

War, POW, to continue their case against the Hussein regime.

In 2002, 17 American ex-prisoners of war were brutally tortured in Iraq during the first Persian Gulf War sued Saddam Hussein's regime. The veterans eventually won a judgement against Hussein. But shortly after the invasion of Iraq, the Bush administration stepped in and had the judgement overturned.

According to a Dec. 28 report in Congressional Quarterly, President Bush issued his veto after lawyers for the Iraqi Government threatened to withdraw \$25 billion worth of assets from U.S. banks if the provisions was allowed to become law. The American POWs were granted damages by a U.S. district court in July 2003. The court awarded \$959 million in compensatory and punitive damages to the 17 POWs—some of whom remain on active duty today and are serving in Iraq.

But earlier in 2003, after signing a bill that allowed Americans to collect court-ordered damages from the frozen assets of terrorist states—a list that included Iraq at that time—President Bush had confiscated what was then \$1.7 billion in Iraqi assets held in private banks. He allowed the payment of two judgments including one for so-called “human shield” hostages held in Iraq in 1990, but none for the Americans taken prisoner in the 1991 Gulf War.

The President chose to respect corporate interests over human interests and corporate rights over human rights. This is something that the American people have seen from this administration in the past in unrelated matters.

This bill, H.R. 5167, the “the Justice for Victims of Torture and Terrorism Act” restores a provision in the previously vetoed Defense bill that would allow American veterans and victims of torture to pursue legal claims against their torturers.

Simply put, American veterans tortured as prisoners of war do not deserve to be left behind by a presidential policy that keeps them from seeking justice. We need to hold countries accountable for torturing American troops so it never happens again. We need to get our priorities straight. Protecting American veterans and POWs should come before protecting a country's assets.

We must act today to correct this problem. I urge my colleagues to act with me, and support this bill. A strong bipartisan message of support needs to be displayed by this body to right the wrongs and send a message to the President that American soldiers deserve better. The message is clear: American soldiers deserve the right to bring torturers to justice. I invite my colleagues to stand with me today and support this important legislation.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5167, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The title was amended so as to read: “A bill to terminate the authority of the President to waive, with regard to Iraq, certain provisions under the National Defense Authorization Act for

Fiscal Year 2008 unless certain conditions are met.”.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, September 11, 2008.
Hon. NANCY PELOSI,
The Speaker, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MADAM SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in clause 2(h) of rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on September 11, 2008, at 4:25 p.m.:

That the Senate passed S. 3406.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely,

LORRAINE C. MILLER,
Clerk of the House.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CAZAYOUX). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

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

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

HONORING TINA ALLEN

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

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, it was with great sorrow that I learned of the passing of my dear friend and constituent, Tina Allen. Tina dedicated her life to documenting the spirit of black Americans through her sculptures.

Each of her subjects, famous or not, were her way of writing our history in bronze. As an artist, she was an inspiration. As a person, she was a beacon of life as she brought to life the features of great people.

She often said that “great people should have great monuments.” Her work includes abolitionist Frederick Douglass at the African American Museum of Birmingham and featured in the movie, “Akeelah and the Bee”; Rev. Martin Luther King in Las Vegas, Nevada; botanist George Washington Carver at the St. Louis Botanical Garden; Sojourner Truth, City Hall Park, Battle Creek, Michigan; and more recently, entertainer Sammy Davis, Jr.

□ 2000

Tina worked on projects big and small. She was best known for her

monumental statue of “Roots” author, Alex Haley, which was installed at Haley's Heritage Park in Knoxville, Tennessee in 1998. Her hands were able to create life-like images from simple mounds of clay. As a result of her work, Tina was interviewed as a featured artist on the “Best of CBS Sunday Morning.”

Ms. Allen was a child prodigy in sculpture and at age 11 was taken under the wing of internationally renowned abstract sculptor, William Zorach. After earning her BFA from the University of South Alabama in Mobile, she continued her studies in New York and also in Italy.

To her family and friends, I extend my sincerest condolences on their loss. Her sculptures will live on as a testament and inspiration to others. She will be sorely missed, but forever remembered.

And Mr. Speaker, I would like to yield the remaining part of my time to the distinguished Congresswoman from California, MAXINE WATERS.

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank Congresswoman WATSON for taking time out this evening to honor and recognize Tina Allen. Tina Allen was a friend. As a matter of fact, she was a friend to so many of us women in the greater Los Angeles area. We held her in such high esteem. She was such a talented artist who is famous for the many works that were just identified by Congresswoman WATSON. I have one of her sculptures in my home. And as I took another look at it, this weekend thinking about Tina, it's hard for me to reconcile that she has passed.

She was a very vibrant woman who was just full of life. She was so involved in the community. And she had been commissioned to do a bust of a community activist in my district, Ms. Lillian Mobley. And we were so looking forward to that. And so I joined with Congresswoman WATSON and others in basically saying farewell to Tina and extending my sympathy to her children and to her family. She was a great artist who will be missed by us all.

I yield back and thank you for yielding time to me, Congresswoman WATSON.

Ms. WATSON. Thank you, Ms. WATERS.

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

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

NATIONAL SECURITY INTERAGENCY REFORM

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

Mr. DAVIS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share my perspective

on an essential reform to ensure the security of our Nation. We must reform our national security system to ensure effective interagency operations. As a member of the House Armed Services Committee and co-chair of the House National Security Interagency Reform Working Group, implementing reform of the national security system is one of my highest priorities. Our current interagency process is broken. There are regulatory, legislative, budgetary, resource and culture impediments to effective interagency operations. These problems are independent of personalities, policies and particular presidential administrations. In order to protect the United States interests and its citizens, it is critical that reform to executive and legislative processes be allowed to better the integration among currently stove-piped departments.

A successfully integrated interagency process will empower the United States to more effectively employ our nonmilitary instruments of power abroad. This ability will allow us to more effectively fulfill our interest while reserving the use of lethal force as a last resort. In fact leaders and policy makers need two things; first, an overarching national strategy that frames the intent of all policy on national security; second, a toolbox of resources that can be configured, hopefully in a preventive way, to fulfill our strategic objectives.

The current interagency system was devised over 60 years ago for a different era and is based on a very specific national security strategy when security was primarily a function of military capabilities wielded by one department in overseas missions. At the time, major combat operations and nuclear deterrence were the principal focus of U.S. national security strategy. This strategy required limited coordination of activities between vertically structured military and civilian departments and agencies.

Today, national security involves a much wider array of issues that can be addressed only with a broader set of capabilities that are highly synchronized and carefully calibrated.

Many agencies are not conscious of or prepared to act in their national security roles. Many civilian departments and agencies do not believe they have a role in the national security system, and the cultures of these organizations produce few, if any, incentives for staff to participate in national security missions. These agencies often lack "expeditionary" capabilities. Even if they have the desire to help, they may be prevented from doing so by a combination of factors including personnel shortages, lack of resources, lack of statutory authorizations and regulatory constraints.

Additionally, interagency operations are not governed by standard concepts and procedures. Without common processes, interagency operations tend to be very ad hoc. For example, Paul

Bremer, head of the Coalition For Provisional Authority in postwar Iraq believed that he reported to the President through the Secretary of Defense and did not want to be bogged down by "the interagency process." National Security Adviser Rice's senior deputies, simply to get information, were relegated to checking the CPA website every day to see what new orders Bremer had issued. Such arrangements are enormously inefficient and liable to produce erratic outcomes.

We must ensure that civilian agencies have the resources required for effective integration with the Department of Defense. Think what could have been done to deter the growth of criminal militias in Iraq if the Department of Treasury had been able to assist in the rapid implementation of simple electronic banking systems to get money and payroll to the people of Iraq during the post conflict stabilization period.

A new National Security Act is needed to update the organization and procedures created by the National Security Act of 1947. We need to codify an adaptive approach that flattens, simplifies and integrates the agencies of the executive branch and the committees of Congress. We must ensure all departments and agencies that have national security roles have specific objectives, responsibilities and operational planning capabilities so they can protect America's interests.

Second, we should require that personnel who are selected for the Senior Executive Service in departments and agencies with national security roles have professional development via institutional training and operational assignments in agencies other than their own to better understand the national security interagency system. Third, we should strive to build regional expertise across the departments and agencies to ensure a bench of personnel with the knowledge and skills required to accomplish departmental and agency missions in all regions of the world. For example, we should consider better regional alignment between DOD and the State Department.

As my colleagues and I undertake the challenge of crafting reform legislation, I welcome the opportunity to work with all agencies to gain their insights on the way ahead for reform.

THE ADMINISTRATION HAS LEFT THE HOMELAND VULNERABLE TO ATTACK

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

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, for a long time now, we've been waiting for the administration to make an announcement about troop withdrawals from Iraq. Well the big day came last week, and it went over like a lead balloon. The President said that he is going to leave troop levels basically steady.

Mr. Speaker, the administration's decision to "stay the course" in Iraq is absolutely unacceptable. The American people know that invading Iraq was a mistake in the first place. And they want to bring all of our troops out, not just token forces.

The President said that he can withdraw a handful of troops without the surge because the surge has been a success. But when he leaves office, troop levels will actually be higher than it was before the surge. That leads me to ask a simple question. If the surge has been so successful, why do we need more troops after the surge than before it?

The President also said that normal life is returning to Iraq. Try telling that to the 4 million Iraqis who are still refugees and not able to return. Half of them are children.

The President also told us that civilian deaths are down. Try telling that to the relatives of the 1,200 civilians who were killed in Iraq this summer.

And what is an acceptable number of civilian deaths? This summer, an average of 13 Iraqi civilians were killed every day. If that happens in any State or any city in America, we would call it a crime wave. But if it happens in Iraq, the administration seems to think it's something to celebrate.

The administration has also been telling us for a long time that the occupation of Iraq is making America safer. But that claim doesn't hold up, either. The independent and bipartisan Partnership For a Secure America issued a report last week which says that America is still "dangerously vulnerable to chemical, biological and nuclear attacks." It also said that "the threat of a new, major terrorist attack on the United States is still very real."

And a joint report issued last week by the House Foreign Affairs Committee and the House Committee on Homeland Security found that the administration has not delivered on a myriad of critical homeland and national security mandates. It is clear, Mr. Speaker, that the administration's single-minded obsession with the occupation of Iraq has left our homeland open to another attack, an attack that could be much worse than 9/11.

Today we commemorate the terrible anniversary of that terrible day—not today, last week we did. It is outrageous that after 7 years we can't say that our citizens are safer than they were that day. And the administration's decision to stay the course in Iraq will only continue to make things worse.

The only solution is to set a firm timetable for the safe redeployment of our troops out of Iraq. Giving the Iraqi people back their sovereignty will allow us to work with the international community to rebuild that shattered country. Iraq needs electricity, schools, roads, hospitals and water. And America needs to invest in