

reflect back on the role of this man who was an example for each of us and who deserves the world's attention, the world's prayers, and the world's acclaim.

EIGHT-DAY BIPARTISAN CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I have remarks that I would like to make on two different subjects. One has to do with a visit by a delegation of Senators led by the Democratic leader, the Senator from Nevada, Mr. REID, and then a brief remark about the proposal that we use the supplemental appropriations bill to turn State driver's licenses into national identification cards.

First I will comment on the 8-day congressional delegation that I was a part of over the last recess. It was led, as I said, by the Democratic leader. Let me say first how much I appreciate the style of his leadership. He is the Democratic leader, and occasionally there is a partisan word in this place, but this was a bipartisan delegation. We visited eight countries in 8 days, including Jerusalem, Israel, the Palestinian territories—visited leaders of the Palestinian Authority—we visited Kuwait, Iraq, Georgia, and the Ukraine. In France, we received a NATO briefing from our ranking general.

I think it is important for this body to know that in all of his public and private comments, the Democratic leader spoke for the administration of the U.S. Government. In other words, whatever his private views of policy difference might have been, he did not express those outside of this country. I was not surprised by that—I think that is the way it ought to be—but I was impressed by that. I was impressed by that part of his attitude, by the bipartisan quality of the delegation, and by the hard work he expected of those on the delegation. I appreciated the chance to be included, and I appreciated his leadership.

As I am sure the Senator from North Carolina, who occupies the chair, knows, and the Senator from Texas feels the same way, there are so many thousands of people—in my case, Tennesseans—serving in Iraq and Kuwait that I almost felt at home visiting there last week. My wife Honey and I were greeted at the Kuwait Airport by an Army reservist who is publisher of the Dyersburg News and copublisher of the State Gazette. We had dinner with the 844th Engineer Combat Battalion, which is based in Knoxville, which includes more than 500 Tennesseans. One of those reservists is SGT Amanda Bunch, a nursing assistant at Asbury Acres in Maryville, my hometown where my mother and grandfather lived for a few years. The school superintendent from Athens, just down the road from my hometown; the president of the Lexington Rotary Club in west Tennessee, a physician; three Blount County deputies, from my home coun-

ty—all among those serving in the Tennessee National Guard.

I may have felt at home, but as LTC Don Dinello, who commands the 844th, reminded me, no place there is entirely safe. A few days earlier, a patrol had discovered explosives on a bridge over which the colonel's soldiers might have traveled. Thankfully, the explosive device was disarmed before anyone was hurt.

In Baghdad, I ate lunch with three marines who were recent high school graduates from Savannah, Manchester, and Tullahoma, TN. Their mission is to guard the U.S. Embassy. I asked one of these young men what a U.S. Senator should know about their work. Andrew Pottier of Savannah told me:

Not much to know, sir. They shoot at us and we just shoot them back.

Not even in the Green Zone, where several thousand Americans work every day, was it entirely safe. The protocol officer greeted us wearing a nice green dress covered by a flack jacket. When one of the members of our delegation, a female Senator, went to the ladies restroom, a female soldier with an AK-47 went first, inspecting every stall.

I was reminded just a couple of days ago how dangerous it can be when I went to the funeral in Sevier County of SGT Paul W. Thomason, III, the first member of our National Guard unit, the 278th, to be killed.

It is very difficult to grasp the reality of the security situation in Iraq. It is hard to grasp it from television. On the one hand, there is the danger I just described. On the other hand, our casualties are significantly down. Twelve of the 17 Iraqi provinces, we were told by our commanders there, are relatively without incident. An average of 800 supply trucks convoy each day from Kuwait to the edge of Baghdad. Since August, there have been 166 attacks on these trucks, killing 2 soldiers.

Forty percent of those serving in Iraq and Kuwait are reservists or guardsmen. Several thousand of them are from Tennessee. Most left behind families, jobs, and mortgages for up to 18 months. Far from home, they are dealing with child custody, insurance, births, and deaths. Thirty percent of the members of the 844th unit, with whom I visited, are continuing their education online. I brought home information so I could help seven reservists who are having trouble with their citizenship applications.

Here are three other thoughts from that visit:

One, armored vehicles. Commanders in Kuwait assured me that no humvee or truck is now going into a combat zone without Level I or Level II armor.

Second, in the training of Iraq forces, we met with GEN David Patraeus, the former commander of Fort Campbell's 101st Airborne Division and one of our most accomplished military leaders. He persuaded me and I think most other members of our delegation that

training is proceeding in an impressive way. It is not complete, but we are making progress.

Finally, infant democracies. We have sacrificed many lives and paid a heavy price in dollars to invade Iraq and remove Saddam Hussein, but without that decision there would be no infant democracies in Iraq and Afghanistan. Georgia, Ukraine, and Kuwait would be less democratic, and Syria would not be pulling troops out of Lebanon. We in the world are safer without Saddam Hussein, who the new Prime Minister designate of Iraq, if he is elected, told us, in his words, that Saddam had buried alive 300,000 people.

When will our troops come home? I do not know. I believe we must have a success strategy, not just an exit strategy. This strategy should be based on whether Iraqis can reasonably defend themselves and whether they have some sort of constitutional government. Having liberated Iraq, it is now not our job to stay there until there is a perfect democracy.

We Americans are very impatient. We also sometimes have short memories. We are expecting the Iraqis to come up with a constitution by August. It took America 12 years to write a constitution after declaring our independence, another 130 years to give women the right to vote in this country, and nearly 200 years before African Americans were allowed to vote in every part of America.

I hope after the two Iraqi elections scheduled for the end of 2005 that we will begin to see large numbers of Tennesseans coming home; for our average stay in other instances where the United States has helped build nations, as in Germany and Japan, has been about 5 years.

The Presbyterian Chaplain of the 844th—which I visited—Rev. Tim Fary from Rhea County, I discovered I had met before. He was then 8 years old and I was Governor of Tennessee. I was playing a piano concert with the Chattanooga Symphony at a July concert at Chickamauga near Chattanooga. Tim Fary, 8 years old, was lost.

He told me:

When I found my parents 2 hours later, I had a handwritten note that read, "Dear Tim: Thank you for your advice. Governor Lamar Alexander." That note kept me out of trouble. I still have it.

We hope Tim's prayers, as well as our own, will keep our brave Tennesseans safe so they can accomplish their mission and come home soon.

DRIVER'S LICENSES

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I would now like to speak for 4 or 5 minutes on another subject. I again thank the Senator from Texas. This is a subject that I recently wrote an op-ed about, which was published last week in the Washington Post. Fearing that many of my colleagues might have been in places such as Texas or Tennessee or Iraq and might have missed