

Simmons' early success as, in his words, "the mother of black higher education in the State of Kentucky." Through his work as president of the school and as pastor at St. Stephen Baptist Church, Dr. Cosby has worked to expand the school to its original home at 7th Street and Kentucky, where, in conjunction with the current campus, it will once again operate as a fully independent liberal arts university.

In this capacity, Simmons will again offer students from around the country a chance to realize their potential and excel, giving hope to those who need it. I applaud the vision and fortitude that Dr. Cosby has shown in restoring this indispensable treasure, which is not just a shining light in Kentucky's history, but to the Commonwealth's present and future as well.

I hope that it is Simmons, not recent decisions in Washington that could indicate a slow retreat from our strides in civil rights, that portends the course our Nation now treads. It is my great honor to stand on the House floor in recognition of the tremendous national significance and benefit of Simmons College of Kentucky and to say: Welcome back.

IRAQ

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

Ms. KAPTUR. Madam Speaker, President Bush finds himself increasingly isolated on the issue of Iraq. Public support continues to evaporate. This week in a devastating blow to the President's policy, Indiana Senator RICHARD LUGAR, ranking member of the Foreign Relations Committee, a respected voice and, I might say, a very experienced voice on foreign policy for the past 30 years, publicly broke with the Bush administration on Iraq.

In remarks on the Senate floor which are prominently featured on the home page of his Web site, Senator LUGAR said: "Our course in Iraq has lost contact with our vital national security interests in the Middle East and beyond. Our continuing absorption with military activities in Iraq is limiting our diplomatic assertiveness there and elsewhere in the world. The prospects that the current "surge" strategy will succeed in the way originally envisioned by the President are very limited within the short period framed by our own domestic political debate. And the strident, polarized nature of that debate increases the risk that our involvement in Iraq will end in a poorly planned withdrawal that undercuts our vital interests in the Middle East. Unless we recalibrate our strategy in Iraq to fit our domestic political conditions and the broader needs of U.S. national security, we risk foreign policy failures that could greatly diminish our influence across that region and the world."

Senator LUGAR framed the debate in terms of U.S. interests in the Middle

East and the world. He is correct to note that: "The current surge strategy is not an effective means of protecting those interests. Its prospects for success are too dependent on the actions of others who do not share our agenda. It relies on military power to achieve goals that it cannot achieve. It distances allies that we will need for any regional diplomatic effort. Its failure, without a careful transition to a backup policy would intensify our loss of credibility. It uses tremendous amounts of resources that cannot be employed in other ways to secure our objectives. And it lacks domestic support that is necessary to sustain a policy of this type."

I would add several other observations: Rising casualties signal a strategy that is not working.

The U.S. death toll has risen to over 3,555 and there are that many Iraqis dying every month. President Bush himself has admitted his surge will result in more American casualties, a phenomenon we in Ohio know well as last week we lost another airman, F-16 pilot Kevin Sonnenburg, who was laid to rest.

Madam Speaker, I would like to place in the RECORD other important information about the situation in Iraq. Flexibility is not the President's strong suit, and it is time for President Bush to get in touch with reality before he does more damage to the position of the United States in the Middle East and before we lose more of our sons and daughters and the nation of Iraq loses more of its sons and daughters.

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RISING CASUALTIES SIGNAL A STRATEGY THAT IS NOT WORKING

When a U.S. soldier was killed recently by a roadside bomb in the southwestern section of Baghdad, the death toll for American service personnel reached 3,500 over the four years of this war.

The U.S. death toll has risen over 3555.

President Bush himself admitted his "surge" will result in more American casualties—a phenomenon that has become all too frequent as a result of the Administration's conduct of the war. Even now, Northwest Ohio is mourning the loss of an F-16 pilot from the 180th Fighter Wing out of Toledo.

We stand foursquare behind our troops. We will support them in every possible way.

Sooner or later, President Bush has to face the facts: the American people will not sacrifice their sons and daughters in a failed strategy.

SOLDIERS BECOMING INCREASINGLY DISILLUSIONED

Our armed forces are being stretched too thin, but the White House just won't listen. Senator LUGAR said in his speech: "The window during which we can continue to employ American troops in Iraqi neighborhoods without damaging our military strength or our ability to respond to other national security priorities is closing."

Tour after tour in Iraq are taxing the best troops in the world, our American soldiers, leaving them increasingly disillusioned with the mission.

Soldiers are home no longer than 24 hours before they receive a phone call telling them to change their plans because they are going back to Iraq.

Our troops have stepped up to the plate, they have served with honor, and now it is time for their Iraqi counterparts to step up.

Our unit has already sent two soldiers in a box. My soldiers don't see the same level of commitment from the Iraqi Army units they're partnered with.—Captain Douglas Rogers of Delta Company.

Meanwhile, the line between ally and foe is continuing to be blurred as soldiers watch shadowy militia commanders installed as Iraqi Army officers, which places all our forces in a vulnerable position, heavily susceptible to internal as well as external terrorist attacks.

THE WAR IS CAUSING NEUROPSYCHIATRIC ILLNESS AMONG OUR TROOPS

The war in Iraq is taking a hidden toll on the American forces:

38 percent of soldiers, 31 percent of our Marines, 49 percent of our Army National Guard and 43 percent of our Marine reservists have reported symptoms of neuropsychiatric illnesses—PTSD, anxiety, depression.

Mental health care stigma remains pervasive and is a significant barrier to care.

Mental health professionals are not sufficiently accessible to service members and their families.

There are significant gaps in the continuum of care for psychological health.

The military system does not have enough resources, funding or personnel to adequately support the neuropsychological health of service members and their families in peace and during conflict.

There is a shortage of active-duty mental health professionals. The system has been stressed by repeated deployments and other frustrations, and psychologists and psychiatric nurses are leaving the military in growing numbers:

Air Force lost 20 percent of mental health workers from 2003–2007.

Navy lost 15 percent of mental health workers from 2003–2006.

Army lost 8 percent of mental health workers from 2003–2005.

This report points to significant shortfalls in achieving goals and taking care of our service members and their families.—Dr. S. Ward Casscells, assistant secretary of defense for health affairs

The current complement of mental health professionals is woefully inadequate.—MHTF Report.

CONCLUSION

Madam Speaker, flexibility is not President Bush's strong suit.

As his policy in Iraq continued to unravel, he dug his heels in and refused to listen to the generals, to the Congress or to the American people.

As the situation in Iraq continued to deteriorate, the President kept insisting that things were getting better and the violence was beginning to subside.

As civil society devolved into chaos, President Bush held onto the false hope that the Iraqi people were somehow prepared to take the necessary steps toward creating a democracy.

Madam Speaker, President Bush cannot sustain this charade any longer.

The “wise men” of the Republican Party, including Senator LUGAR, are calling into question the fundamental precepts of the Bush policy and calling for a major overhaul.

The president's Iraq policy stands discredited in the eyes of the world. At this point, only President Bush, Vice President CHENEY and Prime Minister Tony Blair seem to believe that the original mission has any chance of success.

It is time, Madam Speaker, for President Bush to get in touch with reality before he does anymore damage to the position of the United States in the Middle East and before we lose in the Middle East even more of our sons and daughters in this disastrous war.

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

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

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.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentle-

woman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

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.)

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

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

DIPLOMATIC STRATEGY FOR IRAQ

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

Mr. SESTAK. Madam Speaker, I rise to speak for a few minutes about Iraq. Every Member of the House brings their experience with them. Mine happens to be 31 years in the military, including leading men and women in war. I have operated with the Soviet Union, the People's Republic of China, entered the DMZ in North Korea, dealt with the Iranians at sea in the Persian Gulf.

When I saw us about to go into Iraq, I was concerned. I felt it was a tragic misadventure, not because of Iraq solely by itself, but because of what it would do to our strategic security around this globe.

I flew with my battle group over Iraq just prior to the war, after having left the war in Afghanistan. I have always been taken in the military by the power of our diplomacy, the power of our diplomats, because they are the ones who often have prevented us from having to use our military. I honestly believe there is a way to redeploy from Iraq that does not mean just getting out nor just bringing the troops home. Those are the wrong words.

Iraq is a set piece in a strategic environment around this world that the United States has interest in. And there is a way to end this tragic misadventure, to redeploy out of Iraq so we might place our men and women where they need to be in Afghanistan, the western Pacific, and here at home to improve the readiness of our Army that has not one, not one active Guard or Reserve unit that is in a state of readiness to deploy anywhere to any other contingency in this world.

And that strategy is really brought about by changing the behavior, in particular, of Iran, who I have operated with at sea, and Iraq and Syria, and the other nations in that region. We will not do that by doubling down once again on a bad bet with a surge of military forces. I know. I have watched it happen before.

This can only be resolved by a strategy that sets a date, a date within a year by which we will redeploy out of Iraq, because that date is not just for ending this war, it has the value of a different strategy to leave an unfailed state, as Iran, recognizing that we will no longer be in that state, but we will remain in the region at our bases that we do have in Qatar, Oman, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates; and our carrier battle group and our amphibious ready group in that region because we have interests there.

But by that date we change the behavior of Iran who does not want to deal by itself with the 2 million Iraqis who have been dislocated from their homes and have yet to overflow their borders, as 2 million others have.

And Syria, that is Sunni, does not want as it fuels, after we leave there, a civil war, would be fueling the Sunnis against the Shia that the Iranians might be supporting. Neither nation wants a proxy war.

If we work diplomatically with a date certain, because they don't want us to remain in that nation, we have the ability to bring to the table the interested parties who can work on the extreme elements in that nation, Iran and Syria; and we deal with the center, the government of Baghdad, with a date certain that makes them recognize they must also step up to the plate and assume responsibility for the country which they have done and presently have to do as we keep a lid politically and militarily on a simmering pot.

There is a strategy which I believe we need to pursue, Republican and Democrat together, that sets a date of approximately a year, which gives us time to safely redeploy. Because, remember, it took us 6 months to redeploy out of Somalia with only about 8,000 troops, when we have 160,000 in Iraq with over 100,000 U.S. contractors. We need time to safely redeploy with a strategy that works to bring Iran and Syria to the table because they have interests in accommodating stability as we remain in that region because of our interests, providing air cover if necessary from above, from bases outside or Special Forces from outside, as we begin to address our other security interests around the world and here at home.

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STAND DOWN 2007

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

Mr. CLEAVER. Madam Speaker, we are all concerned about the troops. I am extremely concerned about the troops when they return home.

On this past Saturday, June 23, I visited the 14th annual Kansas City Stand Down. This is a 2-day event, and it opened up in Kansas City on Truman Road, the road that Harry Truman's