, investigating everything from the rampant waste, fraud, and abuse of Iraq reconstruction funding to troop readiness to the Iraq Study Group Report to the shameful mistreatment of wounded soldiers recuperating at Walter Reed Medical Center.

And we will not stop, Mr. Speaker, until we are clearly on a glide path to the day when our troops come home and where we can

"care for him who has borne the battle, and for his widow and orphan." And even then our work will not be done. For we must still be about the business of repairing the damage to America's international reputation and prestige. But this Democratic majority, led by the Progressive Caucus and the Out of Iraq Caucus, has ushered in a new era of oversight, accountability, and transparency to defense and reconstruction contracting and procurement.

THE LOGAN ACT

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

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I have high regard for everybody in this whole body, but when someone does something wrong, it is imperative that it be brought to light, and brought to light in a public forum.

About a week ago, the Speaker of the House, along with others, took a trip that the State Department and the White House disapproved of, to visit Syria. Syria is a terrorist state, has been on the terrorist state list for a long, long time. They have been working with Iran, they have been a transit point for weapons that went into Lebanon, weapons that killed a lot of people. They support Hezbollah and Hamas, two terrorist organizations. They work closely with Iran which has been involved in terrorism and is also on the terrorist list. And for the Speaker and others to go over there and talk with Assad, in my opinion and in the opinion of the law, the Logan Act, that it was not only the wrong thing to do and sent the wrong message, but it was a violation of an act of Congress.

I want to read to you the language in the Logan Act. It says, "Any citizen of the United States, wherever he or she may be, who, without authority of the United States, directly or indirectly commences or carries on any correspondence or intercourse with any foreign government or any officer or agent thereof, in relation to any disputes or controversies with the United States, or to defeat the measures of United States, shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than 3 years or both."

Now, I am not under any illusions that there is going to be any censorship of the Speaker or any prosecution of the Speaker, but I think the American people ought to know that she weakened the position of the United States in the Middle East, and she broke the law; and she should be held accountable for that. And tonight I hope the American people get this message and send a message to the Speaker.

She has talked recently, as I understand it, and she is thinking about going to Iran and talking to Ahmadinejad. He is one of the terrorist leaders of the world. And if she were to go over there while he is building nu-

clear weapons and the whole world is trying to get him to stop, it would be a sure sign of weakness on the part of the United States, and it would send such a signal that they would be more aggressive than they have been in the past.

In 1938 and 1939, Winston Churchill was looked upon as a warmonger because he warned about Hitler, and yet Lord Chamberlain went to Munich, Germany, and he signed a peace agreement on Hitler's terms, gave Hitler the Sudetenland, came back, and said, "Peace in our time," because he went and talked with Hitler and he thought he could convince him not to be aggressive. That was the green light for World War II and 62 million people died.

Talking to these terrorists without getting them to discuss and want to change and move away from their policies of mass destruction is wrong. Iran is trying to build nuclear weapons and they will already have one; they are trying to build a delivery system for intercontinental, intermediate range, and short-range missiles.

We must not send a signal of weakness. I think the Speaker did the wrong thing. I believe she violated the Logan Act because she didn't have the approval of both the White House and the Defense Department, and I hope that she won't do this again. And I certainly hope she won't go to Iran.

□ 1945

COMMEMORATING THE RUTGERS UNIVERSITY SCARLET KNIGHTS

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

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I came here tonight to talk about the Rutgers Women's basketball team, which I am so proud of, and I will. But I have to respond to the previous speaker.

I am very proud of the fact that Speaker PELOSI went to Syria. It is very important for us to have a dialogue with Syria. The fact of the matter is that the Iraq Study Group recommended that we have a dialogue with both Syria and Iran, and certainly we need a new direction with regard to the war in Iraq. And an effort to reach out and have dialogue is a good thing.

And there is such hypocrisy on the part of the other side of the aisle. I mean, the President and the White House criticized the Speaker. But a week before, a couple of days before, there were Republican Members of Congress that went to Syria. So this is just total hypocrisy.

It was a good thing that she went to Syria. It is the very type of dialogue that we need.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I came here this evening to honor the Rutgers University Scarlet Knights women's basketball team and applaud their character and integrity. These remarkable young