

Pennsylvania, and a member of that panel, "The Pentagon is not credible to continue inquiries that veterans and the public do not find persuasive."

The New York Times writes in discussing that issue:

A special White House panel said today that the Pentagon had lost so much credibility in its investigation of the release of Iraqi chemical weapons in the 1991 Persian Gulf War that oversight of the investigation must be taken away from the Defense Department permanently.

Mr. Speaker, I am happy to inform my colleagues that there is language in the committee report of Labor-HHS, which passed the House today, language which I introduced, which funds an independent, scientific research program, into how chemical exposures in the Persian Gulf relate to the illnesses suffered by 70,000 of our veterans.

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This research program is to be implemented through the Secretary of Health, with the National Institute of Environmental Health Science as the lead agency. The committee has agreed to appropriate \$1.1 million for next year and \$7 million over a 5-year period.

What is important here, and it is very important, is that for the first time a governmental agency outside of the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs is going to take a hard look at the role that chemicals may have played in causing gulf war illness. This is a major breakthrough, and we have to continue in that effort.

This report language is strongly supported by the American Legion, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and the National Gulf War Resource Center. Veterans and Americans all over this country are, to say the least, less than impressed about the role that DOD and VA have played in this entire process from the very end of the war until today.

Mr. Speaker, the military theater in the Persian Gulf was a chemical cesspool. Our troops were exposed to chemical warfare agents, leaded petroleum, widespread use of pesticides, depleted uranium, and burning oil wells. In addition, they were given a myriad of pharmaceuticals as vaccines.

Further, and perhaps most importantly, as a result of a waiver from the FDA, hundreds of thousands of our troops were given pyridostigmine bromide, which was being used as an antinerve gas agent, had never been used in this capacity before. Under an agreement between the DOD and the FDA in regards to this waiver, the DOD was required to collect data on any use of pyridostigmine bromide. However, they failed to do that.

Mr. Speaker, we are beginning to make some progress by going outside of the DOD and the VA. It is a breakthrough. We have to continue in that direction in order to address this enormously serious problem.

For 5 years, the Pentagon denied that our soldiers had been exposed to any chemical warfare agents. Finally, after being forced to admit that there were exposures, they suggested that the exposures were "limited". The DOD's first estimates were 400 troops exposed, then 20,000 troops. In July of this year, the DOD and DIA gave us their best estimate—that as many as 98,910 American troops could have been exposed to chemical warfare agents due to destruction of "the Pit" in Khamisyah, an Iraqi munitions facility. Mr. Chairman, I would not be surprised if this estimate is revised upward in the not too distant future, as more information is gathered regarding other incidents of chemical warfare exposure.

Mr. Speaker, an increasing number of scientists now believe that the synergistic effect of chemical exposures, plus the investigational vaccine pyridostigmine bromide, may well be a major cause of the health problems affecting our soldiers:

Dr. Robert W. Haley of the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center concludes that the gulf war syndromes are caused by low level chemical nerve agents combined with other chemicals, including pyridostigmine bromide. Doctors Mohammed Abou-Donia and Tom Kurt, of Duke University Medical Center, in studies using hens, found that a combination of two pesticides used in the gulf war, in combination with pyridostigmine bromide causes neurological deficits in test animals, similar to those reported by some gulf war veterans. Doctors Garth and Nancy Nicolson have completed research which concludes that gulf war veterans' illnesses may be due to combinations of chemical exposures in the Persian Gulf. Dr. Claudia Miller reports that there are similarities between the gulf war veterans' symptoms and those of some civilians exposed to organophosphate pesticides, carbamate pesticides, or low levels of volatile organic chemical mixtures. Dr. William Rea concludes that neurotoxic environmental exposures and other personal exposures prior to and during deployment in the gulf may have resulted in chronically deregulated immune and nonimmune detoxification systems, resulting in multi-symptom illness. In addition, a number of these scientists and physicians have devised treatment protocols for gulf war illnesses and some are reporting success in their treatments. These are the types of research programs and treatment protocols which our Government should be aggressively pursuing for the sake of our veterans, and what I hope will be accelerated as a result of this language.

The National Institute of Environmental Health is eager and ready to begin research and to provide its results to Congress in an expedient manner. This research program will address three areas of which are necessary to better understand the nature of the problem. These are: First, capitalizing on the existing body of knowledge of a similar disorder called multiple chemical sensitivity, second, defining individual genetic differences in the ability to metabolize environmental agents commonly encountered during Desert Storm, and third, developing a better understanding of how multiple exposures interact to exert their toxicity on an organism. Moreover, the research program is to include an investigation of treatment protocols which are being developed in the public and private sectors for illnesses re-

sulting from chemical and other environmental exposures.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Massachusetts [Mr. MEEHAN] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. MEEHAN addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

#### SECRETARY OF THE ARMY'S SENIOR REVIEW PANEL ON SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from the District of Columbia [Ms. NORTON] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, a number of women members of the women's caucus may be coming to the floor this afternoon to make speeches concerning the report of the Secretary of the Army's Senior Review Panel on Sexual Harassment.

The reason women Members of the House would speak to this subject relates to the fact that sexual harassment in the Armed Forces was the first issue of the 105th Congress to come to the attention of the women's caucus. We did not choose it; it chose us. We came back to find a full-blown scandal. This time it was not Tailhook and the Navy, it was Aberdeen and the Army, and it looked like a far more serious scandal than the Tailhook scandal.

We had a meeting with the Secretary of the Army. We have followed this issue, met with officials. Some of our Members have given very special attention to it. We have sought remedies, we have monitored this issue, and now a report comes through.

Mr. Speaker, what is important to note about this report is the absence of equivocation. The findings of the report are nothing short of refreshing, and the Secretary of the Army, Mr. Togo West, deserves our compliments for sending forth a panel to do a job, frank and full, so that the Armed Forces of the United States would not be disgraced by continuing allegations of sexual harassment.

Examples of findings that are bold and unequivocal are, and I am quoting: "The Army lacks institutional commitment to the EO Program. Examples: Sexual harassment exists throughout the Army, crossing gender, rank and racial lines." Pretty stark, pretty frank, and the kind of straight talk that will pierce the ranks up and down. That is what we need if we want to get rid of this stuff.

The panel said, "We are firmly convinced that leadership is the fundamental issue." That is indeed refreshing. At Aberdeen we saw that there were drill sergeants and others of lower rank who were prosecuted and sanctioned. Only now are we seeing that at Aberdeen some of the upper ranks have also been sanctioned. Unless that happens,

there is no credibility for sanctions at all in a command structure. If one is at the top, one is in charge and one is accountable for whatever happens throughout the ranks.

Among the conclusion and recommendations is one that says that "It is necessary to imbue human relations training in the Army training system as a doctrinal imperative." That is very strong, because a doctrinal imperative means when it is part and parcel of a mission, and the mission is incomplete unless it is part of that mission.

I was struck by a recommendation that the EO Programs had to be engineered to protect those who use it and ensure that those working in it are not stigmatized. That said to me that if one was in the EO part of the program, one was not in the regular Army, or at least one did not have the same respect as those who were. This says that those people must be given credit for what they are doing, take pride in it and do it well. And when it says protect those who use it, it implies that in fact what we know to be true was true, and that is that the EO Program just as well may not have been there when it came to matters of sexual harassment because it did not do its job.

According to this report, women did not feel that they could come and report the sexual harassment at all. That is a comment on a justice system that no one ever wants to hear. The report says that a command climate assessment down to company size units, at least annually, should take place. If that had taken place, if there had been annual assessments at the company level, then it seems to me sexual harassment, which included criminal conduct, could have been found out. Unless one is willing to go down to that level, of course one is not going to find out about sexual misconduct. People do not come out, salute, and then engage in sexual harassment.

We do not think that there needs to be a witch-hunt, but one can uncover these matters if we do our job, and I congratulate the Army on this report. We will be looking to see if they carry out the report with the strength that its language implies.

#### SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN THE MILITARY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maryland [Mrs. MORELLA] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MORELLA. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my Women's Caucus colleagues for calling this afternoon's series of special orders dealing with sexual harassment and discrimination in the U.S. Armed Forces.

The seriousness of this problem first came to light with reports of sexual harassment and violence at the Aberdeen Proving Ground in my own State of Maryland. Not only were these reports confirmed, but, regrettably, further investigation has revealed that they were only the tip of the iceberg.

In contrast to prior such scandals within the military, the Army, and Secretary Togo West,

deserve credit for their quick and serious response to these reports. The Army's Senior Review Panel on Sexual Harassment and the Inspector General's Special Inspection of Initial Entry Training concluded that sexual harassment is widespread, "crossing gender, rank, and racial lines," and that job discrimination is even more pervasive. Additionally, they found that "respect as an Army core value is not well institutionalized in the [Initial Entry Training] process."

Clearly, when 47 percent of military women experience unwanted sexual attention, when 15 percent experience sexual coercion, when 7 percent are victims of sexual assault, and the victims are not only afraid to report acts of misconduct against them, but also feel that their charges will go unheeded, the unit cohesion and personal respect necessary for peak military performance, and the defense of the Nation, are jeopardized.

As these two reports also make clear, these issues are complex, and cannot be resolved overnight. Nonetheless, we do expect the Army to undertake every possible effort to remedy these problems as quickly as possible, and to work to maintain a high standard of personal conduct for all of its soldiers and officers.

Mr. Speaker, I again want to thank my Caucus colleagues for calling this special order, and I also want to thank Congresswomen FOWLER and HARMAN, our Caucus members serving on the National Security Committee, for the work which they have done on this issue. I look forward to continuing to work with them, as well as the Chairman of the Military Personnel Subcommittee, Mr. BUYER, on gender issues in the military. I look forward to the hearings which the subcommittee will hold on this issue in October, to learn more specifically what actions the Army will take to correct its personnel problems, and what we in Congress can do to assist in their implementation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York [Ms. SLAUGHTER] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Ms. SLAUGHTER addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas [Ms. JACKSON LEE] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

#### KEEPING COSTS DOWN: COMPETITION AMONG VENDORS FOR PROCUREMENT OF POSTAL UNIFORMS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. STRICKLAND] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. STRICKLAND. Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor this afternoon to talk about an issue that is of great concern not only to myself but to other Members of this body.

Under our current system, the United States Postal Service allows employees of the service to choose where to purchase their uniforms. Consequently, literally hundreds of small manufacturing companies and vendors from throughout this country are now supplying these needed uniforms on a choice basis to those who work for the Postal Service.

My concern and the concern of many of my colleagues is that the Postal Service is contemplating a change of policy, and rather than working with these large number of vendors and manufacturers, they are contemplating the selection of a single large vendor that would take over the responsibility for the procurement of postal uniforms.

Now, why does this concern me? The Postal Service contends that such a change in policy would save them money. My concern is that it would cost American jobs. I believe that the Postal Service should be required to purchase uniforms that are American-made, and that they should only purchase uniforms from companies which uphold and maintain certain high standards for the way they treat their workers and the fact that they are good corporate citizens.

In my district, in the small town of Nelsonville, OH, we have Rocky Shoes, Rocky Shoes and Boots, and a significant percentage of Rocky Shoes and Boots' business goes to provide shoes for those who work for the Postal Service. It is a good deal for Rocky Boots, and I believe it is a good deal for the men and women who work for our Postal Service.

So it troubles me that an institution, an agency such as the postal system which currently is very profitable and is realizing significant yearly profits, would in the name of cost savings take action which could cost my constituents and the constituents of many other Members of this body their livelihoods and their jobs.

Now, nearly 70 Members of this body have signed letters to the postal system and the Postmaster General expressing our concern about this proposed policy. I am happy with the fact that the postal system has at least temporarily put a moratorium on this proposed policy change. I remain concerned, however, that in the name of cost savings and efficiency, an action could be taken and is currently under consideration that would be very, very damaging to working men and women and working families in this country.

I believe that the best way to realize cost savings is to maintain a system where there is fair competition, where small manufacturers and vendors must compete for the business, rather than placing this responsibility in the hands of a single large vendor. Over 100 manufacturers and over 800 vendors are at risk.

So I come to the floor this evening to express in this venue my concern for this proposal and to ask Members of this body to join me as we request a