

pace. Iraqis spend 16 of every 24 hours without electricity.

Rather than sending additional troops to combat the insurgency, we should begin to responsibly redeploy our forces in Iraq while redoubling our efforts to train and equip Iraqi forces to provide their own security, an effort which is at the very heart of the Iraq Study Group recommendations for bolstering security in Iraq.

President Bush rightly characterized the most recent pushes to stabilize Baghdad, Operation Together Forward and Operation Together Forward II, as unsuccessful, because there were not enough Iraqi forces to hold areas cleared by American troops. But the President's assertion that we will now be able to rely on 18 Iraqi army and police brigades to shoulder much of the burden in a new offensive in Baghdad is clearly at odds with reality.

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The Iraqi Army has not distinguished itself in combat. And four of the six battalions that were deployed to the capital last summer failed to show up at all.

The Iraqi police, which are under the control of the Ministry of the Interior, have been heavily infiltrated by Shiite militias and death squads and cannot be expected to take on Shiite extremists as Prime Minister Malaki has pledged. There is little support for an escalated American military presence in Iraq. American military commanders do not see an increase as improving the security situation on the ground, and the strain of multiple deployments has seriously eroded our capacity to respond to other contingencies should the need arise.

The American people, Democrats and Republicans alike, do not support an increase in the troop strength in Iraq. Perhaps most important of all, the Iraqis do not want more American troops in Iraq. In fact, if there is one thing that unites Iraqis, it is the desire that American forces should not remain indefinitely.

Furthermore, by continuing to bear the brunt of the fighting against insurgents, foreign fighters, and militias, the United States has fostered a dangerous dependence that has slowed efforts to have Iraqis shoulder the burden of defending their own country and government.

Even as we focus our military efforts on training Iraqi security forces, we need to push the Sunnis and Shiites to make the political compromises that are the necessary precondition to any reconciliation process. I have been arguing for more than 2 years that the struggle in Iraq is primarily a political one. The Iraq Study Group and numerous outside experts have also pressed the administration to force the Iraqi Government to make the hard decisions on power sharing, minority rights, and the equitable distribution of oil revenues that could help quell the Sunni insurgency and undermine

support for Shiite maximalists like Mukkada al Sadr.

I also believe the United States must work to convene a regional conference to support Iraq's bringing together its neighborhoods to find ways to stem the flow of weapons and foreign fighters into Iraq and to pursue common strategies in support of reconstruction and political reconciliation efforts.

There is hard evidence that Iran is facilitating the flow of weapons, trainers, and intelligence to Shiite militias in a bid to assert greater control over its neighbor. At the same time, the long and porous Syrian border has continued to be a transit point for foreign jihadis who have carried out some of the spectacular and devastating attacks on U.S. troops and Iraqi civilians.

Finally, our efforts in Iraq cannot be pursued in a vacuum. We need to do more to engage the Arab and Muslim world, and there must be a renewed effort to start peace negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians. This week's passage of the 9/11 implementation bill included excellent proposals for buttressing our leadership by improving our communication of ideas and communication in the Muslim world and by expanding U.S. scholarship exchange and other programs in Muslim countries.

Mr. Speaker, failure is unacceptable, but so is staying the course. I hope and expect that the debate we are going to have, the first real debate we have had in years, will convince the President to listen to those who are calling for a new way forward and not more of the same.

A TRIBUTE TO ROBERT ADERHOLT

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

Mr. ADERHOLT. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to congratulate, pay tribute, and honor a great jurist who has served on the bench for over 40 years in his home State of Alabama.

Born on December 6, 1935, to Ruby and Jesse Clifton, he grew up in Winston County, Alabama, and graduated from Haleyville High School in 1954. He pursued his undergraduate degree at Birmingham-Southern College. Thereafter, he attended the Cumberland School of Law in Lebanon, Tennessee, and obtained his law degree from the University of Alabama School of Law.

As a young attorney, he joined the faculty at the Cumberland School of Law, which by that time had moved from Lebanon, Tennessee, to Birmingham, Alabama, which is known today as Samford University. It was during this time that he authored, along with Professor Sam B. Gilreath, Caruther's "History of a Lawsuit," eighth edition.

In 1958, he married his high school sweetheart, Mary Frances Brown, and they have been married for over 48

years. They have one son, who is married to the former Caroline McDonald and, two grandchildren, Mary Elliott and Robert Hayes.

In 1962, he began serving as judge of the Court of Law and Equity in Winston County and served there until 1973. Then in 1977, he took office as one of two judges serving the 25th Judicial Circuit in the Alabama court system and has remained on the bench for 30 years.

He has served the public for more than 40 years and has presided over each case that has come before him with integrity and with impartiality. He is someone who has a brilliant legal mind; but most important, he has compassion for all individuals, regardless of their background or their social standing.

He is a man of faith, prayer, and integrity, who has a great love for his family, his country and his God. He has taken his job seriously from the first day he stepped up to the bench to preside. In addition to his responsibilities on the bench, he has been a businessman and has pastored Fairview Congregational Church in Hackleburg, Alabama, for over 40 years.

Mr. Speaker, I know all these things to be true about this individual and his character and his reputation because I personally observed him. Many times Members don't always have that kind of perspective when they come to the floor. I can say these things in all truthfulness as I stand here on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives because this man, the judge I am talking about, Bobby Aderholt, is my dad.

GAS PRICES

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

Mr. STUPAK. Mr. Speaker, I rise to commend the new Democratic Congress which will finally address high energy prices.

Many Americans have a hard time understanding what often seems like arbitrary reasons for fluctuations in gas prices. As the chairman of the Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, I look forward to bringing transparency to the oil and gas markets to clarify their effect on gas prices.

A recent example of confusing market behavior was in September and October of 2006, just before the November elections. Gas prices dropped an average of 60 cents per gallon. This 60-cent drop in gas prices occurred despite the fact that there were pipeline disruptions in Alaska and indications that OPEC would cut oil production.

While gas prices dropped 60 cents a gallon in September and October, crude prices only dropped 10 cents. For years, the American Petroleum Institute, API, the oil companies' main lobbying group, spent millions of dollars on public relations campaigns convincing the