

is allowing this war to continue, despite the wishes of the American people, despite the fact that our military is overstretched, and despite the fact that our presence in Iraq has been, according to our own State Department, “used as a rallying cry for radicalization and extremist activity in neighboring countries . . .”

It is up to Congress to act because the President will not. It is up to us to listen to the American people, to save American lives, and to ensure our Nation's security by redeploying our troops from Iraq. We have that power and responsibility and we must act now.

That is why I support the amendment offered by Senators LEVIN and JACK REED—an amendment with binding deadlines for both beginning and ending redeployment and the only amendment we are likely to consider that would take a strong step toward bringing our involvement in this war to a close.

The Levin-Jack Reed amendment is not as strong as I would have liked, but it does require the President to bring home our troops, starting in 120 days. I am encouraged that this amendment is bipartisan, and while I wish it had the support of the entire Senate, the support of Senators SMITH, HAGEL, and SNOW is nonetheless an important development.

I call on other Republicans to follow their lead; there is no time to waste. It is not enough to pass something that sounds good but doesn't move us toward ending the war. Weak, feel-good amendments may give people up here political comfort but that comfort won't last long we can fool ourselves, but we can't fool the American people.

It is a tragic truth that the war in Iraq has become the defining aspect of our engagement in this part of the world. Coupled with this administration's inconsistent efforts to promote democracy and the rule of law overseas, the war has alienated and angered those whose support and cooperation we need if we are to prevail against al-Qaida and its allies.

As long as the President's policies continue, Iraq will continue to be what the 2006 declassified National Intelligence Estimate called a “cause celebre” for a new generation of terrorists. Meanwhile, al-Qaida has expanded its relations with dangerous regional terrorist groups.

The newest National Intelligence Estimate indicates that we may now be facing the worst-case scenario in that our indefinite military presence in Iraq has both allowed al-Qaida to reconstitute itself while it has also served as a recruitment tool for a growing and scattered global network of al-Qaida affiliates. It is becoming increasingly difficult for this administration to argue, as it continues to do, that our presence in Iraq is doing anything but profoundly undermining our national security.

Instead, we should be directing our attention and resources to combating

the global threat posed by al-Qaida and its affiliates. The fight against terrorism is not conventional and requires better intelligence, better cooperation with friends and allies, stronger regional institutions, and more comprehensive policies designed to reverse the conditions that might lead to the creation of safe havens. We must prevent these safe havens from being established, including by working to settle regional conflicts and ensuring adequate provision of economic and development assistance so local populations can reject terrorist organizations. We need regional strategies that address the capabilities and policies of all affected countries, both bilateral and multilateral. We must expand our assistance while ensuring that corruption and threats to human rights and political liberties do not undermine these efforts.

By redeploying our troops from Iraq, we can refocus on developing these vital strategies. And by freeing up strategic and technical capacity, we can better address other priorities that have not received adequate attention, such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and Somalia. We can provide real international leadership to combat other pressing enemies such as endemic poverty, HIV/AIDS, and corruption—all of which can contribute to the kinds of instability where extremists thrive. These global battles can't be won if the war in Iraq continues to dominate our foreign policy and indefinitely drain vital security resources.

As I have said before and as I will undoubtedly say again, the administration's policies in Iraq are an unmitigated disaster. But we can mitigate this disaster, lessen the massive burden imposed on our troops, regain our credibility with the international community, and make our Nation more secure. We can and must do that by redeploying our troops from Iraq. Repairing the damage that has been done to our national security will be difficult and time-consuming, and we can start today by passing the Levin-Jack Reed amendment.

There is no reason to wait any longer. Members of this body have claimed that in September we will have a clearer sense of whether the “surge” has succeeded and whether our policy needs to change. But we already know what that report will tell us. We have heard it from foreign policy and military experts and could even read it with our own eyes in the Pentagon's first quarterly surge report or the White House's Benchmark Assessment Report, which was released last week. The surge was intended to create a “window” for political progress, but significant political progress is still nowhere to be seen. We already know there is no military solution to Iraq's problems, so now the question is how long are we prepared to wait? How long are we prepared to have our young men and women police a civil war where the struggle over national identity and the

distribution of power has long since moved out of the Parliament building and onto the streets? How many more brave young Americans will lose a limb or be killed while we tell ourselves that another couple months will turn around 4 years of failed policies? When are my colleagues on the other side willing to say that enough is enough?

It has been a long night, and we have had some heated exchanges. It appears that a minority of the Senate is prepared to prevent a majority of the Senate—and the country—from doing what is long overdue: putting an end to a war without end. This is not the first time that a minority has prevented a majority from acting in this body. Indeed, I have been on the other side of a few of those fights. But this is not a question of senatorial prerogatives. I am not questioning the right of Senators to prevent a vote on the Levin-Jack Reed amendment. I am, however, questioning the wisdom of such a move, of allowing this terrible mistake to continue for days, weeks, months.

I will continue working to bring this war to a close. As long as so many of my colleagues refuse to listen to the American people, to acknowledge that this war is hurting our country and making our Nation more vulnerable, we will have more debates and more votes. Sooner or later, we will end this war. And the sooner we do so, the sooner we can start redeploying our servicemembers from Iraq's civil war and refocusing on a global campaign against a ruthless, determined enemy whose reach extends far beyond Iraq.

REMEMBERING LADY BIRD JOHNSON

Mr. BIDEN. Madam President, so much has been said about the various parts of Lady Bird Johnson's life, as one of our most beloved First Ladies, as a loving mother and grandmother, as the mother of the conservation movement, and as a skilled businesswoman. But there is another aspect all of us in this body appreciate, and that is her mark on this Chamber.

Before the Johnsons left Washington in January 1969, they came to the Capitol to say farewell. And the ever gracious Lady Bird Johnson, who had watched her husband serve as a Senator and a majority leader, said:

When we say goodbye to Washington, the address of 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue was a small span of time for us in comparison to the years that we spent closely affiliated with this building.

She knew how to use this building. She was the first First Lady to ever undertake a major legislative effort—the Highway Beautification Act of 1965. Four decades later, her efforts still bloom on our highways in every region of this country, and in this city.

She did what each of us, and all of us combined, come here to do—leave America better than we found it. Her achievement is all the more remarkable because it was a trying period in

our Nation's history. A President had been assassinated, we were divided by Vietnam, there were riots in our cities over desegregation.

But she understood nature belongs to every single one of us, and we have an obligation to pay nature back. As President Johnson said, when he signed the law:

There is a part of America which was here long before we arrived, and will be here, if we preserve it, long after we depart.

As Mrs. Johnson departs, we thank her for her preservation. We thank her for lining every corner of the country with flowers that we all enjoy.

And we thank her for teaching us that preservation and beauty go beyond the wildflowers, to the need to deal with pollution and urban decay and other problems that are too prevalent in our country and world today.

Jill and I are thinking of her daughters, Lynda and Luci, their families—and, in particular, Senator Robb, who served this body so well.

CONGRATULATING CAL RIPKEN, JR.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Madam President, today I honor and congratulate Cal Ripken, Jr., on his induction to the Baseball Hall of Fame. Throughout his storied 21-year career, Cal has been the epitome of an "Iron Man," both on and off the field.

I watched Cal go from being unknown to being the best known baseball player from Baltimore since Babe Ruth. I was there on the last day at Memorial Stadium and the first day at Camden Yards, and I will watch him when he is inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame on July 29.

For we Orioles fans, it was never if we would be celebrating such an amazing feat but when we would be celebrating it. All baseball fans know about "The Streak." We fans remember the victory lap he took around Camden Yards. And the countdown—where the numbers were displayed not just at the Camden Warehouse or in the Baltimore Sun but also at my office in Hart Senate Office building: 2,632 consecutive games, 431 home runs, 19 All-Star game starts, two American League Golden Glove awards, eight Silver Slugger Awards, two American League MVPs, and on and on.

But the most important thing we remember, which the numbers cannot fully reflect, is the strong, dependable presence of Cal—night after night, day after day—through broken bones, through the wide range of emotions and pressures he experienced as a major leaguer, as a father, and as an active citizen in our community. Every game there he was—at third base and shortstop, smiling, and doing his job. And doing it well.

I remember that fateful night when Cal broke Lou Gehrig's long-standing consecutive game record. To see that banner drop from 2130 to 2131, and to hear the admiration and jubilation

from the crowd in Baltimore, was something I will always remember. The sustained cheers were neverending as Cal, urged by Rafael Palmeiro, took a lap around the field. It was a proud night for the Ripken family, for the Orioles, and for Maryland. It was such a magical night. Families from all over came with their kids to celebrate the "Iron Man" and his achievement. The evening had as much dignity as the player himself.

Cal's accomplishments transcend well beyond the baseball field. His character and demeanor is reflected in the success he experiences every day off the field. He shows up and gives maximum effort in every aspect of life. He puts his family above all, he is a consummate community activist and is committed to living and teaching the "Ripken Way."

The "Ripken Way" is simple, really, but its wisdom is enough to build great players and bind generations together. It states: "Keep it Simple, Explain the Why, Celebrate the Individual, and Make it Fun." This style emphasizes clarity and simplicity, while also stressing empathy and interest.

I have certainly used the "Ripken Way" in my life and I believe many Marylanders and Americans also use it. In Maryland, I can tell you the "Ripken Way" is not just on our ballfields. It is in our factories. It is in our homes. It is in the bread we serve our families. It is in our hospitals in Baltimore, where Cal has contributed so much to children in need of hope and a smile. And it is in our hearts today as we salute Cal Ripken, Jr., and this wonderful honor he is receiving.

Cal applies the "Ripken Way" both on and off the ballfield, particularly in his philanthropic work at the Cal Ripken Sr. Foundation. The Cal Ripken Sr. Foundation was established in 2001 in memory of Cal's father. To this day, Cal carries the torch and legacy of his father. It is a legacy that has shaped Cal's life and a legacy that has shaped the entire Orioles' organization.

By emphasizing work ethic, playing by the rules, putting the team first, and showing up every day, the Cal Ripken Sr. Foundation serves disadvantaged youth across the country. The foundation has even built a beautiful state-of-the-art stadium in Aberdeen, MD, where kids can play. Cal has put much of his own money into the foundation and the stadium's construction, while also working to secure private donations.

Cal may be a local boy, but he is no ordinary man. There is no question that Cal has earned his way into the Hall of Fame, the respect of the world, and the admiration of generations to come.

Baltimore may have lost the powerhouse company Bethlehem Steel, but it will always be home to "Iron Man" Cal Ripken, Jr. I congratulate Cal on his stellar career, his strong work ethic, his commitment to family and community, and for the well-deserved, wonder-

ful honor of being inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame.

While he has already achieved so much, I can't help but think that the best is yet to come.

CONGRATULATING TONY GWYNN

Mrs. BOXER. Madam President, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Tony Gwynn on his induction into the National Baseball Hall of Fame on July 29, 2007. During an illustrious 20-year career spent entirely with the San Diego Padres, Tony Gwynn was a consummate sportsman whose excellence at the plate earned him the recognition as one of the greatest hitters in the game's long and storied history.

A native Californian, Tony Gwynn was a standout student-athlete at San Diego State University, where he excelled on the school's baseball and basketball teams. Tony remains the only athlete in Western Athletic Conference history to be recognized as an all-conference performer in two sports. His talents on the baseball diamond and the basketball court would lead to his selection by the San Diego Padres and the National Basketball Association's San Diego Clippers on the same day in 1981.

Tony Gwynn made his major league debut on July 19, 1982. Over the course of the next 20 years, he would compile one of the most accomplished resumes in baseball history. A remarkable model of consistency, Tony batted over .300 for 19 consecutive seasons, leading to 3,141 career hits. A 15-time All-Star, he won 8 batting titles during his career, tying the National League record held by Honus Wagner. He is the only player in major league history to win four batting titles in two separate decades. A true all-around player, Tony also won five Gold Glove Awards in recognition of his defensive excellence in the outfield.

In addition to his accomplishments on the field, Tony Gwynn has also been widely recognized for his passion and commitment to make a positive impact in the community. In 1995, he was presented the Branch Rickey Award as the top community activist in Major League Baseball. He received the prestigious Roberto Clemente Man of the Year Award in 1999 for combining sportsmanship and community service with excellence on the field. That same year, he was inducted into the World Sports Humanitarian Hall of Fame in Boise, ID.

Affectionately known as "Mr. Padre," the Padres retired his No. 19 jersey and named the street on which its beautiful downtown stadium is located "Tony Gwynn Drive" in his honor. Judging from his excellence on and off the field, it is clear to see why Tony Gwynn is one of the most admired and beloved sports figures in America.

As his teammates and fans would attest, Tony Gwynn is a deserving inductee into the National Baseball Hall