

In Bratislava, Alliance legislators urged our respective governments to examine carefully what further assets they can individually commit. We recognize, of course, that many NATO countries, like our own, already deploy substantial numbers of forces in Afghanistan and elsewhere. The United States currently has about 13,500 military personnel in and around Afghanistan, most in conjunction with Operation Enduring Freedom, the separate mission to fight the Taliban and al Qaeda in southeastern Afghan. Germany and Canada are the two largest contributors to ISAF, with about 1,800 troops each. But Canada's year-long commitment ends in August, and its forces must be replaced from elsewhere.

Compared with the total resources the Alliance can call on, the numbers needed now are not great. Their likely impact, however, is crucial. Time is not on our side. Excuses will not suffice. We must secure those assets now. To fail to do so will place in jeopardy all we have achieved thus far in improving stability in this crucial region.

Actually, this is a failure of political will, pure and simple. Make no mistake about it, this is a failure that jeopardizes the success of our mission in Afghanistan and jeopardizes the very credibility of the Alliance.

We often say that failure is not an option. Mr. Speaker, in Afghanistan, failure is a distinct possibility. And unless allied leaders in the next few weeks demonstrate the political will to deploy the necessary assets in Afghanistan, failure gradually will become a reality.

Drastic shortfalls exist despite the fact there are more than 2 million military personnel in the active and reserve forces of the European NATO allies. Less than 2 percent of those forces are deployed in missions in the Balkans and Afghanistan.

Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, the Secretary General of NATO, has stated repeatedly that the credibility of the Alliance is at stake in Afghanistan and so, it should be emphasized, is the future of the Afghan people.

Recognizing this reality, the leaders of all 26 NATO allies' parliamentary delegations to the Parliamentary Assembly, in an extraordinary, unprecedented step, authorized this Member to send a letter to all the heads of government of the NATO countries forthrightly expressing the concerns of the Assembly.

That letter strongly urges governments to provide the necessary resources for the NATO missions in Afghanistan and the fervent hope that effective action can be taken quickly and the necessary forces provided.

In addition, we agreed to raise this concern in our respective national legislatures in order to generate the widest possible parliamentary support for the required resources to be made available.

NATO already has made remarkable progress in Afghanistan and, with a lit-

tle more effort, our goal of bringing peace and stability to that troubled country is achievable.

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

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

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

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

HONORING OUR NATION'S VETERANS

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

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce two pieces of legislation in this House that recognizes and honors the service and sacrifice of members of the United States Armed Forces throughout the history of our great Nation.

The first bill is H.R. 4425, called the Honor Our Fallen Prisoners of War Act. Currently, prisoners of war who die during their imprisonment of wounds inflicted in war are eligible for a posthumous Purple Heart recognition. However, those who die of starvation, for example, or beatings or freezing to death are causes which are not eligible for the Purple Heart.

Can this be right? There should be no false distinction indicating more courage or more sacrifice by some who died and less by others. All POWs who died in service to our Nation should be eligible for this Purple Heart recognition, and H.R. 4425 will allow all members of our armed forces who die while a prisoner of war, regardless of the cause of death, to be awarded this honor. This will apply to all wars, past and present.

I am indebted to Rick and Brenda Morgan Tavares of Campo, California, and to Wilbert "Shorty" Estabrook of Murrieta, California, who brought this issue to my attention. Shorty survived the Tiger Camp death march during the Korean War and was imprisoned for over 3 years. Brenda's uncle, Corporal Melvin Morgan, died of starvation and beatings he suffered in 1950 at the age of 20 in Korea. Surely Corporal Morgan is deserving of a Purple Heart.

I am also introducing H. Con. Res. 434, a resolution to commend all persons who were inducted for service in the United States Armed Forces during World War II. I repeat, inducted into service. This is a particularly fitting time for such recognition. We all witnessed last Saturday the World War II Memorial on the Mall in Washington, DC, being dedicated as a lasting symbol

of our Nation's appreciation of these veterans. We are also approaching the 60th anniversary of D-Day on June 6, 2004, when tens of thousands of inductees, or draftees as they are usually called, were among the Allied Forces invaded Normandy, France.

To provide a bit of history, the Selective Training and Service Act of 1940 was enacted 1 year after Germany invaded Poland, and the number of men to be inducted into the Armed Forces was increased 5 days after the United States entered World War II in December of 1941. Of the over 16 million uniformed personnel serving during World War II, 10 million were draftees. They distinguished themselves in war and peace, as we know, and Tom Brokaw has called them "America's Greatest Generation."

The Blinded Veterans Association of San Diego, California, and its President William Montgomery have asked for my help in gaining national recognition for the draftees in our Armed Forces, and I am honored to do so today. H. Con. Res. 434 commends the millions who were inducted during World War II and who served with great courage to advance the cause of freedom throughout this world.

Taken together, these two pieces of legislation remind us of the gift of freedom that we have been given through the service and sacrifice of men and women who came before us. I urge my colleagues to support both H.R. 4425 and H. Con. Res. 434.

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

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

ON THE RETIREMENT OF BRIGADIER GENERAL MICHAEL F. GJEDE

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

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend Brigadier General Michael F. Gjede on his service to the United States of America. After more than 35 years in the Air Force, General Gjede will be retiring, and we in northeast Ohio have been very privileged to have him as the Commander of the Air Force Reserve 910th Airlift Wing at Youngstown Air Reserve Station in Vienna, Ohio.

A graduate of Northeastern University in Boston, General Gjede earned his commission through the Air Force Officer Training School program in 1968. Once he had earned his wings, he served two tours in Vietnam flying B-52s and logging over 140 combat missions.

General Gjede has held numerous command positions in the Air Force,