

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.

□ 1830

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."

In the summer of 2005, Vice President CHENEY told Americans that the so-called insurgents of Iraq were in their last throes.

Fast forward to the morning papers this week. The Washington Post, and I quote, "Situation Called Dire in West Iraq; Anbar is Lost Politically, Marine Analyst Says."

The San Francisco Chronicle, quote, "Police Discover 65 Bodies Across Iraq."

The New York Times, "New Wave of Violence Flares Across Baghdad."

The BBC, "Iran Offers Iraq Full Support."

On top of that, according to the Department of Defense, in September so far 23 of America's brave servicemembers died in this seemingly endless occupation. Throughout this occupation there have been 2,900 coalition deaths. Almost 2,700 of those are Americans. An average of 100 Iraqi civilians are dying each day.

Mr. Speaker, it is time for a reality check. The so-called insurgents are not in their last throes. The mission is not accomplished, far from it.

This administration, the President, the Vice President, Secretary Rumsfeld, and Secretary Rice, won't admit they have made a mistake. Instead of planning for withdrawal, which is supported, by the way, by the American people and the Iraqi public as well, this administration is wearing blinders and pressing on. They even have the very nerve to question the patriotism of anyone who dares to take off the rose-colored glasses and speak the truth about the occupation of Iraq.

What kind of America is that? Americans are asking, they are asking, are we safer than we were 5 years ago? They know the answer; the answer is no. They question why the President didn't dedicate serious efforts to the capture of Osama bin Laden. And they know when they ask, is he working on that, the answer is no. And they also ask whether the President has dedicated serious efforts to being a partner for peace in the Middle East, and the results that they see prove that the answer is no. Instead, private citizens are being wiretapped, torture runs rampant, and the administration plays politics with the tragic events of September 11.

Is this the kind of America we want to pass on to our children? Is this the kind of America that will win us friends on the world stage? The answer, of course, is no. It is time for a reality check. It is time to support an alternative to these misguided policies.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to seriously consider whether our current policy is going in the right direction, because Congress has the power to change it. Congress has the power to make the much-needed changes. And one important change for Congress to make would be to resume our constitutional role and revoke the President's Iraq war powers. We could also insist on a

plan, and we must insist on a plan, to bring our troops home. And it is time to give Iraq back to the Iraqi people. But, most of all, it is time to tell the President, no more.

I urge my colleagues, stand up for our troops. Cosponsor my bill, H.R. 5875, the Iraq War Powers Repeal Act, because, Mr. Speaker, enough is enough. It is time to bring our troops home.

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.)

#### RECOGNIZING AND CELEBRATING HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES WEEK

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

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to join my colleagues today in recognizing the vital contribution historically Black colleges and universities make to our Nation. I am especially pleased for the opportunity to honor these great institutions, which have given the African American community so much for so many years.

HBCUs have been in existence for more than a century, fulfilling the hopes and dreams of many African Americans who might not have otherwise had the opportunity to achieve the dream of higher education. And they are still relevant and necessary today.

As President Clinton once said, "Historically Black colleges and universities continue to play a vital role by adding to the diversity and caliber of the Nation's higher education system. Furthermore, these institutions remind all Americans of our obligations to uphold the principles of justice and equality enshrined in our Constitution."

While comprising less than 3 percent of all American colleges and universities, HBCUs educate nearly 85 percent of African-American college graduates in the United States. I am among them.

As a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Howard University, and the proud father of another Howard University graduate, I know firsthand the opportunities these great institutions provide.

In 2004, HBCUs turned out 131,241 African-American graduates with 4-year bachelors degrees. That represents the highest number of degrees awarded to African Americans in this Nation's history—more than double the amount awarded in 1990.

In the 7th District of Maryland, which I represent, Baltimore's Morgan State University now ranks 8th nationally in the number of baccalaureate degrees earned by African Americans.

And these institutions are not just providing opportunities to their students. Across the length and breadth of America, the more than 100 HBCUs are having a positive impact upon the communities in which they are located—and upon the Nation as a whole.

Coppin State University, also in my District, is demonstrating its crucial role in the community by its "adoption" of nearby Rosemont Elementary School; and by the Nursing Center that offers affordable health care to the children and adults in its vicinity.

Mr. Speaker, we must continue to support these vitally important institutions of higher learning.

I applaud the President for his proclamation acclaiming the contributions that HBCUs are making to all of America—and I urge him to work with my colleagues in Congress to match those words with the funding that these institutions so desperately need.

Our historically Black colleges and universities are remarkably adept at accomplishing a lot with a little, but they need more public support. Just look at the HBCUs hit by Hurricane Katrina that continued providing class sessions in what can be termed less than ideal circumstances. I applaud their resiliency.

As we continue to celebrate HBCU week, let us not forget the social interest in keeping them vital and thriving. Each year, HBCUs produce the leaders of tomorrow: writers, musicians, actors, activists, business leaders, lawyers, doctors—and Members of Congress.

Let's honor these great American institutions by supporting our Nation's HBCUs both in rhetoric and in practice—by providing sufficient funding for their continued existence.

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

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

#### TRIBUTE TO HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

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

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join my colleagues in recognition of National Historically Black Colleges and Universities Week. This special week, the nation pays tribute to HBCUs that make such a difference developing young minds and shaping our future.

As defined by the Higher Education Act of 1965, HBCUs are "any historically black college or university that was established prior to 1964, whose principle mission was, and is, the education of black Americans, and that is accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association determined by the Secretary (of Education) to be a reliable authority as to the quality of training offered or is, according to such an agency or association, making reasonable progress toward accreditation."

Nearly fourteen percent of our country's African American students in higher education are enrolled at HBCUs. These colleges and universities are preparing a new generation of leaders, business people, teachers and scholars. They play a vital role in ensuring that our higher education system is the finest in the world. This year's HBCUs Week is themed, "The Tradition Continues: New Successes and Challenges," which is a tribute to the rich tradition of HBCUs and the enduring role they play in the weave of our social fabric.