

two agents who have given years of their life in service to this nation, and who have been unjustly punished for doing their job to protect our homeland. On January 17th, 2007, both agents Ramos and Compean must surrender themselves to federal authorities unless action is taken to overturn their sentences. I strongly encourage you to listen to the concerns of the American people and use the power of your office to pardon these two agents.

Sincerely,

WALTER B. JONES,  
Member of Congress.

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
Washington, DC, October 31, 2006.

Press Secretary TONY SNOW,  
The White House,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SNOW: I am extremely disappointed by your responses last week to questions regarding the possibility of a presidential pardon for United States Border Patrol Agents Ignacio Ramos and Jose Alonso Compean. On October 19th, the agents were convicted and sentenced to 11 and 12 years in federal prison respectively for firing shots at a Mexican drug smuggler who brought 743 pounds of marijuana across the U.S. border last year. The two agents were prosecuted by the U.S. Attorney's office and the smuggler was granted full immunity to testify against the agents.

At press briefings, you labeled a question concerning a presidential pardon for the two agents "nonsensical," and later announced the White House's intention to "wait and see" what a November 13th congressional hearing on their case produces.

Unfortunately, your comments reinforced the perception that the Administration is indifferent toward the agents' case. Despite my repeated requests for an investigation of this case and, most recently, a request by a dozen members of Congress for the President to pardon the agents, the Administration has collectively dismissed the concerns of elected members of Congress and countless citizens throughout the country. Your comments, unfortunately, came across as a continuation of that collective dismissal.

While our Border Patrol is tasked with the difficult and dangerous mission of securing America against illegal immigrants, drugs, counterfeit goods, and even terrorists—it is troubling that the Administration has persistently ignored opportunities to pursue justice for two agents who have been sentenced to prison for doing their job to protect our homeland. It is unconscionable that the Administration would not want justice to prevail for two heroes who have dutifully served this nation on the front lines in the fight against terrorist infiltration and narcotics trafficking on our southern border.

I strongly encourage you to do everything in your power to convince the Administration to investigate the Justice Department's overzealous and unjust prosecution of this case, and to pardon these two agents.

Sincerely,

WALTER B. JONES,  
Member of Congress.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I would hope that the American people would join behind a number of us in this Congress, both Republican and Democrat, and contact the White House and say to the President, for goodness sakes, pardon these two border agents who have done nothing more than try to protect this country.

God bless these two agents and their families, and may God continue to bless America.

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

(Mr. SCHIFF 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. CARDOZA) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. CARDOZA 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. PALLONE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

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#### RECENT VISIT TO ISRAEL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. OSBORNE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. OSBORNE. Mr. Speaker, 2 weeks ago I visited Israel, spent about 12 days there, and traveled the whole country. We started in the northern part, up around Caesaria Philippi, went down to Elat on the Red Sea, went to Jerusalem, went to Tel Aviv, talked to the people, and had a very good feel for what actually is going on there.

So often on CODELS we are in a country for 24 hours, 36 hours, and we move on. And this was a little different. And so at the present time, obviously, people know that Israel is in a very difficult spot. Recently they had a war involving Hezbollah on their northern border. And the Hezbollah was located in Lebanon, southern part of it, and fired hundreds, if not thousands, of Katyusha missiles into Israel, particularly the northern part of Israel. And yet, as we visited that part of the country, it was almost untouched, it seemed. They had repaired, they had restored, and life was going on as usual only a couple, 3 weeks after the conflict had ended.

As many people know, Hamas is very powerful in Gaza and in the West Bank and has tremendous influence in the Palestinian areas. At the present time, there are rockets being fired by the Hamas people down in Gaza, into Israel.

So as we watch this and as we watch the continual conflict with the Palestinians and the desire for the Palestinians to have a unified state, unifying the West Bank, on the west bank of the Jordan and in the Gaza Strip down in the southwestern part of the country, you can see that Israel is under tremendous pressure.

Yet, the thing that was rather impressive was the staying power, the resolve, the willingness of the Israelis to try to see this through. I guess the lessons that I took away from this, and the concerns, were that, obviously, it is important that the United States have that same staying power, that same will to pull together, that same willingness to survive in the face of adversity.

Because even though we are protected by two great oceans, the world has shrunk. Today we are not as secure as we once were. We face a true global conflict over the horizon. Many of the things that we observed in Israel, I think, apply to us, even though sometimes we are not aware of it.

Tony Blair made an interesting observation here recently. He stated that peace in the Middle East will be hard to come by unless Israel and the Palestinians and Hamas and Hezbollah can somehow resolve their differences. I believe that is very true.

Our focus is on Iraq here in the United States, sometimes on Afghanistan. But at the heart of much of the conflict and much of the turmoil in the Middle East is the conflict that involves terrorist organizations and Israel. I am not here to be partisan and take Israel's side versus another nation's side. I am simply pointing these issues out that I think are very important.

The things that I mentioned that particularly impressed me about the Israelis were, number one, a willingness to persevere in the face of great adversity, and people realize what the terrorists are attempting to do. But also not far away is Iran, and the Iranian president has basically said that he would like to destroy Israel, and everyone knows that at the present time it does appear that Iran is trying to build nuclear capabilities. This is a very tenuous situation as far as Israel is concerned. Despite these threats, as I mentioned, Israel seems to be staying the course, seems to have great resolve, and I would hope that we would have the same resolve in our country in terms of persevering in the face of adversity.

The second thing that I took away from that trip to Israel that I think is important, that may have some applicability to our situation here in the United States, is a sense on the part of the Israelis of having great unity of purpose, a willingness to pull together, a willingness to avoid all fragmentation. I guess when your back is to the wall and you are not very big, you realize that unity of purpose is critical. So we certainly detected that.

I guess I can relate a little bit to my previous experience in the athletic arena in regard to the importance of unity of purpose. A team of great athletes which was polarized and which was divided was not able to accomplish a great deal; and yet a team with less talent which had unity of purpose would usually prevail over a superior