

With health care costs rising and the number of diagnosed diabetics at an all-time high, we must work to prevent diabetes through education and awareness, as well as work to lower the cost of care associated with this disease.

□ 1850

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. KILROY). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

HONORING LEOPOLDO CIFUENTES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise to honor the memory of a friend who passed away just a few days ago, a larger-than-life personality, a generous and extraordinary man, Leopoldo Cifuentes.

Scion of a distinguished Cuban family, his grandfather purchased the famed Partagas cigar factory in 1875. The Cifuentes family symbolizes Cuban tobacco and cigars, the best in the world. And Leopoldo Cifuentes symbolized his remarkable family.

When the Cuban Communist tyranny confiscated all businesses in Cuba in 1960, including the tobacco business of the Cifuentes family, young Leo came to the United States of America, a country he loved and admired deeply. He married Dagmar Hidalgo Nunez, an extraordinary woman, in 1962.

That year Leopoldo Cifuentes volunteered to join the United States Army. Years later, he received an honorable discharge and the commendation of the then Army Secretary Cyrus Vance. Leo and Dagmar subsequently moved to Spain, where much of their extended family resided. Their children, Leopoldo, Jr., and Mayte, were born there. As Leopoldo and Dagmar's family grew, so did Leo's business success. But he never stopped loving the United States of America, nor the country of his birth, Cuba. Leopoldo Cifuentes, along with his son Leo Jr., and his nephew Rafael, have been bulwarks in the fight for Cuba's freedom.

Madam Speaker, just this last July, when I visited Spain to meet with recently arrived former Cuban political prisoners, Leo, Leo Jr., and Rafa helped me to lend a hand to our heroes, the just-released-from-the-gulag former political prisoners. And that's typical of their generosity and their patriotism.

I send my deepest condolences to Dagmar, Mayte, Leo Jr., Rafa, and the

entire wonderful family of Leopoldo Cifuentes. I will never forget him.

DESTROYING THEIR PROPERTY AND INSULTING THEIR INTELLIGENCE

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

Ms. WOOLSEY. Madam Speaker, the trip taken by the U.S. delegation to the NATO summit in Lisbon was an expensive one indeed. The decision made there to extend our military occupation of Afghanistan into 2014 and possibly beyond will exact untold, unsustainable, unacceptable costs.

A war that has already tragically cost us 1,400 American lives will now take many hundreds more. A war that has already drained the Treasury of \$370 billion will drive us further into debt and stall our economic recovery. And a war that has undermined our national security goals will continue to make us less safe.

Here we are patting down holiday travelers at the airport while we escalate a war that is fomenting, rather than fighting, terrorism. That's the current state of our national security policy. Talk about missing the forest for the trees.

This decision to stay the disastrous course in Afghanistan represents a broken promise plain and simple, a promise that was to at least begin ending this war in July of next year. Meanwhile, as the timetable extends, the tactics seem to grow more violent.

Remember shock and awe in Iraq? Well, we are now engaged in what one American officer called, "Awe, shock, and firepower" in the form of enormous tanks now rolling into Afghanistan for the first time during this war. As if Afghans needed another reminder of the 1980s Soviet invasion, which was heavy on tank artillery, and left an indelible mark on the national consciousness.

The optics here, Madam Speaker, are very bad, and the rhetoric is disturbing as well, with one official boasting to the Washington Post, and I quote him, he said, "We've taken the gloves off." And another saying that counterinsurgency, and I quote him, "doesn't mean you don't blow up stuff or kill people who need to be killed." Of course, the problem is that we are killing a lot of people who don't need to be killed, innocent civilians caught in the crossfire.

How exactly are we supposed to win people's hearts and minds when we are destroying their homes and exterminating their families? When will we understand that this kind of warfare, this entire war is the best propaganda tool the Taliban could ask for? And besides, Madam Speaker, tank deployment flies directly in the face of the COIN doctrine that is supposed to be guiding our

Afghanistan strategy. We have all heard General Petraeus wax philosophical about U.S. troops moving within communities, helping forge a bond between the people and their government. Except that tanks and night raids are about just the opposite—removing our troops from Afghan communities in favor of launching deadly explosives from a safe distance.

But apparently NATO officials have come up with a creative way out of that contradiction. The Post reports that an Afghan farmer asked a general at a public meeting, "Why do you have to blow up so many of our fields and homes?" He was told that when villagers travel to town to submit a claim for property damage it helps better connect them to their government. Can you imagine a response more galling, Madam Speaker? Now we are not only destroying their property, we are insulting their intelligence, too.

This must end, it must end now. And Madam Speaker, we must bring our troops home. Our troops should have come home a long time ago.

□ 1900

MIAMI CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL'S VENTILATOR ASSISTED CHILDREN'S CENTER CAMP

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROSLEHTINEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROSLEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I am so pleased, so pleased, to recognize the Miami Children's Hospital's Ventilator Assisted Children's Center Camp and congratulate them on their 25th anniversary.

This extraordinary camp serves children who depend upon medical technology to breathe. It gives them a chance to just be kids for a week.

Founded in 1986 by Dr. Moises Simpser, the camp has grown from serving 50 to over 250. This one magical week is the work of hundreds of volunteers and a year's worth of planning and preparation. The VACC Camp is the first of its kind in the Nation, and families come from across the country to participate.

For this 1 week every year, children who are usually all but confined to their hospital rooms and their homes can experience camp activities and a near-normal life. Packed with activities and field trips, this week is a week of firsts: First-time dancing, first-time bowling, first-time swimming. VACC Camp is not about what the campers cannot do; it's about what they can do.

Through a partnership with Shake-A-Leg Miami, the camp even developed a special sailboat that campers can steer with their chins, regardless of how much medical equipment they require. Other field trips include cruising on Biscayne Bay, shopping at Bayside

Marketplace, a day at the beach, and lunch at the Hard Rock Cafe. Often this is the one time a year that these children have a chance to go outside in the fresh air and feel the sunshine on their faces.

At camp, volunteers make the week unique by putting on carnival nights and themed dance parties. But above all, the camp offers a chance to escape wheelchairs, medical tubes, and breathing equipment by going swimming. The process of getting each child into the pool takes over 20 minutes and five to six volunteers.

VACC camp is unique for the opportunities that it provides to its campers and their families. Caring for a child who is dependent upon technology to breathe puts an incredible amount of pressure on even the strongest of families. Parents are responsible for intensive 24-hour care without a day off.

Of all the difficulties of caring for a sick child, one of the most trying is social isolation. VACC Camp serves not just the kids but also their siblings and their parents. With programs like Parents' Dinner Out, this camp is a time to have fun and take a day off. What a luxury.

VACC Camp is an opportunity for these children and their parents to see that they are not alone, to build a community and a support structure.

Camp is a life-changing week for the families and the selfless volunteers who make it happen. Sponsored by Miami Children's Hospital and supported by hundreds of volunteers, VACC Camp is completely free for the families. The camp depends not only on the medical professionals who use their vacation days but also on its many teen volunteers. Local high school students interact with campers to make the week truly special and fun, and they leave the week with lifelong friendships. Camp is as much of a life-changing event for these high school students as it has been for the campers themselves.

I am so appreciative, Madam Speaker, of the hard work and the countless volunteers who come together to make this camp a magical week year after year.

To Dr. Simpser and everyone involved at the VACC Camp: You have touched the lives of so many families and helped so many become happier and healthier children. Happy 25th anniversary, VACC Camp, and keep up the good work.

**GEORGIA'S FIRST SQUADRON,
108TH CAVALRY OF THE 48TH INFANTRY BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM**

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

Mr. GRAVES of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the dis-

tinguished service of seven men from Georgia's First Squadron, 108th Cavalry of the 48th Infantry Brigade Combat Team based in northwest Georgia.

On September 2, 2010, these men received the Bronze Star and Army Commendation Medals with "V" Device for their personal valor and action in an intense firefight during Operation Brest Thunder. Operation Brest Thunder, an operation involving U.S. troops, French marines, and the Afghanistan National Army, was designed in order to persuade the citizens of Afghanistan that it was safe for them to participate in the electoral process in the dangerous insurgency area of the Shpee Valley and the Kapisa Province.

It was through their bravery and boldness during this operation that the following men have been recognized for their outstanding action. The Bronze Star Medal with "V" device was awarded to:

Captain Nathaniel C. Stone of Monticello, Georgia; Sergeant First Class Kenneth Brooks of Calhoun, Georgia; Staff Sergeant William Bookout of Villa Rica, Georgia; Sergeant Roger Mavis of Dallas, Georgia; and Specialist Christopher Lowe from Savannah, Georgia.

Receiving the Army Commendation Medal with "V" device were Staff Sergeant William Moore of Newnan, Georgia, and Specialist Justin Evans of Silver Creek, Georgia.

During Operation Brest Thunder, a large number of Taliban had entered the Shpee Valley in Afghanistan in order to reinforce insurgents already there. At the start of their mission, U.S. forces immediately took heavy fire from enemy forces in every direction.

After a fellow captain was mortally wounded, and the assisting soldier, Specialist Lowe, wounded and incapacitated, Captain Stone and Specialist Evans sprung into action. Captain Stone was dispatched to lead the Quick Reaction Force to evacuate Specialist Lowe and the fallen soldier from the battlefield back to the combat outpost. Meanwhile, Specialist Evans treated Specialist Lowe's wounds while staying off enemy fire.

Maneuvering under fire, Captain Stone and Sergeant First Class Brooks, the onsite commander, immediately assessed the situation and the course of action for evacuation. They soon realized that the only way to retrieve the casualties was to immediately employ their men to lay down fire at a tree line that had been the source of the heaviest assault.

Once their men were in place and able to begin an aggressive attack, Captain Stone, along with another soldier, sprinted approximately 50 meters up high ground towards the house where the casualties were located without regard for their own personal safety. Upon reaching Specialist Evans and

Specialist Lowe, Captain Stone realized Specialist Lowe was losing a lot of blood and must be rapidly evacuated out of harm's way. Captain Stone sprinted towards one of the vehicles where Specialist Lowe was placed, while several rounds of enemy fire shot around him, skimming the top of his right boot.

And Captain Stone ran through enemy fire to ensure that Specialist Lowe received medical attention and that the body of his fellow soldier was retrieved.

This quick thinking and courageous action by Captain Stone and Specialist Evans, without regard for their own safety, saved Specialist Lowe's life and assured the retrieval of their fellow man. Throughout the duration of Operation Brest Thunder, Sergeant First Class Brooks, Staff Sergeant Moore, Sergeant Mavis and Sergeant Bookout endured heavy enemy fire.

These men led valiantly, calmly, and decisively. Although they were under heavy enemy fire, these men and their team pressed on and unfortunately sustained two casualties. However, they were able to maneuver their forces and hold Overwatch positions until the Quick Reaction Force could respond to medevac any casualties and help neutralize the enemy threat. They simultaneously oversaw the defense of their combat outpost from heavy fire upon the return of their mission.

A few of these men have noted Operation Brest Thunder to be one of the toughest battles they have fought. But it is because of their strength of skill that a Taliban commander and almost two dozen insurgents fell, helping the United States and her allies grow stronger, protecting her from those who wish to do her harm.

The courageous actions of these men show their commitment to their mission, to each other, and to their country.

Madam Speaker, I have taken this opportunity to commend the heroic actions of these men. But I would also like to take this opportunity to thank them. I would like to thank these men for sacrificing their lives and their livelihoods for this country.

I want to thank their families for showing tremendous support, strength, and resiliency, and I want to be sure that they and their brothers and sisters all across the United States Armed Forces know that we at home are always thinking and supportive of them. Americans can sleep more peacefully, Americans can live their lives more freely knowing that soldiers like these brave men from Georgia's First Squadron, 108th Cavalry of the 48th Infantry Brigade Combat Team are out there fighting for our freedoms.

God bless them and their families, and may the Lord continue to bless this great and glorious cause called America.