

also one of the bright stars in our country's balance of trade.

Many like myself see recycling as an important environmental issue facing our country, but there are a whole host of other issues that face, and possibly inhibit, recycling in the United States, far beyond just getting people to throw cans in the proper receptacle. That is why we created the Recycling Caucus, so we can focus our efforts on this important sector and address not only environmental issues, but also issues of trade, energy and commerce.

Chief among those issues is the very simple statement that should guide any legislative efforts that impact this industry. Recyclables are not just waste and recycling is not just disposal. In fact, recycling is the opposite of both. By thinking of recycling as waste and recycling as a disposal activity like trash or garbage collection, we risk encouraging unintended consequences that can and do inhibit recycling.

We need to avoid inhibiting recycling efforts because the benefits are tremendous. For example, recycling kept over 140 million tons of material out of landfills last year. In addition, manufacturing products from recycled materials save energy. For example, using recycled aluminum can save as much as 95 percent of the energy used when producing products from virgin ore. Recycling also reduces eight major categories of water pollutants and ten major categories of air pollutants, including greenhouse gas emissions, compared with manufacturing from scratch.

Mr. Speaker, I again want to thank my caucus cochair, Mr. GILLMOR of Ohio, and our other colleagues who have already joined us on the House Recycling Caucus. I also want to thank the members and staff of the Institute of Scrap Recycling Industries for their assistance over the past 2 years in helping us make the idea of the caucus into a reality.

The Recycling Caucus is a broad-based caucus that will address all facets of recycling, with input from a wide range of associations, industry groups, experts, environmental organizations and other stakeholders.

Again I want to wish Mrs. SNOWE and Mr. CARPER much success in the other body. I look forward to working with them to promote all aspects of recycling in the United States.

STRAIGHT FACTS ABOUT IRAQ

Mr. MCDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take my 5-minute Special Order out of order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman from Washington is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Mr. MCDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, the President likes to say as the Iraqi people stand up, the U.S. will stand down. He has changed the mission from finding weapons of mass destruction to re-

moving a dictator and bringing democracy to Iraq, saying the Iraqi people would decide what is best for their country. The President essentially likes to point to the recent formation of a new Iraq government as vindication of his policies and a turning point in bringing peace to a troubled land.

Last week, Iraqi Prime Minister Maliki announced a 24 point reconciliation to stabilize the country, his government's first major independent initiative. Within hours, we learned the U.S. had been deeply involved in watering down what the administration did not like about the Iraqi reconciliation plan, including two key elements, an offer of amnesty for insurgents and calling for a timetable for U.S. troop withdrawal.

Well, Mr. Speaker, you can't have it both ways. U.S. troops will never be able to leave Iraq as long as we stay the course of allowing the Iraqi government to make decisions only so long as we agree with.

After all the sacrifices made by the American people, after all the American soldiers lost in combat, wounded and psychologically scarred in combat, the President's Iraq strategy is evolving into a corporate subsidy strategy. Influential leaders at home and abroad are beginning to raise questions about the President's intentions.

Mr. Speaker, I will enter into the record three recent articles from the mainstream influential news media in the Mideast and the U.S. "Sovereignty is just a word on paper until Iraq is allowed to run its own affairs," is the title of an editorial published in the Daily Star, a distinguished newspaper in Lebanon.

On the same day, the Daily Star reprinted a commentary originally published in the Los Angeles Times entitled: An Iraq Amnesty Will Split the Insurgency. The Arab News published a commentary entitled Reconciliation in Iraq: If Only Maliki Had Freedom of Action.

Thoughtful people are raising troubling questions. This is the conclusion of the Daily Star's editorial: "The Iraqis need the space to make hard decisions that will help them restore stability in their country. But they will never find this space so long as the U.S. officials continue to micromanage the Iraqi government according to their own plan. What the Iraqis really need most now is what the Americans promised them long ago, freedom. And that ought to include the freedom to govern their own country in a way that would benefit the Iraqi people."

The President keeps telling Congress and the American people that it is stated policy to let Iraq stand up. If that is the case, then the President cannot instruct the administration to hold the Iraqi government down. Otherwise, we are installing a U.S. government, run by Iraqis, and that is one of the worst fears of the Middle East.

If the President is going to follow his own policy, then Iraqi leaders may

make decisions we don't like. If the President is calling the shots behind the scenes, then the new Iraqi government will have no credibility. Without credibility an Iraqi government is living on borrowed time, and we know it.

This Nation has some history with attempts to install or prop up governments around the world beholden to the United States, and the record is dismal. How many times have we thrown billions at so-called friends, only to see these leaders ousted or ignored because they are seen as puppets of the United States?

The Arab News commentary says, "If left to his own devices Iraq's new Prime Minister Maliki has a good chance of uniting his fractured country and stamping out the violence. But there is just one problem. U.S. internal politics appear to be thwarting his efforts."

Running Iraq from behind the scenes cannot be the President's definition of stay the course, or the U.S. will stay in Iraq indefinitely. The Iraq war has divided this Nation, and the Iraq government's decisions on difficult issues like amnesty for insurgents will divide America even more.

The President said he wanted a free and independent Iraq. Well, perhaps he got what he wanted. Now what is he going to do about it?

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Finding a way to end the war can be as difficult as finding a way to start a war. It will be impossible unless the President starts talking straight to the American people and to the Iraqi people. You cannot install a puppet government and think that that is going to fool the Iraqis. They will continue to attack, which will keep our troops there and keep the death going.

We must be honest about what our policy in Iraq really is.

[From the Arab News, June 27, 2006]

RECONCILIATION IN IRAQ: IF ONLY MALIKI HAD FREEDOM OF ACTION

(By Linda Heard)

If left to his own devices Iraq's new Prime Minister Nuri Al-Maliki has a good chance of uniting his fractured country and stamping out the violence. But there is just one problem. U.S. internal politics appear to be thwarting his efforts.

On Sunday, Al-Maliki presented his Parliament with a 24-point national reconciliation plan that was backed by Sunni opposition figures. This included amnesty for insurgents without blood on their hands, further prisoner releases, and a timetable for Iraqis to take over all aspects of their country's security.

Des Browne, Britain's defense secretary, applauded the moves saying, "There is no conflict in the world that has been resolved without dealing with the issue of reconciliation. Reconciliation requires risks, whether it is in South Africa, Northern Ireland or the Balkans . . ."

These are undoubtedly good steps on the road to cementing various factions but earlier press releases suggest Al-Maliki's initial grand design has been considerably watered-down.

According to a report in last Friday's Times newspaper titled "Peace deal offers

Iraq insurgents an amnesty” Al-Maliki was set to “promise a finite, U.N.-approved timeline for the withdrawal of all foreign troops from Iraq; a halt to U.S. operations against insurgent strongholds” and an amnesty to insurgents responsible for the deaths of American forces.

In the event, the above crucial points were excluded from the prime minister’s proposals.

In light of the turnaround, it is almost certain that U.S. officials have been busy whispering in his ear. On Thursday, Democratic senators proposed a vote to begin the drawdown of U.S. troops but were rebuffed by mostly Republican opponents, who believe an early pullout would empower terrorists, weaken the U.S.-sponsored Iraqi government and endanger the security of the U.S.

In reality, most Bush supporters perceive the argument in terms of America winning or losing the war placing concerns about Iraq’s stability secondary. For them an imminent withdrawal would be tantamount to an admission of failure or, worse, surrender that they fear will affect the outcome of next November’s midterm elections.

The idea that insurgents could be forgiven for the killing of U.S. military personnel has also failed to sit well with either members of the U.S. administration or Congress, who predict public outrage.

An article by Lincoln Lease, a U.S. Army specialist serving in Baghdad, published on insidebayarea.com illustrates how some Americans might view that move.

Lease writes: “I take personal offense to Al-Maliki’s proposition to grant any kind of amnesty—limited or unlimited—to any insurgent who has been involved in terrorism against the United States. It seems to me that Al-Maliki has slapped all the families of wounded or dead soldiers in the face.”

The idea that the Iraqi leader is intent on humiliating the families of American soldiers or bent on offending Lincoln Lease and his ilk is entirely preposterous.

Al-Maliki faces not only the daunting task of quelling a bloody insurgency; he must also rid his country of foreign fighters, gain control over sectarian militias and commence the rebuilding process.

To do this he must bring his people together in a process of forgiveness and reconciliation, a process that cannot be effective as long as Iraqi insurgents are being labeled “terrorists” for their attempts to oust invading armies that from the standpoint of most Iraqis entered the country under false pretences in the first place.

In his article Lease asks Al-Maliki “How can you even consider the possibility of granting any kind of reprieve for any insurgent? How can you view these terrorists as patriots defending their country? How can you justify the murder of U.S. soldiers on your streets? We came here to rebuild Iraq, not to occupy it.”

Poor Lincoln Lease has patently fallen hook, line and sinker for the official line. He says, “we came here to rebuild Iraq” while every one knows the reason given for the invasion was Iraq’s stockpiles of WMD which turned out to be nonexistent.

He might also be reminded that billions of dollars slated for reconstruction have been channeled elsewhere or simply disappeared into the ether. Moreover, his government’s construction of up to five permanent military bases and the largest and most fortified embassy in the world indicates Americans plan to stay in Iraq for the long haul.

While it is tragic that 2,500 U.S. soldiers have lost their lives since the 2003 invasion, new official figures point to the deaths of 50,000 Iraqi civilians during the same period; 20,000 more than George W. Bush’s recent estimate.

If Lease, who began his rant by expressing his “rage and contempt” was sincere in his concern for military families, he would be backing an imminent military pullout rather than focusing on his own ego-led sensibilities.

A growing number of specialist think-tanks and Middle East pundits are now of the opinion that the very presence of foreign troops serves to fuel the insurgency, while evidence points to the fact that far from bettering the lives of Iraqis the occupation has thrust their war-torn land into an abyss of desperation and despair.

Should Lease care to relinquish his rose-colored spectacles for a moment, he might care to read the recently leaked memo from the U.S. Ambassador to Iraq Zalmay Khalilzad to the U.S. State Department that reveals a country in turmoil, run by armed militias, its people traumatized by fear.

Dated June 6 and published by the Washington Post, the memo highlights negative experiences encountered by nine members of the U.S. Embassy’s staff afraid to tell even family members that they work for the Americans.

It’s been three years and three months since “Shock and Awe”. The Bush administration has surely had its chance to bring some semblance of normality to Iraq and has failed dismally. There is only one thing left for it to do and that is to back off and allow Al-Maliki a free hand.

Former U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell was famously reported as telling Bush “if you break it, you’ll own it” with reference to Iraq. That may be true but the only ones who can give that country back together are the Iraqis themselves. It’s time they were given that chance.

[From the Daily Star, June 28, 2006]

AN IRAQ AMNESTY WILL SPLIT THE INSURGENCY

(By Henri J. Barkey)

The new Iraqi government is considering giving amnesty to some insurgents, including those who committed attacks against the United States, other coalition forces and the Iraqi military. It’s understandable that many U.S. soldiers and other Americans would find the idea offensive. Nevertheless, it is critical for the Bush administration to quietly back the proposal behind the scenes.

The details of the amnesty haven’t been announced, and the details are crucial. It would be a grave mistake to offer amnesty to the foreign fighters who have poured into Iraq to help with—or foment—the insurgency. But amnesty for former Baathists and other Sunni rejectionists could help divide them from their Al-Qaeda comrades, to the benefit of Iraq and the U.S. However distasteful, some sort of amnesty is a prerequisite for Iraqi reconciliation. American troops will leave one day, and the Iraqis will have to find a way to live together. If the U.S. wants to succeed in Iraq, it must put Iraqi interests first.

The killing of the Al-Qaeda leader in Iraq, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, has created an unprecedented opportunity for the new Iraqi government. Zarqawi triggered resentment not just because he slaughtered civilians indiscriminately but because he hogged international attention, eclipsing his homegrown jihadist competitors.

Moreover, although he controlled only a segment of the Iraqi insurgency, Zarqawi had an aura of invincibility. His death gives the Iraqi government a chance to divide and co-opt the insurgents, exploiting whatever intelligence was gained in the Zarqawi raids and whatever disarray his death has created to score more military gains.

The government of Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki enjoys more legitimacy than its pred-

ecessors, and for the first time it includes bona fide Sunni representatives. But it needs to change the pessimistic mood in Iraq while retaining the goodwill of its American backers. As a sovereign government, Iraq has every right to set the terms of the amnesty, but it should proceed with caution.

An amnesty aimed only at insurgents not affiliated with Al-Qaeda would deepen the divide between the foreign and Iraqi fighters. On the other hand, an amnesty for those who perpetrated the hideous and indiscriminate bombings of mosques and marketplaces would both condone terror and validate the insurgents’ cause. Anyone involved in recruiting suicide bombers, or planning or helping execute bombing attacks, should not qualify for amnesty.

Americans will find it repugnant that those who blew up our soldiers may get off scot-free. But ironically, that outcome is in our best interests. An Iraqi government that insists, in the face of American objections, on implementing an amnesty would demonstrate to its people, especially the Sunnis, that it is not a stooge of Washington, that it is capable of acting independently of the Bush administration. And the stronger and more independent the Iraqi government is, the more likely that U.S. soldiers can come home.

Amnesties have succeeded in ending insurgencies in many other countries because they bring the rebels in from the cold and undermine their support structure. Algeria, which experienced some of the most violent civil strife of the modern era, offered repeated amnesties, and today its nightmare appears to be ending. Turkey, which has refused even to consider a meaningful amnesty for its Kurdish rebels, is engaged in a seemingly unending low-intensity conflict.

Amnesties alone are not a panacea. There will always be die-hards for whom the cause is too sacred or for whom violence is a *raison d’être*. Still, every militant has an extended family network. These relatives are unwittingly drafted into the conflict; they are likely to worry about their sons’ or brothers’ fates, to be extremely antagonistic toward the authority pursuing them and to help fighters evade their pursuers. A meaningful amnesty, accompanied by a counter-insurgency campaign, can turn these relatives into allies. They will, often for their own sakes, put pressure on fighters to take advantage of such an offer.

In Iraq, the jihadists Zarqawi trained will not lay down their arms, but their Iraqi brethren may do so—and betray the foreigners to save their own skins. Even a few such victories would give the counter-insurgency momentum and the Maliki government breathing space. A decisive victory against the Iraqi insurgency could take a decade or more. But Washington and Baghdad have demonstrated that they can be allies for the long haul. Washington can best demonstrate its commitment to the new government accepting an Iraqi amnesty that allows Maliki to give his foes a reason to lay down their arms.

[From the Daily Star, June 27, 2006]

SOVEREIGNTY IS JUST A WORD ON PAPER UNTIL IRAQ IS ALLOWED TO RUN ITS OWN AFFAIRS

Back in June 2004, the U.S. administrator in Iraq, L. Paul Bremer, handed a leather-bound document to then-interim Prime Minister Iyad Allawi, and with this symbolic gesture pronounced Iraq a free and sovereign state. One could easily challenge the fantasy that the Americans ever really owned Iraq’s sovereignty and could return it or withhold it as they pleased. But in addition, one could easily challenge the idea that the Iraqis have been “granted” any sovereignty at all.

Although sovereignty was long ago transferred, the Iraqis remain on the receiving end of a 9,996-kilometer screwdriver that officials in Washington still wield in their effort to shape the future of Iraq. The most recent example of U.S. tutelage at work was the amending of an amnesty plan put forth by Premier Nuri al-Maliki on Sunday. An earlier version offered to pardon Iraqi insurgents who have attacked U.S. troops. But after a series of closed-door talks between U.S. and Iraqi officials, Maliki announced a watered-down version of the amnesty, one which is unlikely to lure any of the major insurgent groups that aren't already participating in the political process.

It is understandable that U.S. officials would react with outrage to the idea of forgiving insurgents with American blood on their hands. As Senator Carl Levin said, "the idea that they should even consider talking about amnesty for people who have killed people who liberated their country is unconscionable." But Senator Levin and others like him seem to forget that liberating something means setting it free.

The Iraqis need the space to make hard decisions that will help them restore stability in their country. But they will never find this space so long as U.S. officials continue to micro-manage the Iraqi government according to their own plan. What the Iraqis really need most now is what the Americans promised them long ago: freedom. And that ought to include the freedom to govern their own country in a way that will benefit the Iraqi people.

REINTEGRATING EX-OFFENDERS BACK INTO NORMAL LIFE

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

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, the problem of successfully reintegrating ex-offenders back into normal life is one of the major issues facing especially low-income and minority communities throughout the Nation.

This problem continues to fester throughout the United States of America. It is indeed a social as well as a public safety problem. Nearly 650,000 people are being released from Federal and State prisons this year. There are over 3,200 jails throughout the United States, the vast majority of which are operated by county governments. Each year these jails will release in excess of 10,000 people back into communities throughout the Nation. We will continue to have these massive releases over the next several years. The massive increase in incarceration in the United States that occurred during the past 25 years now must turn public attention toward the consequences of incarceration without providing meaningful rehabilitation measures and access to reentry programs and opportunities.

As we know, the large numbers of ex-offenders being released from prison will cause enormous public safety problems for many communities, especially where large numbers of ex-offenders will return and live in the same neighborhoods.

The Justice Department reported that the cost of crime to victims is ap-

proximately \$450 billion a year. Therefore, these communities will absorb the high cost of further victimization as a result of the presence of such a high number of ex-offenders.

The Congressional Black Caucus is concerned about the administration not requesting or adequately funding the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant Program, Residential Substance Abuse Treatment Program, Gang Prevention Program, Juvenile Accountability Block Grant, Juvenile Delinquency Block Grants and other programs.

The Congressional Black Caucus recommended increasing the funding level up to \$3.1 billion for Justice programs and to expand the re-entry programs for nonviolent ex-offenders to facilitate their transition from prison to normal community life.

The CBC wants to ensure that specific programs are receiving adequate funding to prevent crime, increase public safety, and reduce recidivism. We, of course, can do that by passing the Second Chance Reentry Bill that now has more than 100 sponsors in the House, 22 sponsors in the Senate, is actually awaiting markup in the Judiciary Committee. And I would urge all of my colleagues to sign on, join up, help rehabilitate and prepare the individuals who are coming home from jail and prison. Support the Second Chance Reentry Bill.

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

(Mr. JONES of North Carolina 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 Texas (Mr. BURGESS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURGESS 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 Nebraska (Mr. OSBORNE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. OSBORNE 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 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.)

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

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana 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 Ohio (Mr. BROWN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BROWN of Ohio 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 Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BILIRAKIS 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 Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. KAPTUR addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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

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

TRIBUTE TO THE DAHL FAMILY

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

Mr. KIND. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the Dahl family of Viroqua, Wisconsin. With their operation of the Dahl Pharmacy for more than 100 years and four generations, the Dahls wove themselves into the fabric of their community. Their pharmacy has been one of the pillars of Viroqua's downtown business district for over a century. From medication to a soda fountain, prescriptions to snacks, all sorts of services have been available to old and young alike since the early 1900s.

Chuck and Karen Dahl are good friends of mine who owned and operated the pharmacy for many years. Decent, principled people, the Dahls worked hard to grow a successful small business that would be attentive to local concerns. They have been actively involved in their community, displaying their belief in the responsibility to give back to the people who allowed their business to prosper. The Dahls' leadership has made the city of Viroqua and Vernon County better places to live, work, and raise children. In 2001, Chuck and Karen passed the Dahl Pharmacy along to another generation by selling it to Chuck's daughter, Katherine Dahl.

The Dahl Pharmacy, like many providers throughout the Nation, is facing a myriad of complications with the new Medicare Prescription Drug Plan. I commend Dahl and all the other pharmacies which have been on the frontlines of this new program. They have tirelessly served seniors uncertain about the new Medicare Part D regulations.