

THE IRAQ WAR JUST KEEPS
GETTING WORSE

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

Mr. MCDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, America has suffered the worst defeat in memory, and not by any insurgents. The world is rightly shocked and appalled by the pictures from Iraq. Rogue U.S. soldiers have committed atrocities that sicken us. They have harmed Iraqi citizens. They have endangered every decent U.S. soldier, and they have turned more people against us. The world must know that America stands for justice, and that justice should be carried out quickly against those responsible for these despicable acts.

The Iraq war just keeps getting worse for America, Mr. President. For those who mistrusted us before, the pictures will inflame their rhetoric. For those who hate us, the pictures will impassion them to find new recruits.

Every decent American can only feel enraged that the sordid conduct of a few people will be portrayed worldwide as representative of our Nation.

Iraqis were insulted and humiliated, but seven officers have received only a reprimand, a slap on the wrist. They were not even demoted or discharged. The world will ask, is that what America calls justice? No, it is not; and this administration had better take this seriously.

The U.S. would have gone to war if our citizens had been treated like this in another country. Remember our outrage when they hung some of our people from a bridge. The administration's response is just one more mistake. It is completely inadequate.

Iraq has been a mistake from the beginning. The administration refused to get help and support from the international community, and the administration continues to spout rhetoric that no one in the whole world either believes or accepts. Every day, literally, the administration switches from one policy to another.

First, the Baathists were bad, aligned with Saddam and no friend to the U.S. Then the U.S. hired a Baathist general to try and get us out of the mess in Fallujah. Then the U.S. replaces the guy after Iraqis protest the general's role in Hussein's regime. Now a new guy is in; but the insurgents, heavily armed and fortified, have already rejected the new general.

Fighting has broken out in several cities, and U.S. artillery is shelling positions near the Baghdad airport. There have been more U.S. casualties, and U.S. soldiers remain in grave danger all over Iraq while the administration test-fires a few possible solutions.

Note, Mr. President, this is not a test. Iraq is not a laboratory. They are shooting real bullets, and we keep pretending we have a policy. Some say

Iraq is not like Vietnam. Iraq looks more and more like Vietnam every day.

In southeast Asia, there was always more reassuring rhetoric from a Democratic President, by the way, than there was truth or policy to back it up. In Iraq, there is all this talk of growing a democracy; but in reality, we are seeding a civil war, with our soldiers' blood right in the middle of the violence.

What is the American administration going to say, We are working on it? The Pentagon said a few hours ago that 135,000 U.S. soldiers will remain in Iraq at least through 2005. In other words, the only thing being handed over on June 30 is a bill of goods, meant more for the American people and the election than the Iraqis.

It is time this administration faced the American people and the truth of their mistakes. Either get an international solution now, before more U.S. lives are lost, or get out and admit you should have never gone into Iraq in the first place. All the rhetoric in the administration's arsenal can start a debate, but it cannot stop a bullet.

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

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

EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER
TIME

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time of the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

30-SOMETHING WORKING GROUP

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

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, I rise to commend the tremendous leadership of two of our colleagues, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MEEK) and the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN), and the 30-Something Working Group for taking the lead on this vital effort to talk to the next generation of Americans about issues that they care about.

Tonight, during the Special Order, our 30-Something Working Group has 1 hour to speak to the young people of America. It consists of 14 Members of Congress in their 30s, as it said. The gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN) is in his 20s, just turned 30. All regions of the United States are represented in the group and all aspects and the beautiful diversity of our country: the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. CARSON);

the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. DAVIS); the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. FORD); the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. JACKSON); the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. KENNEDY); the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. KIND); the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. LANGEVIN); the gentleman from Washington (Mr. LARSEN); the gentleman from Utah (Mr. MATHESON); the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MEEK); the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN); the gentleman from California (Ms. LINDA T. SANCHEZ); the gentleman from Washington (Mr. SMITH); and the gentleman from New York (Mr. WEINER). How proud we are of them.

Democrats are committed to listening to and working with young people on issues they care about and that impact their lives, jobs, the economy, health care, higher education, globalization, and protecting the beautiful environment that is God's creation.

Over the past 8 months, our 30-Something Members have been on the road across America beginning a new dialogue with the next generation. Thirty-Something Members have traveled to Louisiana, Alabama, Massachusetts, Kentucky, Michigan, Florida, through the States that I have mentioned, their home States, talking to young people to hear their views on critical issues.

Two weeks ago, the 30-Something Working Group cohosted the Next Generation Democratic Summit. More than 250 18- to 30-year-olds came to Capitol Hill to discuss their concerns with Members of Congress and to share their insights about how to inspire other young people to be more engaged in government.

Today, we are launching another part of our effort to reach out to the next generation. This regular 30-Something hour is an exciting opportunity for House Democrats to have a national discussion with young Americans across the country. We certainly invite response from the young Americans.

Mr. Speaker, as my colleagues well know, all of us here in Congress have a responsibility to the next generation. We have received a precious gift, a privilege, of representing our districts in Congress and the wonderful responsibility to make the future better for the next generation. Not only do we have that responsibility as a Congress, but each of us has a responsibility to do that. Every decision that we make has an important bearing on the future. No one is impacted more by that than our young people.

So I am so very proud of our 30-Something Working Group and the leadership that they have assumed under the exceptional leadership of the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MEEK) and the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN).