

enough to ensure that in the future the insurgents and terrorists do not take hold in Iraq.

It is time for our military presence in the Middle East to be converted to a powerful quick-reaction force outside of Iraq. 80 percent of Iraqis want us out of their country and 47 percent say killing Americans is justified.

Then, we should reallocate the funds being spent in Iraq, which dwarfs the combined budgets of all other programs in place to fight terrorism, and re-engage with the countries around the world that rallied behind us in the wake of 9/11 but were alienated by our conduct in Iraq.

Some have suggested that taking the target off the backs of our troops by removing them from the center of this conflict would lead to chaos. Implicit in that critique is the suggestion that we don't have chaos today. Our troops' presence there, I believe, is allowing Iraq's citizens a convenient excuse for failing to take responsibility for their destiny.

The Iraqi people clearly would like us to leave and permit them to govern. Our troops have expressed the same sentiment. And it is clear that if we are to reclaim our place on the world stage as a unifying force for democratic values and the ideals of our country, the way to start is to redeploy so we can be ready for future challenges.

TRIBUTE TO ROBERT (BOB)  
LECLERCQ

HON. THADDEUS G. McCOTTER  
OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
*Wednesday, June 21, 2006*

Mr. McCOTTER. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor and acknowledge Robert (Bob) Leclercq as he completes his distinguished career as a firefighter in Garden City, Michigan.

Bob has dedicated his life to helping the citizens of Michigan. Upon graduation from East Garden City High School in 1970, he joined the National Guard as a Medical Corpsman in the Mobile Army Surgical Hospital, Unit 2077, of Detroit. Bob began his career as a firefighter in Garden City on October 30, 1979. During 23 years of honorable and dedicated service, he advanced through the ranks from Firefighter to Engineer to Lieutenant and ultimately to Captain.

For two decades, Bob has vigorously pursued additional education and specialized training, including Advanced Firefighting, EMT Specialist, Pump Operator, and Hazardous Materials courses. He has also served as Trustee, Secretary, and currently as President on the International Association of Fire Fighters, Local 1911 Executive Board. In addition, Bob started two beneficial community programs: one, which teaches CPR classes; the second, which takes blood pressures at the senior tower. In 1986, the Jaycees recognized Bob's contributions with the Michigan's Top Ten Outstanding Young People Award.

At this milestone in Bob's life, let us reflect upon the decades of his dedication; let us remember the scores of lives which have been touched by his benevolence; and let us not forget the bravery and courage with which he served and protected. His friends and family are inspired by his accomplishments, honored by his loyalty, and ennobled by his exemplary love for neighbor and community.

Mr. Speaker—Bob's wife, Brenda, his children, Bob Jr. and Sherri, and his grandson, Drake, have ample reason to celebrate. In honor of his commitment to protecting all the citizens of Michigan and of his legendary dedication to improving the lives of Garden City residents, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Bob for his years of service to our community and our country.

DECLARING THAT THE UNITED STATES WILL PREVAIL IN THE GLOBAL WAR ON TERROR

SPEECH OF

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
*Wednesday, June 21, 2006*

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, this resolution will not ensure any success in Iraq. It will not bring our troops home. It will only signal the death of true, honest debate within the walls of this great Chamber.

For many more years than any of us have been alive, this House, the People's House, has been democracy's citadel for intelligent, meaningful, real debate that has led to solutions to some of history's most important and vexing crises.

The charade that many on this floor are attempting to pass as a debate today does a great disservice to those monumental American leaders who have spoken from this same floor over the past two centuries. It does a great disservice to the American public, which expects its leaders to lead, not pander. And it does a great disservice to our military men and women who are depending on us to work together and complete our mission so that they may complete their mission and come home. Today's so called debate is politics at its worst—we're playing politics while U.S. men and women are being killed, wounded and kept away from their families.

Mr. Speaker, I remember lying in a military hospital bed just home from Vietnam while Congress played politics—it was disdainful then and when I think of those brave men and women I've visited at Walter Reed Hospital, Bethesda Hospital and Ramstein Hospital in Germany—it makes me sick today. Let's do our job and bring our troops home as soon as possible.

For weeks we have been told, and the American people have been promised, by the Republican majority that there would be a debate on this floor on the Iraq war. Instead, we get what the news is reporting as "Republican election year strategy." Mr. Speaker, this charade represents a shameless dereliction of our duties and a missed opportunity to provide the American public with the open and honest debate they have been demanding for the past 3 long years now.

This feel-good resolution ignores the issues most important to the men and women serving in Iraq, their families and the taxpayers who have already been billed nearly half a trillion dollars.

It ignores the issues raised by some of our most respected generals. Just listen to what a few have said about the Administration's rush to war:

"We are paying the price for the lack of credible planning, or the lack of a plan."—General Anthony Zinni

"What we are living with now is the consequences of successive policy failures."—Lieutenant General Greg Newbold

"They pressed for open warfare before the diplomacy was finished. It was a tragic mistake. It's a strategic blunder."—General Wesley Clark

This resolution ignores the lack of accountability and oversight that's led to some of the most egregious and embarrassing examples of waste, fraud and abuse on record, such as: \$9 billion in missing reconstruction funds.

\$263 million in excessive or unsubstantiated costs for importing gasoline into Iraq.

Over \$20 million for items that weren't delivered, including:

Security for civilian flights at Baghdad International Airport that never occurred; non-existent pipeline employees; old and broken down trucks; spray-painted Iraqi cranes passed off as new; police trucks; and a refurbished police academy and library. And millions more have been wasted at taxpayer expense due to no-bid and over-billed contracts awarded by the Bush administration.

This resolution ignores how the civilian leadership of the Defense Department grossly miscalculated the armor and equipment needs of our troops before sending them into combat, which resulted in:

40,000 troops who didn't have basic Kevlar vests or the ceramic plates needed for full protection, which left parents and spouses to buy body armor for their loved ones;

30,000 Marines who needed twice as many heavy machine guns, more fully protected armored vehicles and more communications equipment to perform their operations successfully;

Soldiers who were issued boots with cheap and soft soles that quickly wore out, thus having to sew material to the bottom of their boots out of desperation;

Soldiers who went to combat with inadequate or poor field radios, ammo carriers, weapon lubricant, socks and even rifle slings;

Military units that were deployed without the necessary armor needed to protect ground vehicles, making them vulnerable to IEDs. And when our troops jerry-rigged them with steel playing, they often flipped or rolled-over, injuring or killing soldiers;

And soldiers who subsequently had to sift through garbage dumps for scrap metal to uparmor ground vehicles.

Mr. Speaker, if you are in charge, you are responsible. That is why several respected generals have cast a vote of no confidence with our civilian leadership of the Defense Department for its lack of planning:

Rumsfeld and his team turned what should have been a deliberate victory in Iraq into a prolonged challenge.—Major General John Batiste.

I do not believe Secretary Rumsfeld is the right person to fight that war, based on his absolute failures in managing the war against Saddam in Iraq.—Major General Charles H. Swannack, Jr.

They only need the military advice when it satisfies their agenda.—Lieutenant General John Riggs

If I was President I would have relieved him three years ago.—Lieutenant General Paul K. Van Riper

Two and a half more years of that leadership was too long for my nation, for my Army, and for my family.—Major General Paul Eaton

Mr. Speaker, we need to be working non-stop to bring our troops home as soon as possible, not to score political points while they