

ago, and it is my special privilege to acknowledge him for he came as the regional leader of the NAACP more than four decades ago to Houston, Texas, and he never forgot the routing and the importance of educating our young people about the emancipation.

So I stand today to be able to chronicle the history and to thank those who are now fighting the battle to preserve Freedman's Town in Houston, Texas, a town that was formulated by freed slaves right after the Emancipation Proclamation that is now under siege by those who would desire to disrupt the few remaining historic buildings and blocks and, if you will, bricks that make up the street, cobblestone bricks. I pray that the energy of those remaining, Reverend Samuel Smith, Captain Roberts, Reverend Robertson, will hold on, and the number of churches that are in that area, that we will fight for the establishment of a Freedman's Town corridor in the name and in tribute of Juneteenth and the emancipation of our people.

Let me cite for those a depictive picture that shows both celebration and shock as Major Gordon Granger came into Galveston to be able to announce that these yet humble servants, these slaves, were yet free.

Let me quickly go to the language that was offered to me in remarks made by Curtis Faulkner. I want to read, first of all, just a few brief words from the message of Abraham Lincoln during the emancipation: "Fellow citizens, we cannot escape history. We of this Congress and this administration will be remembered in spite of ourselves. No personal significance, or insignificance, can spare one or another of us. The fiery trial through which we pass will light us down, in honor or dishonor, to the latest generation. We say we are for the union. The world will not forget that we say this."

So he spoke of saving the union, but he also laid the ground work for the Emancipation Proclamation.

He continued: "Other means may succeed; this could not fail. The way is plain, peaceful, generous, just—a way which, if followed, the world will forever applaud and God must forever bless."

This was the genesis of the emancipation of slaves, but yet we are still wracked by discrimination and disparity. So when I speak of education and No Child Left Behind, I use Houston as an additional laboratory, testing the fear of children and not the learning of children. We want to reform so that all of our children can learn. Poor funding for underperforming schools, a failure of this administration that never decided to fund. Closing schools, lack of pay for teachers, all of that is meaningful.

I close, Mr. Speaker, by saying this. Freedom is not enough and you do not wipe away the scars of centuries by saying now you are free. We want the emancipation to be known in our hearts. We want a national holiday for

the Juneteenth. And I look forward to working with my colleagues to commemorate, celebrate, and be reminded of the sweat and blood and tears of those who stand here today.

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

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

#### JUNETEENTH/BLAIR'S BILL

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

Mr. RUSH. Mr. Speaker, I stand here today, along with my congressional Black Caucus colleagues, in recognition of Juneteenth Day. It is fitting for us to not only acknowledge where we have been in the past but also to evaluate where we are today as a people.

Mr. Speaker, one of the most pressing issues in the African American community remains the issue of education. Many of my colleagues have outlined the progress and the challenges that many African American students face as they strive to acquire the educational benefits that every American should receive.

In the words of the great African American leader Malcolm X: "Education is the passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it today."

Education is, of course, the key to a bright future. And it is the vital ingredient in finding success and achieving the American Dream. While African Americans have come very far, educationally, there is still much work to do at the Federal, at the State, at the local, and at the family level to ensure that all of our students are learning and are being given the chance to succeed.

Today, Mr. Speaker, African American females, in particular, are achieving gains in education that were previously unheard of. Black females are graduating from college, graduate school, and post-graduate school at record levels. And this is something we can all be proud of and take comfort in.

However, Mr. Speaker, there are still many problems. Today, our Nation has more African American men in prison than in college. In many urban cities, Black males are dropping out of high school at a rate of 50 percent and even less are going to college.

One problem that many of our young students face is the issue of gun violence that pervades our community. Mr. Speaker, we have to make the schools and the neighborhoods that we live in safe for our students. We must address the gun violence that is plaguing so many of our communities.

African American males under age 30 are nearly nine times more likely to be

murdered than a white male under age 30. African Americans make up only 13 percent of the population of our Nation but in 2001 suffered almost 25 percent of all firearms deaths, and 52 percent of all firearm homicides.

Mr. Speaker, just days ago, on May 10, a student, Blair Holt, was riding home from school on a public bus and was fatally shot while trying to shield a young female friend from a gunman's bullet. Blair Holt was an honor student with plans to attend college, and instead, his young life was prematurely taken for no reason at all. Mr. Speaker, this school year alone, 31 Chicago public school students have been murdered; 31 students have lost their lives; 31 students have not given their talents, their skills, and their abilities to make this world a better place.

While this statistic is true for the schools in my district, gun violence is all around. Gun violence is prevalent in so many of the communities all around this Nation. And we must put an end to this domestic terrorism that is destroying communities and making our constituents live in fear. As elected officials, it is incumbent upon us to enact legislation that would help reduce the flow of guns into our communities and help our struggling and frustrated law enforcement departments all across this Nation to keep track of those who possess guns and where those guns are.

I have introduced H.R. 2666, Blair's bill, which would implement a Federal gun licensing and registry program. This bill will help law enforcement track over 200 million guns that are too often ending up in the hands of criminals, young people, and gang members.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 2666 is a step in the right direction. We must do all that we can for our Nation's children.

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

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

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#### GETTING SMART ABOUT IRAQ

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, I have come down to this floor more than 200 times to hold the administration accountable for its actions in Iraq. Since then, we have seen it all, from freedom fries to "the surge." During these dog days of summer, however, we can't relent. We have to join together as never before because this administration is moving in new and even more dangerous directions in foreign policy. Let me give you an example.

Several weeks ago, the administration confirmed what I had been saying

for the last 3 or 4 years; namely, that they are determined to maintain tens of thousands of American troops on permanent military bases in Iraq for many decades to come. To support this position, they draw an absurd comparison between the situation in Iraq and the situation in South Korea. South Korea, where U.S. troops have been stationed for more than 50 years. And then White House spokesman Tony Snow said U.S. troops may have to stay in Iraq indefinitely to perform what he called an over-the-horizon support role. Over-the-horizon support role. George Orwell couldn't have said it any better. Call it what it really is, Tony: Occupation.

Ever since the administration took us into Iraq, I have tried to get at the heart of what is wrong with this foreign policy, and I believe the answer is this: The administration's foreign policy has failed. It has failed because it sells America short. The administration believes that the only weapon we have to fight terrorism is military power, but by relying on military power alone and ignoring our many other strengths, they have made America much weaker, not stronger.

There is another answer: A much different look at diplomacy and foreign policy. First, we must reestablish our moral leadership and regain our standing in the global community by using diplomacy as our first and best resort, and war only as our last resort. President Roosevelt said that the Presidency is preeminently a place of moral leadership, and that is something this administration must learn.

Second, we must rebuild our international alliances. We may be a Superpower, but we don't have super powers like Spiderman. So, we need the help of other nations. International cooperation is by far the best way to dismantle terrorist networks, manage globalization, stop the spread of disease and global warming, and fight the poverty that is the breeding ground of terrorism.

Third, Mr. Speaker, we must stop using fear as an excuse to justify immoral wars, or as a bludgeon to crush dissent and trash our Constitution. Again, quoting President Roosevelt, the only thing we have to fear, he said, is fear itself. Well, this administration believes that without fear, they can't move their agenda.

Fourth, we must end our addiction to foreign oil that pumps billions of dollars into autocratic regimes and props them up. Let's get serious about sustainable energy. And let's export green technology instead of war.

Next, we must renew our commitment to nuclear nonproliferation. It is sheer hypocrisy to demand that Iran and North Korea halt their nuclear programs while we talk about developing new nuclear weapons of our very own.

And finally, we must take the money we are investing in war and reinvest it in what makes us truly strong: edu-

cation, health care, jobs, child care, the environment, and nonviolent problem solving.

I have offered a national security plan myself which rests on these broad principles. It's called SMART, which stands for Sensible Multilateral American Response to Terrorism. SMART, H. Res. 227, is deadly serious about stopping acts of terrorism. It would beef-up our intelligence capabilities. It would enhance our efforts to cut off financing for terrorist organizations.

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

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

#### REDEPLOY FOR A SECURE AMERICA

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

Mr. SESTAK. Mr. Speaker, a little over 5 years ago, I was in the war in Afghanistan, first on the ground for a very short period of time, and then I returned in charge of an aircraft carrier battle group. I saw a just war.

Eighteen months later, I went back to Afghanistan, on the ground again, and saw what we had not accomplished because we had diverted our attention and our resources, our Special Forces, our Psychological Operation Forces, our Civil Affairs Forces, those and our attention were diverted to the tragic misadventure in Iraq.

To me, Afghanistan is a poster child for what we have failed to do, and that is to remain engaged throughout this world, to be ready here at home in order to provide for a strong defense in support of our diplomacy of engagement.

I am not antiwar. I am pro-security. And that is my concern, that Iraq is every day seriously degrading the strategic security of America. It is why I believe that there is a different strategy to redeploy from Iraq with a date that is certain, one that is out there in order to change the behavior of those nations in that region, give them a different incentive to work towards stability so that as we redeploy over a fixed timetable, we will leave behind a state that is fairly stable and that is not failing.

I believe, having been in Iraq with Senator HAGEL and having traveled throughout that country, that my belief is only reinforced that we can no longer provide the political and the military cover for the Iraqi leadership that has failed to step up to the plate, that has failed, being in control of 32 ministries in Baghdad, to stop pursuing personal ambition, establishing personal fiefdom as our soldiers provide them not only the military, but the po-

litical cover, not to take the challenging decisions that they must take.

But I also believe, beyond that it is wrong to double-down on a bad bet by putting more troops into what is a civil war and that our military cannot resolve, the best military in the world, I believe a date certain also changes the incentives, the structure of incentives to change the behavior of Iran and Syria.

Everywhere Senator HAGEL and I went in Iraq we heard that Iran has undue influence. Yes, they do. We're bleeding, bleeding profusely. But when I asked our senior political leader there, if we were to redeploy, does Iran want a failed state? The answer was, no, they don't. With a date certain and the confidence the United States should have, having dealt with the Soviet Union, having dealt with the People's Republic of China, bringing it into the world's community, we should have the confidence to deal with Iran and Syria. Bring them together to work, with a date certain as their incentive toward working on the extreme elements in Iraq as we work in the center to bring about an unfailed state that can only be brought about by a date that is certain to redeploy.

It took us 6 months to redeploy from Somalia, a much smaller contingency of forces. We have over 100,000 civilians in Iraq, in addition to our troops. I believe that the Democratic leadership, working with the Republicans, should work towards what the President said. We will not have an open-ended commitment. With a date certain, working together, we can, on an authorization bill, a bill that establishes a date beyond which no funding would be permitted for troops within Iraq, while we use appropriations bills to continue to fund our forces so that we do not ever again, as we did in the last month, place those forces, those whom we serve with, wearing the cloth of our Nation that we sent to war, that we never again play a game of chicken between us and the President.

Being in the military is a dangerous business. It has, as someone said, the dignity of danger. It does not, however, have to be unsafe. Fund them fully with a date that is certain in our authorization bill by which we must redeploy, with enough timeline that the nations there can be brought together under U.S. leadership to bring about, by the only possible means that it can be done, diplomacy, strong diplomacy, as we remain in the region on our bases in Amman, Qatar, Bahrain, carrier battle groups, disengage, reengage in Afghanistan as well as here at home and elsewhere around this world in order to bring about a stronger security for America.

#### THE BUSH-KENNEDY AMNESTY BILL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from California (Mr. ROHRBACHER) is recognized