

house. We will not have that tool this year, because they did not plan.

Now they say, well, they are trying to figure out where they might borrow the money to fight the fires. Might borrow the money. That means going back and decimating already underfunded programs in the Forest Service, maybe fuel reduction again, recreation most probably, capital investment improvements, all sorts of things that are detrimental to the resource and the public lands.

I have a novel idea. Why do they not instead be honest about how much money they need and come to the Congress from the White House with the President's support and ask for what they think they will need to fight this year's fires? Ask for another \$600 million. Yes, it is a lot of money, but we cannot ignore this problem. We could better prepare if they knew they had the money on hand. Instead of people scrambling around the Forest Service looking for other budgets to rob, they could be training more initial attack teams.

We got a report on the Biscuit Fire, a huge fire in southern Oregon a couple of years ago, which says there were no initial attack teams available. It is reported by some observers from California that the big southern branch of that fire was isolated to a couple of trees on one ridge on the first day. Now, if we had been able to get an initial attack team in there, but again, because of underfunding they were not available for days, we might have been able to prevent the whole southern branch of that cataclysmic fire.

So what is going to happen this year? They proudly say, well, they get 98 percent of those sorts of things. That is true. But if the 2 percent of the ones that they do not get, or even the 1 percent, are huge destructive fires that destroy resources, that destroy communities, that maybe even take lives, then is that not kind of a faulty way to save money? They say, well, we do not want all of those young people sitting around waiting for the initial attack teams; that would cost hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Well, it cost \$200 million to fight that fire. So we could have spent a couple of thousand dollars to have young people trained. If there really are not any fires going on, let us put them out there and do some trail maintenance or something else; they can certainly do that work too if that is what we are paying them for. But when the fires are already starting to burn, to have them ready to go at a moment's notice is crucial and critical and could stop and prevent a huge catastrophic loss of resource, loss of life, loss of property.

That is a good Federal investment. I do not begrudge paying those young men and women who are going to risk their lives for a little bit of down time when we are going to use them sometimes 3, 4, 5, 6 days straight a week or 2 later.

So I find that this administration is just being so shortsighted. They can

see the problem: The most catastrophic predicted fire in history, they grounded the tanker planes, asked for and got only half the money they think they are going to need; we will lack the initial attack teams and a whole host of other things we need to do. We are going to short the communities for their fire prevention programs, their cooperative fire management and other things where we help communities fire-proof themselves and homeowners with a little bit of Federal matching money and assistance.

What is wrong with this administration? Why will they not ask for the money they need to protect our people, our communities, our resources?

SITUATION IRAQ: HAVING FAITH IN A SUCCESSFUL OUTCOME

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

Mr. OSBORNE. Mr. Speaker, I spent most of my life in a competitive environment and, during that time, I tried to understand why some organizations are successful and why some fail and some win and some lose. It seems to me that in a competitive endeavor that three principles were critical.

Number one, unity of purpose; everyone having a common goal and pulling together. Number 2, the willingness to pay a greater price than the opposition; to sacrifice, to suffer, if necessary. And number 3, having confidence in a successful outcome to believe in the organization.

I believe that these principles are generally time-tested and proven. It seems to me that some of these principles might apply to our struggle in Iraq.

Recently I have heard some comments that the war is unwinnable. This is troubling, because it seems to me that words matter. Such statements are often self-fulfilling prophecies, because if you think you cannot, if you say you cannot, you probably cannot.

So what if a football coach or a coach of any kind told his team that they probably could not win? They probably would not win. What if Washington told his troops at Valley Forge that they could not win? It probably would have made a big difference in the final outcome. What if Lincoln had said after Antietam, where 26,000 casualties occurred in one day, the bloodiest single day in our history, if he had said, it is over, we cannot win? What if MacArthur had said this: Instead of saying he was going to return, what if he had said he was going to quit and go home? Or what if Eisenhower had said during the Battle of the Bulge that he could not be successful either?

Recently a Member of Congress came up to me and asked me this. He said, what is the exit strategy? I guess the way the question was phrased, it was how do we get out of this and somehow save face? How do we gracefully de-

part? I guess I did not have a good answer for him. As a matter of fact, I was puzzled because I had not really thought of that kind of an exit. I thought the exit strategy was to win. I did not know we had another exit strategy. The exit strategy, as I understand, was to displace the Taliban in Afghanistan, Saddam Hussein in Iraq, set up a representative government in both countries, train and equip each country's police and military to provide stability, and then leave. The rest of it, I believe, is up to the Afghan and Iraqi people. Much of this has been done already. It is certainly not completed, and certainly it is a difficult conflict and there is a lot yet to be done.

When I was in the Middle East not long ago, a young Reserve captain had been in Iraq for a nearly a year, and he said this: It is important that the American people not lose patience. I believe that is very true. He said this: He said, it is better to fight al Qaeda here in the Middle East than it is at home. He was proud of what he had accomplished over there militarily, in terms of the infrastructure, the water, the electricity, oil production, hospitals, schools, children being vaccinated, provisional governments being established.

So if we declare defeat, and if we say we cannot win, and if we say we have to pull out, it will do this: number one, we will dishonor the 750-plus soldiers who have died already, and their families.

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Number two, we will sentence thousands of Iraqis who have helped in the reconstruction to death. They will not have much chance, and this is the one thing they are most fearful of.

Number three, we will have shown terrorists everywhere around the world that we lack the will, we lack the courage to see this through. In other words, we will put a huge bulls-eye on our back.

So we all say on this floor time after time we support our troops; but, and I would say this, telling them that the war is unwinnable, engaging in partisan wrangling is not supporting our troops. It is critical that Members of this body stand united, stand committed and stay the course.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CHOCOLA). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take the gentleman from California's (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Washington?

There was no objection.

THE PRESIDENT'S NEW PR OFFENSIVE

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, the President's new PR offensive in Iraq is offensive. The President sent Secretary Rumsfeld to Iraq. He should have sent him to see the Red Cross instead.

This administration remains in denial over the prisoner abuses in Iraq. They think creating a photo op in Iraq will somehow divert attention from the photos that shock the world. Justice is not a PR stunt in Iraq.

The responsibility is not a sound bite from Secretary Rumsfeld telling Americans from Iraq that he is in charge. Accountability is not a mug shot from the prison where policies that shame America spun out of control.

Mr. President, this is a crisis of worldwide scope. Landing on an aircraft, Mr. Speaker, will not help. Standing your guy up in Iraq will not help. Pretending it will go away will not help. Put away the banner, Mr. President, because America is in the midst of a crisis.

We are just beginning to comprehend the magnitude of the abuse at one prison in Iraq, and we are beginning to hear of abuses that may have taken place elsewhere. This PR stunt will be seen around the world as just that, and it will only make matters worse.

Restoring America's credibility in the world will take America confronting this awful thing. The people mugging for the camera are the people who ought to be at the center of a complete and impartial investigation. Anything less will be a cover-up plan in plain sight.

The world simply will not allow it. Every day the questions and comments worldwide get just tougher and tougher.

From the Gulf News, today's editorial is entitled "Inside Afghan's Prisons, U.S. Abuses are Shrouded in Mystery."

Singapore's Straits Times newspaper carries the commentary today entitled "Torture and the Politics of Ambiguity."

I will insert these newspaper articles into the RECORD at this point.

[From the Straits Times, May 13, 2004]

TORTURE AND THE POLITICS OF AMBIGUITY (By Michael Manning)

Each new revelation of physical abuse, maltreatment and sexual humiliation of Iraqi prisoners by American and British soldiers shocks international public opinion, leaving officials to scramble desperately to contain the damage.

United States Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld warns that more documentary evi-

dence of wrongdoing at Abu Ghraib prison lies in store, evidently in the preemptive hope that the outrages stopped there.

As a former US military intelligence interrogator, I am convinced that the images from Abu Ghraib are just the beginning. The wanton cruelty there is all too clearly symptomatic of a systemic failure.

But what system failed? Was it a failure of discipline and training—the result of sending inexperienced and unworried reservists into poor conditions, abruptly extending their deployments and then leaving them understaffed in the face of a growing influx of captured insurgents? Or did the pattern of abuse amount to so many orders from superiors to "soften up" prisoners for interrogation?

The answer is, most likely, both and neither.

Ultimately, what gives rise to abuses such as occurred at Abu Ghraib is a policy of deliberate ambiguity concerning how to handle detainees. The pressure in a war setting to get information that could save lives is immense. But senior political and military officials—particularly in democracies—prefer to avoid any association with torture.

Ambiguity is thus a political strategy that encourages the spread of implicit, informal rules of behavior, thereby shifting accountability onto the lowest ranking, least powerful and most expendable soldiers.

I completed the US Army's three-month basic interrogation course in the late 1980s. It was rigorous—only seven of 33 students finished it—as it required mastering the technical minutiae of collecting, cross-checking, standardising and reporting enormous masses of information.

But the curriculum was much less meticulous concerning interrogation techniques. An interrogation, we were instructed, should begin with polite, direct questioning, because a certain number of detainees simply want to unburden themselves. If more persuasion was needed, we could offer rewards for cooperation—anything from cigarettes to political asylum.

Beyond this, we were taught that we could "apply pressure." The term was never defined in any formal setting, but the concept was not difficult to decipher. As US Army General Antonio Taguba's report on the abuses at Abu Ghraib put it, the "guard force" was "actively engaged in setting the conditions for successful exploitation of the internees."

This obvious violation of the Army's rule prohibiting participation by military police in interrogation sessions does not surprise me. I was never taught that military police came under a separate chain of command. On the contrary, between classes, during breaks in field training and in other informal settings, some of our instructors let it be known through insinuation and innuendo that we could have the guards beat uncooperative subjects.

This was never said in the classroom, but it was made clear the role of military police was to serve the interrogators, for an interrogator's effectiveness depends on convincing the detained of his omnipotence.

The hidden rules of the game came closest to being officially acknowledged during two weeks of simulated interrogations towards the end of the training course. These sessions involved only a student interrogator, and instructor in the role of the detainee and a video camera.

When, during a simulation, I asked an imaginary guard to take away the detainee's chair, the instructor feigned being removed violently. When I told the non-existent guard to hit the detainee, the instructor played along. All of us knew that a failed interrogation could mean being dropped from the course. I was not dropped; I finished first in my class.

For those who benefit from the politics of ambiguity, international law is an indispensable prop. In his recent US Senate testimony, Mr. Rumsfeld claimed that the military police at Abu Ghraib were instructed to abide by the Geneva conventions.

So was I. Throughout my training as an interrogator, the admonition to follow the Geneva conventions accompanied virtually every discussion of "applying pressure." Unfortunately, like "applying pressure," the Geneva conventions were never defined. We never studied them, nor were we given a copy to read, much less tested on their contents. For many of us, the conventions were at best a dimly remembered cliché from war movies that meant, "don't do bad stuff."

Again, the tacit rules said otherwise. One instructor joked that although the Geneva conventions barred firing a 50-caliber machine gun at an enemy soldier, we could aim at his helmet or backpack, since these were "equipment." Others shared anecdotes about torturing detainees.

Whether such talk was true is irrelevant. We were being conditioned to believe that the official rules set no clear limits, and that we could therefore set the limits wherever we liked.

In the end, the politics of ambiguity may fail Mr. Rumsfeld; all those high-resolution photographs from Abu Ghraib are anything but ambiguous. If similarly shameful disclosures multiply, as I believe they will, let us at least hope that official apologies and condemnations may finally give way to wider, more genuine accountability and reform.

[From the Gulf News, May 13, 2004]

FARHAN BOKHARI: INSIDE AFGHAN PRISONS, US ABUSES ARE SHROUDED IN MYSTERY

The scandalous treatment of Iraqi prisoners by United States military personnel and the series of condemnations surrounding key US officials, most notably Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, are too significant to be ignored easily. But one essential danger flowing from recent revelations surrounding the actions of American military personnel in Iraq is that similar mistreatment of prisoners in US custody in Afghanistan could have occurred on the same proportion. And perhaps this was easily overlooked.

The bottom line remains that the world's so-called sole superpower, eager to sermonise the rest of the world over principles of democracy and basic human values, now finds itself confronting fundamentally tough questions over the very same values—which have theoretically stood at the heart of its policy-making.

How can the US lead the world if its actions cause more inhumanity than the protection of humanity? There are no easy answers to that fundamentally significant question. To make matters worse, a number of Afghan and Pakistani families related to the fighters nabbed during the Afghan war and subsequently taken to Guantanamo Bay, are completely in the dark about the fate of their near and dear ones.

The fate of the prisoners captured by the US in Afghanistan will not only continue to haunt the region surrounding the central Asian country but indeed the rest of the world. Vociferous criticism of US treatment of Iraqi prisoners is only gathering fresh momentum.

For many critics, no amount of denunciation of Washington's policies can ever compensate for the suffering endured by a large number of victims, thanks to the failure in enforcing stringent codes of conduct. The fallout from the Iraqi prisoners issue across the Muslim world will also carry its reverberations to Afghanistan, where many Afghans remain skeptical about Washington's