

and be honest with the American people about the cost of war when it comes to the men and women who are fighting for every one of us.

If we are just being told a happy picture all the time, and not getting the reality of what is out there, we in Congress cannot do our job to make sure our veterans get what they need. The men and women who have served in the military have borne significant burdens. They have assumed great risk for our country, and they have sacrificed their lives and their limbs to protect all of us and our freedoms. They have done their job. They have done what this country has asked. They have done it honorably. It is time this administration helps us keep a promise to them to fulfill their needs. Our Nation has a moral obligation to care for those who have served this country in uniform, and that begins by an honest assessment of the cost.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I share some of the feelings of the distinguished Senator from Washington about our veterans. There is no question about it, we need to do more for them, and we will.

TESTIMONY OF GENERAL DAVID PETRAEUS

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, we live in a cynical age where the truth is often discarded because it does not meet the goals of an election campaign strategy or it is not what the core constituencies of certain political movements wish to hear.

One does not need to look any further to prove this point than the media's portrayal of General Petraeus's testimony before Congress this week.

Lost in the coverage were the hard facts and the veracity of the personal assessments of a remarkable leader. He has spent years in Iraq, first, as the commander of the 101st Airborne Division during the initial race to Baghdad and then as the officer in charge of training the Iraqi Army. This was followed by his authorship of the "Army-Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Manual" that was used as the basis for our current strategy, and now in his role as the commander of Multi-National Forces—Iraq.

This man deserves the plaudits and credit from all of us. Think about it. How many of us would spend years away from our wives, our families. The sacrifices of our men and women over there is remarkable. This man is one of the most remarkable.

So let us lay aside the rhetoric and learn the truth outlined by this seasoned commander.

Here are General Petraeus's own words:

As a bottom line up front, the military objectives of the surge are, in large measure, being met. In recent months, in the face of tough enemies and the brutal summer heat

of Iraq, Coalition and Iraqi Security Forces have achieved progress in the security arena. Though improvements have been uneven across Iraq, the overall number of security incidents in Iraq has declined in eight of the past 12 weeks, with the number of incidents in the last two weeks at the lowest levels seen since June 2006. One reason for the decline in incidents is that Coalition and Iraqi forces have dealt significant blows to al-Qaida-Iraq.

The general goes on to point out:

Coalition and Iraqi operations have helped reduce ethno-sectarian violence, as well, bringing down the number of ethno-sectarian deaths substantially in Baghdad and across Iraq since the height of the sectarian violence last December. The number of overall civilian deaths has also declined during this period, although the numbers in each of the areas are still at troubling levels. Iraqi Security Forces have also continued to grow and to shoulder more of the load, albeit slowly and amid continuing concerns about the sectarian tendencies of some elements in their ranks. In general, however, Iraqi elements have been standing and fighting and sustaining tough losses, and they have taken the lead in operations in many areas.

These are the words of a trusted and very capable commander who was unanimously confirmed by the Senate. They are insightful, and they show that at long last, we are beginning to make significant progress in Iraq.

I believe Churchill could have been talking about our current prospects in Iraq when he said:

This is not the end. It is not even the beginning of the end. But it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning.

Yet even before General Petraeus gave us his professional military opinion on the status of the war, some attempted to undermine the veracity of his analysis and, worse, the character of the General himself.

Of course, I am speaking of the disgraceful actions of MoveOn.org and their now infamous advertisement. Before even having the opportunity to hear General Petraeus's analysis, this group stated that General Petraeus is a "military man constantly at war with the facts." It claimed he was "cooking the books." It asserted that his action is a betrayal of the American people.

This is shameful.

There is no need to read between the lines.

There is no subtext here.

The text is clear.

MoveOn.org has called General Petraeus a liar.

That is disgusting. It is beneath the dignity of decent and honorable people.

According to this group, General Petraeus is injuring his country and endangering those under his command by lying about the progress in Iraq.

Now, anyone who has had the opportunity to meet the General and anybody who has bothered to follow his career or his academic pursuits knows these are disgraceful and unwarranted allegations. However, there might be a silver lining to this libel. Now, all of America understands why MoveOn.org and other groups like it are called the nutroots. These people are nuts. They

don't care who they hurt. They don't care whom they smear. They don't care whom they libel. To them, politics is more important than anything else, and the accumulation of power is most important of all. Perhaps if they rejoined the reality-based policy community, they would have actually waited to hear the General's analysis before criticizing it.

Here is the reality.

General Petraeus is a consummate professional. He is a man who has dedicated his life to our country.

And I would note that when you put on a uniform, dedicating your life to your country has the potential to mean a good deal more than running for Congress.

But to Moveon.org, which has sadly become a core participant in the Democratic party's policymaking, General Petraeus is a disgrace to the uniform.

Let me be clear. It is MoveOn.org that is the disgrace. And I think it is important that the entire Congress publicly repudiate these absurd charges. I hope those in this body who are fond of listening to and following MoveOn.org's misguided policies see this group for what it is—an American embarrassment.

I have been very interested in watching the debates both on the Republican side and on the Democratic side. I have been impressed with the candidates for President. There is no question. They are decent and honorable people. But they ought to decry this. They should start by demanding that people within their party start acting responsibly. The same applies to Republicans. If we have people who are doing disgraceful, offensive things such as MoveOn.org, we ought to rise out of our seats and condemn them. I believe good people in both parties will do that. But thus far, there has been a silence on these issues, especially when it comes to General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker.

What was particularly galling about the inaccuracies of MoveOn.org's comments is that many Members of Congress have been to Iraq in the previous few months and have seen with their own eyes the progress that is being made. Therefore, I would like to take this opportunity to share with my colleagues some of the experiences I had during a trip I made to Iraq a few months ago with Senator SMITH and one of the great Congresswomen in the House, Congresswoman HARMAN.

As part of my preparation for this trip, I read with great interest the articles written by Michael Fumento and published in the Weekly Standard about the time he was embedded with U.S. forces in Ramadi.

Mr. Fumento wrote as recently as eight months ago that our forces in Ramadi, described the time between when they went out on patrol and when they were attacked as the 45-minute rule. Under this rule, our forces hypothesized that it took the enemy 15 minutes to determine where an American patrol was and then 30 minutes to

organize an attack. Unfortunately, those attacks occurred with great frequency and severity.

However, during my recent trip to Ramadi, I walked—admittedly in body armor and with a reasonably sized military escort—in one of its major markets in the heart of the city downtown. There, I saw what would be unimaginable a few months ago: shopkeepers selling their goods, children playing, and urban life beginning to re-emerge.

How did this happen? First, the local tribal leaders made a decision that they would no longer tolerate the yoke of tyranny that had been placed upon them by al-Qaida—and make no mistake, al-Qaida is whom we are fighting in Ramadi. These leaders saw firsthand their fellow Sunni Muslims murdered and tortured under al-Qaida's false exploitation of a noble and peaceable religion. Not surprisingly, these sheiks began assisting coalition forces and, most importantly, their own Iraqi security forces in rooting out the terrorists. For example, once the local leaders decided to support the Coalition, 1,000 citizens of Ramadi joined the Iraqi security forces almost over night.

The success I witnessed was attained due to the implementation of the new tactics articulated in General Petraeus's innovative counterinsurgency strategy. Under this plan, large areas of Ramadi were encircled and then, led by Iraqi security forces, a thorough search was conducted in each area. Once these searches were completed and al-Qaida rooted out, the progress was made permanent by placing Joint Security Stations throughout the newly cleared territory.

These Joint Security Stations are one of the major reasons we have seen such advancement in Ramadi and other locations in Iraq. Joint Security Stations are manned by Iraqi Army and police forces as well as American forces who live in these installations in order to provide a permanent security presence for cleared neighborhoods.

Joint Security Stations accomplish three vital goals. First, much like the local police officer in any city, the U.S. forces become intimately involved in the security of the enjoining population. Second, our soldiers also learn about the environment in which they are living and, therefore, can more readily adapt their operations to better achieve the goal of providing security for the local population. Third, our forces help to train and support the Iraqi units assigned to the Joint Security Stations. Ensuring the Iraqi forces have sufficient capabilities to independently provide security to their own population is, of course, one of the primary goals of General Petraeus's strategy.

The implementation of the Joint Security Stations is radically different from previous tactics. In the past, U.S. forces would clear an area and then return to bases on the periphery of town and then move on to their next assign-

ment. The predictable result was that shortly after the U.S. operation concluded, the insurgents would return to the area.

No longer.

Joint Security Stations provide continuous security to the local population. That is why the additional troops that were sent to Iraq as part of the surge are so important. It is not more for more's sake but to have sufficient forces to implement effective counterinsurgency strategies such as the Joint Security Stations.

Fortunately, the success we are seeing in Al Anbar is being replicated in other locations throughout Iraq. In Baghdad, I was briefed by General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker as to the situation in that city. Here, too, I found that through the implementation of new strategies and tactics such as the Joint Security Stations, progress has been made.

One of the early criticisms of the new strategy was the contention that, even if you secure Baghdad, the terrorists will move to the provinces such as Diyala in the north. In fact, the then-leader of al-Qaida, Abu Zarqawi, was killed in Diyala in 2006. However, just as in Ramadi, the Iraqi local leaders decided they did not want to live under the tyranny of al-Qaida, and they joined with us in the effort to throw the terrorists out of the major Diyala city of Baqubah.

However, what also made a lasting impression was the way in which General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker worked together. There are no bureaucratic fiefdoms here. Far from it. In fact, as one watched the General and Ambassador finish one another's sentences, one was struck as to not only how integrated our new strategy is, but how each leader was searching to incorporate the other's department's strengths in order to achieve the well-defined goal of defeating the insurgency and creating an Iraq that could independently secure its own future.

Now, does this mean victory in Iraq is imminent? Hardly.

If one looks to history, counterinsurgency operations are successful only after a significant period of time. We have only recently developed and implemented our new strategy.

So what are the other possible strategies?

Some of my friends on the other side of the aisle recently supported the Levin-Reed amendment to the Defense Authorization bill that would start the reduction of our forces in 120 days. Their legislation would only permit the forces to remain in Iraq that are necessary to protect U.S. and Coalition personnel and infrastructure; train, equip, and provide logistics support to the Iraqi security forces; and engage in targeted counterterrorism operations against al-Qaida, affiliated groups, and other terrorist organizations.

Let's consider that strategy for a moment. Would that not mean that U.S. forces would be confined to large oper-

ating bases in order to protect Coalition infrastructure and support Iraqi forces—only venturing out to conduct raids against terrorists?

Does this strategy sound familiar? It certainly does to me.

The Levin-Reed plan reminds me of the failed Rumsfeld plan. Remember, under Rumsfeld's plan our forces were concentrated in large bases on the periphery of urban areas, only venturing into town to conduct raids and, as my colleague from Delaware often reminded us, conducting patrols where our forces would only speed through areas.

That was a failed policy, not because it was not well implemented; it just did not work.

Yet my colleagues on the other side are determined to repeat it. But this time we would proceed with even fewer troops, which we all know, and many of my Democratic friends continue to point out, was one of the reasons our initial strategy failed in the first place.

Then there is the cost in human lives if the Democrats plan is implemented.

As General Petraeus's testimony articulated, elements of the Iraqi security forces are making progress, but they continue to require strong support from Coalition forces. That training and support are, in part, being provided by the Joint Security Stations.

But, if we are to leave precipitously, how many innocent people will be killed? Remember, it is al-Qaida that is a major instigator of the sectarian violence in Iraq. According to their adherents, their goal is simple: Join us, live by our strict rules, or be slaughtered.

I understand the American people are discouraged by this war—but how will history judge us if we permit the wholesale slaughter of innocent civilians?

If these arguments do not sway you, then let me ask a question about our own self-interest.

What happens if Iraq becomes a failed state? Does anyone really believe al-Qaida would not use Iraq as a base of operations to conduct terrorist attacks against our homeland?

Does anyone really believe that al-Qaida would not exploit the petroleum wealth of Iraq to further their objectives? Remember, in Afghanistan—a country of few natural resources—there were reports after the fall of Kabul that al-Qaida was working on chemical and biological weapons.

I wonder what al-Qaida would buy with the billions of dollars it would accumulate if it controlled even a fraction of Iraq's oil wealth.

Mr. President, we as Americans are known for asking "what is the bottom line?"

Here it is:

We have made enormous mistakes in prosecuting the war in Iraq. So what do we do? Do we concede defeat, which is really what the Levin-Reed amendment offers? Do we hope for the best, that al-Qaida will leave us in peace. Or do we follow the only sensible strategy that

is beginning to show some signs of success?

I believe we all know the sensible answer to that question.

We must not yield.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MENENDEZ). The clerk will call the roll. The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

FREE INTERNET ACCESS

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, since its inception, the Internet has provided a powerful economic boost to our Nation, especially in rural areas. It has become an important everyday tool for millions of Americans, a valuable educational resource, and a powerful mechanism for communication.

To ensure the Internet's benefits are available to as many people as possible, Congress should reduce obstacles to broadband access. One way to accomplish this goal is to prevent taxes from being imposed on Internet access, because such taxes will only drive up the overall cost of the use of the Internet.

The Internet Tax Freedom Act, first passed by Congress in 1998, established a moratorium on State and local governments' ability to tax Internet access. Extended in 2004, that moratorium will expire on November 1—less than 2 months from today. Legislation has been introduced in both the House and Senate to extend the Internet tax moratorium. I have been supportive of such legislation and expressed support when the Senate Commerce Committee explored the issue at a hearing on May 23 of this year.

Our chairman, Senator INOUE, has been very supportive of the concept of keeping taxes off the Internet.

Tremendous investment, growth, and innovation in broadband deployment has occurred since the moratorium was first adopted. In order for this progress to continue, Congress should extend the Internet tax moratorium before it expires this fall.

If it is not extended by November 1, more states could take the opportunity to quickly pass laws and impose new taxes on the Internet. Such taxes would only serve to expand the digital divide between those who can afford broadband access and those who cannot.

The Internet has allowed States such as Alaska to compete on a more level playing field. Alaskans are now able to market their goods to customers in the lower 48 and around the world, which is especially beneficial for small businesses located in remote areas. Improved broadband access has also eliminated distance barriers for education and medicine, providing rural areas with a higher quality of life.

Faster, cheaper Internet access also helps drive America's economic engine and creates new jobs. Continued broadband deployment will help ensure America keeps this competitive edge. Without it, our Nation will fall behind in the global economy. If discriminatory taxes are imposed on Internet access, our country will face a real danger, and the rest of the world will no longer look to the United States for Internet innovations.

The date the Internet tax moratorium is set to expire—November 1—is fast approaching. It is my hope Congress will act to extend this important moratorium before that deadline arrives.

While the expiration of the Internet tax moratorium is the most pressing broadband issue before Congress right now, several more issues should also be addressed to encourage greater broadband deployment and availability in this country. First and foremost, universal service should be updated so that rural America has the same broadband opportunities as the rest of America. This will require the work of both Congress and the Federal Communications Commission.

Additionally, the Government should try to stay away from doing things that would reverse the recent policy trends of encouraging broadband deployment through free market principles.

I sincerely hope that the Congress will act to extend this moratorium in a prompt fashion.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Pennsylvania is recognized.

9/11 REMEMBRANCES IN PENNSYLVANIA

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I rise for a few moments to do something that I had hoped to do yesterday but didn't have the opportunity in the midst of our hearings on Iraq and so much else going on. I don't want to miss the opportunity to commend so many people in Somerset County in Pennsylvania, who, on two occasions—Monday night and, of course, yesterday—were observing the 9/11 remembrances.

In the case of the Monday night event I attended at the Somerset Alliance Church in Somerset, PA, I wanted to commend them for so much. There are several groups—I will not mention names—such as the National Park Service, of course, that helped bring that event together, as well as doing so much other work at the crash site; the families of Flight 93, the Flight 93 Advisory Commission, the Flight 93 Memorial Task Force, and so many others too numerous to name.

On Monday night, the service I attended was a night of grief, a night of gratitude, and I think a night of renewal. There was grief in the obvious sense that we still grieve for those who perished heroically on September 11, 2001, at every site—in this case in Shanksville, Somerset County, PA. Certainly, it was a night to grieve.

It was also a night to express gratitude in two ways at least: One, gratitude for those who gave their lives heroically so that the plane crashed in Pennsylvania instead of coming here to destroy the Capitol or some other part of our Government, and where more lives might have been lost, as well as, I think, to express gratitude to those brave Americans on that plane, but also to express the gratitude of the people who came after that tragedy in Somerset County, where the families, in particular, wanted to use this Monday night ceremony to thank the people of Somerset County. So many people have provided some measure of comfort over all these 6 years to the families who loved and lost. So I think it was also a night for gratitude.

Finally, it was a night to express our shared feeling of renewal, renewing not just our commitment to take care of those families and to do all we can to help them, but also our collective renewal to continue the fight for the ages—the fight against terrorism all across our country and across the world. So it was a night to renew our commitment to that basic shared promise that we make to each other that we will never stop fighting against terrorism, and we will be ever vigilant against this threat to all of America and, indeed, to the world.

I wanted to pay tribute to those in Somerset County who came together this past Monday night for a ceremony entitled "The Spirit of Community: A Service of Remembrance for the Passengers and Crew of Flight 93." I thank, in particular, the families for paying tribute to those in the community of Somerset County who have helped them.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BROWNBACK. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. McCASKILL). Without objection, it is so ordered.

EASTERN CONGO

Mr. BROWNBACK. Madam President, I rise to speak on a situation now developing to which I hope my colleagues will pay some attention. If we get involved at an early phase, it may be something we can head off rather than have it develop full scale. And I will