

Furthermore, our pact with Oman solidifies the strong U.S.-Oman alliance in the global war on terror. We listened tonight to the recommendation of the 9/11 Commission, and also we have the March 2006 National Security Strategy specifically citing the need to advance trade and economic liberalization in the Persian Gulf region as a key part of a comprehensive U.S. strategy to bolster security, to fight terrorism and to oppose Islama-fascism. However, America's influence in the region has to be measured by more than projected military might. If we are going to help anchor the Middle East in the modern world, we clearly must reduce conflict in the region by promoting growth and opportunity.

As the gentleman from Wisconsin said tonight, the U.S.-Oman FTA is a win-win policy that only builds upon our country's goal of strengthening economic relations and increasing trade, fair trade, with our partners in the Middle East. By strengthening our ties with the key strategic ally committed to trade liberalization and economic reform, the U.S.-Oman FTA will demonstrate to other countries in the region the benefits of free and open rules-based trade and engagement with the United States.

I hope that come Thursday, my colleagues on a bipartisan basis, as the gentleman put it, will put aside their partisan blinders and consider supporting this trade pact when it reaches the floor. A "yes" vote means yet another step on the long road to expanding new economic opportunity for both of our regions.

#### IRAQ WATCH

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. SCHMIDT). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. LARSON) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Madam Speaker, once again we come to the floor this evening as part of Iraq Watch. We do so this evening with both heavy and somber hearts for everything that is going on as we currently speak in the Middle East. Our hearts especially go out to our great ally Israel, as it wards off vicious attacks by Hezbollah. Once again, it only underscores the need for us in this body to do the kind of oversight and review and have the kind of dialogue and discussion that has been absent on the floor of this House and in our respective committees.

Madam Speaker, as we have on so many of these occasions, we begin this evening by once again honoring as well those brave men and women who wear the uniform of our country. They serve this Nation so valiantly.

Let me also acknowledge so many veterans and individuals who have played such a key role, especially those from the Vietnam era, in understanding and helping us recognize that

it is so important to differentiate between the warriors and the war. So we salute those brave men and women who are in harm's way, who are dealing with untenable situations they are confronted with in Iraq.

I especially want to draw attention again to a bill that we have before this body that we are still seeking more signatures to, and requesting and asking the Speaker and the majority leader to bring it to the floor by unanimous consent.

□ 2115

I do not believe that there is anyone in this body that does not understand the need for making sure that the Iraqi government does not grant amnesty to those who kidnap, kill, torture and maim American citizens and American troops.

And so I think it is so vitally important that this message be sent, especially as the insurgency only intensifies in the region. Brookings Institute and others who have polled find that 47 percent of the people in Iraq believe that it is okay to kill Americans. It is time that we send a clear message. That is why we come to the floor on successive evenings to send a clear message to the American public about what is transpiring before our eyes.

We pause, as I said earlier, both in somber and peaceful resolution that this conflict can be resolved speedily and we especially pray for those Americans who need to be evacuated from harm's way.

Madam Speaker, I am joined this evening by several of my colleagues who have come to this floor on repeated occasions to talk about a new direction that is needed in the Middle East, a new direction that needs to be taken by this Congress, a new direction that needs to be taken by this President, so we provide an opportunity for this great country of ours to once again move us forward out of harm's way and into a peaceful resolution to what has become consistently a quagmire known as Iraq.

With that, I recognize the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. DELAHUNT).

Mr. DELAHUNT. Madam Speaker, I thank my friend and colleague from Connecticut. It is good to be joined by my other colleague from New York (Mr. BISHOP) and Chris Van Hollen from Maryland.

Madam Speaker, I would like to speak for just a moment regarding what is happening in terms of the war on terror. We should all be alarmed. We see the events of recent days unfolding in Lebanon, Israel, in Gaza. And it is clear that terrorism is spreading. It is not declining.

I would submit that those events were inevitable, the law of unintended consequences, if you will, that many of us predicted when the resolution that authorized the invasion of Iraq came to the floor. I dare say that in the Middle East today there is an awareness on the part of world opinion that the war in

Iraq has increased the likelihood of terrorist attacks around the world.

A recent poll that was commissioned by the BBC, and again, this was a poll that was taken in some 35 countries, found that 60 percent of the world believes that the threat of terrorism has increased some 60 percent, while only 12 percent believed that it has declined.

And the nexus was the war in Iraq, and the conduct of the war in Iraq. They saw the war in Iraq as an impediment to the defeat of terrorism. And the experts agree. There was a survey done of more than 100 individuals with extensive foreign policy experience and national security backgrounds.

And what was particularly disturbing is that among the experts, 84 percent said that the United States was not winning the war on terrorism, and some 86 percent said that the world was becoming more, not less, dangerous in terms of terrorism because of our involvement in Iraq.

This is extremely frightening. And let me put forth a premise to you, to my colleagues. I would suggest that it is not unrelated that we see Hamas and Hezbollah asserting themselves today, in the past several weeks, because there is a growing awareness that the United States is bogged down in Iraq, and that world opinion in terms of the role of the United States in Iraq is highly negative.

And what do we see in terms of the new Iraqi government and its relationship with Iran, a sponsor of Hezbollah and a sponsor of Hamas? We see exchange of diplomats. We see a billion dollar line of credit coming from Iran to Iraq. We see a military corporation agreement between Iran and Iraq. Iran, the sponsor of Hezbollah and Hamas. That is what we see. That is what we are seeing.

And we are listening to the foreign minister, the foreign minister of Iraq when asked about the United States pressuring Iran to disclose where they are in the development of nuclear technology, to disclose whether any of those efforts could be utilized to develop a nuclear bomb, a nuclear weapon.

And the Iraqi foreign minister is saying, do not pressure the Iranians; accept their word. I mean, what is happening? Are the American people aware of these particular events? And then of course at the same time, the forgotten war, if you will, the country that harbored al Qaeda, that was ruled by a radical Islamists sect called the Taliban is on the verge of unraveling.

The Afghan defense minister recently made this statement: we need five times the number of security forces to address the issue of a resurgent Taliban. Without them we are in real danger of collapse. So everywhere we look in terms of the Middle East, we see danger and we see danger to Israel, we see danger in the entire region. And we hear, "Stay the course."

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Madam Speaker, the gentleman makes a great

premise that he asks us to respond to. But what I would like to do, if I could, is respond by quoting from a column in the New York Times yesterday by Frank Rich, who said: "The Bush doctrine was a doctrine in name only, a sales strategy contrived to dress up the single mission of regime change in Iraq with the philosophical grandiosity worthy of FDR. There was never any serious intention of militarily preempting either Iran or North Korea whose nuclear ambitions were as naked then as they are now, or striking the countries that unlike Iraq were major enablers of Islamic terrorism. 'Axis of evil' was merely a classier brand name from the same sloganeering folks who gave us compassionate conservatism, and 'a uniter not a divider.'"

Madam Speaker, with that I would like to yield to my distinguished colleague from New York (Mr. BISHOP).

Mr. BISHOP of New York. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Connecticut for yielding, and I thank him also for his leadership in organizing these very important discussions on the administration's failed policy with respect to Iraq, and for that matter the administration's failed policy with respect to the conduct of our foreign affairs in general.

It is a subject that we discuss all too infrequently in this Chamber. Let me just pick up on the point that Mr. LARSON just made. It was 4½ years ago that the President came into this Chamber to deliver his State of the Union Address for 2002.

It was in that address that he first characterized North Korea and Iran and Iraq as the Axis of Evil. And I think it is without argument, without debate today, that all three of those states present this country, our country, with greater threats to our safety and security than they did when they were first characterized as the axis of evil, and that is because we have embarked on a failed strategy in Iraq that has bogged us down, that is apparently without end, without success, and yet prevents us, because of our preoccupation with Iraq and because of the troop strength that has been needed in Iraq and prevents us from dealing with the threat that is now posed and was posed at the time by North Korea and the threat that was posed and is now posed by Iran.

Let me also comment on something that Mr. DELAHUNT from Massachusetts said repeatedly, the war in Iraq has been characterized as the centerpiece of the war on terror. It is frankly not at all the centerpiece on the war on terror. It is a diversion from the war on terror. It is a diversion that does not serve either the country well or serve our allies well.

We have a foreign policy, it seems to me, that is rooted in ideology as opposed to pragmatism, and we are learning the limits of applying that ideology as we deal unsuccessfully with the situation in North Korea and the situation in Iran.

We see the Middle East in flames as we speak, and we recognize that we have a long history that nothing good happens in the conflict between Israel and the Palestinian territories unless the United States is intimately involved in being an honest broker to bring about resolution of vexing and difficult issues.

Let me share just a couple of statistics that I think speak to just how far off track we are in Iraq. The number of insurgents in 2003 was 5,000. Today that number stands at 20,000. I am sure we all remember when the insurgency was described as a few dead-enders.

I am sure we all remember when the Secretary of Defense rather dismissively described what was happening in Iraq by saying that "freedom is messy."

□ 2130

We now have a situation where those dead-enders, so to speak, have metastasized into 20,000 insurgents. The average number of daily attacks has risen in just 1 year from 53 to 75. This does not sound like an insurgency that is in its final throes, and yet that is what we were told.

The number of civilian casualties resulting from sectarian violence has increased by 600 per month, now to a total of nearly 1,600 lost innocent lives per month. That is the equivalent of a 9/11 every 2 months in Iraq. Would any one of us stand for that if that were happening in this country? We certainly would not. Yet the carnage continues, and sectarian violence has increased dramatically over this period of time.

Financially, the burn rate has doubled from nearly \$4 billion per month to \$8 billion per month over the past 2 years, and I am sure we all remember how dismissively the administration handled the early estimates of the war. When Mr. Lindsey first said it would be \$100- to \$200 billion that was dismissed out of hand, and we were told that it would be no more than \$50- or \$60 billion for the war. We are now \$300 billion and counting, as I say, with no end in sight.

We all wish that we could believe the administration's happy talk with respect to stability taking hold, with respect to progress being made. But we are now 3½ years into this tragic conflict, and we are no closer to the goal of an Iraqi state that does not pose threats to the safety and security of this Nation.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. I want to thank the gentleman from New York for his insightful comments, many of which were echoed by Paul Krugman in a New York Times article today called March of Folly.

With that I would like to yield to the gentleman from Maryland, Mr. VAN HOLLEN.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. I thank my colleague from Connecticut, and thank him for his leadership on this very important issue of national security, and

thank my colleagues Mr. DELAHUNT and Mr. BISHOP of New York for all of their leadership.

I would just like to pick up where Mr. DELAHUNT and others left off with respect to the forgotten war in Afghanistan. I do think it is important, when we look at the situation in the world today, and we look at the violence erupting in the Middle East, we do remember what happened here in the United States back on September 11, 2001, and the origins of that attack.

As he reminds us, the attack on the United States, September 11, 2001, came from al Qaeda, al Qaeda that was sheltered by the Taliban government in Afghanistan; and that the world was with us when we responded, fully and forcefully, to those attacks of September, 2001.

In fact, the United Nations unanimously passed a resolution supporting us, our NATO allies universally supported us. In fact, they enacted a charter, part of a NATO charter saying an attack on one was an attack on all.

Yet today we are seeing in Afghanistan there has been a resurgence of Taliban activity, and at a very time when we are facing that resurgence, the United States is not providing a commitment that we need to make sure that we succeed against those who began and perpetrated the attacks of September 11, 2001.

Back then, instead of focusing on that battle against those who attacked us, we did divert our resources and our energy in Iraq.

The President gave a number of reasons back then for the action we were taking. We remember well the twin pillars of the argument. He said, well, they have got weapons of mass destruction. Many of us said, let's let the U.N. inspectors have a little more time to see whether that is true or not true.

The President said, no more time, we are going in. He also said there was collaboration between al Qaeda and the regime of Saddam Hussein in Iraq. The 9/11 Commission and many others have proven that that is not true either.

But it is important to remember that the President also advanced some other reasons for going to war in Iraq. One of the arguments he made was by the United States going to Iraq. By invading Iraq, we would help build stability in the Middle East, that we would promote democracy in the Middle East, that we would reduce the influence of the hardliners in the area and increase the influence of the moderates.

In fact, just a few weeks before the invasion of Iraq, in a speech before the American Enterprise Institute, here is what the President had to say. I think it is important to reflect on his words then as we look now at the terrible violence erupting in the Middle East.

He said then, and this was one of the rationales he gave us for going to war in Iraq, success in Iraq could also begin a new stage for Middle Eastern peace and set in motion progress for a truly democratic Palestinian state. The passing of Saddam Hussein's regime will

deprive terrorist networks of a wealthy patron that pays for terrorist training and offers rewards to families of suicide bombers, and other regimes will be given a clear warning that support for terror will not be tolerated. That was a word of his to Iran and others.

Without this outside support for terrorism, Palestinians who are working for reform and long for democracy will be in a better position to choose new leaders.

Well, in fact, what has happened in the Middle East, since the invasion of Iraq is the opposite of what the President has said.

We know now that when we invaded Iraq, we took the lid off Pandora's box, that we set in motion longstanding grievances within different groups within Iraq, the Sunnis, and Shiias and the Kurds, and that outsiders exploited the mess that was created in Iraq, and al Qaeda, that had never operated out of Iraq, did become active in Iraq.

In fact, what happened was our invasion of Iraq strengthened the hands of extremist groups throughout the region. It made it more difficult for the more moderate Arab governments to support the United States, because people in their countries saw that the United States had invaded Iraq, and they said there was no reason for this war of choice against Iraq.

The big winner, the big winner, of course, as Mr. DELAHUNT pointed out, has been Iran. Iran has very successfully exploited the chaos and the vacuum that has been created in Iraq as a result of the mess there. They have gone into Iraq. They have many agents there, and they, as we know, are also exploiting the feelings of others throughout the region, especially Hezbollah. They have provided missiles to Hezbollah, missiles that are now being used to rain down on northern Israel.

Iran, Iran, as a result, has become much more of a power in the region. Iran, one of the other countries the President named as the axis of evil, has, in fact, been strengthened by the President's decision to go to war in Iraq.

You just need to read the comments of other Arab leaders in the region, from some of the more moderate Arab countries who say today, they ask, this is quoted in *The New York Times*, Who is benefiting, asked a senior official of one of the Arab countries, critical of Hezbollah. Definitely not the Arabs or the peace process, but definitely the Iranians are benefiting.

Arab leaders have long been concerned about Iran, and the great irony of our invasion of Iraq is it has greatly strengthened the hand of Iran and greatly strengthened the hands of the extremists in the region who have been fueled by the antagonism that is unleashed toward the United States and the West by our actions there.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. The gentleman makes an excellent point. Every time I travel back to my dis-

trict, the question that more often than not is raised at every forum, every community gathering, every town hall meeting is, How is it that the United States could go from a position in the aftermath, the immediate aftermath of September 11th, with having the entire world on our side, to the point where we are today where so many are opposed to our policies?

What is it that took us down that perilous course? How could it be that the former President, Bush the first, if you will, and his advisers, were the most outspoken critics about going into Iraq, warning this current administration of its folly, of its danger?

I can remember very distinctly being in Saudi Arabia with JACK MURTHA and talking to our Ambassador there, and saying to him that, oh, it seems as though you have a gathering storm here in Saudi Arabia, in August of 2002.

He said, gathering storm? He said, Congressman, you are from New England, aren't you? I assume you either read the book or saw the movie. He says, we have over 35 percent unemployment. We have a median income that has dropped from 28,000 to under 7,000 per household. What we have here is not a gathering storm, what we have here is a perfect storm.

If we preemptively strike this toothless tiger in Iraq, we will unwittingly accomplish what Osama bin Laden failed to do. We will create a united Islamic jihad across the Middle East and drive it into chaos. The voices of reason, the voices screaming out at the time were Snowcroft, Eagleburger, Baker, Kissinger, all warning against this folly.

Yet as you point out, we persisted.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Well, I think that is absolutely right. You see this whole shift, overnight, in world opinion, again from the world being on our side and willing to fight alongside us in the war on terror that had been precipitated by the attacks of Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda. That was one day.

After the invasion of Iraq that turned out to be based on totally false premises, you saw the world turn against us. Some people here ask, Why does it matter whether people around the world like us or support our policies? Why does it matter if people in the Middle East have a positive view of the United States? Why does it matter if the Islamic world has a positive view of the United States?

Well, here is the problem. If you don't have the support of those countries, it is very difficult to get their cooperation in the war on terror. It is very difficult for them to say we are going to help you in the United States in this battle on terror. That is one problem.

The other problem is, it is a total contradiction between our efforts to promote democracy in the region, on the one hand, and to say we don't care what the people in those countries think, on the other hand. Because if we want to promote democracy, which

means that we want leaders in the region to be elected by the people, then we better make sure that the people who are electing them support our goals and support our objectives.

Because if the people who are electing the leaders in Middle East countries hate the United States and want to bring harm to the United States, it is very difficult for someone running for office there to say they support our efforts and support our policy.

You saw the election in the Palestinian areas of Hamas and the extremists as opposed to the Palestinian Authority. The Palestinian Authority had said, we want to work with the United States, and we want to work with Israel toward a peace process. But the people, when they had a choice, for all sorts of reasons chose the more extremist Hamas.

So the perceptions of the United States and our policies overseas have a direct bearing on our own security here at home. You cannot say you want to promote democracy in the Middle East, on the one hand, and say you don't care if they hate America, on the other hand.

□ 2145

If they hate America, they are going to elect leaders who reflect the will of the people, and that is bad for the United States, and yet our actions have fueled that kind of antagonism and hatred and actually made us less, not more, secure.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Madam Speaker, we have been joined by the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATERS) who certainly has embodied from the outset in opposition to this war the voice of reason as it relates to getting us out of Iraq.

Ms. WATERS. I thank very much Representative LARSON. I would like to thank you for the leadership that you are providing in putting together these opportunities night after night on the floor to illuminate what is going on in Iraq. You are absolutely right.

I am the Chair of the Out of Iraq Caucus, and we have our 1-year anniversary as of this week. We organized because we understood very well that something was very wrong with this war. It was not a popular thing to do, but increasingly, Members began to join. We do have 72 Members. We have other Members who are recognizing, as they work in their districts across this country, that the people of America are sick and tired of this war. They believe that the President of the United States has mismanaged this war, and they want to bring our troops home.

The violence that we are witnessing on a daily basis in Iraq is absolutely unconscionable. The violence is such that not only are the Sunnis being attacked by the Shiias, but innocent people are being killed. Civilians are being killed day in and day out, and to tell you the truth, Mr. LARSON, and other Members here and Mr. DELAHUNT who has worked on this issue so long and so

hard, I think it is easy for us to conclude at this point, no matter how difficult it is, that we have destabilized Iraq with our occupation.

When we went into Iraq supposedly because they had weapons of mass destruction and discovered that there were none; when we decided to change our tune, that is, the President of the United States and talk about wanting to instill a democratic government, the American people said, okay, the President of the United States must know what he is talking about.

So they have a new government. Saddam Hussein is behind bars. There are no weapons of mass destruction, and you know what is going on? The civil war that this President and this administration is in denial about, but if you read the papers today, you even have Sunnis that are saying, well, we do not like the Americans, we do not like this occupation, but you know, we need them now to help us be protected against these attacks that are coming at us on a daily basis.

So we recognize that the President of the United States started this discussion about the training of the Iraqi soldiers and how we were doing such a good job, there was a turning point, and they were going to be able to take over and to provide security for that country.

Well, in the first place, we did not go there. The President of the United States did not tell the American people we were going there, to be in the middle of a civil war, to protect one group from the other. Never said that. And now that is the only reason we are there, because we have got to protect the Sunnis from the Shiias? I mean, that is what our American soldiers are supposed to be doing. Our American soldiers who come from these towns and these hamlets do not know a Shiia from a Sunni, and then they get in situations where they are shooting to kill, and people would criticize them when they do not know what it is they are confronted with. We are there because we have to negotiate this civil war by way of warfare.

I think it is unconscionable what is happening there, and I think it is time for this administration to admit that not only have they made a mistake, but they have not trained enough Iraqi soldiers to take over the security of this country, and there is no number of Iraqi soldiers being trained in sight that will take over the security of this country. These groups who have been at each other's throats for centuries and maybe were contained by a strong man, right or wrong, are in the throes of a full civil war.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Madam Speaker, I think the gentlewoman asks a very legitimate question, but I do not think you were present in the Chamber when I referred to a statement dated July 13 coming from the Afghan defense minister, a gentleman by the name of Abdul Rahim Wardak, who said that the Afghan Army cannot secure the

country without at least 150,000 more troops, five times what it has today, and that in his opinion, and he clearly represents the sentiment of the government, it is an opportunity for the United States to double the assistance given to Afghanistan. In other words, we left Afghanistan before we finished the job.

What I find particularly interesting is that we do not hear that from this administration, but the new head of NATO, the NATO force in Afghanistan, a British general, David Richards, made this observation: Afghanistan's Taliban rebels have taken advantage of a power vacuum and grown stronger because the world's attention has been distracted by Iraq.

How true. I agree with him. I agree with him. And if one looks around the landscape again, I am sure it has not been on the front page, but we all here present in this Chamber today know what is happening in Somalia. Radical Islamist warlords have taken over Somalia. Winning the war on terror, you know, the rest of the world believes that we are losing the war on terror.

Many of the gentlemen that were referred to, Eagleburger, Lawrence Cobb, and others that have served in Republican administrations, agree that because of Iraq we are losing the war on terror today and eroding our own national security.

Mr. BISHOP of New York. Madam Speaker, if the gentleman would yield, I would just like to expand on a point that the gentlewoman from California made. She talked about the report in today's New York Times that Sunni leadership is now asking American troops to stay to deal with the sectarian violence, and it points out the folly, if you will, of what purports to be our exit strategy.

I mean, the President has said repeatedly that as the Iraqi Army stands up, then we will stand down. We have now stood up a significant number of Iraqi soldiers and law enforcement officers, and yet here we have the Sunni leadership, which has been adamantly opposed to our presence in the country, adamantly opposed to our occupation of the country, now asking us to stay.

And so what does that suggest? It suggests that we do not have an exit strategy at all, or the one that has been put out there by the President is one that has absolutely no chance of yielding any kind of beneficial result in Iraq.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. That is what the General Accountability Office says as well. The GAO report calls for a new direction in Iraq. The GAO report of July 11 says that the administration's national strategy for victory in Iraq is questionable and victory cannot be achieved without significant change in the President's current stay-the-course strategy. It is unclear, it goes on to say, how the United States will achieve its desired end-state in Iraq, given the significant changes in assumptions underlying U.S. strategy.

Ms. WATERS. Madam Speaker, if the gentleman will yield, it was alluded to earlier that not only were we distracted from doing the job in Afghanistan and we have ended up in this morass in Iraq, it was reported, and I do not have the documentation for it, that Mr. Wolfowitz, Mr. CHENEY and some of the other war hawks had said, once we are in Iraq, we tie down; then on to Iran and on to Syria. Now, I do not know if that is true, if Iraq was to be used as a staging ground to then move on to the attack in Iran and in Syria, but I think that the Iranians believe it, and I think the Syrians believe it.

I watch what we are learning every day about the fact that many of those missiles that are being launched from Beirut are missiles that have been manufactured in Syria, and we also know that the Iranians have their hand in support of Hezbollah and what is going on.

Now, this says an awful lot, and you guys alluded to it a bit earlier. Here we are, here we are tied down in the middle of a civil war in Iraq and having threatened with no more than talking about the axis of evil but even beyond that, going into these neighboring countries, and now I think they are about to put us on the run, trying to distract us and have us react in different parts of the Middle East. And of course, we cannot do that with Kim Jong Il looking over our back in North Korea, launching missiles over into the Japan Sea. And we have got Tehran who has told us that they would certainly continue with their development of nuclear capability.

So here we are, Afghanistan, we are spending much of our soldiers' time trying to protect Karzai who is sitting in Kabul and not doing anything, and as you said, the Taliban and the warlords are really running it.

We are getting overwhelmed. We are getting outmaneuvered. We are placing the American people at great risk, and it is about time we just go ahead and tell it like it is. We have created more risk than not, when in fact this war on terrorism was supposed to be about making the American people safer.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Madam Speaker, if my friend would just yield for a moment just to confirm points that were made by everybody, but specifically by CHRIS VAN HOLLEN, there is a GAO report that was issued in April of 2005 that speaks to the issue of deepening and broadening anti-American sentiment all over the world. We have all seen the polling data. It is frightening. Talk about a world opinion that threatens our national security.

And the GAO specifically alluded to the fact that it has the potential to dramatically hurt our commercial interests. One only has to check the price of oil. One only has to look at today's stock market report. Everywhere we turn the implications and consequences of this failed policy is hurting the American people, our national security, our commercial interests and everything that is attendant thereto.

Then, when we start to examine the relationship between the new government in Iraq and Iran, why have we spilled the blood of more than 2,500 Americans and already have appropriated taxpayer dollars on the way to \$500 billion?

□ 2200

And by the way, I am sure if you haven't, that you will find in your mail tomorrow a letter, a Dear Colleague letter from our friend and colleague from Illinois, Jan Schakowsky. And she makes the point that on July 7, the Iraqi, not Iranian Parliament Speaker, Mahmoud al-Mashhadani had this to say. He accused Jews of financing acts of violence in Iraq in order to discredit Islamists who control the Parliament and government so they can install their agents in power.

Some people say we saw you beheading, kidnapping and killing. In the end, we even started kidnapping women who are our honor. These acts are not the work of Iraqis. I am sure that he who does this is a Jew and the son of a Jew. I can tell you about these Jewish Israelis and Zionists who are using Iraqi money and oil to frustrate the Islamic movement in Iraq and come with their agents.

Is this what we have wrought?

These words should be condemned by the President. I am sure we all would join in a resolution condemning the words of this head of the Iraqi Parliament, this Iraqi Government that has executed a bilateral military agreement with Iran.

Where are we heading, my friends?

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Would the gentleman yield?

The sad part about so much of this is that so much of it was foreseeable, if only the President and the White House had listened to people who knew what they were talking about in this very important foreign policy area.

I quoted earlier this evening the words of the President in a speech that he gave at the American Enterprise Institute on the eve of going to war in Iraq, when he talked about the fact that our invasion of Iraq would create a new era of stability in the region. It would help create a domino effect of creating new democratic movements in the region. It was sort of the big bang of creation of democratic governments in the region. That was what the President said.

But the fact of the matter is at the same time the President gave that speech, the experts were telling him the opposite, and yet they were ignored because their advice did not fit the decision that President and some of his advisers had made.

Just a month ago, Paul Pillar, who was the head of the Bureau of Near East and South Asia at the Central Intelligence Agency at the time of the invasion, testified; and here is what he told the Congress just recently. He told the Congress that what is happening was, in fact, predicted in the national

intelligence estimate of that time. Here is what he said. And on the situation, this is his testimony about a month ago. And on the situation that would be faced in post-Saddam Iraq, the Intelligence Community produced, on its own initiative, its assessment of the likely challenges there. It presented a picture of a political culture that would not provide fertile ground for democracy, and foretold a long, difficult, and turbulent transition. It forecasted in a deeply divided Iraqi society there was a significant chance that sectarian and ethnic groups would engage in violent conflict unless an occupying power prevented it. It also assessed that the war and occupation would boost political Islam, increase sympathy for terrorist objectives and make Iraq a magnet for extremists from elsewhere in the Middle East.

This is the assessment of the Central Intelligence Agency before we went to war in Iraq. The people who knew the region, the people who understood the consequences of an invasion were ignored by this White House.

So we have to ask ourselves, where is the accountability in this system?

From day one in this administration, the people who got it wrong have been rewarded, and the people who got it right have been ignored. And yet what this administration says to us is "Trust us." Just stay the course. More of the same.

Well, we have had years of failed policy. No one has been held accountable. What do we expect in the years ahead and the days ahead and the months ahead from an administration that refuses to hold those who get it wrong accountable and ignores all those who get it right?

Mr. DELAHUNT. That is an excellent point, my friend, if you would yield for just one minute.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. I would be happy to yield.

Mr. DELAHUNT. But what is most disturbing is that this House, run by the Republican Party, has failed to ask those questions of this administration, and thereby abrogated its responsibility to the American people to ask the questions that would have made a difference.

Did Mr. Pillar come before this Congress?

I can enumerate name after name of voices that, well, I could put up a long list of generals, General Batiste, General Eaton, General Zinni, who spoke truth to power, who said, This is the wrong course.

And listen, we never had a hearing until just recently in the committee of jurisdiction, the House International Relations Committee. Shame on us. Shame on this institution, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Will the gentleman yield?

The gentlemen, I think, words of both my distinguished colleagues from Massachusetts and Maryland are summed up very well in Frank Rich's

article yesterday when he said, This Presidency never had a vision for the world. It, instead, had an idea fixed on one country, Iraq, and in pursuit of that obsession, recklessly harnessed American power to a gut-driven improvisation and PR strategies, not doctrine, that has not changed, even now.

And with that, let me at this point recognize our colleague, the distinguished lady from Texas, who has also come to the floor this evening.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. I thank the distinguished vice chairman for his leadership, his consistent leadership, along with my colleagues. And I particularly thank Congresswoman WATERS for the vision of the Out of Iraq Caucus.

As I listened to many of you isolate or emphasize intelligence failures, leadership failures, generals who had the expertise of war, I wanted to bring as we talk this evening, to the forefront the whole concern, the human toll.

As I know that we are speaking tonight, there are thousands of military families who are about the American fabric across the land. We already know that some of them are barely making ends meet. Some of them are on food stamps.

But just this past weekend we sent 140 more of those from my congressional district out of Ellington Field. Some have been redeployed before. Some are on their first, second, third redeployment.

If you speak to our Armed Services Committee, they will tell you that we have depleted most of the back-up of our military prowess. The battalions that were in Kuwait are not one, two, three and four. They are down to maybe one battalion, if you will, that is in reserve. And so we have a crisis not only that is impacting the direction of the Iraq war, but the overextending of our military.

The 20,000, 15- to 20,000 injured, who are physically maimed and mentally maimed; resources in the Department of Defense appropriations, not enough to cover the mental health needs of these individuals, and as well, the silence of their injury, not being seen by the American people, and the cost that will be put upon society without, I believe, any direction in any harvesting of dollars that will help these military personnel.

The very crux of where we are today in Iraq has a lot to do with some of the misdirection, the political misdirection of our soldiers. They won the war, but yet they were expected to be policemen. They are expected to be political officers, if you will; they are expected to build infrastructure with no guidance. And so out of that frustration comes Haditha. Out of that frustration comes the brutal murder of a young woman and her family, because you are talking about redeploying soldiers once, but then two, three, four, times.

I met a soldier in the airport, and they said, four times I have been redeployed.

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So as I look at the crisis in Israel and Lebanon and now to the other side of us, North Korea, frankly, any talk about attacking Iran begs the question of whether or not we have the kind of military resources to even engage in that kind of conversation.

I think we failed in Iraq because we did not engage. We did not first develop a political and foreign policy that could engage the region. Not Saddam Hussein. We know he was a despot. But the region, to ask for our allies' support, to ensure that the inspections had gone forward.

And now with Israel our hands are tied. We know that we want to ensure that soldiers are sent back to their sovereign country. Israel has a right to defend herself. But we also realize that the United States has to show a balanced perspective, calling for a ceasefire, sending an envoy team of high-level reporting directly to the President, and engaging in foreign policy that says we realize that the region is important. A secure and safe Israel, a two-state response to the Palestinian issue, but the region is important.

And when we went into Iraq, we said to the region you are not important. We can be an aggressor. We can go in and attack. We thought we could go in without any fallback, with impunity. And now we see that our generals are now disagreeing with us, that our allies in the Arab states are now falling away from us, that the crisis is at such a level that our credibility is so shattered that when the region needs us most, which is now, there is a question of whether or not we have the kind of leadership and credibility going in. This is what Iraq has brought to us and the American people.

I commend my colleagues for organizing this special order to discuss the conduct and costs of the war in Iraq. I look forward to engaging in dialogue with my colleagues about the most important issue facing the country today and the most fateful and ill-considered decision of this Administration.

#### I. THE BUSH IRAQ POLICY HAS HARMED THE U.S. MILITARY

A few weeks ago we learned the sad news that the 2,500th soldier has been killed in Iraq. More than 19,000 others have been wounded. The Bush administration's open-ended commitment of U.S. troops to Iraq has weakened the U.S. Army, the National Guard, and the Army Reserves. The extended deployments in Iraq have eroded U.S. ground forces and overall military strength. A Pentagon-commissioned study concluded that the Army cannot maintain its current pace of operations in Iraq without doing permanent damage to the quality of the force. So more than three years of a continuous deployment of U.S. troops to Iraq has:

Contributed to serious problems with recruitment, with the U.S. Army missing its recruitment targets last year;

Forced the Army to lower its standards for military recruits; and

Led to military equipment shortages that hamper the ability of U.S. ground forces to do their job in Iraq and around the world.

#### II. THE IRAQ WAR HAS BEEN MISMANAGED AND THE RESULTS HAVE BEEN DISASTROUS

Quotes from the retired generals calling for the ouster of Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld:

We went to war with a flawed plan that didn't account for the hard work to build the peace after we took down the regime. We also served under a secretary of defense who didn't understand leadership, who was abusive, who was arrogant, who didn't build a strong team.—Retired Army Maj. Gen. John Batiste.

My sincere view is that the commitment of our forces to this fight was done with a casualness and swagger that are the special province of those who have never had to execute these missions—or bury the results.—Retired Marine Lt. Gen. Gregory Newbold.

They only need the military advice when it satisfies their agenda. I think that's a mistake, and that's why I think he should resign.—Retired Army Maj. Gen. John Riggs.

We grow up in a culture where accountability, learning to accept responsibility, admitting mistakes and learning from them was critical to us. When we don't see that happening it worries us. Poor military judgment has been used throughout this mission.—Retired Marine Gen. Anthony Zinni, former chief of U.S. Central Command.

I really believe that we need a new secretary of defense because Secretary Rumsfeld carries way too much baggage with him.

... I think we need senior military leaders who understand the principles of war and apply them ruthlessly, and when the time comes, they need to call it like it is.—Retired Army Maj. Gen. Charles Swannack.

He has shown himself incompetent strategically, operationally and tactically, and is far more than anyone responsible for what has happened to our important mission in Iraq. ... Mr. Rumsfeld must step down.—Retired Army Maj. Gen. Paul Eaton.

#### III. WAR IN IRAQ HAS DIVERTED RESOURCES AND ATTENTION FROM OTHER FRONTS IN THE FIGHT AGAINST GLOBAL TERRORIST NETWORKS

The killing of Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi was a major success for U.S. troops, but it is not likely to diminish Iraq's insurgency. Iraqis make up 90 percent of Iraq's insurgency, unlike foreign fighters like Zarqawi, and a primary motivation for Iraq's insurgency is the U.S. troop presence. Even after the Samarra shrine attack in February threatened to push Iraq into all-out sectarian civil war, the vast majority of attacks still target U.S. forces.

Outside of Iraq, the Bush administration has failed to present a realistic strategy for countering the threat posed by the global terror networks. In a recent survey of more than 100 of America's leading foreign policy experts conducted by Foreign Policy magazine and the Center for American Progress, eight in 10 (84 percent) do not think that the United States is winning the war on terror. The War in Iraq has not helped America win the broader fight against global terrorists. Instead:

By invading Iraq without a realistic plan to stabilize the country, the Bush administration created a new terrorist haven where none had previously existed.

By maintaining an open-ended military presence in Iraq, the Bush administration is presenting U.S. terrorist enemies with a recruitment tool and rallying cry for organizing attacks against the U.S. and its allies.

According to the National Counter-Terrorism Center, the number of large-scale terrorist attacks in Iraq increased by over 100 between 2004 and 2005, with a total 8,299 civilians killed in 2005.

Osama bin Laden remains at large and Al Qaeda offshoots proliferate.

By diverting resources and attention from Afghanistan to an unnecessary war of choice in Iraq in 2003, the Bush administration has left Afghanistan exposed to a resurgence of the Taliban and Al Qaeda. The United States needs to complete the mission in Afghanistan and cannot do it with so many troops bogged down in Iraq.

By focusing so many U.S. resources on Iraq, the Bush administration has taken its eye off the ball in places like Somalia, which was overrun by Islamist militias tied to Al Qaeda last week.

#### IV. THE WAR IN IRAQ HAS INCREASED THE BURDEN ON U.S. TAXPAYERS WITHOUT STABILIZING IRAQ OR MAKING AMERICANS SAFER

Over the last three years, the United States has spent more than \$300 billion in Iraq, yet the investment has failed to stabilize Iraq or improve the overall quality of life for most Iraqis. According to the Congressional Research Service, total assistance to Iraq thus far is roughly equivalent to total assistance, adjusted for inflation, provided to Germany—and almost double that provided to Japan from 1946 to 1952. Yet on key metrics like oil production, Iraq has failed to advance beyond pre-war levels, and quality of life indicators remain dismal:

Oil production is below pre-war levels (2.6 million barrels per day in 2003 vs. 2.1 million barrels per day in May 2006);

The majority of water sector projects and health care clinics planned in 2003 remain not completed, despite spending hundreds of millions of dollars;

One in three Iraqi children is malnourished and underweight, according to the United Nations Children's Fund.

Rather than a record of progress and achievement, the Bush administration's record is one of corruption and waste:

Remaining unaccounted for is \$8.8 billion given to Iraqi ministries by the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA), according to the Congressional Research Service;

Iraqi Defense Ministry officials spent \$1 billion on questionable arms purchases;

The Interior Ministry has at least 1,100 ghost employees, costing \$1.3 million a month.

In short, we have no strategy, no support from allies or friends in the region, a nascent civil war in the country we are supposed to be helping, an overstretched military, a misdirected counterterrorism effort, and a massive diversion of funds in support of a failed effort.

#### V. MULTIPLE DEPLOYMENTS HURT MORALE AND FAMILIES—MULTIPLE DEPLOYMENTS TAKING TOLL ON MILITARY FAMILIES, ANSWERS QUESTIONS OF HOW TO HELP FAMILIES OF DEPLOYED SERVICE MEMBERS

Military families need greater psychological, emotional, and organizational assistance according to the results of a new survey released March 28 of this year by the National Military Family Association (NMFA).

The study, "Cycles of Deployment Report," which focused on the needs of military families, shows service members and military families are experiencing increased levels of anxiety, fatigue, and stress. In response, NMFA outlined recommendations for meeting these challenges amid multiple and extended deployments, increased rates at which service members are called upon for service,

and the heavy reliance on National Guard and Reserve forces.

This report clearly shows the range of support programs for families has expanded since the start of the War on Terror. However, multiple deployments and a high operations tempo mean different types of support are needed for families' continued success before, during, and after deployment. The survey results provide the Department of Defense a detailed roadmap for making sure families are taken care of during this important time.

Key findings from this study about the impact of deployment includes:

Almost half of respondents reported they have used or would use counseling services such as anger management classes and family counseling. Three quarters of those who stated they were better able to deal with subsequent deployments found counseling services to be helpful.

Two-thirds of military families surveyed did not have contact with their unit or unit network volunteer during the critical pre-deployment stage.

Less than one-half reported a consistent level of family support through the pre-deployment, deployment, and post-deployment phases. Seventeen percent reported no support was available.

Many respondents are concerned that volunteers who help families adjust to life during deployment and what to expect after the reunion are becoming fatigued and subject to "burn-out." They stated that the leaders of unit family groups should be paid or have paid professional support personnel assigned.

Military family members with civilian jobs face pressure to avoid taking time off before, during, or after deployment. Sixty percent of military spouses are employed outside the home and many have either quit their jobs or are considering it.

Military families are worried about how the reunion will go with their deployed family member even as they are worrying about their servicemember's safety in the field. Unfortunately, many families are not taking advantage of specific return and reunion briefings and activities.

Many respondents expressed that when entering a second or third deployment, they carry unresolved anxieties and expectations from the last deployment(s). While they may have gained knowledge of resources available to them, respondents whose servicemember deployed multiple times reported being more fatigued and increasingly concerned about their family relationships.

Although challenged by the demands of deployment, families noted they are proud of their servicemember and their service to our country. They understand that family support is primarily their personal responsibility, but they expect "The Military" to provide support as well.

#### VI. RECOMMENDATIONS TO DEAL WITH STRESS OF MULTIPLE DEPLOYMENTS

The National Military Families Association has developed a series of recommendations for how the Department of Defense (DoD) can better train and support military staff and civilian volunteers to assist military families, including:

Expand program and information outreach. Create formats for families to access support services and maintain touch with their commands and unit family group that live too far

from either the unit or from other military families.

Assist families in developing in realistic expectations and then meet them. Educate military families about what to expect before, during, and after deployments.

Direct more resources to support family volunteers. Increase the level of resources and paid professionals both counselors and administrative, to support the logistics of family support and conducting family readiness activities.

Address return and reunion challenges throughout the deployment cycle. Help with the reintegration of a servicemember with the family after deployment.

Recognize that family time is important. Encourage service leaders to give family time a higher priority when planning operational activities, especially for servicemembers who have only been back from deployment for a few months.

Continue deployment briefings throughout the year. Never assume families have all the information they need. Ongoing deployment briefings can especially help new spouses or the parents of new recruits. Experienced family members also may find new challenges during a subsequent deployment or find the accumulated stress from multiple deployments creates the need for re-engagement with the family readiness/support group or for accessing different support personnel.

#### VII. IMPACT OF DEPLOYMENT OF NATIONAL GUARD

In addition, Madam Speaker, the large and extended deployment of National Guard units overseas has undermined the ability of the United States to deal with terrorist attacks or natural disasters. For example, State officials in Louisiana and Mississippi struggle to overcome the absence of National Guard members from their States in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. In Louisiana, about 100 of the National Guard's high-water vehicles remain abroad—even as the State continues to rebuild from Hurricane Katrina. Coastal North Carolina is missing nearly half its Humvee fleet, and Guard officials there say shortages have forced the State to pool equipment from different units into one pot of hurricane supplies.

In addition, the equipment the Guard needs to help in the aftermath of natural disasters like Hurricane Katrina is in shorter supply because the gear is in use in combat zones, is battle-damaged, or has been loaned to cover gaps in other units.

#### CONCLUSION

Madam Speaker, our troops in Iraq have never faltered and they have never failed. They were never defeated in battle. They won the war they were sent to fight. They completed their mission. They performed magnificently.

They have earned the right to return home and be reunited with their families and loved ones. Now is not the time for us in Congress to falter or fail. Now is the time to embrace a plan for our troops in Iraq that offers a chance of success. We need a plan that will work. There is only one such plan. It is the Murtha Plan I support.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for joining us again and again pointing out that she, like so many of us, has said good-bye to troops, mainly to Reservists and members of the National Guard who have been deployed and re-

deployed, and our hearts go out to their families and, as we have at the outset at the end of every one of these Iraq Watches, spoke about the difference between the warriors and the war, and we continue to salute them. And I thank the gentlewoman from Texas.

We only have a few more minutes, and I want the gentleman from Massachusetts and the gentlewoman from California to have the opportunity to close. But I do want to thank the Members for coming down here from New York and Maryland, Texas, California, and Massachusetts and say to the American people that we come here out of love of country. It is because of love of country and because we are more often than not denied a voice on this floor, not only denied a voice on this floor but in the committees, where oversight and review is so important.

Why is that so, you might ask? It is so, unfortunately, because this is a one-party town where our erstwhile colleagues on the other side are in control of the House of Representatives, the Senate, and the executive branch of government. And they are able to shut off debate and stifle this side of the aisle even from coming forward with alternative resolutions on matters so important.

#### FURTHER MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A further message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed without amendment a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 42. An act to ensure that the right of an individual to display the flag of the United States on residential property not be abridged.

The message also announced that the Senate has passed with an amendment in which the concurrence of the House is requested, a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 5441. An act making appropriations for the Department of Homeland Security for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2007, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the Senate insists upon its amendment to the bill (H.R. 5441) "An Act making appropriations for the Department of Homeland Security for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2007, and for other purposes.", requests a conference with the House on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses thereon, and appoints Mr. GREGG, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. STEVENS, Mr. SPECTER, Mr. DOMENICI, Mr. SHELBY, Mr. CRAIG, Mr. BENNETT, Mr. ALLARD, Mr. BYRD, Mr. INOUE, Mr. LEAHY, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. KOHL, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. REID, and Mrs. FEINSTEIN, to be the conferees on the part of the Senate.