

to his neighbors. He can fix anything. He knows more about world events than most politicians. He still mows his own grass, even though he's over 80 years of age, and he has a strong opinion on politics and world issues. He gives plenty of advice to all people, including me. He has two computers in his home office. He sends e-mails to hundreds of his buddies throughout the world.

Dad and Mom still live in Houston not far from where I grew up. My dad is a charter member of the Greatest Generation. He was proud to be in the United States Army, but he, like many Americans of that generation, get emotional about the ones who died for this Nation.

Mr. Speaker, not far from this Capitol is the World War II memorial that honors those who never returned from Europe, Africa, the South Pacific in the great World War II. This memorial lists the battles, the names, and the States and the territories where those warriors called home. In the back of this memorial is a massive bronze-looking plate, but on closer inspection, Mr. Speaker, it's not a bronze plate at all. It's actually 1,000 bronze stars. Each star represents 400 Americans killed for our country in World War II, 400,000 Americans, mostly kids in their teens and in their early twenties who gave their youth for our future. Further down the Mall are the memorials for Vietnam and Korea, and in the brush is the World War I memorial that is hidden among the trees.

So today, Mr. Speaker, as we approach Memorial Day to honor those who have fought in the great World War II, and all American wars, we honor not only my dad and those who returned in victory, but also, we honor all those American heroes who never returned and for whom the bugles have played Taps for the last time.

And that's just the way it is.

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

(Ms. WOOLSEY addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

□ 1900

VOTE ON IRAQ SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDING BILL

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

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, the American people want U.S. soldiers out of Iraq. A majority of Iraq's elected Parliament want U.S. soldiers out of Iraq. And I want soldiers out of Iraq, out of harm's way and out of the middle of a civil war.

This is what the American people elected us to do in November, knowing

the best way to support our troops is to protect our soldiers and get them out of Iraq.

Since January, 431 U.S. soldiers have died in Iraq; 83 American soldiers died in January, 80 died in February, 81 died in March, 104 died in April, and 83 Americans have died in Iraq so far in May.

Since January, 2,496 U.S. soldiers have been wounded in Iraq. In fewer than 5 months, the U.S. casualties in Iraq is already exceeding the number of soldiers who died or were wounded in Iraq in 2003. But the President insists we're winning. The reality is his stubbornness and intransigence has lost the war and the peace.

Outside my office, we honor the fallen heroes of the State of Washington by showing the photographs of 78 men and women killed in Iraq. Adding more pictures will not sustain their memory. We honor these fallen heroes only by protecting the living.

The way forward is not more casualties, as the President freely admits will occur.

The way forward in Iraq is not claiming phony ties to 9/11, fake intelligence, or outright fabrication, although these are the trademarks of this administration.

Demanding a timetable to get our soldiers out of Iraq, as I have done repeatedly, is the strongest support anyone in this Congress or country can do to support our soldiers.

I voted today to support U.S. soldiers by voting against a bill that approves an endless war and provides the President with a box of preapproved blank checks. A Nation does not support its soldiers by accepting more Americans killed and wounded in Iraq while carrying out the flawed mission of a failed presidency. The Congress does not support our soldiers by passing flawed legislation that supports a President who is totally out of touch with reality.

Spending more money in Iraq without a timetable to get out of Iraq only buys more casualties in a needless military disaster ordered by a President who can mislead, but not lead, America in war or peace.

The invasion of Iraq was and is all about oil. The one and only benchmark that matters to the President is for Iraq to pass an American-engineered oil law that delivers the oil wealth of Iraq into the hands of Western oil companies.

The President would not listen when a majority of Iraq's parliament signed a petition last week demanding a timetable for the withdrawal of U.S. forces. That's because it doesn't matter what they think; only what the President and his neocon friends want. And they want oil. They want it so much that the President will keep the U.S. soldiers in Iraq until he can strong arm the passage of a law that provides cover for Western oil companies to control Iraq's vast oil wealth. That is the President's definition of mission accomplished.

The American people elected us to stand up to a President who is out of touch and out of control. Over 3,000 U.S. casualties ago, we were handed the gavel to lead against the President who had taken his Republican majority in Congress to suspend the coequal branch of government.

The President issued orders, and the Republicans bowed their heads and complied. We must lead, not capitulate.

American soldiers will never be safe as long as the President can order a military escalation in one breath and, in the next, predict growing casualties. The Iraq people will never be free so long as the President has the freedom to occupy their Nation. The American people will never be served as long as the President can go it alone in Iraq and in the halls of Congress.

The American people gave us a mission, but on this day, we have failed in that mission.

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

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

FORMER U.S. BORDER PATROL AGENTS RAMOS AND COMPEAN

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

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, today is the 128th day since two U.S. Border Patrol agents entered Federal prison. Agents Ramos and Compean were convicted in Federal courts for shooting a convicted drug smuggler who brought 743 pounds of marijuana across our border into Texas.

These two law enforcement officers, who have each given years of their life in service to this Nation, never should have been sent to prison. By attempting to apprehend an illegal alien drug smuggler, these agents were simply doing their job to protect the American people.

Although it is clear that the agents fired in self-defense, the U.S. Attorney's Office prosecuted the agents and granted fully immunity to the drug smuggler, who claimed he was unarmed.

This case is a black mark on the American judicial system. Despite countless pleas from the American people and Members of Congress, the President has refused to pardon these men. Every day and every hour that these agents spend behind bars is a travesty of justice. Instead of crafting deals to grant mass amnesty to illegal aliens who have broken the law, our government needs to get serious about border security and get on the right side of the law.

The prosecutor of this case gave an illegal alien drug smuggler immunity

for his crime, free medical care and issued him a border crossing card to enter the United States of America. The two agents received sentences of 11 and 12 years in prison and now spend 23 hours a day in isolated prison cells. These men are not criminals.

Our government needs to wake up and stop sending the wrong message to our Border Patrol agents and law enforcement officers who face bullets in the line of duty and risk their lives to protect the American people.

Many of us in Congress are concerned about the Federal prosecutor in this case and his decision to bring criminal charges against these border agents. There are legitimate legal questions about how this prosecution was initiated and how the U.S. Attorney's Office proceeded in this case.

I am hopeful that this Congress will soon hold hearings to investigate the prosecution of these agents, because it is time for justice to prevail over injustice.

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

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

FUNDING WAR IN IRAQ

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

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, since Democrats took over Congress, we have tried to establish a process to responsibly end our involvement in Iraq. We, like all Americans, have watched in sadness as 3,422 of our brave soldiers have lost their lives, including 57 of those who came from the State of New Jersey.

That is why Congressman PASCRELL and Congressman PALLONE, Congressman HOLT, Congressman ROTHMAN and Congressman SIRES and myself voted against this resolution.

As we said, we have asked the President to have a responsible end to our involvement, but 3,422 deaths later, the lives of 57 Americans from New Jersey have been lost. Already we have passed and sent to the President a plan that would include a timeline for troop withdrawal.

Our best efforts, however, have been consistently met with a veto. Indeed, President Bush continues to stubbornly, recklessly insist that his failed Iraqi policy continues without any reasonable compromise. We, along with the great majority of Americans, strongly disagree with the President. He has been wrong every step of the way, and it is long past time to bring U.S. involvement in Iraq to a conclusion.

The Democratic leadership has tried repeatedly to bring finality to the war.

But because of a lack of a veto-proof majority, today they have relented on key requirements to help bring about the end.

While we understand why the proposal before us was crafted in such a way, that we believe we must continue to forcibly stand up to the President.

We voted against spending even more money in Iraq because there were no timelines or real accountability on an administration that has proven to be utterly incompetent on the most important issue of our time.

As late as yesterday at a major address, the President continues to try to directly implicate Iraq in 9/11. It was Osama bin Laden, al Qaeda, who made it very clear on that dastardly, cowardly act on September 11 to our World Trade Center that it was done by al Qaeda, done by the Saudi who led this and still continues to lead this terrorist organization.

So why do we continue to try to stretch the reason for going in and having an attack on Iraq that it was because of 9/11. We know that there is the continued attempt to connect the two when they are not connected. Now we hear al Qaeda is strong and doing well in Iraq. However, before 9/11, there were no al Qaeda operatives in Iraq.

So we have now a country that is no better off, really. More people die there. We have a world that is really not any safer. Yet, and still, we have a President who refuses to see the light, continues to go down a path of destruction. So, for that reason, I am proud of my colleagues, PASCRELL, PALLONE, HOLT, ROTHMAN, SIRES and myself who stood up and said, enough is enough, the time is now.

ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE

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

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my profound concern with the continued violations of religious and human rights that the Republic of Turkey has perpetrated against the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the Holy See for over 300 million Orthodox faithful.

While I understand and appreciate the role Turkey must fulfill as a strategic ally in our global war on terror, I am immensely disappointed in the demonstrated lack of progress Turkey has made in support of religious tolerance.

As cochair of the Congressional Caucus on Hellenic Affairs and as a member of the House committees on Foreign Affairs and Homeland Security, I am extremely sensitive to nurturing the growing relationship between the United States and Turkey. The key factors in this relationship are ensuring Turkey's growth as a secular, constitutional democracy.

Americans know the conditions that characterize secular democracies must,

by necessity, include provisions for freedom of religion. While Turkey has made strides in other areas of modernization, it still fails to meet the standards of a civilized world in granting its citizens religious freedom.

We seek no extraordinary demands on Turkey, simply to allow its citizens and institutions to be free of harassment based on religion. It's as simple as that.

Like his predecessors before him, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, worldwide leader of Orthodox Christians, has made extraordinary efforts to bridge the gap between Christianity and Islam. The Patriarch, whom the Orthodox Church considers the first among equals, has been an ambassador of goodwill for the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

In fact, the Ecumenical Patriarch has been proactive in assisting Turkey's cause on the world stage. His excellency, Bartholomew, has stated that Turkey's admission into the European Union would "... provide a concrete example and a powerful symbol of mutually beneficial cooperation between the Western and Islamic worlds and put an end to the talk of the death of civilizations.

"This in turn would be a true strengthening of Europe and the European ideals that converge with the values of the 'pilgrims of the book' spoken by the current Prime Minister of Turkey."

The Ecumenical Patriarchate has a record of reaching out and working for peace and reconciliation amongst all faiths and has fostered dialogue among Christians, Jews and Muslims. What the Greek Orthodox community and all watchdogs of religious freedom throughout the world are asking for in return is simply that Turkey abides by the tenets of its constitution, which secures religious rights for all of its citizens.

In accordance with the administration's ambitious agenda over the next 2 years to further develop a U.S.-Turkey strategic relationship, I urge my fellow Members to support House Resolution 373, of which I am an original cosponsor, so that we may impress upon Turkey the need to grant the Ecumenical Patriarchate ecclesiastic succession; the right to train clergy of all nationalities; and respect for human rights and property rights of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

By encouraging Turkey to continue the achievements that democratization has yielded thus far for its society, we will be working to promote and safeguard religious human rights for the Ecumenical Patriarchate. For this, we and nearly 300 million Orthodox Christians would be eternally grateful.

□ 1915

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