

sapping strength from U.S. domestic priorities such as health care, education, energy independence, all much needed here at home. Unfortunately, the report begins with this sentence, and I quote: "The U.S. has long-term relationships and interests at stake in the Middle East," but then, amazingly, fails to identify them. Obviously, one of them is oil. And the U.S., again, does not commit itself in this report to a strong effort to restore America's energy independence here at home.

In addition, the report is very iffy on how the oil bounty of Iraq, which has the second largest set of reserves in the entire world, will be handled in the future. Though it makes suggestions on how to manage that oil reserve, the prospects of that being accomplished are quite remote. The report makes many recommendations that apply in Iraq, but not to end America's chief strategic vulnerability, our dependence on imported petroleum surely from the Middle East.

Importantly, the report places the Iraq situation in a regional context, explaining how what is happening in Iraq is operating to harm America's standing throughout the Middle East. It states how tepid international support is for the U.S. engagement in Iraq, despite the President's acclamations that there is a coalition of the willing.

In addition, the report acknowledging that for the United States to draw down forces, Iraqi units must replace them. And then the report details that the 138,000 Iraqi Army troops and 188,000 police units have some state of readiness. Half of them are not up to the task, with many functions infiltrated by the opposition.

The report presents a confusing picture on the issue of how long the United States might need to maintain its presence in Iraq. It recommends unit withdrawal by 2008 at some level. But then, in a different section, the report states that not all U.S. combat brigades would be needed in the future for force protection for backing up Iraqi units, but, of course, says many units would still be needed. At least that is the inference, but it doesn't say how many.

In the end, it fails to address the issue of how many combat units would actually be needed and, therefore, leaves the door open for an extended U.S. presence.

Admitting the difficulty it will entail, the report recommends restoring broken diplomatic relations with nations the administration has publicly ridiculed, such as Syria and Iran, as well as factions within Iraq and throughout the region with which the administration has no dialogue, such as Moqtada al-Sadr's Mahdi faction. The report properly identifies the unresolved Israeli-Palestinian conflict as paramount to reaching a regional peace settlement, stating clearly that neither Democrats nor Republicans would ever abandon Israel, but making strong recommendations on how to restore the peace process.

The report also makes some statements I find implausible. One is that only 5,000 civilian contractors are operating in Iraq, from hired guns to transportation specialists, when in fact that number now exceeds over 100,000, and represents a serious and worrisome departure from past U.S. military operations. If that private presence morphs into a mercenary force that occupies Iraq as the U.S. military withdraws, this would be a first in American history and a development I would not welcome.

Mr. Speaker, I was disappointed to read that at the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad, which was the largest in the world with over 1,000 employees, only 33 Americans speak Arabic. This is shocking and dangerous and another indication of the shocking mismanagement of the U.S. mission in Iraq.

#### URGING A PRESIDENTIAL PARDON FOR TWO U.S. BORDER PATROL AGENTS

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

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I am on the floor tonight to bring to the attention of the House a situation involving two U.S. Border Patrol agents. Agent Ramos and Compean were found guilty in a Federal court for wounding a Mexican drug smuggler who brought 743 pounds of marijuana across our southern borders into Texas. These agents never should have been prosecuted for their actions last year, yet they have been sentenced to 11 and 12 years in Federal prison respectively. On January 17 of 2007, both agents will enter Federal prison unless action is taken to overturn their sentences.

Agent Ramos served the Border Patrol for 9 years, and was a former nominee for Border Patrol Agent of the Year.

Agent Compean had 5 years of experience as a border agent. By attempting to apprehend an illegal alien drug smuggler, these agents were simply doing their job to protect the American people. These agents should have been commended for their actions, but instead the U.S. Attorney's Office prosecuted these agents and granted full immunity to the drug smuggler for his testimony against our agents.

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The drug smuggler received full medical care in El Paso, Texas, was permitted to return to Mexico, and is now suing the Border Patrol for \$5 million for violating his civil rights. Ladies and gentlemen of the House, he is not an American citizen, he is a criminal.

On October 26, an article by Sara Carter of the Los Angeles News Group, quotes two of the drug smuggler's family members who said, "He has been smuggling drugs since he was 14 years of age and would not move drugs unless

he had a gun on him, and he has been bragging about the money he is going to get in a lawsuit every time we talk to him."

While this habitual drug smuggler goes free, the families of the two El Paso Border Patrol agents have struggled to cope for almost 2 years with this unjust prosecution and conviction.

On October 18, an article by Sara Carter, she describes the devastation that has fallen upon the Ramos family, stating, and I quote, "They have almost lost their home on several occasions, they no longer have medical insurance, and most of the money raised for them will go to attorneys when they appeal the case."

I further quote, "Threats from associates of . . . [the drug smuggler] have left the Ramoses fearful for their children's safety. The El Paso Sheriff's Department has had deputies monitoring the Ramos family since the threats came by e-mail and phone."

The article reports, "Ramos first thought when the smuggler turned to him was of his wife and three young sons. He shot at the smuggler to save his life and his partner's, he said." Although it is clear that the agents fired shots to defend themselves and the border that they patrol, Ramos and Compean were convicted mainly on the testimony of a drug smuggler who claimed he was unarmed.

A sealed indictment for the drug charges forbade the defense from calling into question the integrity of the drug smuggler as a witness. Despite my repeated requests for an investigation of this case, and a request from dozens of Members of Congress to pardon the agents, this administration has ignored the concerns of countless citizens who have decried the unjust prosecution of these two heroes.

Members of Congress and the American people are outraged and concerned with this administration's indifference to the plight of these two honorable men who have been crucified unfairly by a Federal prosecutor. By using the power of his office to pardon these two agents, the President has the opportunity to immediately reverse a grave injustice. These two agents have given years of their life to service to this Nation, and have been unjustly punished for doing their job to protect our homeland.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, many in Congress and the people of America are asking the President to please consider our request and to pardon these two agents for protecting the American people from a known drug dealer. Please listen, Mr. President, we are asking you to please help.

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The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WESTMORELAND). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

#### TIME FOR A CHANGE IN IRAQ

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, it is time for the stubbornness of the White House to end. Today the President received recommendations from the bipartisan Iraq Study Group. This report should serve as a wake-up call that the status quo is simply not working, and that both Democrats and Republicans are now coming to the conclusion that we must take our troops out of Iraq.

The President's strategy of stay the course is not working. In fact, things in Iraq are dramatically worse today than they were 1 year ago. Consider that last year the people of Iraq were experiencing an average of 200 attacks per week. Today those attacks have doubled to more than 400 every week.

Imagine that, Mr. Speaker, living in a country or trying to stabilize a country where 400 attacks are taking place on a weekly basis. The situation is not getting any easier for American troops either. This October was the deadliest month for U.S. troops in more than 2 years, and the war is increasingly a war fought exclusively by American troops. To date 12 countries have pulled their troops out, and six more countries are planning to withdraw in the coming months.

Now, what are our brave men and women accomplishing today in Iraq? They are essentially serving as referees in a civil war between Shia and Sunni militias.

Mr. Speaker, we are also spending billions of dollars in Iraq, money that could be better served on domestic priorities here in the United States or in combating terrorists who are making a comeback in Afghanistan.

Today we are spending \$8 billion a month in Iraq, and we are not seeing any change on the ground.

Mr. Speaker, the American people voiced their frustration with the problems in Iraq and demanded with their votes a change of course on election day this year. But instead of listening to the people, instead of listening to Democrats, instead of listening to countless foreign policy experts who have demanded a change of course, President Bush has stubbornly stayed the same course.

He said there will be no graceful exit from Iraq, and that American troops will still be in Iraq when he leaves office in 2 years. This is President Bush's war. He initiated it, and it is now his responsibility to get us out.

Mr. Speaker, we must eliminate the open-ended commitment to keep troops in Iraq indefinitely. The Iraqi Prime Minister stated that his army has reached, and I quote, a good level of competency and efficiency, and that

they could be ready to take on the task of securing Iraq by June of next year. We should force the Iraqi security forces to play an increased role in securing their own country. The Pentagon must also redouble its efforts to effectively train the Iraqi security forces.

This past weekend, Mr. Speaker, a classified memo penned by Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld suggested that our course of action in Iraq is not working and the President should reconsider redeploying troops. Now, as Democrats, for months we have proposed this solution of redeploying troops out of Iraq, and the only thing that has happened is that we have been vilified by the President and many of our Republican colleagues in Congress.

I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that I support House Joint Resolution 73 introduced by Congressman JACK MURTHA of Pennsylvania last November 17 in 2005.

I don't want to go through that whole resolution, but I would like to make reference to the last whereas clause and the resolve clause, and it says, Whereas Congress finds it evident that continuing U.S. military action in Iraq is not in the best interests of the United States of America, the people of Iraq or the Persian Gulf region. Now, therefore be it resolved that the deployment of the United States forces in Iraq, by direction of Congress, is hereby terminated and the forces involved are to be redeployed at the earliest practicable date. That is what I believe in. That is what I would like to see us pass here.

Today I think, Mr. Speaker, it is very important to mention and to note that the Iraq Study Group, a bipartisan group, Democrats and Republicans, sent President Bush a strong message, and that is that the President's state of denial about the Iraq war cannot continue. The time has simply come to bring our troops home.

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

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

#### GOODBYE TO FRIENDS

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. Mr. Speaker, at the end of every election cycle, we say goodbye to a lot of our friends and hello to new Members of the Congress. Tonight, since we are right near the end of our session, our special session, I thought I would take just a moment to say goodbye to some of my friends, whom I am not going to see again, unless they invite me to their House for a steak dinner when I get in their region.

A lot of the Members of the Republican Study Committee, which SAM JOHNSON, JOHN DOOLITTLE and ERNIE ISTOOK and I founded about 10 years ago, were defeated in this elect. We have some new Members, but a lot of them were defeated. I want to say to them you have done a great job for your country and all of you we are going to miss. I can't name all of you, but you know who you are.

I also want to say a fond farewell to some of my colleagues from Indiana who I think fought the good fight and I think did a good job for our Hoosier State, but won't be with us again. MIKE SODREL, who has a great southern Indiana accent, I loved to rib him when he was on the radio. MIKE, we are going to miss you. He was very active on Agriculture Committee, the Science Committee, Small Business and Transportation. I don't know how he did all of that. That must be one of the reasons he wasn't able to win the reelection. He probably worked too hard up here.

Then, of course, CHRIS CHOCOLA, who was on the Budget and also Ways and Means. CHRIS was also from the northern part of Indiana. He did a great job for our State. We will miss CHRIS as well.

JOHN HOSTETLER, who came from what we call the bloody Eighth of Indiana. He carried the Republican mantle of leadership in that district for a very, very long time. He did a great job, but unfortunately this time the bloody Eighth got to him. JOHN, we are going to miss you as well.

ERNIE ISTOOK, who as I said before was one of the founders of the Republican Study Group, we called it CAT, Conservative Action Team. ERNIE ran for Governor and got hit with the tide. So, ERNIE, he didn't make the governorship. We are going to lose him as a Member of Congress. ERNIE, we are going to miss you as well. You did a great job with the Republican Study Committee.

Then I want to say goodbye to some of my buddies from the 98th Congress. There is only one of us left, the last man standing, SHERRY. There were 24 of us that were elected back in 1982 and 1983. SHERRY BOEHLERT, NANCY JOHNSON and MIKE BILIRAKIS were the last four. JOHN MCCAIN was the other four, but he went over to that other body where the air is a little bit rarefied. JOHN and I will be the only two left.

But SHERRY, we are going miss you. I know you are going to go home and really enjoy being with your wife and family and not having to run every time you hear a bell ring. You will probably hear the phone ring and go nuts.

NANCY JOHNSON, you have been a great friend. I will certainly miss you as well.

MIKE BILIRAKIS, fortunately MIKE's son has joined us from his district. We are going to miss MIKE as well. I had some great debates with MIKE about Cyprus. MIKE, I am going to miss you on those debates. Maybe your son will