

There was no objection.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, last week, Army General George Casey, the top American military commander in Iraq, presented civilians leaders here at home with a plan for sharply reducing the number of U.S. troops in Iraq for September of this year.

According to reports, General Casey shared his plan with Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld; Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Peter Pace; and even President Bush himself.

The idea of an actual plan for how to end the war in Iraq is something that many of us in Congress have been calling for over the last several months and years. General Casey's plan reportedly suggests reducing our troop presence by as much as 60 percent. But, unfortunately, without a plan about how best to accomplish bringing our troops home, a plan to protect the safety and ensure the safety of 135,000 American soldiers, this could haphazardly actually endanger the remaining 40,000 to 50,000 soldiers and leave them behind as sitting ducks.

Mr. Speaker, I have been calling for the President to present a plan for bringing our troops home since December of 2005; and in May of last year, when we held the first debate on Iraq on the House floor after the beginning of the war itself, 128 Members of the House, more than one-third of the Members of the House of Representatives, agreed that the President needed to come up with a plan for bringing our troops home and share it with the appropriate congressional committees.

Today, more than a year later and with the majority of the American people agreeing that this senseless war needs to end as soon as possible, that number would be surely higher.

The idea that the President invaded a country in the very first place without a strategic goal in mind and without a plan for how to win and how to leave is absolutely incomprehensible. And no one should confuse the Bush administration's tired old line about staying the course for an actual plan or a strategy. Lines like "we will stay in Iraq until the job gets done" are nothing more than trite slogans.

What most Americans and nearly all Iraqis understand is that open-ended U.S. military presence in Iraq does not serve either Americans or Iraqis. The very perception that we plan to stay in Iraq permanently at any level is one of the greatest catalysts spurring the Iraqi insurgency. Just yesterday, 11 Sunni insurgent groups publicly stated that they would immediately halt all terrorist attacks in Iraq, including those against American troops, if the United States would publicly commit to leaving within the next 2 years.

It is clear that the time is long overdue to bring our troops home. For goodness sakes, the American people are for this. The Iraqis are for this. Why can't Congress be for this? Is it not time we caught up with the people we are supposed to be working for?

Every week, every day, every hour we stay in Iraq is costing us dozens of American and Iraqi lives, hundreds of physical and psychological wounds, and billions of dollars. Let us send a message to our troops, let us send a message to the rest of the world that the values of diplomacy, multilateral cooperation, and respect for others' freedoms are the paramount American values, the qualities we stand for as a Nation, not endless war and certainly not the occupation of a sovereign people.

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Since the beginning of the war, President Bush has said we would leave Iraq as soon as the military commanders on the ground told him it was time to do so. Well, now the highest-ranking military leader in Iraq has presented a plan for bringing our troops home. For the sake of our soldiers, their families and the people of the United States and Iraq, it is time for the President to keep his end of the bargain, but, Mr. Speaker, not without a plan, one presented to the Congress. He didn't have a plan going into the war, he didn't have a plan to win the war, but he must have a plan leaving the war. Otherwise, our troops will once again be under great danger.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PRICE of Georgia). 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 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.)

REUNITING MISSING CHILDREN WITH THEIR FAMILIES

Ms. MILLENDER-McDONALD. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to speak out of order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentlewoman from California is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Ms. MILLENDER-McDONALD. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to stand tonight and thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for passing H.R. 4416, a bill I introduced to help missing children be reunited with their families. Let me first begin by thanking Chairman TOM DAVIS and Ranking Member WAXMAN for reporting this measure out of the House Committee on Government Reform. I would also like to thank Chairman Ehlers for the role that he and the Committee on House Administration have played in moving this legislation forward.

Mr. Speaker, my bill will permanently authorize the use of official franked and penalty mail to assist in the location of missing and exploited children. Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita opened many eyes to the undeniable reality that faces so many of America's most vulnerable. In the aftermath of those disasters, TV screens across the country aired photographs and other information about missing children throughout the gulf region. Fortunately, in the days and months since, the children missing as a result of these hurricanes have been reunited with their families, and that is very good news.

However, one thing remains clear. This Congress should take every reasonable step available to help families, not only those from the gulf coast but all across America be reunited with their loved ones that have been missing. My bill represents one step in that effort.

I have reviewed this matter at great length in the course of my work as ranking member of the Committee on House Administration and as a member of the Commission on Congressional Mailing Standards. In my judgment, the congressional frank presents an ideal opportunity to distribute information about missing and exploited children in addition to being an effective way for Members to communicate with their constituents about our important work.

Beginning in 1985 and for a period of 3 years, section 3220 of title 39 of the U.S. Code authorized the use of Federal penalty mail to assist in U.S. Department of Justice efforts to locate and recover missing children. Congress subsequently reauthorized this law three times for various lengths of time, but the last reauthorization expired 4 years ago, and unfortunately it has not been renewed or extended.

This program, which is entirely voluntary, has been a joint effort between the Department of Justice and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. By permanently authorizing this legislation, we are providing Federal agencies and the United States Congress with the opportunity to help in the recovery of missing and exploited children throughout this country.

Under the provisions of my bill, biographical data and pictures of children featured in the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children's photo distribution program can be included in various categories of official Federal Government mail.

According to the center, one in six of these featured children is recovered as a direct result of someone in the general public recognizing the child in the picture and notifying authorities. The U.S. Postal Service reports that in fiscal year 2005, U.S. Government agencies mailed over 1.3 billion pieces of penalty mail. If only 50 percent of this mail had included a picture and biographical sketch of one of the more