

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

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

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

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

IRAQ WATCH

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

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening as we come to the floor again as part of what we have come to call our Iraq Watch, and I am grateful that we are joined by several colleagues this evening, Mr. BISHOP from New York, Mr. McDERMOTT from Washington State, and others that will be joining us throughout this early part of the evening.

Now, let me start, as we always have, by recognizing the valiant service of the men and women who wear the uniform. And as our leader Ms. PELOSI often says, our men and women who wear the uniform deserve a leadership that is worthy of the sacrifice that they make on a daily basis. I am proud of this Congress, inasmuch as it has been able to distinguish the warriors from the war, and so we continue to honor those brave men and women who wear the uniform of this country and who sacrifice daily on our behalf.

And yet, as events unfold around the globe, but specifically in the Middle East as it relates to Iraq, what we find is even amongst those who initially favored the war, such as pundits like Thomas Friedman, who now have come to say that we have got to come to the realization that we are no longer midwifing democracy in Iraq but, in essence, babysitting an insurgent civil war. So this evening we come here to discuss Iraq from the context of the mistakes that have been made and the need for accountability, starting with the resignation of the Secretary of Defense.

At some point, somewhere along the line, there has got to be accountability for the actions that have transpired in Iraq. We were wrong about the information that led up to going into the war. In fact, the strongest critics against us going into the war were people such as Scowcroft, Eagleburger, Kissinger and Baker, hardly left-leaning liberals, but people who understood international policy and the severe consequences that would result if we

ended up going into Iraq without the full support of the world. And so Americans everywhere kind of have to scratch their heads and say, how is it that we had the entire world with us when we invaded Afghanistan and end up virtually with no support in Iraq.

It is clear from discussions with policymakers and former generals that a series of mistakes have been made, not the least of which was going against our own national policy, the Weinberger Doctrine, which stated very clearly the United States should never go to war against another country unless its vital interests are threatened; and the Powell corollary to that, if we do go in, we should go in with overwhelming force.

In both cases, that doctrine and corollary were rejected in favor of the doctrine of preemption and unilateralism, which has left our allies looking at us as we twist slowly in the winds of Iraq, as Friedman says, babysitting an insurrection and civil war while our most precious of resources, our men and women who serve this country, are in harm's way.

We need a new direction. We ought to send a very clear signal to the world, to the people in this country that it is time for accountability; that it is time to say that mistakes were made and then move on. And we can start with Defense Secretary Rumsfeld stepping down, as he should.

The head of the 9/11 Commission has indicated to both Republicans and Democrats alike that we need to continue to adopt those resolutions and recommendations that they have found in their studies, 20 of which still aren't implemented, which is over half. And so in order to prosecute the war on terror, we have got to be able to accomplish those goals. But without a Congress that wants to hold the President accountable, that is not going to happen.

A gentleman that has been doing just that and speaking out in his district has been TIM BISHOP of New York, and at this time, I would like to yield to him.

Mr. BISHOP of New York. I thank my friend from Connecticut for yielding, and I also thank him for his ongoing leadership on this and so many other issues of importance here in our Congress.

Let me just pick up on a few comments that were made with respect to oversight and accountability. And I find it particularly ironic, when one studies the tragic history of our involvement in Iraq, and whether it begins with the misuse of prewar intelligence or whether it begins in effect with the reasons that we were given for going to war, none of which turned out to be accurate, all of which turned out really to be more about marketing a war than about a real threat that imperiled our safety and security, that we are now being told by these very same people that have led us so far astray, that have so weakened our Nation and

so exposed us to a war on terror that we must fight much more vigilantly than we have thus far; we are now being told that these are the people that we must continue to keep in leadership positions in order to keep us free and safe. And, in fact, it is their very leadership, and I am speaking specifically about the Secretary of Defense and other civilian leaders in the Pentagon, that have led us so far astray.

When you chronicle the mistakes that were made in Iraq, we best-cased the result of our involvement in Iraq and we worst-cased the threat that was there. We invaded with too few troops. We have certainly sufficient troops to overthrow a regime that spent a fraction on defense relative to what we spend on defense, but we invaded with too few troops to secure the peace. We failed to secure the borders. We failed to secure ammo dumps. We failed to see to it that our troops were properly equipped and outfitted, and that was because the leadership of the Pentagon refused to accept the warnings that had been given by so many different experts in this area, that we weren't going to be welcomed with open arms, that we weren't going to be treated as conquering heroes and liberators, but in fact we were going to be viewed as occupiers and invaders.

But our troops arrived with insufficient body armor, with insufficiently armored vehicles because this insurgency was not recognized or anticipated. And yet we have these very same people telling us that they are the ones that are going to keep us safe.

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I will just say one other thing, and then yield back. I think this is an administration that specializes in giving us false choices. We are now being presented with the latest false choice, and that is that those of us who do not support the "stay the course" in Iraq can be accused of wanting to abandon the war on terror.

Nothing could be further from the truth. There is not a soul on our side of the aisle that would advocate abandoning the war on terror. Everyone on our side of the aisle would advocate continuing to wage that war, but to wage it with the full resources of this Nation and to wage it much more intelligently than we have thus far.

The sad truth about our involvement in Iraq is that it has stripped us of the resources that we need to wage the war on terror. It is why Osama bin Laden remains at large 5 years after September 11, and it is why al Qaeda remains as powerful as it is.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. If the gentleman will let me ask a question, knowing you are from New York and knowing specifically you are from Long Island, and, of course, with a solemn date approaching us of September 11, do most citizens in New York understand, in your estimation, the difference between the war on global terrorism and the war in Iraq and see