

released a report this week showing that Iraq has failed 11 out of 18 benchmarks. And those seven that did not fail were barely, barely worked upon at all. In response, the administration now claims that these benchmarks should no longer be used to measure progress. It is clear that the administration will never accept the reality about Iraq. The only way to end the violence is to fully fund a safe and orderly redeployment from Iraq.

The shallow fortune-telling of the Bush administration cannot replace what every American knows: The only right course in Iraq is to bring our troops home by fully funding a safe redeployment of our troops and military contractors. The American people want bold leadership, and they have called on the Congress to take action, action now. The occupation has been a total failure and the American people will not accept taking a wait-and-see attitude. They know that the only sensible moral and responsible course is to fully fund the redeployment of our American troops and military contractors. And they want us to get started on it now.

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

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

PLANNED DEFEAT BY WITHDRAWAL?

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

Mr. POE. "Never, never believe any war will be smooth and easy, or that anyone who embarks on the strange voyage can measure the tides and hurricanes that he will encounter. The statesman must realize that once the signal is given, there are unforeseeable and uncontrollable events."

Winston Churchill's statement many years from the past indicates the truism of war. It is hard. It is always hard.

Next week, General Petraeus will be reporting to this Congress what progress has been made in achieving security and stability in Iraq. No doubt the report will offer mixed results, signs of progress and probably setbacks.

In the midst of all of this review, Mr. Speaker, the question is: Now what?

Regardless of what anybody thought about going into Iraq, we are there. Right now our military personnel are risking their lives every day in Iraq and Afghanistan to protect our interests at home and abroad. In my opinion, there are far too many people focusing on where we have been and how we got there rather than making decisions about the future and our involvement in Iraq.

The way I see it, Mr. Speaker, we just have two options. We can stay in

Iraq and keep fighting for the American interest and what we believe is right, or we can turn our back and leave. There is not a third option.

To those who think we ought to leave Iraq and bring our troops home, what will happen if we withdraw before the job is done? The answer is chaos and more bloodshed. Without a stable Iraq, the power vacuum will inevitably entice more civil war like we haven't begun to imagine and, most likely, a regional conflict that will lead to serious security risks for those nations and the United States.

Congress is making the outcome of this war the same as the planned failure in Vietnam. That war lasted 10 years. The media didn't like the war. The American public got war weary and Congress then cut the funding and started bringing troops home. The results: We left before the mission was accomplished. We abandoned our friends, and when the communists gained control, they killed thousands of people because we lost our way.

Our enemies today believe we will abandon Iraq in the same way, and they hope we do. They feel we don't have the stomach for war. Our enemies believe they are more committed to their cause of killing in the name of religion than we are for our cause of life and liberty.

Abandonment and retreat is not a strategy. We stay because it is in America's best interest to stay and secure a victory before we turn the country over to the Iraqis. We stay because there are men and women laying down their lives for the cause of America. Twenty-one courageous men and women from my area in southeast Texas have died in Iraq and Afghanistan. What would the retreat crowd tell those families about their kids who died on the altar of freedom? War got too hard so we left? We don't quit because war is hard. War is always hard. We stay, Mr. Speaker, because we know that we are fighting a global enemy who doesn't intend to stop war. They want to destroy us. Success, Mr. Speaker, has never come from withdrawal; it never will.

General George Patton in World War II told his troops in 1944, he said, "Sure, we want to go home. We want this war over with. The quickest way to get it over with is to get the ones who started it. The quicker they are whipped, the quicker we can go home. You must always do your finest and win."

That is the only option. And yes, Mr. Speaker, Patton and his boys successfully finished that war.

And that's just the way it is.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mrs. MCCARTHY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

THE PRESIDENT'S WAR ASSESSMENT

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

Mr. MCDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, when the President arrived in Australia the other day, he told the prime minister, quote, "We're kicking ass" in Iraq. It is a clear sign that he intends to keep a massive U.S. military force in Iraq as long as he remains in office. And he will make it official administration policy next week. "We're Kicking Ass in Iraq" might be the headline of the report the White House is writing for General Petraeus to deliver to the Congress next week.

It is supposed to be an objective military assessment, but the President has declared it will be a White House spin document, as usual. Here's what the President's "kick ass" assessment translates to on the ground: 10 U.S. soldiers killed this week; 793 U.S. soldiers killed so far this year; 3,752 U.S. soldiers killed since the beginning of the war; and 27,186 U.S. soldiers wounded since the beginning of the war. And, 71,000 documented Iraq civilian deaths since the beginning of the war, although the actual number is much higher.

As the Times of India newspaper said today, Iraq is getting worse day after day. We don't even know how bad things really are.

The ACLU filed a lawsuit the other day demanding the U.S. release military documents concerning the number of innocent civilians killed by the U.S. forces. They fear the government is hiding the human cost of war. We don't know, but reliable information does exist.

There is plenty of factual information for the President to rely on, but he won't. An independent commission of retired U.S. generals released a report today that concludes that the Iraqi national police force is so corrupt the force should be disbanded. These U.S. military experts concluded that Iraq's Army over the next 18 months, "Cannot yet meaningfully contribute to denying terrorists safe haven."

The GAO released its own independent study showing the Iraq Government has reached only three of the 18 benchmarks established as part of the U.S. continuing to fund the war. In case anyone thinks that achieving three of 18 isn't too bad, let me tell you what they are.

The first benchmark we achieved was passing a law that legally protects the rights of minority parties in Iraq. Except the minority Sunni population remains outside the political situation totally. The other two benchmarks the Iraqi Government achieved was setting up security and public relations offices to support the military escalation. But the White House will use the military brass to paint a much rosier picture next week in its report to the Congress.