

the President has indicated he may ignore—ignore—this provision. Every time senior administration officials are asked about permanent military bases in Iraq, they contend it is not their intention to construct such facilities. Yet this signing statement issued by the President yesterday is the clearest signal yet that the administration wants to hold this option in reserve. This is exactly the wrong signal to send both to the Iraqi Government and its neighbors in the region and to others as well.

Permanent U.S. military bases gives a blank check to an Iraqi government that has shown no evidence that it is ready to step up and take full responsibility for what happens in Iraq. Permanent U.S. military bases feeds the propaganda of our enemies, who argue that the U.S. invasion in 2003 was carried out to secure access to Iraq's oil and establish a strategic beachhead for the U.S. military in the region. Permanent U.S. military bases means U.S. troops will be in Iraq for years to come, ensuring that the great strain on the American military will continue indefinitely.

Finally, and I will conclude with this, we have a lot on our plate this year to deal with. We have the economy to deal with and so many other difficult issues, but the war in Iraq continues to be a central foreign policy challenge faced by the President, by the Congress, and by the Nation. When this President departs office after 8 years, he should not—should not—commit our soldiers and our Nation to 10 more years—10 more years—if not longer, and hundreds of billions of dollars, if not more, spent on the war in Iraq.

Mr. President, I yield the floor, and 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. INHOFE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, it is my understanding, under a previous unanimous consent request, that I would be recognized for up to 35 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. That is correct.

### THE THIRD REASON

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I don't very often do this, but I am going to make a presentation today, and I would like to give it a title, and the title is "The Third Reason." The subtitle very likely could be "The third reason we are winning in Iraq, and we should be in Iraq."

I have to say that I have had occasion to be there many times, and there is no doubt in my mind and, I don't doubt, in many people's minds that we are actually winning in Iraq. But be-

fore I address this, I would like to point out something very few people are aware of; that is, the mess that was inherited by George W. Bush right after 9/11.

First of all, if we look back during the 1990s, there was this euphoric attitude that the Cold War was over and we no longer needed a national defense system. So during the 1990s, during the Clinton administration, we started decimating the system. And I have the documentation here because a lot of people don't understand this.

If you would take what happened in the first year, or the last year of the previous administration over the first year the Clintons had control of the budget, and if we had taken a flat amount to determine how much we were going to be spending on defending America, then draw a straight line and only add into that the inflation—in other words, that is what it would be if we didn't do anything else—well, the budget that came from the White House is this red line down here. If you take the difference between the red line and what would have been a flat budget, it is \$412 billion. In other words, \$412 billion came out of our defense system. However, the good news was that Congress looked at that and said that is too big of a cut, so they intervened and raised President Clinton's budget up to this brown line in the middle. So what was inherited by this President was an amount \$313 billion less than it would have been if it had just been a static amount.

Now, that would have been bad enough—and I have always contended we have to make that the No. 1 priority in America: to defend America—but to make it worse, on 9/11 we went to war, and then we were pushed into a situation of going into and liberating Iraq, and all of a sudden, people started standing on the floor of the Senate and saying things like: Well, how in the world could this President be getting into deficits, how could he be spending so much, and all of this. This is the reason: because we started off \$313 billion less than during the time period of the previous administration. That is the seriousness of it.

Now, I say that just because I recall so well the confirmation hearings for the Secretary of Defense, Secretary Rumsfeld. During his confirmation hearings, they were making statements at that time about what were they going to do with the problems that were there and that we are underfunded in the military, that our modernization program has gone sideways, our force strength is not what it should be, and what should we do about that. This was all live on TV.

During the confirmation hearing—and I was on the Senate Armed Services Committee—I said: Mr. Rumsfeld, we have a problem I see as very serious, and that is you are going to get all of your generals around you, we are going to get all these smart people, and they are going to be asked what are we

going to be confronted with 10 years from today, and the generals, as smart as they are, are going to be wrong.

I can remember what I said at that meeting 7 years ago. I said: The last year I was in the House of Representatives, I was attending a House Armed Services Committee hearing, and in that committee hearing an expert witness said: Ten years from now, we will no longer need ground troops in America.

Of course, we saw what happened in Kosovo and Bosnia, and we knew that was wrong. So I said: Since we can't tell where we are going to be 10 years from now, and there is a lead time in preparing for war or a contingency, what is the answer to this thing? We don't know if we are going to have the best strike vehicles or lift vehicles or the best artillery pieces.

He said: I have made a study of that, and you are asking the right person, because in the average year, for the 100 years of the 20th century, we spent 5.7 percent of our GDP on defense. At the end of the 1990s, it went down to 2.7 percent.

I said: Down to 2.7 percent. Where should it be?

He said: We don't know for sure but somewhere in excess of 4 percent, probably 4½ percent, which is still less than it was for the previous several hundred years.

That was kind of interesting to me because when you look right now, how many people in America realize there are some things we have that are not as good as some of our potential adversaries?

I would say that one of my heroes prior to the time he was Chief of the Air Force was GEN John Jumper. General Jumper stood up and said publicly—in 1998, I believe it was—he said: Now the Russians are making a strike vehicle that is better than our best, and he talked about the SU-27s and the SU-30s. Our best were the F-15s and the F-16s. That was a shocking statement. So we started working on the F-22 and the F-35, the Joint Strike Fighter.

Right now, the best piece of artillery we have in our arsenal is World War II technology. It is a Paladin. It is something where you have to get out after every shot and swab the breech the way you did back in World War II. So now we are stepping ahead. But this has all happened during this administration, where we now have the new FCS—Future Combat System—that is going to revolutionize, for the first time in probably 40 years, how we fight battles.

I only say that because this is something we are going to have to contend with in the future, and it also paints a pretty good picture as to where we were when this thing happened on 9/11.

I would like to suggest there are three reasons we went into Iraq. The liberation of Iraq is the first one, and that is called to my mind now because I had an experience—you will enjoy this, I say to my good friend from Arkansas, who is occupying the chair—

two weekends ago when I happened to be in a place referred to now as JFK's winter White House. It was the Kennedy compound in West Palm Beach, FL. Ironically, it was sold to a very strong, wealthy, partisan Republican, and we were having an event down there. I looked out to the audience when giving a talk, and there were a lot of my heroes, among them Alexander Haig, who was previously Secretary of State under Ronald Reagan. He told the story of Saddam Hussein, that in 1991—and this is right after the first Persian Gulf war—we had what we called the first freedom flight into Kuwait. Now, it was so early in the end of the war that the Iraqis did not know the war was over, and they were still burning the fields down there, the oil-fields, and all of a sudden, day would turn into night as the wind shifted and smoke went back and forth.

It wasn't all Republicans, I might add. Tony Cuello, who at that time was the majority whip in the House of Representatives, was there also.

Anyway, we had an occasion to go to Kuwait, and one of the persons on that trip was then the Ambassador from Kuwait to the United States, a man of nobility, and he had his daughter, who was around 8 years old, with him. They wanted to go see what their home looked like in the Persian Gulf. So we went there, only to find out that Saddam Hussein had been using that home as a headquarters. We went up to, I think it was the little girl's bedroom, or one of the bedrooms, and found that it had been used as a torture chamber. There were body parts strewn around the room, stuffed into walls, and horrible things had been going on. A little boy had his ear cut off because he was caught with a little tiny American flag within sight.

We talked about the horrible atrocities going on and personally witnessed some stories of individuals, people who were sentenced to a torturous death by Saddam Hussein. Many of them would beg that their body be eased into a vat of acid head first so that they would be able to die quicker than feet first.

We saw the fact that the weddings, any weddings that were taking place out in the streets at the time of Saddam Hussein, they would raid the weddings, they would kill the people, rape the girls, and bury them alive. We saw mass graves, hundreds of people had been buried alive or tortured to death.

I guess what I would say is, the first reason we went to Iraq, as I think we would go anywhere, our country would go anywhere, is to aid a country that had this type of Holocaust-type of atrocities taking place. So that was the first reason was to end Saddam Hussein's regime of torture. It was successful. We did it.

The second reason was because Iraq was a major terrorist-training area. There are four areas where they trained. You know about Samara and Ramadi because people now realize—they are pretty familiar with that. But

you may have forgotten or may never even have known about some of the other areas. Sargat, for example, was an international terrorist training camp in northeastern Iraq near the Iranian border. It was run by Ansar al-Islam, a known terrorist organization. Based on information from the U.S. Army Special Forces, operators who led the attack said: It is indeed more than plausible that al-Qaida members trained in that particular training camp.

That is in Sargat. The Green Berets discovered, among the dead in Sargat, foreign ID cards, airline ticket receipts, visas, passports from Yemen, Sudan, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Oman, Tunisia, Morocco, Iran, and many other places.

At Salman Pak, it was a facility south of Baghdad, and we have a number of videos and computer disks, documents, and other materials, including explicit jihadist propaganda, which revealed terrorist training footage, and the targets were clearly Americans. The foreign Arabs were being trained as hijackers of airplanes. That is interesting. They had a fuselage of an old Boeing 707 on the ground in Salman Pak, where they were training terrorists to hijack airplanes.

Now, we have no way of knowing whether those were the perpetrators of the crime that took place on 9/11, but very likely that could have been the case. Now, the bottom line, though, is the second reason for the liberation of Iraq was to do away with all of the training camps, the four specific training camps that I am talking about, and we did that.

So I would like, before getting into reason No. 3, to kind of compare what is going on from a perspective that most of you guys probably have not heard; that is, I have had occasion to be in what we call CENTCOM and Africa—that is where the major problems are—some 19 times. And let's go back and kind of compare the last three visits there—not the last three but three of the last visits.

One was before the surge. It was June of 2006. And that was in the wake of Zarqawi's death. We remember that so well. The Iraqis were operating under a 6-month-old parliament. Al-Qaida continued to challenge coalition forces throughout Iraq. Things were not going all that well, but the coalition forces did launch 200 raids against al-Qaida and cleared out some of the strongholds.

But I had occasion to talk to Defense Minister Jasim. And in visiting with him, we talked about the current situation in Iraq. And he felt it could be done. It could be done—our people would be able to be trained over a period of time with proper training to take care of this. And we talked about some of these things that our press talked about back in the United States.

He said the big conflict between Sunnis and the Shias was mostly a

Western concept, and he used as evidence of that individuals in his own family. He happened to be married—I could get this backwards—either he was a Sunni married to a Shia or vice-versa.

We had a good discussion. But we could see very clearly that we believed things might be getting a little better, but they were not as better as we hoped. Let's fast-forward to May of 2007.

I returned to Iraq and visited Ramadi, Fallujah, Baghdad, and some of the other areas. And this is after the surge. The surge took place in January. So this was in May; this was 3 months later. So Ramadi went from being controlled by al-Qaida and hailed as their capital. We might remember this. About 15 months ago they had a news conference over there where they said that Ramadi was going to become the capital of terrorism in the world, the world capital.

Well, by May of 2007 it was under total control, totally secure not by U.S. troops but by the Iraqi security forces. The neighborhood security watch programs were working. It was kind of like the programs we have in this country. We have a neighborhood watch program, and they go out and they look and see what they can do to make things more peaceful.

And you have heard the stories of how they would go out and they would take an orange spray can, and they would draw circles around the undetonated IEDs. This was going on, and it seemed to be going very well. That is the first time that I realized—I am kind of a slow learner—I realized that the leaders in Iraq were not the political leaders but the religious leaders, the clerics and the Imams.

Prior to the surge, the average—we had intelligence people there—the average of the messages that were in the mosques on a weekly basis were 80 to 85 percent anti-American. Since April there had not been any anti-American messages.

The joint security stations seemed to be going very well there. That was where, instead of going back, our troops going back into the Green Zone in Baghdad after they were out on a raid or doing their work on a mission, they would instead go to some of the homes of the Iraqi security forces and actually bed down with them, they developed personal, intimate relationships with them.

The burden sharing was increasing. Fallujah came under the control of the Iraqi brigade. And that was an area that we might recall where our Marines went World-War-II style door to door.

In Anbar, it changed from the center of violence to a success story. In Baghdad, the sectarian murders decreased by 30 percent, and joint security stations stood up forming deep relationships between the coalition forces and the Iraqis. It was referred to by General Petraeus as "brotherhood of the close fight."

And there is some other good news, too. The media became about halfway honest. This was kind of interesting because I can remember on earlier trips, the first thing the troops would ask me when I would go in is, they would say: Why is it the American people do not understand what we are doing? Why do they not like us? Why is it the media do not like us?

I can remember LTC Tim Ryan. He said, as I have here:

The inaccurate picture they paint has distorted the world view of the daily realities in Iraq. The result is a further erosion of international support for the United States' efforts there, and a strengthening of the insurgents' resolve and recruiting efforts while weakening our own. Through their incomplete, uninformed and unbalanced reporting, many members of the media covering the war in Iraq are aiding and abetting the enemy.

Well, that is what I heard from many of them, but this is one that we can actually quote.

Well, that is something that is changing. I think we saw a few months after I returned from that trip, two of the journalists—one was Michael O'Hanlon, the other Kenneth Pollack—wrote an op-ed piece in the New York Times, and this was actually above the fold on the front page, to let you know. If you want to look it up on your Web site, it was July 30, 2007.

They said things such as: Troop morale is high, and they had confidence in General Petraeus and his strategy. Civilian fatality rates were down roughly a third since the surge began. Streets in Baghdad were slowly coming back to life with stores and shoppers and so forth. American troop levels in Mosul now numbered only in the hundreds from where they were before. More Iraqi units are well integrated in terms of ethnicity and religion. And, keep in mind, these were statements that were made and were in the New York Times, which has not really been a bastion of support for the President or the war.

But here is another one. I happened to see this one September 2, 2007. Bob Schieffer had an interview televised with Katie Couric. Katie Couric is another one who has never been a supporter of the President. And they said this. This is a quote now. She was responding to questions.

Well, I was surprised, you know, after I went to eastern Baghdad. I was taken to the Alawi market which is near Haifa street—

Which several of us have been to—which was the scene of a very bloody gun battle back in January, and, you know, the market seemed to be thriving, and there were a lot of people out and about, a lot of family-owned businesses and vegetable stalls, and so you do see signs of life that seem to be normal. . . . The situation is improving.

That was not me. That was not Senator JIM INHOFE who has always been supporting this effort. That was Katie Couric.

Before giving the press too much credit, though, let me suggest to you that if you look at this chart—this is

something I stumbled onto yesterday—and since the success has been there, you notice they are not saying it is not successful, but they are not covering it. This is the coverage in September of 2007. It dropped down by about half in October, then it dropped down again in November. So I guess what we are saying is, if they cannot print something bad because nothing bad is happening there, they do not print anything at all.

Well, I returned to Iraq on August 30, and the surge continued its success. I traveled to the Contingency Operating Base Speicher in Tikrit and to the Patrol Base Murray south of Baghdad and visited Ambassador Crocker and General Petraeus. And so, again, the same changes that took place 3 months later were taking place and were much better. Less than half of the al-Qaida leaders who were in Baghdad when the surge began were still there. There was a 75-percent reduction in religious and ethnic killings in the capital, double the seizure of insurgents' weapons, and a rise in the number of al-Qaida killed and captured.

So, you know, the surge knocked out some six media cells which make it harder for al-Qaida to spread their propaganda. Anbar's incidents and attacks were down from 40 a day to less than 10 a day. Economic growth, you heard what Katie Couric said about the markets. I was in the same crowded markets. They were selling fresh food like normal times.

The large hospital project in the Sunni Triangle is back on track. The Iraqi Army is performing very well. The Iraqi citizens formed a grassroots movement called the Concerned Citizens League.

Baghdad returned to normalcy. Little kiddie pools, the lawns that were cared for, amusement parks and markets, and the surge provided security. Security allowed the local population and governments to stand up. Basic economics has taken root. Iraqis are spending money on Iraqi projects.

Now that is the good news. Here is the bad news. General Petraeus, after all of his success, the far left had crossed the line—I think we all remember this—when a full-page ad, paid for by moveon.org, besmirched the motives and the honor of our No. 1 commander on the ground in Iraq, General Petraeus.

Remember, they called him General "Betrayus." I supported Senator LIEBERMAN's condemnation of moveon.org's attempt at character assassination, as well as Senator CORNYN's resolution. Senator CORNYN's resolution stood behind General Petraeus. And there were 28 Senators in this Chamber who supported moveon.org, an act, I am sure, will be remembered.

While no American is above scrutiny, this was clearly a calculated move on the part of this organization to undermine the noble efforts of this patriot to execute the duties that we in the Con-

gress unanimously sent him to accomplish.

You simply have to wonder whose side some of these people were on. This goes to show how far some will go to root for American failure in Iraq. These organizations are clearly placing their political agenda ahead of the best interests of the United States and particularly the men and the women who are in uniform.

So let's just for a minute set Iraq aside and look at Iran. Beyond the obvious consequences that would befall an Iraq without U.S. support, lack of a secure and stable Iraq means instability in the Middle East; namely, an unimpeded rogue Iran. A crippled Iraq will create a power vacuum. Remember what Ahmadinejad said on August 28, 2007.

Soon, we will see a huge power vacuum in the region. Of course, we are prepared to fill the gap, with the help of neighbors and regional friends like Saudi Arabia, and with the help of the Iraqi nation.

Maybe it was good that was said because people know what kind of person he is, and they know he was prepared and wanting to fill the gap, a gap, a vacuum that is not there now.

Arab nations in the region have expressed their concern about Iran and are eager to contain the growing Iranian power. The world knows what Iran is capable of. The world has seen their aggression.

BG Jimmy Cash, U.S. Air Force retired, former command director inside the Cheyenne Mountain Complex, that was 1987 to 1989. He was the only person who could initiate a nuclear attack after advising the sitting President of a missile launch by our enemies and our need to respond.

No political or civilian had more knowledge about day-to-day military actions around the world. He said—and this is a quote. This is BG Jimmy Cash:

I watched Iran and Iraq shoot missiles at each other every day, and all day long, for months, they killed hundreds of thousands of their own people. . . . They were fighting for control of the Middle East.

Iran's nuclear work continues, including the enrichment of uranium, which could easily be used as part of a nuclear weapons program. I think we all understand that.

In the last 2 years, Iran has continued developing ballistic missile technology, launching missiles over 2,000 kilometers. Coalition forces have intercepted Iranian arms shipments in Iraq, including materials that are used to make explosively formed penetrators—that is EFPs—which are the most deadly of IEDs, which are being used against our American troops.

Coalition forces have also detained Iranian agents in Iraq. On January 7, Iranian gunboats—we remember that, how they were harassing some of our U.S. warships at the time.

Iran has now turned their attention to the only other threat to their dominance—freedom-loving nations throughout the globe. The world cannot afford to have Iran in control of the Middle East.

So Iraq remains as the critical link. Iraq is at a decisive turning point in their journey toward democracy. The surge has created opportunities that the Iraqi people have not taken for granted. The “awakening” is spreading from Al Anbar Province to Diyala Province. I saw it coming years ago. Years ago, I can remember going, as many of my colleagues had, from place to place in Iraq—long before the surge—seeing that our troops, when they would receive goods from home, such as cookies and candies, and they would take their packages and repack-age them in small packages and throw them out to these kids way out in the countryside, and the kids would wave American flags. That was out there. We knew that success was taking place.

The once turbulent and violent Al Anbar Province is returning to Iraqi control—Iraqi control, not our control. The Government of Iraq enacted The Justice and Accountability Act—that law—on January 12, showing real progress toward former baathist reconciliation.

Al-Qaida is a spent force in Iraq. It is retreating to the Horn of Africa.

Speaking of Africa, I have had occasion to be in Djibouti in the Horn of Africa. I have to say this with some degree of pride—this picture you are seeing in the Chamber now is of a little girl who was actually found as a little orphan girl who was 3 days old, south of Djibouti. My wife Kay and I are blessed with 20 kids and grandkids. Our daughter had nothing but boys, so she has now adopted this little girl, and that little girl is my granddaughter.

Some good things are happening over there. But I have to say that looking at the squeeze that is taking place in the Middle East, a lot of the terrorist activity is going down into the Horn of Africa. The occupier of the chair is fully aware that we—both sitting on the Senate Armed Services Committee, we are very proud of the fact that we are setting up and helping the Africans set up African brigades.

Syria has ceased supporting foreign fighters in Iraq. The Saudis are crack-ing down on supporters of Islamic ter-rorists in their own country. Iran is isolated. The world must remain focused and steady.

Iraq is an example to the world of how to reject terror and confront those who practice it. It is not going unnoticed. Political leaders see this. The world sees now that little kids are not being tortured to death in Iraq. Girls are now going to school instead of being raped and murdered. No more mass graves, no more vats of acid. And the butcher, Saddam Hussein, is dead.

Yes, we are doing a difficult thing, but we are doing the right thing. Just as Americans always try to do the right thing, we are doing the right thing there. But think of it for a minute. Isn’t Iraq trying to do what we were trying to do 230 years ago? We were seeking a parliament at that time 230 years ago, and that is what Iraq is

doing today. We were seeking a con-stitution. That is what Iraq is trying to do. We were seeking democracy. We were seeking freedom. Iraq is seeking the same things we were seeking some 230 years ago.

The Iraqis are watching us. They are risking their lives, the same as we were risking our lives some 230 years ago. I think of that first election that took place up in Fallujah, when the Iraqi security forces were going—knowing they were going to be shot at, but they were willing to do that—to go vote. Re-member the purple fingers. That is what was taking place.

I would have to say this: We went through the same thing in this coun-try. I have always said one of the best speeches made was Ronald Reagan’s “Rendezvous With Destiny,” when he talked about the Cuban who trying to escape Castro’s Cuba. As his ship washed up on the shore of Florida, a lady was there and said—and he was talking about the atrocities of Castro’s Cuba—and she said: I guess we in this country don’t know how lucky we are. He said: How lucky you are? We are the ones who are lucky because we had a place to escape to.

I would have to say that the first rea-son was to end the murderous regime of Saddam Hussein. The second reason was to shut down the terrorist training camps. The third is they are doing ex-actly what we did 230 years ago.

When you stop and think about the message and the inspiration we had from our forefathers, and when you stop and think about the message that was given when a tall redhead stood be-fore the House of Burgesses and made a speech for them at that time—and it is certainly for us today, and certainly for Iraq today—he said:

They tell us, sir, that we are weak—

This is exactly what they have been saying to the Iraqis.

They tell us, sir, that we are weak—unable to cope with so formidable an adversary. But when shall we be stronger? Will it be the next week or the next year? Will it be when we are totally disarmed . . . ? Shall we gather strength by irresolution and inaction? Shall we acquire the means of effectual re-sistance by lying supinely on our backs, and hugging the delusive phantom of hope . . . ? [W]e are not weak, if we make a proper use of those means which the God of nature has placed in our power. . . . armed in the holy cause of liberty, and in such a country as that which we possess, are invincible by any force which our enemy can send against us. Besides, sir, we shall not fight our battles alone.

This is important.

. . . we shall not fight our battles alone. There is a just God who presides over the destinies of nations; and who will raise up friends to fight our battles for us. The battle, sir, is not to the strong alone; it is to the vigilant, the active, the brave. Besides. . . .if we were base enough to desire it, it is now too late to retire from the contest. There is no retreat but in submission and slavery! Our chains are forged.

Some would say that we should re-treat, we should leave. But that man stood before the House of Burgesses and said:

Why stand we here idle? What is it that gentlemen wish? What would they have? Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be pur-chased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God!—I know not what course others may take; but as for me—

Said Patrick Henry—  
give me liberty or give me death!

I guess what I am saying is, the Iraqi freedom fighters are not unlike what we were some 200 years ago. Wouldn’t it be great if we were to provide the in-spiration for them that our forefathers provided for us?

That is what is happening right now. We are winning. We are doing the right thing.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

#### GI BILL

Mr. WEBB. Mr. President, I wish to raise two issues briefly to the Members of our body today.

The first is, if we look back at the State of the Union speech last night, the President, toward the end of his speech, talked about those who have been serving since 9/11—the same indi-viduals my colleague from Oklahoma has been talking about for the last 35 minutes. The President said, at one point:

We must keep faith with all who have risked life and limb so that we might live in freedom and peace. Over the past 7 years, we have increased funding for veterans by more than 95 percent. As we increase funding, we must also reform our veterans system to meet the needs of a new war and a new generation.

Unfortunately, what the President did not speak about in his remarks last night was probably the most important benefit we can be offering to people who have served our country since 9/11; and that is, a GI bill that would give them the same sort of educational ben-efits as those who served during World War II.

We have heard so many people on this floor and in the administration, in their speeches, talk about how this is the next greatest generation. We hear people lionizing the service they have given since 9/11, and I am one of those who is a great admirer of those young men and women who have stepped for-ward and served since then. But when they leave the military, they have an educational package that was designed in peacetime as a recruitment incen-tive in the 1980s and does not allow them to move forward toward truly a first-class future.

Here are a couple of examples for you:

When people came back from World War II—those veterans—8 million of them were able to take advantage of a GI bill that paid all their tuition, bought their books, and gave them a monthly stipend to the school of their choice.

For instance, Senator LAUTENBERG, who is a cosponsor of my GI bill legis-la-tion, S. 22, was able to go to Colum-bia on a full boat. Today, that would