

she says, "never knew anything but church on Sunday and school on weekdays."

Having learned the importance of education early in her life, Letitia became a teacher in a one-room schoolhouse in Excelsior Township. Though she left this post to marry, farm, and raise three children, she never gave up her passion for teaching. Since retiring from the farm in 1970, Letitia has continued to pursue her love of teaching. As late as last year, Letitia spoke to students of the Okoboji Elementary School on two different occasions and offers weekly lessons to the students who deliver meals to her in her home.

A reliable champion of family, togetherness, and love, Letitia represents all that is good about the traditional American values that we in Iowa hold dear. On the occasion of Letitia Lawson's 110th birthday, I offer my congratulations and the best wishes from Congress.

AMERICA MUST RESIST TEMPTATION TO START A WAR WITH IRAN

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

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, I know it is an election year, and I know President Bush's ratings are at an all-time low, and I know gas prices are very high and the people are restless. Nevertheless, I call upon my colleagues and the President to resist the temptation to start yet another war.

There is an old saying: "Fool me once, shame on you. Fool me twice, shame on me." Well, friends, if we fall for the case being made to go to war against Iran, it will be "shame on us." And I define bombing from 40,000 feet as war.

Just as we did in the months leading up to the invasion of Iraq, a country which had no connection to 9/11 and no weapons of mass destruction, this administration intentionally confused us with regard to Iraq. It is doing the same with Iran. The administration says they want compliance with nuclear treaties but makes it clear that they really will settle for nothing less than regime change.

When I said before the Iraq war that I believed the President would be willing to mislead us into the war if he believed misleading us was necessary to fulfill his plans, I was excoriated, but I was right. I do not characterize the President's motives. I assume he took us into war in Iraq because he sincerely believed it was the right thing to do. We know now that he was wrong about that. The world is less safe. The Iraqis are in turmoil. More Americans have died in the President's plan in Iraq than died in New York City and at the Pentagon.

What the President did with our Iraq policy is being replicated with our Iran

policy. There was much to criticize about Saddam Hussein, and there is much to criticize about the ayatollahs and their front men in Iran. We have every right to demand that Iran adhere to its obligations under the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty and to pursue sanctions and other penalties. What we do not have the right to do is to make it impossible for Iran to satisfy our demands without regime change.

When we started demanding regime change in Iraq instead of demanding compliance with U.N. inspectors, we put ourselves on the path to war in Iraq. We are on the same plan and the same path in Iran. We will not talk with the Iranian government, and we will not stop talking about overthrowing it. It is impossible for the Iranian government to satisfy this administration and remain a government, although this administration will immediately deny that.

Every time it appears something is going to work out with the Soviet Union, or whatever, we pull the rug out from the negotiators. Because we don't want negotiation. We don't want to solve the problem. We want regime change. Somehow this administration has got it in its head that it has the right to tell other governments to step aside for people we like better. That is wrong.

We tried it with Mosaddegh and put in the Shah and we are back at it again. What we should do instead is to call their bluff and let them save face at the same time. If they say they want nuclear energy, we should say, okay, if it is nuclear energy you want, you won't mind having wall-to-wall U.N. inspectors watching every move you make to keep people from getting the wrong idea.

We make sure that they can't build bombs and let them have what they are entitled to under the NPT: civilian energy. We must quit making the leaders more popular. And we are doing it by making them the guys who stand up to the U.S. We must quit acting like we are going to invade any country that has the wrong regime.

If we attack Iran, as I fear we are on a course to do, we will unleash a hell unlike anything this region has seen. Iran is not Iraq. It has not been under sanctions for 10 years. It has not been bombed flat by the Gulf War. It is a strong nation with weapons. We will make ourselves once again less safe if we attack them.

Mr. Speaker, this administration has now been told on this floor, in public, on the record. The President will come here in about 6 or 8 or 9 months and give us a State of the Union. If he has taken us into a war in Iran, he will deserve what happens.

This country does not need another war. We have already proven the failure of that in Iraq; and because they won't change their mind, they keep doing the same thing over and over again. And now there is an election coming up. The 2006 election is coming

and they want to distract us. That is why they are leading us towards Iran.

IRAN IS A TERRORIST STATE

(Mr. BURTON Indiana asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, Iran, as my colleague leaves the floor, is a terrorist state. They are trying to develop nuclear weapons, and the world and the United States cannot tolerate that. We will rue the day if we allow them to go forward with their nuclear weapons program. We will try diplomatic means, we will try economic sanctions, we will try anything to stop them; but we cannot allow them to build a nuclear capability, because they are a known terrorist state, period.

And I want to say one more thing about my colleague's comments about weapons of mass destruction not being found in Iraq. Many people thought that Iraq sent those weapons out of the country. Well, one of our special ops organizations in the last two or three days found 800 canisters, 800 canisters, of chemical weapons, the type that was used to kill the Kurds, 10,000 women and children, Kurdish children, during the regime of Saddam Hussein, and also the kinds of weapons that were used in the Iran-Iraq war.

So saying there were no weapons of mass destruction, when we have actually found 800 canisters in just the last few days, proves that that is not correct.

TIME FOR THE IRAQI PEOPLE TO ASSERT CONTROL OVER THEIR POLITICAL DESTINY

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

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, the Iraq war is now in its 4th year, and I, like many of my colleagues and millions of my fellow citizens, are troubled about the direction the conflict is taking.

I have been to Iraq three times to visit our troops there, and I have spent time with our wounded here and in Germany. They have done everything we have asked of them, and they have done it magnificently. While we have a moral obligation to do whatever we can to avoid having Iraq spiral into an all-out civil war, now is the time for the Iraqis themselves to decide if they wish to be one country. And, Mr. Speaker, it is time for us to take steps that will ensure that 2006 is a year of significant transition to full sovereignty for the people of Iraq.

This is a conflict that has come to grief in many ways. In the fall of 2002, I voted to authorize the use of force against Iraq because of the threat that Saddam Hussein had stockpiles of chemical and biological weapons, and because I was concerned that he had an

active nuclear weapons program. If you go back and look at the debate in the House and Senate, this was a decision taken by the Congress to prevent Iraq from acquiring or using or transferring nuclear weapons.

Months later, as American forces pushed across the Kuwaiti frontier and into Iraq, we were on a hunt for weapons of mass destruction. Delivering the Iraqi people from the brutality of Saddam Hussein was a noble act, but the promotion of democracy in Iraq was not our primary reason for going to war. Similarly, we knew the Shiite majority had suffered terribly under the Ba'ath regime, and freeing them from the oppression of the Sunni minority was an added benefit of the invasion. But reordering the ethnic balance of political power in Iraq was not our primary purpose for going to war.

Soon after the fall of Baghdad, it became clear that many of the pre-war assumptions that had guided the President and his advisers were wrong. There were no chemical or biological weapons, there was no nuclear program, and while many Iraqis celebrated the ouster of Saddam Hussein, they did not line the streets of Baghdad to greet our troops with flowers. In fact, within days, there emerged the beginnings of what would become an organized and deadly insurgency that would quickly put an end to General Tommy Franks' plan to pare down the 140,000 troops in April 2003 to about 30,000 by September 2003.

In recent months, even as our military has become more adept at combating the insurgency, the nature of the struggle in Iraq has changed yet again. Long-simmering ethnic tensions, which had been suppressed under Saddam's totalitarian regime, have threatened to tear the country apart. While the full-scale civil war that many feared in the wake of the bombing of the Askariya mosque in Samarra has not yet come to pass, most observers believe the country is currently in the grip of a low-level civil war that could erupt into a full-scale conflict at any time.

The ongoing sectarian strife has been exacerbated by the protracted struggle among and inside Iraq's political factions over the formation of a permanent government. Last week's decision by the Shiite parties that make up the largest bloc in parliament that was elected 4 months ago to replace Prime Minister Ibrahim al-Jaafari with Jawad al-Maiki paves the way for the formation of a broad-based government. The question is now whether this hopeful development will be enough to pull Iraq back from the precipice.

There is a broad consensus among experts here and abroad that Iraq's future will be determined by politics and not by force. The formation of a permanent Iraqi Government, one that will have the power of legitimacy and vision to assume primary responsibility for securing and governing the country, is a necessary precondition to end-

ing the insurgency, preventing a civil war, and allowing large-scale reconstruction to begin.

Consequently, our role in Iraq must become more political and less military. For if there is one thing that Iraqis of every ethnic, religious, and political stripe can agree on, it is that they do not want foreign troops in their country indefinitely.

I support a responsible redeployment of our troops during the course of 2006 so we are not drawn into sectarian conflict and so Iraqis are forced to take primary responsibility for securing and governing their country. A responsible redeployment of American coalition forces will have to be done in stages to build greater Iraqi sovereignty and control over security, not civil war. We should also publicly declare that the United States does not seek to maintain a permanent military presence in Iraq, and I have cosponsored legislation to prevent the establishment of permanent bases, which can only serve as a catalyst for the insurgency and for foreign jihadis.

Devising and implementing a successful end-game in Iraq will be difficult, but an open-ended commitment to remain in the country is untenable and unwise. The American people want Iraq to succeed and for a representative government there to survive and to lead to a better future for the Iraqi people. But it will ultimately be the Iraqi people who must decide whether they wish to live together in peace as one country or continue to murder each other in large numbers. We cannot decide that for them.

In the fight against the malicious al Qaeda in Iraq, foreign jihadis bent on destroying a government chosen by the Iraqi people, we are in solidarity with the Iraqi people who want a better life for their children. But, Mr. Speaker, we will not stand as a shield between Iraqi sects bent on killing each other. The new prime minister and leadership have the next 30 days to form a strong unity government. We hope they will be successful in that task, and we hope that the Iraqi leaders understand that the patience of the American people is running out.

Mr. Speaker, the Iraq war is now in its fourth year and I, like many of my colleagues and millions of our fellow citizens, am deeply concerned about the direction that the conflict is taking.

I have been to Iraq three times to visit with our troops there and I have spent time with our wounded here and in Germany. They have done everything that we have asked of them and they have done it magnificently.

Tragically, these American heroes are still being killed and wounded daily. Over 2,300 troops have been killed and thousands more have been injured. American taxpayers are paying approximately \$194 million a day for the war according to the Congressional Budget Office—that's more than a billion dollars a week. A new CRS report puts the current costs of continued operations in Iraq and Afghanistan at close to \$10 billion a month, with most of that money going to Iraq.

While we have a moral obligation to do whatever we can to avoid having Iraq spiral into all-out civil war, now is time for the Iraqis themselves to decide whether they wish to be one country. And, Mr. Speaker, it is time for us to take steps that will ensure that 2006 is a year of significant transition to full sovereignty for the people of Iraq.

This is a conflict that has come to grief in so many ways. In the fall of 2002 I voted to authorize the use of force against Iraq because of the threat that Saddam Hussein had stockpiles of chemical and biological weapons and because I was convinced that he had an active nuclear weapons program. If you go back and look at the debate in the House and Senate, this was a decision taken by the Congress to prevent Iraq from acquiring and using or transferring nuclear weapons.

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Soon after the fall of Baghdad, it became clear that many of the prewar assumptions that had guided the President and his advisers were wrong. There were no chemical or biological weapons; there was no nuclear program; and, while many Iraqis celebrated the ouster of Saddam Hussein, they did not line the streets of Baghdad to greet our troops with flowers. In fact, within days there emerged the beginnings of what would become an organized, deadly insurgency that would quickly put an end to General Tommy Franks' plan to pare down the 140,000 troops in Iraq in April 2003 to about 30,000 by September 2003.

In recent months even as our military has become more adept at combating the insurgency, the nature of the struggle in Iraq has changed yet again. Long-simmering ethnic tensions, which had been suppressed under Saddam's totalitarian regime, have threatened to tear the country apart. While the full-scale civil war that many feared in the wake of the bombing of the Askariya mosque in Samarra has not yet come to pass, most observers believe that the country is currently in the grip of a low-level civil war that could erupt into full-scale conflict at any time. I am especially concerned by media reports that Shiite militias have been deploying to Kirkuk, Iraq's third largest city, in a bid to forestall any attempt by Kurds to assert control over this major center of Iraq's oil-rich north.

The ongoing sectarian strife has been exacerbated by the protracted struggle among and inside Iraq's political factions over the formation of a permanent government. Last week's decision by the Shiite parties that make up the largest bloc in the parliament that was elected four months ago to replace Prime Minister Ibrahim al-Jaafari with Jawad al-Maiki paves the way for the formation of a broad-based government. The question now is whether this hopeful development will be enough to pull Iraq back from the precipice.

There is a broad consensus among experts—here and abroad—that Iraq's future will

be determined by politics and not force. The formation of a permanent Iraqi government—one that will have the power, legitimacy and vision to assume primary responsibility for securing and governing the country—is a necessary precondition to ending the insurgency, preventing a civil war and allowing large-scale reconstruction to begin.

Consequently, our role in Iraq must become more political and less military; for if there is one thing that Iraqis of every ethnic, religious and political stripe can agree on, it is that they do not want foreign troops in their country indefinitely.

I support a responsible redeployment of our troops during the course of 2006 so that we are not drawn into sectarian conflict and so that Iraqis are forced to take primary responsibility for securing and governing their country. While the process of training Iraqi security forces has gone more slowly than many had hoped, recent reports have indicated that we are making progress and that every week more Iraqi units are capable of taking a greater role in combating the insurgency.

A responsible redeployment of American and coalition forces will have to be done in stages to build greater Iraqi sovereignty and control over security, not civil war. In the first phase of the redeployment, our forces should be gradually withdrawn from insecure urban centers and moved to smaller cities where reconstruction is supported by the local population, and to remote bases where our troops will be able to support Iraqi units if necessary. Over time, these troops will be withdrawn from Iraq altogether and redeployed outside the country, either in the region or back to the United States. We should publicly declare that the United States does not seek to maintain a permanent military presence in Iraq and I have co-sponsored legislation to prevent the establishment of permanent bases, which can only serve as a catalyst for the insurgency and for foreign jihadis.

Devising and implementing a successful endgame in Iraq will be difficult, but an open-ended commitment to remain in the country is untenable and unwise. The American people want Iraq to succeed, and for a representative government there to survive and lead to a better future for the Iraqi people. But it will ultimately be the Iraqi people who must decide whether they wish to live together in peace as one country or continue to murder each other in large numbers. We cannot decide that for them.

In the fight against the malicious Al Qaeda in Iraq, foreign jihadis bent on destroying a government chosen by the Iraqi people, we are in solidarity with the Iraqi people who want a better life for their children. But we will not stand as a shield between different Iraqi sects bent on killing each other. The new Iraqi prime minister and leadership have the next thirty days to form a strong unity government. We hope that they will be successful in this task. But our hopes in Iraq have too often led to disappointment, and the Iraqi leaders must understand that the patience of the American people is running out.

TRIBUTE TO AIR FORCE TECHNICAL SERGEANT WALTER MOSS, JR.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gen-

tleman from Texas (Mr. POE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to pay tribute to a native Houstonian, Walter Moss, Jr., who voluntarily served our Nation in Iraq and who died doing so. He was assigned to the 366th Civil Engineer Squadron, Explosive Ordnance Disposal, or the EOD, Flight as a noncommissioned officer in charge of the EOD Resources Element, Mountain Home Air Force Base in Idaho.

On March 29, 2006, Tech Sergeant Moss became the 200th Texas member of the Armed Forces killed in Iraq. Mr. Speaker, Texans are only 7 percent of the United States population, but make up 10 percent of the volunteers in Iraq and Afghanistan. Further, almost 9 percent of the military deaths in Iraq are Texans.

Additionally, Moss was the first airman from Sather Air Force Base in Iraq to be killed in action during Operation Iraqi Freedom. He was 37 years old. In his long military career, he specialized in the dangerous job of detection and removal of explosive devices.

□ 1945

He was killed while trying to defuse a makeshift bomb while conducting operations near Baghdad. The terrorists in Iraq use the improvised explosive devices, or IEDs, as a cowardly way of murdering Iraqi women, children, civilians and Americans. The terrorist use of IEDs is one of the most dangerous threats to our troops in uniform in Iraq.

Technical Sergeant Moss was the first line of defense between IEDs and his fellow military comrades. Since being deployed to Iraq in January, Sergeant Moss had responded to more than 200 calls. Those 200 calls meant that Moss had perhaps saved the life of an American or Iraqi civilian.

Born in Houston, Texas, Moss attended Aldine High School. He joined the Air Force upon graduation from Aldine and soon married his high school sweetheart Georgina.

From the beginning of his military career, Moss stood out as a leader. His motivation earned him a coveted spot assisting the United States Secret Service. During his 16-year military career, he guarded the likes of former President George H. Bush and the First Lady.

While stationed in Guam, he disposed of 12,500 pounds of hazardous World War II munitions and supported the Secret Service again in protecting Hillary Clinton. In 1997, he and his family were stationed at the 31st CE Squadron, Aviano Air Force Base, Italy. He was handpicked from his unit to provide EOD support during the Middle East peace talks where he ensured then-Secretary of State Madeleine Albright's safety.

Moss had two children, Andrew, 13, and Veronica, 9. A military traveling family, they had already lived with their father in Guam, Italy and Turkey.

Technical Sergeant Moss was deployed in support of Operations Southern Watch, Allied Force, Desert Strike, Northern Watch and Iraqi Freedom. He was awarded the Meritorious Service Medal, the Air Force Commendation Medal with three oak leaf clusters, and the Air Force Achievement Medal with one oak leaf cluster.

Even though he was in the Air Force, the Navy and Marines honored him with the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal, and he will be awarded the Bronze Star with Valor and the Purple Heart.

I attended Technical Sergeant Moss' funeral in Spring, Texas, and I talked to his father Walter Moss, Sr. Walter told me he was proud of his son, proud of the life he chose, and proud of the country he served. At the funeral there were a great number of Air Force personnel, strangers, citizens, family, and even a motorcycle group carrying large American flags.

I would like to extend my prayers and condolences to his father Walter, his mother Rebecca York, his brother Brian, his relatives and friends in Idaho and Texas, his wife Georgina, and his children Andrew and Veronica. He died as he lived: Protecting Americans.

Our hearts are filled with gratitude for the brave airmen such as Technical Sergeant Walter Moss. He sought out danger so others would not face danger. He was a father, a husband and a brother. His unyielding courage was an inspiration to his fellow airmen and his family. He was an American patriot, and he was a cut above the rest of us.

And that's just the way it is.

URGING ACTION ON THE ENERGY CRISIS

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

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, everyone is talking about gas prices. This morning President Bush presented the Nation with, he said, a "plan to lower gas prices."

A little over a year ago on June 6, 2005, energy was \$2.09. I use that date because that was the date that the President of the United States signed his energy bill that he hailed would be a great improvement for energy and energy prices here in America. \$2.09. Today in Chicago it stands on average a little over \$3 in the Chicago area. Over a little less than a year ago when the President signed his energy bill, the one that this Congress delivered to him, energy was \$2.09 a gallon. Today in Chicago gas is \$3.32 a gallon.

In the year in which we debated the energy bill, the oil and gas interests spent \$86 million lobbying this Congress and got \$14.5 billion in taxpayer subsidies. They spent \$86 million lobbying the House of the American people, and they got a \$14.5 billion gift.