

Then the Bush administration spent tax dollars to fight that decision, took it to a higher court, and had that decision overturned.

Now, these prisoners of war were not seeking money from America. They were seeking money from the Iraqi regime that had tortured them. What kind of torture did they experience? They described being tortured with electric shocks, being threatened with castration, being threatened with execution, being beaten so severely that their bones were broken and that they were permanently disabled as a result of those beatings.

This country had frozen over \$1 billion in Iraqi assets that would have been used to pay these ex-prisoners of war just compensation, but the Bush administration said this money is needed for the reconstruction of Iraq. That is more important than compensating the American POWs; and so the Bush administration has returned that money back to Iraq, and our American ex-POWs have been told that there is nothing for them.

This is even more egregious when we consider what Secretary Rumsfeld has recently said. He said that he believes the Iraqi prisoners who were tortured in the Abu Ghraib prison, the very same prison where the Americans were tortured, Secretary Rumsfeld believes that this country should, in fact, compensate them because they were tortured.

So here is what we have. American POWs having been tortured in Iraq and told by the Bush administration they are entitled to no compensation. The Iraqi prisoners were tortured in this very same prison, and our Secretary of Defense is saying American tax dollars should be used to compensate them.

One of the newspapers in my region had a story that went like this: it was the United States of America and Saddam Hussein versus American ex-POWs, and the United States and Saddam Hussein won.

The Senate had taken action. Unanimously the Senate voted last week to approve an amendment submitted by Senator REID, cosponsored by Senator WARNER and Senator LEVIN, to say that no Iraqi prisoner would be compensated for the abuse they endured unless the American POWs were compensated for the abuse that they endured. It seems to me that if we are going to use resources to compensate the Iraqi prisoners, that the American POWs are entitled to at least similar compensation; and I hope that my colleagues from both sides of the aisle will recognize the injustice of compensating the Iraqi prisoners while we fight the compensation for American prisoners of war.

So during the next weeks and months, I am going to be looking for ways to attach this language to a piece of legislation that will guarantee this fairness and will correct this unjust situation.

#### WHAT IS THE EXIT STRATEGY FROM IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN?

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

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, just a few hours ago, this House engaged in a debate, one I believe that is one of the more important debates that we have in this House, and that is, the appropriations for the defense of this Nation. Clearly, there were so many themes and so many issues that go yet unanswered. I think it is important to elaborate for the American people some of the concerns that needed to be addressed but were not addressed in the fullness of the debate that took place.

I acknowledged when I was on the floor that I respected and appreciated the hard work of the chairman of the full committee, the ranking member of the full committee, as well as the ranking member of the subcommittee and certainly the chairman of the subcommittee.

I also have noted in the past my full commitment for our troops on the frontline and have had the pleasure of interacting with them in my visits to them in Afghanistan, more than once, in Iraq and other places in the Mideast, and will continue to interact with them as my other colleagues do; and I continue to indicate that my door remains open to their concerns and their family members.

That is why I rise today, because when the administration announced a \$25 billion supplemental that is necessary for Afghanistan and Iraq, I made the point that I would like to see some strategy, some long-term exit strategy, some way and means of bringing our troops home, some understanding of how many troops we will need, do we have enough troops; and yet in the course of the designing of this appropriations bill, outside of the process of those committees, there has been no known process that I have or known statement to the actual road map that we are going to take out of Iraq and Afghanistan.

There is a due date of June 30 for the transition of power. I frankly believe in al Qaeda assessing the situation that we actually need to have, if you will, a greater understanding as to whether that transition of power will truly work. We do not have that, but yet we have been asked to give \$25 billion, \$25 billion in order for those dollars to go to Iraq and Afghanistan.

I stand here in full support of increased military personnel pay, of support for families and children of the military personnel, of veterans, in support of an increase in their salaries; and, in fact, Mr. Speaker, I had an amendment that would offer \$100 million taken from the missile defense dollars that cost \$20 billion to train, equip and provide related assistance to the military security forces.

Had that amendment been accepted, I might have voted for this appropriation; but the reason why I think this point was extremely important, and again, this may have been something that was discussed in the midst of the committee process, but it was not brought to this body, not in a full debate, and that is, in my visits I spoke to Reservists and National Guard who indicated, I was trained as a cook, trained as a carpenter, trained as a driver, and yet I was being utilized as an MP; I have been utilized as a prison guard for Abu Ghraib, for example. In many instances, because of the short-changing of personnel, we have seen those ill-equipped to be in the midst of combat or to be used or be involved or engaged in combat action, not defense action, not meaning I am doing something else and I am being attacked, but to go out offensively and be part of combat.

We are seeing those individuals untrained doing those duties. We have seen tragedies occur. Certainly, we saw the tragedies of soldiers being kidnapped on convoys. We see the tragedies of MPs not really being trained as MPs; and certainly, there is no greater tragedy for the American personnel and for the Iraqis of Abu Ghraib.

So this amendment was to be offered, and unfortunately, because of the unfortunate restraints, or the restraints that we have, that amendment was not accepted.

I would have also offered an amendment to deal specifically with contracting companies because we realize that we had a problem with outside contractors, though many have done very able work; but I believe that if you are a contractor wearing the flag of the United States of America, engaged with the United States military, you must have an impeccable record; and if by chance you have been charged with human rights violations in the last 5 years or beyond, then I would argue that you have no place in having a contract in the United States Government, but particularly in areas of conflict; and I would have offered that amendment had it been received and accepted.

Let me also say that there are two other crises that I think are extremely important. The first one goes back to military personnel. That has to do, Mr. Speaker, with mental health; and I would have offered an amendment on mental health as well as additional resources for the Sudan.

Let me close by saying that all of this would have warranted a better bill, and maybe we would have had a chance to address the needs of women in America, which I would have spoken about or will endeavor to speak about at some other time. In any event, I will submit many of my comments for the RECORD.