

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado is recognized.

Mr. ALLARD. Madam President, I wish to thank the Senator from Oklahoma on this particular issue. I also wish to thank the last speaker, TED STEVENS of Alaska, for his leadership in making sure we have adequate energy for the American people. Right now, we are falling short. The reason for that is this Congress. It is not business where we should assert blame; it is not the stock markets we have heard blamed on this floor, or the futures market. It is simply because Congress has been tying up these reserves and not providing the incentives we need to move ahead with oil refineries and to make supplies available on the market.

This is a supply-and-demand issue. The demand in this country is exceeding the supply. If we want to become less dependent on foreign oil, we need to do more than what we have done historically.

(The remarks of Mr. ALLARD pertaining to the introduction of S. 3062 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. ALLARD. Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma is recognized.

Mr. INHOFE. Madam President, first of all, I agree wholeheartedly with the comments and the legislative ideas my friend from Colorado has. Again, it is a great frustration that we have tried so hard for so many years to expand our supply here in this country. Hopefully, now, one of the benefits we will get from the high price of fuel is the recognition that we have to start producing our own energy in this country. That is what we should be doing.

Hopefully, after this holiday, when we get back, enough people will have spent enough money driving around and there will be enough political pressure that we can get people to agree to start drilling in ANWR, drilling offshore, drilling in the shale area, and experimenting in some of these areas where we could become totally self-sufficient in America.

IRAQ WAR

Mr. INHOFE. Madam President, I wish to address a little-known secret, a secret to the media and therefore a secret to the American people; that is, we are winning the war in Iraq.

Yesterday, I read an article—I think it was maybe the day before yesterday—in the New York Post by Ralph Peters. It was called "Success in Iraq: A Media Blackout." In it, he writes:

As Iraqi and coalition forces pile up one success after another, Iraq has magically vanished from the headlines. Want a real "inconvenient truth"? Progress in Iraq is powerful and accelerating.

I think he hit the nail on the head. When this war got tough, the cut-and-run defeatist provisions started mak-

ing their way into bills and amendments. Those provisions send a powerful message to our troops and to our enemies: America is not committed to this fight.

But America has remained committed, and through that commitment we continue to attain success. I have been to Iraq, and I have watched the tide turn. I believe I have been there many more times than any other Member. I am on the Senate Armed Services Committee, and I spend time there. I see, month after month, the changes in what has happened since the acceleration.

My visit in June 2006 was in the wake of Zarqawi's death. Iraqis were operating under a 6-month-old parliament. Al-Qaida continued to challenge coalition forces throughout Iraq. In response, coalition forces launched 200 raids against al-Qaida, clearing out the strongholds. The newly appointed Defense Minister and I discussed the current situation in Iraq, the violence brought to that country by al-Qaida, and the transformation beginning in Iraq. I saw the emergence of a sense of what Iraq could be.

Fast forward to May 2007. I returned to Iraq and visited Ramadi, Fallujah, Baghdad, and several other areas. Ramadi went from being controlled by al-Qaida and hailed as a capital under control of the Iraqi troops—by the way, this was at a time when Ramadi was being declared as the potential terrorist capital of the world. We saw neighborhood security watch groups identifying the IEDs with orange spray paint. We saw joint security stations. Things started accelerating and improving over there. Increased burden-sharing was taken on by the Iraqis. Fallujah came under the control of the Iraqi brigade. We had our marines there going door to door World War II style. At that time, I observed—in May 2007—that all of the sudden it was under their own security. Al Anbar changed from a center of violence to a success story. In Baghdad, sectarian murders decreased 30 percent, and joint security stations stood up, forming deep relationships between coalition and Iraqi forces and civilians—"brotherhood of the close fight," as General Petraeus put it. You have to be there to see it and witness personally the excitement that is demonstrated by the Iraqis and the pride they have that they are now in a position to do things for themselves that they were depending on us for before.

On July 30, 2007, 2 months after I returned from Iraq, Michael O'Hanlon and Kenneth Pollack wrote an op-ed piece in the New York Times. It was interesting because we had never seen anything positive about our troops or about the war effort in the New York Times. This one talked about troop morale, that it was high, with confidence in General Petraeus's strategy; civilian fatality rates were down roughly a third since the surge began; the streets in Baghdad were coming

back to life with stores and shoppers. I can remember that. When I am over there, I will go into a shopping area and go up to someone carrying a baby and talk to them through an interpreter. That is where you get to people who are excited because there could be a new life in the young person. They noted that American troop levels in Tal Afar and Mosul numbered only in the hundreds because the Iraqis stepped up to the plate. More Iraqi units were well integrated in terms of ethnicity and religion. Local Iraqi leaders and businessmen were cooperating with embedded provincial reconstruction teams to revive the local economy and build new political structures.

I returned to Iraq on August 30, and the surge continued its success. I traveled to the contingency operating base in Tikrit, Patrol Base Murray, south of Baghdad, and visited with Ambassador Crocker and General Petraeus, who gave his wonderful testimony this morning to the Senate Armed Services Committee.

I saw again on July 30 a significantly changed Iraq. Less than half of the al-Qaida leaders who were in Baghdad when the surge began were still in the city. They either fled, have been killed, or have been captured. The U.S. troop surge in Iraq threw al-Qaida off balance and produced dramatic results. There was a 75-percent reduction in religious/ethnic killings in the capital. They doubled the seizures of insurgents' weapons caches. There was a rise in the number of al-Qaida kills and captures. There was the destruction of six media cells—degrading al-Qaida's ability to spread propaganda. Anbar incidents and attacks dropped from 40 per day to less than 10 a day. This is between the two times I had been there. The economy grew and markets were open, crowded, stocked, selling fresh fruit, and running as you would expect them to. A large hospital project in the Sunni Triangle was back on track. The Iraqi Army performance was significantly improving. Iraqi citizens formed a grassroots movement called Concerned Citizens League. Most of the cities in America, including my cities in Oklahoma, have neighborhood watch programs, where the neighborhoods and people who live there are watching to prevent crimes. That is what is happening in Baghdad and throughout Iraq.

You now see Baghdad returning to normalcy. You see kiddie pools, lawns cared for, amusement parks, and markets. The surge provided security, and security allowed local populations and governments to stand up. Basic economics took root, and Iraqis began spending money on Iraqi projects.

In September, a month later, Katie Couric was there. If there is one who has been a critic of anything in this administration, our troops, or anything happening in Iraq, it is Katie Couric. She said:

Well, I was surprised, you know, after I went to eastern Baghdad. I was taken to the

Allawi market, which is near Haifa Street, which was the scene of that very bloody gun battle back in January, and, you know, this 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.

Madam President, that is not Senator INHOFE talking, it is Katie Couric, who has been probably the worst critic of things over there. So people are realizing that good things are happening.

Despite these successes, the truth about what our troops and the coalition have accomplished in Iraq, it is hidden by the mainstream media. In a recent report of the Media Research Center, it shows that as the improvements took place—this is the timeframe I was talking about, in late 2007. There were this many stories in 2007, and as things improved, it went from 178 in the month of September, down to 108 in October, down to 68 in November, and it shows the media bias that is out there.

As Ralph Peters put it in the article I quoted a minute ago:

The basic mission of the American media between now and November is to convince you, the voter, that Iraq's still a hopeless mess.

I returned to Iraq on March 30 of this year, just about the same time Prime Minister Maliki kicked off his Basra campaign. I was at Camp Bucca, right next to Basra, when they took the initiative. I was there working with Major General Stone and saw what his task force is doing now for detainees.

Before I talk about detainees, let me say how proud their troops were that, for the first time in a major surge, they came into Basra to take care of their own province. We were there.

I have been disturbed about the representation as to how our detainees have been treated. I stopped down at Camp Bucca, the largest detainee camp anywhere in all of Iraq. They separated the extremists and were arming the moderates with education and job skills. We found out that most of them—the vast majority of those who were detainees were actually working before they became detainees, and they were fighting because there is total unemployment there. The only place they could get a job was with the military.

What General Stone has done such a great job of is retraining these people—training them to be carpenters and masons. It is very successful, truly turning bombers and criminals into productive Iraqi citizens and sending them back into the population. Out of 6,000 released, only 13 were rearrested. That kind of tells us the success story. These people are integrating in and working on our side, working in neighborhood groups.

We are now seeing the lowest violence indicators since April 2004. The Iraqi people are turning away from violence. The Government of Iraq is asserting more control, searching out militia and insurgent strongholds.

Operations in Basra and, more recently, in Sadr City have shown the capabilities of the Iraqi security forces and the will of Iraqi leadership. I wish you could have been at the hearing this morning. You could have seen and listened to the progress being made in Sadr City. The Iraqi people are just taking back their streets.

As Ralph Peters said in his article, instead of the media even mentioning the positive role the Iraqis are taking in fighting this war, they focus on a small fraction of Iraqi soldiers choosing not to fight. Mr. Peters, I agree with you that “our troops deserve better, the Iraqis deserve better, and you, the American people, deserve better. The forces of freedom are winning.” That is what he said, and I agree.

Iraq is at a decisive turning point in its journey toward democracy. The surge created opportunities that the Iraqi people have not taken for granted. The “awakening” is spreading from Al Anbar to Diyala Province. “Concerned Citizens Leagues,” through coalition support, are now taking back Iraqi streets from the insurgents. The once turbulent and violent Al Anbar Province has returned to Iraqi control. They are actually doing these things themselves.

The surge enabled the Government of Iraq to meet 12 out of the original 18 benchmarks set for it, including 4 out of the 6 legislative benchmarks. That means their Government is starting to put it together.

Iraq has also conducted a surge, adding well over 100,000 additional soldiers—these are Iraqi security forces—and police to the ranks of its security forces in 2007 and is slowly increasing its capability to deploy and employ these forces.

It is anticipated that Iraq will spend over \$8 billion on security this year and \$11 billion next year. Iraq's 2008 budget has allocated \$13 billion for reconstruction, and a \$5 billion supplemental budget this summer will further invest export revenues in building the infrastructure.

What I am saying is that the reconstruction in that country is now being paid for by the Iraqis. One of the chief criticisms we have had by people whom I call the cut-and-run folks was that they are not paying their own part.

One of the best programs we have is the Commander Emergency Relief Program, which allows our commanders to make determinations as to what needs to be done immediately. It is spending a small amount of money and will go a long way by doing it. How many people know that the Iraqi Government recently allocated \$300 million for our forces to manage the Iraqi CERP? They are taking over their own responsibility.

The Iraqi Government has also committed \$163 million to gradually assume Sons of Iraq contracts, \$510 million for small business loans, and \$196 million for a joint training and reintegration program. Oil reserves are being shared with the provinces.

Al-Qaida is a spent force in Iraq. Syria has ceased supporting foreign fighters in Iraq. The Saudis are cracking down on supporters of Islamic terrorists in their own country. Iran is becoming isolated.

We have to remain focused and realize that these successes will not continue until we, the people, become so informed that we recognize the successes.

The first thing I hear from the Iraqi forces on the many trips I have made there is that: The people of America don't appreciate what we are doing. Now they know more than before how much we do appreciate it, how critical it is that we stay with it.

I think—and I will wind up with this—Ahmadinejad made a statement, and inadvertently he was a great help to us because when all the surrender resolutions were entered in this body, the President of Iran assumed one was going to pass and America was going to leave Iraq—he made the statement that when America leaves Iraq, it is going to create a vacuum, and we are going to fill that vacuum.

Anyone who knows history in the Middle East knows there are no two groups who dislike each other more than the Iranians and Iraqis. That got the attention of the Iraqis. That is one of the many reasons, with the supernatural powers in intelligence and war capabilities of General Petraeus and General Odierno and some of the rest who are involved, that caused this whole thing to turn around.

The success story is well told in the article to which I referred. I ask unanimous consent to have that article printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

SUCCESS IN IRAQ: A MEDIA BLACKOUT

(By Ralph Peters)

May 20, 2008.—DO we still have troops in Iraq? Is there still a conflict over there?

If you rely on the so-called mainstream media, you may have difficulty answering those questions these days. As Iraqi and Coalition forces pile up one success after another, Iraq has magically vanished from the headlines.

Want a real “inconvenient truth”? Progress in Iraq is powerful and accelerating.

But that fact isn't helpful to elite media commissars and cadres determined to decide the presidential race over our heads. How dare our troops win? Even worse, Iraqi troops are winning. Daily.

You won't see that above the fold in The New York Times. And forget the Obama-intoxicated news networks—they've adopted his story line that the clock stopped back in 2003.

To be fair to the quit-Iraq-and-save-the-terrorists media, they have covered a few recent stories from Iraq:

When a rogue U.S. soldier used a Koran for target practice, journalists pulled out all the stops to turn it into “Abu Ghraib, The Sequel.”

Unforgivably, the Army handled the situation well. The “atrocities” didn't get the traction the whorespondents hoped for.

When a battered, bleeding al Qaeda man-
aged to set off a few bombs targeting Sunni

Arabs who'd turned against terror, that, too, received delighted media play.

As long as Baghdad-based journalists could hope that the joint U.S.-Iraqi move into Sadr City would end disastrously, we were treated to a brief flurry of headlines.

A few weeks back, we heard about another Iraqi company—100 or so men—who declined to fight. The story was just delicious, as far as the media were concerned.

Then tragedy struck: As in Basra the month before, absent-without-leave (and hiding in Iran) Muqtada al Sadr quit under pressure from Iraqi and U.S. troops. The missile and mortar attacks on the Green Zone stopped. There's peace in the streets.

Today, Iraqi soldiers, not militia thugs, patrol the lanes of Sadr City, where waste has replaced roadside bombs as the greatest danger to careless footsteps. U.S. advisers and troops support the effort, but Iraq's government has taken another giant step forward in establishing law and order.

My fellow Americans, have you read or seen a single interview with any of the millions of Iraqis in Sadr City or Basra who are thrilled that the gangster militias are gone from their neighborhoods?

Didn't think so. The basic mission of the American media between now and November is to convince you, the voter, that Iraq's still a hopeless mess.

Meanwhile, they've performed yet another amazing magic trick—making Kurdistan disappear.

Remember the Kurds? Our allies in northern Iraq? When last sighted, they were living in peace and building a robust economy with regular elections, burgeoning universities and municipal services that worked.

After Israel, the most livable, decent place in the greater Middle East is Iraqi Kurdistan. Wouldn't want that news getting out.

If the Kurds would only start slaughtering their neighbors and bombing Coalition troops, they might get some attention. Unfortunately, there are no U.S. or allied combat units in Kurdistan for Kurds to bomb. They weren't needed. And (benighted people that they are) the Kurds are pro-American—despite the virulent anti-Kurdish prejudices prevalent in our Saudi-smooching State Department.

Developments just keep getting grimmer for the MoveOn.org fan base in the media. Iraq's Sunni Arabs, who had supported al Qaeda and homegrown insurgents, now support their government and welcome U.S. troops. And, in southern Iraq, the Iranians lost their bid for control to Iraq's government.

Bury those stories on Page 36.

Our troops deserve better. The Iraqis deserve better. You deserve better. The forces of freedom are winning.

Here in the Land of the Free, of course, freedom of the press means the freedom to boycott good news from Iraq. But the truth does have a way of coming out.

The surge worked. Incontestably. Iraqis grew disenchanted with extremism. Our military performed magnificently. More and more Iraqis have stepped up to fight for their own country. The Iraqi economy's taking off. And, for all its faults, the Iraqi legislature has accomplished far more than our own lobbyist-run Congress over the last 18 months.

When Iraq seemed destined to become a huge American embarrassment, our media couldn't get enough of it. Now that Iraq looks like a success in the making, there's a virtual news blackout.

Of course, the front pages need copy. So you can read all you want about the heroic efforts of the Chinese People's Army in the wake of the earthquake.

Tells you all you really need to know about our media: American soldiers bad, Red Chinese troops good.

Is Jane Fonda on her way to the earthquake zone yet?

Mr. INHOFE. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington is recognized.

ENERGY PRICES

Ms. CANTWELL. Madam President, I rise, similar to many of my colleagues this afternoon, to talk about the high price of gasoline and what we need to do as we are leaving Washington and going home for Memorial Day recess to hear, I am sure, from many constituents that they are very concerned about this crisis of paying an ever-increasing amount for gasoline.

Today, I am sure, the market is going to set another record for the number of days gas prices continue to go up, and our constituents want to see relief. I know many of my colleagues have come out here and talked about new supply. I certainly feel one of the biggest priorities the Senate has is to pass a tax credit bill for renewable energy so we can get predictability in the market and continue to get new energy incentives in place. That will take pressure off some of these other supply issues. But many of my colleagues keep talking about the United States looking for more oil or things the United States can do to get into the oil game in a more robust way.

This chart shows it pretty clearly. The United States has 2 percent of the world's oil reserves—2 percent. These are all the other countries with which my colleagues are familiar: Saudi Arabia at 20 percent of the world's oil reserves; Iraq and Iran, another 18 percent. These are the big players.

The point is, the United States is not going to dramatically impact the price of oil by what we do with only 2 percent of the world's oil reserve. So if we want a solution, we are not going to get a solution out of what the United States can do in continuing to be addicted to oil.

It is very important to also note that in the past, we have had many a conversation about this problem and what is the high price of gasoline. We had the same debate when it was the high price of electricity. No one wanted to hear about any other issue than the fact that it was just a supply-and-demand problem. In fact, the Vice President in 2001 said, when talking about the electricity crisis, when prices were going through the roof:

They have got a whole complex set of problems out there that are caused by relying only on conservation and not doing anything about the supply side of the equation.

We found out very shortly thereafter that, no, that was not right. It was not about conservation and supply side; it was about the manipulation of the electricity market. There were lots of people like that. The Cato Institute had a similar take on it. This was in 2002. In 2002, we had gone through much of the Enron debacle, and we had seen prices in the State of Washington for

electricity rise almost 3,000 times what they had been. Yet people were still saying:

Most of the price spike in 2000-2001 is explained by drought, increased natural gas prices, the escalating cost of nitrogen oxide emissions . . . and retail price controls.

We all know the history, now that we have had a few years to look back on it. It wasn't those supply and demand factors but the fact that we actually had unbelievable manipulation of the electricity market.

The reason why I am bringing that up is because I wish to make sure we are policing the oil markets. I wish to make sure we in the United States are doing everything we can to burst this oil price bubble we are seeing. We want to pop this price bubble and give consumers a more reliable number about supply and demand that even the oil company executives are saying. They have testified before Senate committees saying oil should be anywhere from \$50 to \$60 a barrel; that what we are seeing in the marketplace is not about the normal supply-and-demand features, but it is actually about the fact that something else is going on in the marketplace. This is one CEO from ExxonMobil, recently in early April, who testified:

The price of oil should be about \$50-\$55 per barrel.

I am not against discussions about future oil exploration. That is not the point. The point is, what are we going to do to solve this problem and burst this price bubble that while we are going out for the Memorial Day recess is going to continue to plague the economy, continue to plague our consumers, and continue to cause major havoc to our economy.

I think one of the solutions is to ensure effective oversight in the oil market as it relates to oil futures. I know people say they might not wish to talk about oil futures, but I am going to talk about oil futures because of the effect of substantial deregulation has had on these markets. On December 15 of 2000, at 7 p.m. on a Friday night as Congress was adjourning a lame-duck session, the last day of the 106th Congress, on an 11,000-page appropriations bill came to the floor of the Senate, we added a 262 page amendment—the Commodities Futures Modernization Act—that basically deregulated the energy futures market and said it didn't have to have the oversight of other products.

While the Commodities Exchange Act Reauthorization that recently passed as part of the Farm bill gives the CFTC more teeth to police these U.S. futures markets, under an administrative loophole speculators are still free to trade U.S. based energy commodities on U.S. trading engines free from full U.S. oversight meant to prevent fraud, manipulation, and excessive speculation. This is done under and informal CFTC staff "no-action" letter, which essentially means that the CFTC will not take action against