

heads up the Louisiana recovery, is the President of Xavier University. I salute him for his leadership. But his school was devastated. But other historically black colleges, like Texas Southern University and Prairie A&M, were the schools that opened their doors. So, frankly, I believe that we owe more to those schools.

And my closing words are simply this: Corporate America, wake up. You are losing the opportunity to partnership with major institutions, institutions that go into the inner city and provide opportunities for children who could not have the doors open elsewhere or their parents did not have the doors open elsewhere. Today they choose historically black colleges, but we must not throw away a huge percentage of Americans who are talented and ready to serve. Let us rise up as a government, provide the research dollars, because they are equal. Let us be fair but not unfair. And corporate America, answer the call of fairness. Provide the partnerships with historically black colleges so they too can continue to march into the 21st century and provide the leadership that has paved the way for equality, justice, and freedom for America.

I salute the historically black colleges. It is their week, but the Nation belongs to them. As we belong to them, they will continue to serve.

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 Florida (Ms. CORRINE BROWN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

THE CRISIS IN IRAQ

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to speak out of turn.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, Last Sunday Vice President CHENEY appeared on NBC's "Meet the Press" and provided a vivid example of George Santayana's admonition that "those who do not learn from the past are doomed to repeat it."

After 3½ years of bloody combat; after our Nation has lost more than 2,600 of our military's finest; after thousands more of our brave men and women have been wounded; after we have spent more than \$300 billion; with

no end in sight to the insurgency and Iraq plunging into civil war; and after finding no weapons of mass destruction, the very basis of that war, the Vice President told the American people that "if we had to do it over again, we'd do exactly the same thing."

Never mind that the next day the Washington Post published an article on the front page entitled "Situation called Dire in West Iraq: Anbar is Lost Politically, Marine Analyst Says," which revealed that the Marine Corps Chief of Intelligence had recently completed a report that concluded the prospects for securing Iraq's western Anbar province are "dim" and that there is almost nothing the U.S. military can do to improve the political and social situation there. According to Vice President CHENEY, "if we had to do it over again, we'd do exactly the same thing."

Never mind that our invasion of Iraq was predicated on the need to neutralize Saddam Hussein's active nuclear weapons program and destroy his stockpiles of chemical and biological weapons. But no weapons were ever found. According to Vice President CHENEY, "if we had to do it over again, we'd do exactly the same thing."

Never mind that retired senior military officers, former U.S. diplomats, and a wide range of military and foreign policy experts see our efforts to pacify Iraq as undermined by a host of mistakes the administration has made in the prosecution of the war, including the failure to bring enough troops to secure the peace and the catastrophic decision to stand down the Iraqi army. According to our Vice President, "if we had to do it over again, we'd do exactly the same thing."

Never mind that our troops went into battle without adequate body armor and up-armored vehicles. According to the Vice President, "if we had to do it over again, we'd do exactly the same thing."

Never mind that countless billions have been spent on reconstruction with little to show for the effort, many billions unaccounted for. According to Vice President CHENEY, "if we had to do it over again, we'd do exactly the same thing."

Earlier this year House and Senate Democrats unveiled our "Real Security" agenda that lays out a blueprint for a new direction in Iraq. Our plan calls for the establishment of full Iraqi sovereignty, provides for the responsible redeployment of our forces to better protect our troops and to facilitate the transfer of authority, and provides oversight, vigorous oversight, of the prosecution of the war and the reconstruction of Iraq. This new direction in Iraq was rejected by the Republican majority in the House, which has endorsed the President's stay-the-course policy in Iraq, a policy which amounts to nothing more than more of the same.

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The majority in this House is complicit in this failed policy through

its failure to oversee the war and to hold accountable those officials who have failed our troops and the American people. That failure of oversight and the need to hold people accountable has plagued Iraq from the very beginning, and because this Congress, this Republican Congress, refuses to hold the President to account, we keep making the same mistakes over and over again.

On April 26 of this year, in the International Relations Committee, I asked the administration witnesses in our first hearing on Iraq whether they could name any individual who had been held accountable for the myriad failures in prosecuting the war on Iraq. The witnesses were silent for an interminable 14 seconds before the Assistant Secretary of State replied, "That is way above our pay grade." The answer, however, is no one has been held accountable.

That lack of oversight, the absence of accountability, the stubborn refusal to acknowledge that mistakes have been made has brought us to the precipice in Iraq. But as the Vice President revealed so clearly last week, the senior officials in our government still blithely insist, If we had to do it over again, we would do exactly the same thing.

Our troops in Iraq, their families here at home, the families of those who have served deserve better than a stubborn insistence that all is well when it is not, that no mistakes have been made when there have been many, that no correction in course will be made because to do so would acknowledge error. That is unacceptable.

The Democrats will provide a new direction in America. The Democrats will provide a new direction for our national security. There is no time more than now when a new direction is necessary.

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

(Mr. HULSHOF 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 New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

TIME FOR A REALITY CHECK

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to speak out of order.

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

There was no objection.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, on May 1, 2003, under a banner displaying the words, "Mission Accomplished," President George W. Bush stated, "Major combat operations in Iraq have ended."