

Operation Iron Hammer in Baghdad and Operation Ivy Cyclone north of Baghdad. It involves heavy aerial attacks on so-called suspected terrorists' meeting places and infrastructure. For the past 6 days, U.S. forces have pounded targets with 500-pound bombs, cannon fire, and artillery.

I believe it is another public relations campaign. Mr. Speaker, this administration is famous for spinning and sloganeering and basically posturing, and this is another kind of spinning that is going on. They think when they come up with this kind of sloganeering that somehow they are more believable.

So we have this new Operation Iron Hammer in Baghdad, and what is it doing? We are told that they are hitting suspected terrorists. Who are they killing? What terrorists are they stopping when, in fact, the terrorists, as they have been identified who are killing our soldiers, continue day after day to pick our soldiers off. There is no evidence to suggest that this bombing campaign will accomplish anything. In fact, it may make the situation worse.

A top secret CIA assessment from Iraq, which was widely reported last week, warned that bombing campaigns like this one could only incite more Iraqis to fight against Americans.

Mr. Speaker, I will be coming often to tell the truth about what is going on in Iraq. I will not be intimidated.

EXPLORING IRAQ EXIT STRATEGIES

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ROGERS of Alabama). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, over the last year and a half, the administration has attempted to make the case that the Iraq war is part of the global "War on Terror." They argued that military action to disarm Iraq would save the United States from being directly attacked by Iraq's weapons of mass destruction, and would also prevent Iraq from giving weapons of mass destruction to terrorist groups that could then launch attacks against the United States.

Of course, no weapons of mass destruction have been found, and there has been no proof offered that legitimately connects Saddam Hussein with the September 11 attacks or the work of the al Qaeda network on September 11.

The war has effectively had the opposite effect of what was desired. Al Qaeda, which was not proven to exist inside of Iraq prior to the war, is now thriving in Iraq and is targeting U.S. soldiers in their war against the United States. The U.S. occupation is fueling internal and regional hatred towards the U.S. and is providing al Qaeda with a recruiting poster for their anti-American ambitions.

The world is considerably less safe because of this endeavor. Terrorist at-

tacks in Saudi Arabia and Turkey, and a complete breakdown in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, only reinforce that the war in Iraq did not bring peace to the region as President Bush said it would.

Clearly, the mission has not been accomplished. More U.S. troops have died since the end of the war than during combat operations. Last week, the U.S. military launched Operation Iron Hammer, a version of shock and awe, targeted at foreign and nationalist terrorists insurgents whose presence in Iraq is a direct result of the U.S. invasion.

Most of the world's nations view the war and occupation of Iraq to be a U.S. folly. The U.S. is stuck, mostly alone, with a costly, unpopular, and unending occupation of Iraq.

This is why a major change is needed. That is why I believe we need to get the U.S. out and the United Nations in. The U.N. will not go in, however, unless the main focus of resistance and instability, the United States, agrees to pull out.

The U.S. must also renounce all political and economic interests in Iraq. It will be necessary to renounce, clearly and unequivocally, any interest in controlling Iraq's oil resources. The U.N., not the U.S., will administer Iraq's oil revenues.

Under a new U.N. resolution, the U.N. will administer contracts to repair Iraq. War profiteering will no longer be tolerated. It will be necessary to suspend all reconstruction contracts and close the U.S.-led Coalition Provisional Authority, because of the suspicion that various contracts have been given to large American corporations were as a result of political connections. In its place, the U.N. would help Iraqis administer funds to employ Iraqis to repair the damage from the invasion.

I believe if we hand over the security, administrative, and economic responsibilities to the United Nations, member countries would be more inclined to help pull the United States out of this quagmire.

I am not suggesting that we do not have responsibilities there. We need a phase-in of the U.N. force and a phase-out of the U.S., while keeping a Navy fleet to defend the territorial integrity of Iraq from foreign invasion.

The U.S. owes a moral debt to the people of Iraq for the damage caused by the U.S. invasion. The U.S. will also owe a contribution to the U.N. to help Iraq make the transition to self-government.

American taxpayers deserve their contributions to be handled in an accountable, transparent manner. However, Americans are not required to build a state-of-the-art infrastructure as the administration seems to be planning.

All we can do now is to make a dramatic reversal. Of course, we must acknowledge that the continued U.S. military presence in Iraq is counterproductive and destabilizing. We have a choice in front of us: either we change

course, withdraw our troops, and request that the U.N. move in and bring the U.N. in and take the U.S. out, or we sink deeper into this occupation, with more U.S. casualties, ever higher financial costs, and diminished security for Americans. I think that we can still turn this around. I think that America can take a new direction.

Today, Mr. Speaker, in the Washington Post on page A21, there is a story called "Sending a Message," and I will include that in the RECORD of my Special Order. What that does is it talks about the aspects in which the war is escalating and the damage that is occurring to Iraqi communities as a result of U.S. military action. I would suggest that the damage inherent, as is described in this story, is not only to the humble people whose homes are being blown up, but it is also to the U.S. reputation, because as we get into the cycle of violence, we will be digging ourselves in deeper, and we will be distancing ourselves from the world community. This is a time that we need to reach out to the world community, take a new approach, and that will then enable the United States to finally end this unfortunate episode.

"SENDING A MESSAGE" WITH A SHOW OF FORCE

RURAL IRAQI HOMES DESTROYED IN U.S. OFFENSIVE

(By Daniel Williams)

TIKRIT, IRAQ, Nov. 18.—The house of Omar Khalil Ibrahim is a flattened jumble of broken bricks and roofing. Three of his neighbors' homes, still standing, are riddled with big holes made by tank shells that blasted through two or three walls. A dead cow lies rotting beside a broken shed.

The scene in central Iraq was the result of a U.S. military offensive aimed at taking the initiative away from anti-occupation guerrillas. It is using helicopter gunships, tanks and Bradley fighting vehicles, as well as an occasional jet strike, unleashing 500-pound bombs and satellite-guided rockets.

One high-ranking commander described it as a "no-holds barred" operation. The targets are suspected hideaways, command centers and safe houses of the elusive guerrillas, U.S. officials said.

"We have to use these capabilities to take that fight to the enemy, and why not?" said Maj. Gen. Charles H. Swannack Jr., the commander of the 82nd Airborne Division, which patrols western Iraq. "That's why we use them. They are the right systems."

For all the heavy and sophisticated armaments, the targets in Hawijat al-Ali, a rural hamlet near Tikrit, are small-scale. The houses are single-story structures set within walled rose gardens.

"We were surprised by all the big shooting," said Kafi Khalaf, Ibrahim's wife. "They spent a lot to get rid of our houses."

U.S. military officials say the show of force is a necessary response to escalating attacks in central Iraq. Maj. Gordon Tate, a spokesman for the 4th Infantry Division in Tikrit, said the offensive, which began Oct. 1, picked up steam after Nov. 2, when guerrillas shot down a U.S. CH-47 Chinook transport helicopter near the western town of Fallujah, killing 16 soldiers. Rocket and artillery operations replaced search-and-seizure raids that characterized U.S. military activity in the summer and early fall.

"We are sending a message. We are showing we are here," Tate said. Among the

weapons now in use are rockets that each disperse 960 little anti-personnel bombs. Five Iraqis were killed Monday night in a 4th Infantry Division attack, Tate said.

Tate said that sympathizers of deposed Iraqi president Saddam Hussein pay mercenaries to harass U.S. troops. "We want them to think twice," he said. "They should leave out of fear or face death."

To curb the use of roadside bombs that are among the deadliest weapons employed by Iraqi resistance fighters, soldiers have orders to shoot and kill anyone seen digging a hole alongside thoroughfares, Tate said. The same goes for anyone seen carrying a weapon, he said.

Emphasizing the new get-tough approach, U.S. troops in dozens of armored vehicles patrolled in convoys throughout Tikrit Monday. "They are saying, 'I dare you,'" said Ashraf Skarki, a farmer. "The noise and dust, it is all part of their letter to Tikrit."

The activity is not limited to this town, which is notoriously hostile to the U.S. occupation. In Baqubah, several miles east of Tikrit, a pair of F-15 fighter jets, launched from Qatar on the Persian Gulf, dropped four 500-pound bombs Tuesday on some abandoned farmhouses, military officials said. Apache helicopter gunships and artillery poured fire on targets on Baqubah's outskirts and then ground troops pounded the area with 155mm howitzers and 120mm mortars.

"We have taken action on these targets before, but this is to demonstrate one more time that we have significant firepower and we can use it at our discretion," said Lt. Col. Mark Young, commander of the 67th Armor Regiment's 3rd Battalion, part of the 4th Infantry Division. "This is the biggest operation we've had in the Baqubah area in terms of tonnage and volume" of munitions, he said.

On Monday, two U.S. soldiers were killed near Balad, about 35 miles from Baqubah, one in a rocket-propelled grenade attack, the other by a roadside bomb.

"We will not let these insurgents dance on our territory. We need to maintain an offensive stance and let the enemy know that we will come down with a heavy hand," said Lt. Col. Steve Russell, a battalion commander with the 4th Infantry Division.

In Baghdad at mid-evening, U.S. forces fired heavy weapons at suspected guerrilla positions in the far western part of the city. A series of blasts reverberated across the capital. For a second consecutive night, the city was largely blacked out. U.S. officials blamed the electrical outage on a storm that they said toppled high-tension wires, although the weather has been calm for several days all across Iraq.

Exactly who the guerrillas are remains a mystery, even to commanders on the ground. At a briefing in Baghdad on Tuesday, Swannack said that 90 percent of the fighters that U.S. forces have captured or killed were loyalists of Hussein or Iraqi religious militants. While the Bush administration has described foreign fighters as posing a mounting threat, Swannack estimated that only 10 percent of the guerrillas had come from abroad.

"We are not finding foreign fighters coming across the borders in significant numbers to do the fighting," said Swannack, whose soldiers patrol a vast swath of Iraq that borders Syria, Jordan and Saudi Arabia.

Resident of Hawijjat al-Ali doubted the offensive in the Tikrit area would be successful. "Do they really think making this kind of ruin will stop the resistance?" said Jamal Shahib, who described himself as a shepherd.

Shahib and other residents said U.S. soldiers arrived Monday night searching for Ali Ahmed Hamid and Hussein Ali, two teen-

agers suspected of being members of Saddam's Fedayeen, a militia created in the 1990s as an irregular adjunct to Iraq's army and secret police. They did not find the young men. The soldiers arrested Omar Khalil Ibrahim, 55, and told the residents to leave their houses. They then unleashed the barrages of firepower to destroy the structures.

Everyone denied that anyone had a connection to Saddam's Fedayeen. One woman, in a fit of emotion, began to chant, "With our blood and our souls, we will defend you, O Saddam."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

FLORIDA'S CITRUS INDUSTRY

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

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleagues from Florida, Mr. PUTNAM and Mr. SHAW, for arranging this special order this evening.

Trade is a crucially important issue in Florida. With our great seaports and airports and our global position as the crossroads between North America and Central and South America and the Caribbean, Florida is well positioned to benefit from trade with our neighbors. However, in order for that trade to benefit Floridians, to create new jobs and new businesses and to promote the growth of existing enterprises, it must be conducted fairly.

One of Florida's signature industries is citrus. Citrus is Florida's second largest industry, responsible for generating over \$9 billion for the economy and providing nearly 90,000 people with jobs. The industry also accounts for roughly \$1 billion in revenue for the State and local governments. Not only is this industry responsible for giving jobs to tens of thousands of Floridians, it also helps to fund our public hospitals and schools, and our fire and police services.

But all is not well with Florida's citrus industry—primarily because of the impact of imports—and I urge the Bush administration to remember this fact when it considers requests to reduce or eliminate the current tariff on imported citrus juices during the Free Trade Area of the Americas negotiations this week-end or any other negotiations.

There are only two regions in the world that produce a substantial quantity of orange juice: Brazil and the United States. There are also only two regions of the world that consume substantial amounts of orange juice: the United States and the European Union. Brazil already has a virtual monopoly on the EU orange juice market, while Florida's growers sell their product almost entirely in the United States.

There is considerable evidence that the current tariff on imported juices encourages competition among producers and allows Florida's growers to compete on a level playing field. Florida's 12,000 growers, most of whom operate small family-owned operations, are the

most efficient and environmentally responsible in the world. Without the tariff, however, Florida's growers cannot compete against the four dominant processors in Brazil, who take advantage of cheap labor and weak environmental laws at the expense of Florida's growers.

The industry also provides many environmental benefits to the State of Florida and its citizens. A collapse of the industry would lead, perhaps inevitably, to more development and more congestion—and also to more air and water pollution and toxins in the environment. I understand that a collapse of the citrus industry would also threaten over 150 different species with extinction.

Today, Florida's citrus industry is already suffering tremendously because of uncertainty over the future of the tariff. The price of citrus is declining. Growers are selling land because they know they will have no future if the tariff is reduced or eliminated. In addition, the huge processors in Brazil are taking steps to exploit any reduction in the tariff by acquiring more groves in Brazil to enable them to dramatically increase production and overwhelm the U.S. market. It would be hard for any industry to survive, and impossible to prosper, in this environment.

The industry cannot afford to wait 6 more months or a year for the Bush administration to make a decision. This is why I urge the Bush administration to state clearly this week its final decision on this matter—to put an end to this uncertainty that is so seriously harming Florida's citrus industry.

Mr. Speaker, Florida's citrus industry—unlike almost all other agricultural commodities—receives no U.S. subsidies. American taxpayer money does not subsidize this industry. The tariff is the industry's only lifeline.

Again, I urge the administration to consider the ramifications of reducing or eliminating the tariff, which would discourage greater competition and would enable Brazil to secure a global monopoly over the orange juice market.

MEDICARE PRESCRIPTION DRUG AND MODERNIZATION ACT OF 2003

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. GINGREY) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleagues on this side of the aisle for joining with me tonight in discussing over the next hour one of the most important issues to come before this great body, this United States House of Representatives, probably in the history of the Congress, and I am talking about, Mr. Speaker, the impending passage of the bipartisan Medicare Prescription Drug and Modernization Act of 2003.

Mr. Speaker, Medicare is a good program. Medicare had done a lot of things since its inception, of course, when it was first put into place almost 40 years ago, but it is not perfect. Medicare, although it is a good program, is not perfect. Two of the main problems, Mr. Speaker, with Medicare are these: number 1, it has never had a prescription drug benefit. Yes, it covers