

“Dear Congressman CUELLAR, As a member of the National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare, I am writing to urge you please oppose any legislation or plan that would divert dedicated Social Security payroll taxes into private individual accounts or in any way harm the benefits, structure or traditional role of Social Security.”

As you know, President Roosevelt and Congress created Social Security in 1935 to protect retired Americans from experiencing a poverty ridden old age. And America's more than 35 million seniors have invested their hard earned money into Social Security during their long working lives. Social Security represents a covenant between government and its citizens. I therefore stand against the administration's policy and plans to reform Social Security through partial privatization or any other plan that would undermine the promise of the program's full guaranteed lifetime benefits.

One of my top priorities as a citizen and a voter is the protection of Social Security benefits for all current and future retirees. I sincerely hope among your top priorities as an elected official that you will also help defeat the privatization and other proposals that threatened our retirement security.

I urge you to work closely with the National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare and protect the benefits we have worked for, paid for and have earned. Very sincerely, Mr. Hector MacDonald” from Laredo, Texas.

Again, I have received many letters like this, and I think this letter, Mr. Speaker, speaks for itself. I received over 400 letters like this one opposing the privatization of Social Security.

I have taken the time to read these letters, and I have taken a great deal of time to carefully review the proposal and listen to all sides of the debate; and after a thorough analysis I have come to see clearly that this proposal to privatize Social Security does not pass my legislative test. That is, it will not make our families stronger.

The current proposal to privatize Social Security jeopardizes our safety net by pulling the security out of Social Security. It takes our guaranteed benefits and gambles them on a stock market. It threatens to pose benefit cuts, raising the retirement age. And finally it assures adding a tremendous sum to our existing \$7 trillion debt.

Social Security has always been the one source free from risk and designed to reserve as a bedrock guarantee for our seniors.

The system was created and has served for generations as social insurance, not social investment; and we owe it to ourselves and our children, especially our seniors, to preserve that bedrock guarantee.

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO UNITED STATES GROUP OF THE NORTH ATLANTIC ASSEMBLY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to 22 United States Code, 1928a, the order of House of January 4, 2005, and clause 10 of rule I, the Chair announces the Speaker's appointment of the following Members of the House to the United States Group of the North Atlantic Assembly:

Mr. TANNER of Tennessee,
Mr. ROSS of Arkansas,
Mr. CHANDLER of Kentucky,
Mrs. TAUSCHER of California.

FIGHTING TERRORISM

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

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. DAVIS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the subject of this special order.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. DAVIS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, this is an exciting time in the history of the United States, in the history of the world, and in the advancement of freedom.

This afternoon a member of minority made a statement that this war was not a war of choice. Contrary to that opinion, which certainly one has a right to share in this body, I would remind all Members of this House and the people that this was in fact a war that was chosen by Osama bin Laden and even before that by people like Saddam Hussein, those who have subjugated and terrorized their people for decades and even generations.

Osama bin Laden turned his hatred on America after we responded to the request of the Saudi and Kuwaiti governments after Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait in 1990. His aggression was one of the key sparks in the current activities that we find ourselves engaged in right now.

This is a decisive time. In fact, we face the most serious threat to our freedoms and our liberties that we have faced since the end of the Second World War. We are fighting an enemy who has proven it will use whatever violent means necessary to further its cause. Indeed, we are not going to lose because of military strength, but we would lose only if the people of the United States have a loss of resolve.

My encouragement is to stay the course. As we see the development over the past several months around the world there are many, many things to be hopeful for. We recoil in horror at the report of suicide bombers and

strolling into crowded markets or onto packed buses and detonating themselves. Are they primarily focusing on our soldiers? No. The preponderance of casualties are attacks on their own people. In fact, this is not an insurgency in the classic sense. It is led by frankly a group of thugs, people filled with hatred, bitterness, criminals by any measure of merit, killing innocent men, women and children.

We watch in stunned belief when such a terror group announces it has taken hostage Americans or others who are innocent, working in Iraq peacefully to make it a safe place. A place where people can wake up in the morning, go to work, provide for their families, and then come home for a peaceful dinner, which so many of us, the vast and overwhelming majority of citizens in the United States, enjoy.

But our hearts swell glancing at pictures of the 8 million Iraqis who risked their lives to vote for a better way of life, one that does not include violence and brutal dictators. Every person who had the courage in his or her hearts to dip his or her finger in the purple ink on January 30 to vote in Iraq's first democratically held elections in decades, took a courageous stand for freedom and liberty and we applaud that.

I proudly joined my colleagues yesterday to pass the Emergency Wartime Supplemental Budget which we approved 388 to 43. The supplemental provides for \$76.8 billion in defense spending for pay, benefits, supplies and equipment for our troops because we will assure that our troops have the training, the tools and the equipment that they need to carry on to victory in this war.

We needed to move quickly to secure this money and we could not afford to wait for the budget process to wind its way to a finish. The military has told us they needed the funds by May 1 and Congress just cannot move that quickly on the entire defense appropriations bill.

The supplemental is money well spent to show our soldiers that we fully support them and that we are doing everything we can to provide for their safety. It shows our commitment to both our allies and also we show our enemies that we mean business, that we will continue to fight. We will pursue them in every corridor where they exist and, finally, win this war on terror.

This is not a fight we will lose, again, I reiterate because of military strength or lack of it. It is a fight that we can only lose if we choose to walk away, and we must not walk away.

This is a revolutionary time throughout the world. In the entire latitude 10-40 window, the doors of freedom are opening for the first time in decades, for the first time in history in some cases. We are seeing the fruit of the valor of our men and women in uniform in the developments in Lebanon, the developments in Egypt, the developments in Saudi Arabia. It is an exciting

time. It is exciting to see the values of the United States being carried forward, not being imposed but being embraced. Those are not a value of culture but a value of freedom and liberty, the dignity of the individual, the rights of every human being to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

I am proud of what the Iraqi people are doing after the bombings that have come on recruiting stations, on stores, on schools, on polling places. What we are seeing happening is an exciting thing, and that is the next morning the recruits are coming back. The next morning the security forces are coming to work. The next morning the police are on patrol. They are beginning to stand up and it is imperative that we stand with them.

We will continue to be strong and defend liberty so that other people may have the same freedoms that we enjoy.

I want to thank my distinguished colleagues who are here today with me to discuss the supplemental, the impact that it will have on our continued war on terror, one that we will see all the way through to victory.

Mr. Speaker, right now I would like to yield to the distinguished gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SAXTON), the chairman of the Subcommittee on Terrorism, Unconventional Threats, and Capabilities.

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding to me.

I would like to make a few remarks to kind of put in perspective at least my view of the war on terror. Before I do that let me thank the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. DAVIS) for taking out this time to permit several of us to make these remarks.

Let me just say that the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. DAVIS) has been a very energetic Member of the House of Representatives in spite of the fact that he has been here a relatively short time as a member of the Committee on Armed Services, and we certainly enjoy having him here and serving with him.

We all know that we have many people deployed overseas in a number of places. The most often talked about today, of course, are Afghanistan and Iraq, and I think it is fitting at this time to thank and pay tribute to the members of our Armed Services who are, in fact, a part of that deployed force, and to note as others already have today that they often times pay a very high price for volunteering to help their country in this way.

In addition to those folks who are members of the military, there are civilians in Iraq and Afghanistan as well, members of private securities forces that are employed by the Iraqi government and by our State Department and other agencies to provide the security that is necessary. They put themselves in harm's way as well.

I am reminded of one of my constituent families who lost a civilian son who went to Iraq to carry out his private pursuits. And so there are many people who have volunteered,

and we thank them all for the sacrifice they and their families have made in carrying out the mission that the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. DAVIS) has described as trying to solve a set of issues, a problem that is perhaps the most serious international problem that we have had since World War II.

The use of terror in carrying out political objectives is certainly not new. It goes back well over a century and we can find examples of it throughout the world and primarily perhaps in the Middle East as far back as 1900. And, of course, in 1928 it bubbled up in Egypt, where organizations were formed for the purpose of carrying out various types of ill-conceived missions, ill-conceived goals. And, of course, in modern history it has become very prevalent, for example, subsequent to the establishment of the country of Israel, those who wished the Israeli government and the Israeli people ill will and tried to create harm and perhaps do away with the state of Israel, began a war of terror in the Middle East and has continued, I think it is fair to say, continues today. It certainly did very recently.

I first became interested in these issues in the late eighties when on a trip to Israel I happened to pick up a Time Magazine and read a story, an article about Hamas. When I got there I began to ask Israeli officials about this group and they enlightened me over the period of time that I was in Israel on that trip, and I came home convinced that the subject of terrorism was something that our country was going to have to pay attention to and that, in fact, it could end up in the situation where we were going to have a very significant problem. And, of course, the rest of that story is history.

We know that during the nineties we suffered attacks in Saudi Arabia on American interests. We suffered attacks in two countries, in Africa on our embassies there, and we suffered the attack on the USS *Cole* in Yemen. Of course, in 2001 on September 11 our country was attacked here in the homeland.

We had been fairly passive, I must say, about this subject during the decade of 1990s and before. But subsequent to 9/11 and President Bush, who stood at this podium and talked about the global war on terror and declared the war on terror, our country has had some tremendous successes overseas. And through the help of people, some of whom have paid the ultimate sacrifice, but all of whom sacrificed in one way or another, we have had some great successes.

For example, in Afghanistan with the use of air power and some folks on the grounds, we were able to take down the regime that we know as the Taliban, and we were able to disburse the al Qaeda forces that were supported by the government known as the Taliban.

□ 1745

The al Qaeda forces were scattered. We believe that we have captured or

taken down in one way or another something in the neighborhood of 75 percent of their leadership and have, in effect, provided an opportunity for our country to claim a success with regard to the al Qaeda organization.

Of course, I had the opportunity along with some of my colleagues to travel to Afghanistan last February and to see the progress that has been made in that country because of our country's policies. Obviously, along with routing out the Taliban and taking down much of the al Qaeda leadership, the economy of Afghanistan is growing in leaps and bounds. It is not the kind of economy that we know, but still, it is an indigenous economy that is, in fact, growing at a good pace.

The Karzai government has been stood up. In talking with President Karzai, much progress has been made in the goals of education and society generally in that country. Of course, with the coming legislative elections, we will have another democratic victory in Afghanistan when the parliament is actually elected.

We had another opportunity in Iraq. We had problems in Iraq and took advantage of the opportunity in Iraq to take down one of the most despotic, tyrannical governments in the history of the world, the government run by Saddam Hussein and his Baathist party. So we move forward in the war on terror and we fight against insurgents and terrorists in Iraq and rebuild Iraq, bring its economy back up and provide opportunities for the Iraqi people, not only to have their economy grow but also to have that election that was symbolized by the purple finger of over 8 million Iraqi people who stood in line, sometimes being shot at, in order to be able to vote for their new government.

These things have all gone forward and they have set an example for the rest of the world, and as President Bush said not long ago, any country in the world that wants to establish a democracy, we will be there to help.

Today, as we look around the world, in Egypt, there are tendencies that are developing for democratic opportunities. The first real election perhaps in the history of Egypt will be held this year, and of course, in Lebanon, we all see on the news every day that the democracy there is progressing as well as in the West Bank and with regard to the Palestinians who are also in the process of forming a new government and providing for the elections that were recently held.

This is a problem. Terrorism is a problem, always has been. It has become a major issue today, however, primarily I believe because of the possibility of terrorists acquiring the possession of weapons of mass destruction which, of course, would be a very serious and unthinkable kind of a situation.

Once again, let me commend the gentleman from Kentucky for taking out this time to give me and others who will follow me an opportunity to express our views of the current situation

and the successes that are our military men and women and our government and the newly elected democratic governments in the Middle East are having.

Mr. DAVIS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from New Jersey for his aggressive and energetic leadership in the Subcommittee on Terrorism, Unconventional Threats and Capabilities of the Committee on Armed Services. In the 20 years that he has served in the House, he has seen the end of the Cold War, of one dramatically large threat replaced by an even more pernicious threat with the rise of global terror and asymmetric threats.

This is a decisive time in our history, and it is important that we stand together as a people. I regret the occasional rhetoric that we hear even in this body that tears down the efforts of our leaders, of our soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines to effectively carry out their mission.

But there is also a mission at home that we have. As the dynamics of the threats to the United States have changed, it intruded upon our lives on September 11, the protection of our homeland, of our communities, of our children and our families. It is a critical, critical priority.

It is now a special opportunity to introduce a distinguished member of law enforcement who is also now a distinguished Member in this body from the State of Washington. I would like to yield to the gentleman from Washington (Mr. REICHERT), who has established a great record of persistence, the ultimate captor with a great team of law enforcement people of the Green River Killer, who also brings profound insights into law enforcement and port security, homeland security, domestic law enforcement and is now adding great value to the entire people of the United States here in the House. I yield to the gentleman from Washington.

Mr. REICHERT. Mr. Speaker, I thank my good friend the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. DAVIS) for allowing me a few minutes to speak tonight.

I have had experience on the streets of this country and in protecting our communities and our families, and it has been an honor to serve for 33 years in the King County sheriff's office in Seattle, Washington.

Since September 11, our job has changed a little bit. We have had to focus on possible terrorists in our community. This country is at war. It is a different war, a war like we have never fought before. We call it the War on Terror.

Some may disagree with how we got into this war, why we are here and may want to even end this War on Terror. Some have even called it a war of choice. This was not a war of choice. Our country, our Nation was attacked. On September 11, we suffered human loss in a tragic attack on this Nation.

Then what happened? Our armed services jumped into action, and the

men and women of our military came to our aid, came to protect this country and went to war.

Some might ask, well, why would people volunteer for the armed services, why would anyone, law enforcement officers or people who serve in the military, why would they volunteer to sacrifice their life? Why would they volunteer to sacrifice time away from their families or put them in need for their care and attention and put their lives in danger? Why would men and women do that?

As I thought about that, it reminded me of a story that happened a few years ago. I have a 28-year-old son who now is or he was 10 when this happened, but it was a hot summer day in Seattle. It was one of the few hot summer days we had, and I was mowing the lawn and he was following behind me. As we were mowing the lawn and he was tugging on my shirt, he said, Dad, let me mow the lawn, I know I can do this. I was a little bit unsure about having my 10-year-old son run the lawn mower. My wife came out and said, Dave, the phone was ringing; it is for you.

I went in to answer the phone. My son was still tugging at my shirttail, Dad, I can do this, let me mow the lawn. So I said, Dan, if you can start that lawn mower, you can mow the lawn.

So I watched from the window as I was on the telephone, and Dan pulled and tugged and pulled and tugged and pulled and tugged on this rope to start this lawn mower, and the sweat was just pouring down his face, and I thought soon he would give up, but he kept on going.

Finally, then he came to the point where he was so exhausted he had to stop and pause, and he put his head down and he wondered, where do I turn now, what do I do. This was a proud moment for me as a father because he stopped, he looked up, he put his hands together, and you could read his lips. He said, please, Lord, start this lawn mower. Then he bent over and pulled on the rope, and the lawn mower started. So I thought to myself, you know what, if God wants Dan to mow the lawn, I am not going to stop him.

Here is the moral of the story. Here is a young boy who has faith and hope and trust that small children have. If you stop and think about the faith and the hope and the trust that our kids have, that our children and grandchildren have today in each and every one of us, parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, Members of Congress, I do not care who you are, those children are looking to us for leadership.

What has happened here is our military is fighting, sacrificing their lives because they know they cannot give in to terrorists because those little eyes that you look into, that hold that faith, that hope and that trust must never lose that hope, faith and trust.

This country needs to be free. We must support our men and women in

uniform to preserve the faith, hope and trust that every one of our children in this Nation have, and when we passed the supplemental yesterday and supporting our troops for the training, equipment and tools that they need to conduct this war and do their job, we sent them a clear message: We support you and we love you. We care for you and we thank you for keeping our country free and for making sure that our children never lose that faith, hope and trust that they have in all of us and in this great Nation.

Mr. DAVIS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Washington State and also salute all members of law enforcement, our fire, EMS and first responders who are working literally around the clock to make this Nation safe.

Indeed, I want to salute our soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines. My former comrades, classmates, former comrades when I was an enlisted soldier and those who I went to the military academy with and served on active duty with, who are still serving this country today. I applaud your efforts. We love you and we thank you for the sacrifices that you are making to give us a safer tomorrow, a safer Nation, a safer future and hope for the world.

In our have it now, you deserve a break, have it your way society we can easily forget that all true freedom came at a great price. It came with persistence. It came with faith. It came with hope and real hope is not what we see now. Hope is something that we do not yet have, that we are waiting for, that we are pursuing aggressively with great hunger, and that freedom ultimately, as all true freedom came, with the shedding of blood, the willingness to lay down our lives for our friends.

In the prior generations, that has been done willingly, acceptingly, and now we have a great generation that has raised up to defend this Nation to prepare and protect this country for our children and grandchildren as they come forward.

There is a liberal intellectual elite in this country that say the people of the Arabic world are not capable of embracing freedom. I wholeheartedly disagree with that. As one who has learned to love the Arabic culture over the last 27 years, I have seen in ordinary men and women that spark of desire for freedom, a desire to be free, a desire to give their children hope and opportunity and freedom and to grow up in a safe community, to be able to pass on the tenets of their faith, to live with a future that is secure, a future that has promise.

Let me share with you another perspective, another view. I want to share some excerpts from an e-mail that I received from my neighbor down the street. His name is Colonel Charlie Waylon, and he is a reservist.

Working as an emergency room physician, he answered the call after September 11 to join a special forces unit first in the liberation of Afghanistan.

Then he came back again in Operation Iraqi Freedom and is now on his third tour in theater, willingly serving, making a difference in the lives of our soldiers and Marines but also making a difference in the lives of the Iraqi people.

He is a colonel, and his son reports soon to Fort Benning, Georgia, for infantry basic training. They, along with the rest of our soldiers, are constantly in my prayers and my wife Pat's prayers. It is e-mails like this that I receive on a regular basis that convince me that we are doing the right thing, and not only that, that we are winning.

Before my friend went to Iraq, he was asked three questions by one of his neighbors: Are we winning? Is it worth the price? Are we accomplishing anything?

Having spent some time now in theater for the third time, he says the answers to all three are an unequivocal yes. Let me say that again. It is an unequivocal yes.

What gives him that authority to speak is his experience on the ground, having seen that situation develop over time.

First, let us focus on the big picture. We are not engaged in a war in Iraq itself, the main war on the ground. We are engaged in a war of world views, one that does not value freedom, one that values hatred and closed societies over openness and freedom and true discourse; one that does not value the true dignity of the individual, the preciousness of all life but discards that for the sake of a theology of hatred. It does not represent the center of mass of people in that part of the world.

The fact that the Iraqis would rise up and go to the polls in numbers greater than turnout in elections in the United States of America says the man and woman on the street cares deeply, deeply about embracing this opportunity for freedom. Who are we to walk away from them in their time of need right now?

□ 1800

We are now fighting a counterinsurgency, and it has two goals. One, it wants to overthrow the democratically elected government of Iraq which has just held its first session, and try to run the United States out of the country.

What needs to be clear is that we are not alone in facing this enemy. 70 percent of the eligible voters in Iraq turned out for the election. Outside the Sunni Triangle that number approached 85 percent. In my district in the 2002 election only 38 percent of the registered voters turned out to vote. Who are we to criticize those efforts of those valiant people?

We all mourned when we heard that a bomb exploded outside an Iraqi police training center and killed 120 recruits. But if we can find one positive aspect in that needless tragedy, that atrocity, it is that 120 Iraqis felt safe enough to even sign up to become police officers;

that they had courage to invest their lives, to lay their lives down, to put them on the line to protect their families, their communities and ultimately their nation. And the exciting thing is that the men come back the next day. They come back to serve because they understand what is at stake.

Moderate Shiite clerics are not asking us to leave Iraq. The Kurds are not asking us to leave, and the overwhelming majority of Iraqis are not asking us to leave. They want us to stay, to stand by them while they train up, while they become strong and stabilize their own country and bring forth their flavor in terms of their culture of the freedoms that they are taking hold of.

Let us look at what has been achieved so far by those detractors of the policy of this country who have said that this war was a war of choice. It was imposed upon us, I might remind them.

And I would also state, Mr. Speaker, that since in the last year Libya has denounced weapons of mass destruction and opens its doors to the United Nations weapons inspectors, it has opened its doors to Western trade, a desire to become part of the community of nations, and it has renounced terrorism. A former perpetrator of terrorism has repented of that and now are beginning to walk in a new direction, seeing the inevitability of the rise of freedom in the Middle East.

In the fall of 2004 Afghanistan held free and open elections. Women who under the rule of the Taliban could barely leave their homes walked freely to polling places and voted.

In January Palestine elected a national leader in a United Nations supervised election in which women also voted. We are hopeful that the situation with the Palestinian people will lead to a free government, a peaceful government that can coexist alongside the democracy in Israel.

Also in January the Iraqis held their unprecedented election, and again, women voted in overwhelming numbers.

One of my West Point classmates shared with me in a confidential e-mail his perspective on seeing women coming to the polls to vote. He saw elderly women, young mothers with their children clinging to them standing, ignoring the ordnance flying about them, who had the courage to take hold of this once in a lifetime, once in a generation, once in a century opportunity to make a difference, to transform what had been an oppressive atrocity ridden, closed society in which the individual did not matter, but only to feed an appetite of megalomaniacal power of a dictator. That has been cast down. These people are seizing that opportunity.

The unfolding events in Lebanon and Syria's declaration that it will begin withdrawing from Lebanon is an outstanding indicator that as we stay the course and we link arms with freedom

loving peoples in that part of the world, that we will see peaceful resolution to the challenges that we face, and these terrorists will be repudiated for the inhumane individuals that they are.

My friend ends his e-mail by stating that it is not just men and women who are helping lead their countries toward a brighter future. Women who spent years living under dictatorial regimes that demanded their silence are stepping up and playing a major role in the spread of democracy.

He says, and I quote, I want women fully enfranchised throughout this part of the world. I want them voting. I want them involved in government because in my opinion, he states, if they are, this will be a safer, saner and less militant world.

As we transition to other topics relating to this, I would like to introduce a distinguished colleague of mine, a member of my entering class in the Congress. He is the gentleman from Texas (Mr. MCCAUL). He brings a very pertinent record of professional achievement into this body, and can speak with an authority on a wide variety of issues related to the global war on terror.

Prior to being elected to the United States Congress, Mr. MCCAUL served as an Assistant United States Attorney whose charge was counterterrorism investigation and prosecution in the great State of Texas.

Mr. Speaker, I now yield to the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. MCCAUL of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Kentucky for his leadership in managing this very important debate here today. As the gentleman mentioned, I have a background in counterterrorism in the Justice Department. I know this war on terror firsthand. I serve on the Homeland Security Committee and the International Relations Committee.

You know, many believe that the war on terror began on September the 11th, 2001, but the fact of the matter is we have been at war for several decades. You do not have to go back very far for evidence of that. As recently as 1993 an individual by the name of Ramzi Yousef entered the United States claiming political asylum. He was detained and given a notice to appear. He failed to appear at that hearing. Instead he would join the first al Qaeda cell in downtown Manhattan.

We recently passed the REAL ID Act to make it more difficult for those like Ramzi Yousef to obtain political asylum in this country.

After joining his fellow classmates from the bin Laden academy, he engaged in a conspiracy to blow up the World Trade Center. Fortunately, the Towers remained standing that day. But that day would come later. And that was Osama bin Laden's dream.

Then the embassies in Africa were bombed, and the USS *Cole*. In 1997, bin Laden openly and publicly declared war against the United States. The only

thing that troubled him was that the United States would not respond back to his declaration of war. It seemed like the United States was a sleeping giant, and it would not be until the bloodiest alarm of 9/11 that the giant would finally awake.

And now, to the present. There is positive news in this war on terror. We have rooted out al Qaeda in its caves in Afghanistan. We have killed or captured nearly 75 percent of the leadership. We have liberated Afghanistan and held free elections for the first time in the country's history, and we have liberated Iraq. We know that Zarqawi in Iraq has significant ties to bin Laden. We know that al Qaeda today says it has the right to kill 4 million Americans, 2 million of them children. It is a threat that we take very serious today, and it is a threat that we are responding to.

We have seen significant and positive developments in terms of the Syrians pulling out of Lebanon.

Rarely in the history of the world has freedom moved so swiftly through a region. In places where oppression, tyranny and inhumane treatment once flourished, we now find nations waking up to the reality of self-ruled governments and the benefits that come with their new democracies. In Iraq for the first time in more than a generation, people are speaking up for or questioning governments, a new right for many of them. And this discourse is occurring not in closed rooms or the hidden chambers of a dictator's prison, but in the legislative halls of a free Iraq and Afghanistan.

As recently as this week, we as a Congress passed an emergency wartime supplemental bill. We have an opportunity to continue our commitment to the brave fighting men and women who are helping ensure this birth of democracy by providing the necessary tools to protect themselves, by providing the body armor that they need, by providing the armed Humvees that they need, and by increasing death benefits from \$12,000 to \$100,000.

The United States Government and Coalition Forces have trained and equipped nearly 82,000 Iraqi police and highway patrol officers, and along with soldiers, the United States and its allies are well on the way to helping Iraqis defend and protect themselves in their own country.

In all, more than 142,000 Iraqi police officers and soldiers, many of whom have already taken over the responsibilities of protecting their freedom, have received training. About 130,000 of those troops helped ensure the success of the Iraqi elections, some even died to protect those vital votes. Add to that of Iraq's 18 provinces, 12 are now being patrolled and policed by Iraqis. And on February 21, the 40th Iraqi National Guard Brigade officially assumed control of its area of operation in and around Baghdad. This is the first Iraqi brigade to stand alone and have direct control over an area of op-

eration. While the Coalition Partners continue to advise the brigade, the areas will be under complete Iraqi control.

With the \$5.7 billion proposed to train Iraqi troops in the supplemental budget, we are making a confident investment in a nation that will uphold the democracy those in those lands have fought so hard for.

But our need to help spread freedom also includes Afghanistan. We voted on a \$1.3 billion investment to be made there to stabilize this emerging democracy and eventually reduce U.S. forces in the area. We have seen American forces quietly making tremendous progress in a land which for so long had none. Already, Americans have trained 36,000 national and local Afghani police officers, 1,000 border security agents and 400 highway patrol officers. Coalition Forces have set up six training locations to make it efficient to train these troops, and we must remember by training these troops we are spreading and securing democracy, and therefore making us safer here at home. With each and every Iraqi and Afghani troop trained, America is one step closer to bringing its sons, its daughters, its husbands and wives home for good.

I would like to close with a very powerful story. It is a story of Janet and Bill Norwood. It is the story of Sergeant Byron Norwood. As many Members recall, at the State of the Union, Mr. and Mrs. Norwood sat right over there. The President talked about how their son, Byron, lost his life. He lost his life in an incredibly brave story. He rescued seven Marines held hostage by insurgents. He saved seven Marines' lives from the insurgence in Iraq, and paid the ultimate sacrifice in the process. It was a defining moment in the State of the Union, the warm embrace between Janet Norwood and Safia from Iraq.

I would like to close by reading a card that I received from Mrs. Norwood. With each parent I have talked to who lost a loved one in Iraq, they all said the same thing, "Finish the job."

This is a picture of Sergeant Byron Norwood. And in the card written to me, Mrs. Norwood said, "Dear Representative McCAUL.

"We want you to know how much we have appreciated your visits to our home. It was a pleasure to meet you and Linda and to be able to share more about Byron with you. Knowing that you and so many other Americans honor and respect his sacrifice helps greatly to ease our sorrow.

"Thank you also for the flags. The one that was flown over the Capitol on the day that Byron died will always have a special place in a beautifully displayed box with other treasures from Byron's Marine Corps service. He would be so amazed and so proud.

"The whole idea of the Post Office naming is such a stunning honor. One of the things we worried about was that people would soon forget about

Byron. If your bill passes, that will never happen, and that is such a great comfort.

"If you ever become aware of any way I can be of service in my new role as a Gold Star Mother, either to the government or to the Gold Star Moms, please let me know. Sincerely, Janet."

Mr. Speaker, this is what it is all about. This brings this war on terror home to the homes of every family in this Nation, and it is a war that we will prevail in.

Mr. DAVIS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his profound words. No more powerful words can be spoken than those of a mother who has lost a son, whose blood was shed literally to protect our freedoms, the lives of his fellow men.

In the words of our Lord, We share no greater love as a person than he who lays down his life for his friends.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. COBLE (at the request of Mr. DELAY) for today on account of attending a funeral.

Mr. GARY G. MILLER of California (at the request of Mr. DELAY) for today after 4:00 p.m. on account of illness.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Ms. WOOLSEY) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. SCHIFF, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. DEFAZIO, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. WOOLSEY, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. KAPTUR, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. CARDOZA, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. COOPER, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. ROSS, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. BOYD, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. SALAZAR, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. CUELLAR, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. BLUMENAUER, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. CASE, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at the request of Mrs. BLACKBURN) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mrs. BLACKBURN, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. MURPHY, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. WELDON of Florida, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. KIRK, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at their own request) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)