

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 In the first phase of the redeployment, our forces should be gradually withdrawn from insecure urban centers and moved to smaller cities where reconstruction is supported by the local population, and to remote bases where our troops will be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 Over time, these troops will be withdrawn from Iraq altogether and redeployed outside the country, either in the region or back to the United States.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.

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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.