

On the security front, some limited progress has been made. According to the State Department's most recent weekly update, approximately 265,000 Iraqi troops have enlisted to secure and defend their homeland. In addition, American forces recently scored an important victory by killing the number one terrorist leader in Iraq, Abu Musab al Zarqawi.

As Iraqi troops have stood up, however, American troops have not been able to stand down, despite promises to the contrary. The sheer number of Iraqi enlistees has neither translated into capability for independent operations nor improved the security situation. In fact, Iraq is more violent, more dangerous, and more divided than at any time since the war began.

The security situation is increasingly complex. Instead of fighting one battle, we are fighting at least three: against largely Sunni insurgents who are fighting to recapture the power they enjoyed under Saddam Hussein; against growing sectarian violence; and against terrorists, some foreign-born, united under a banner of Islamic fundamentalism. Above all, we are fighting to prevent full-fledged civil war, and the outcome remains uncertain. The death of Zarqawi will help in our battle against the fundamentalist terrorists, but it will not markedly change the larger challenge we face in pacifying Sunni and Shiite extremists.

This picture is not pretty, and it is not a picture the Administration has been willing to discuss frankly. But it is the reality. Crafting an effective Iraq strategy means facing this reality head-on. Unfortunately, the Administration has adamantly refused to do so. In fact, Middle East expert Anthony Cordesman of the Center for Strategic and International Studies called the Administration's most recent report on progress in Iraq, "both dishonest and incompetent." Cordesman noted, "the American people and the US Congress need an honest portrayal of what is happening, not lies by omission and 'spin.'"

Most Americans now understand that this Administration has relied on spin and misinformation to carry out its Iraq policy from Day One. It led our nation into war based on false claims and insinuations. It misled the American public about the likely costs and duration of our operations. It has attempted to discredit critics of its post-invasion operation, including former military officials. And it has consistently refused to level with the American people about the significant obstacles we continue to face.

The real question before us—the question most Americans are asking—is how long must our troops stay in Iraq?

The President has told us that, as Iraqi troops stand up, American troops can stand down. But that formula is backwards. Iraqi troops will not truly stand up until American troops begin standing down. Iraqi leaders will not make the necessary compromises and take charge of their own destiny until they know their dependence on American forces is coming to an end. As we stand down, they will have no choice but to stand up.

While our military's valiant efforts have clearly facilitated important steps forward, including the formation of a democratically elected government, the troubling reality is that our continued presence makes success more elusive. It serves as a disincentive for Iraqi military and political leaders to take courageous

risks to stabilize their country and assume responsibility for their government. Equally importantly, our presence is a magnet for international terrorists and an incitement for the insurgency. While the Administration argues that we must stay the course to help Iraqis accomplish key objectives, our very presence is actually detracting from progress toward those objectives. In order to jump-start progress, our troops must begin to come home.

How we leave does matter. We must leave in a way that maximizes Iraq's chances to govern and defend itself. At the same time, we cannot become hostages to the failures of Administration policy, prolonging our stay in a situation where our very presence is a continuing provocation. That is why I joined with Rep. BRAD MILLER last fall in introducing H.J. Res. 70, which would require the President to deliver the exit strategy that the troops and the American people deserve. Today, I am renewing that call.

Let me explain in clear terms what a responsible exit strategy means:

We need to hear that the President has a plan for reducing our presence in Iraq within a reasonable timeframe. "As they stand up, we will stand down" isn't a strategy; it is a slogan. A responsible exit strategy would set out, in clear and realistic terms, a plan to guide our troops through their departure from Iraq and a strategy for reducing our military commitment. We must be willing to adapt to changing conditions, but a responsible exit strategy must not hold our troops hostage to the Iraqi people's ability to resolve their own differences.

We need to hear that such a plan would begin with an initial, near-term drawdown of U.S. forces. The Administration has repeatedly hinted that a significant drawdown may be imminent, but has quietly backed away from such predictions over and over again. A near-term, initial drawdown of forces would send a message to Iraqis that we have no permanent designs on their country, that our presence is coming to an end, and that they need to step forward to take the reins of responsibility.

We also need to hear a pledge from the President that we will not establish long-term bases on Iraqi soil. When I questioned General John Abizaid, commander of U.S. Central Command, in a recent subcommittee hearing, he refused to make a commitment not to establish permanent bases. In the wake of that exchange, the House has voted twice to force such a commitment. A House-passed amendment to the fiscal year 2006 supplemental appropriations bill to prohibit permanent U.S. bases in Iraq was removed from the final version of the bill by the Republican congressional leadership. The House recently passed a similar provision as part of the fiscal year 2007 Defense Appropriations bill, but it is unclear if it will survive in the final version of the bill. The President must heed Congress's message and send a clear signal that the U.S. has no long-term military designs in Iraq.

In addition, we need to hear that there is a plan to continue to support Iraq when our troops depart. Such a plan would mean ongoing U.S. assistance for the Iraqi government as it crafts policies to facilitate unity, security, and prosperity. This support will be particularly critical as Iraq revisits its constitution later this year. It also means support for the development of Iraqi institutions like its parliament, its judiciary, and its security forces.

Such a plan would also involve increased and assertive engagement by the international

community to increase its involvement. The international community has pledged billions of dollars in resources for Iraq that it has not yet delivered. Just as importantly, however, we need the international community to have a presence in Iraq, working with the Iraqi government, mediating disputes between sectarian parties, establishing greater ties with Iraq's economy, and supporting the development of civil society.

Finally, this plan would require engaging Iraq's neighbors to play a constructive role in giving Iraq a chance to succeed. This means pledging not to interfere in Iraq's affairs. It also means securing borders, training Iraqi security forces, and welcoming Iraq into regional institutions. I was encouraged that the Administration tentatively agreed to conduct a dialogue with Iran on its involvement in Iraq. I hope that this effort will move forward and that similar efforts will engage other Gulf States.

These are the elements of a responsible exit strategy. This is the type of leadership that the President owes our troops and the American people. After more than three years, the loss of more than 2,500 American troops' lives, and \$400 billion, this is the type of leadership that is long overdue.

IN LASTING MEMORY OF JOE PURCELL

HON. MIKE ROSS

OF ARKANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 22, 2006

Mr. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and accomplishments of Joe Purcell who passed away in 1987 at the age of 63. On June 24, 2006, a memorial dedication ceremony will be held to memorialize Joe Purcell, one of the finest citizens and public servants that the city of Benton and the state of Arkansas have ever known. This dedication will recognize Purcell's legacy and life-long devotion to public service. Joe was an admired and cherished member of the Benton community and I would like to take a few moments to recognize his achievements.

Joe Purcell was born on July 29, 1923, in Warren, Arkansas. After graduating from Little Rock Junior College, Joe served his country and entered the Army during World War II. After his time in the military, Joe attended the University of Arkansas School of Law, where he graduated in 1952. That same year, he began practicing law in Benton.

Beginning in 1955, he served four years as city attorney in Benton. In 1959, Joe became Municipal Judge, a post he held until 1966 when he was elected Arkansas State Attorney General. Joe served two terms as Arkansas State Attorney General and went on to serve three productive terms as Lieutenant Governor. He also served as acting Governor of Arkansas from January 3rd through January 9th 1979, when then Senator David Pryor stepped down to serve in the U.S. Senate, before Bill Clinton was inaugurated as Governor. Joe also served as chairman of the Arkansas Democratic Party and was chairman of the state's Bicentennial Celebration in 1976.

President Bill Clinton described Joe Purcell as "a self-made man who represented honesty and integrity in public service." This quote is inscribed on a permanent marker that will

be unveiled at the Joe Purcell Memorial Dedication Ceremony. The marker will hold a special place of honor in front of the Old Federal Building in Benton, Arkansas.

Joe Purcell spent a lifetime dedicated to the community of Benton and the betterment of the lives of others. While Joe may no longer be with us, the marker placed in his memory will remind others of his commitment to public service and pay tribute to a truly remarkable man. Joe was an admired and cherished member of the Benton, Arkansas community and his memory will continue to live on in the lives he touched and the accomplishments he achieved.

ON BEHALF OF THE BEST
FRIENDS KINDNESS WEEKEND

HON. CHRISTOPHER SHAYS

OF CONNECTICUT
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Thursday, June 22, 2006

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to announce that this weekend, June 23–25, 2006, has been designated by Best Friends Animals Society as Best Friends Kindness Weekend.

The way a society treats its animals speaks to the core values and priorities of its citizens.

As a co-chair of the Congressional Friends of Animals Caucus, I am committed to animal welfare because I believe animals are vital to our livelihood, and I believe humankind has an obligation to all animals. Some species have become our companions, some play important roles in sensitive ecosystems, and some are raised for food. It is our duty to protect and care for all of these animals.

The Best Friends Weekend reminds all of us how animals enrich our lives through their companionship, friendship and love.

This weekend of kindness activities should serve as a reminder to all of us, that in this increasing fragmented society we need to be ever more compassionate about the animals in our world, whether they are companion pets, service animals, zoo critters, livestock, or nature's wildlife. It is a reminder that the bond between humans and animals is a vital one and is capable of bringing joy and healing to people of all ages. It is also a reminder to be more kind and compassionate to our fellow man.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO CAPTAIN
ROBERT "HAL" SMITH

HON. JON. C. PORTER

OF NEVADA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Thursday, June 22, 2006

Mr. PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor CAPT Robert Hallock Smith, a dear friend of mine, for his outstanding service to the United States and memorable impact on the State of Nevada, the city of Henderson, and the Southern Nevada Community. Hal passed away on Monday, June 19, 2006 at the age of 89.

Hal was born in Mitchell, South Dakota on February 9, 1917. Shortly thereafter, his family moved to Ellensburg, Washington. Upon graduation from high school, he moved to South-

ern California to attend Pasadena City College and The California Institute of Technology, earning a degree in aeronautical engineering. He later attended La Salle University and the Naval War College, taking courses in command training and international political science.

In the late 1930's, Hal was commissioned as a pilot in the U.S. Navy, and served in active duty in World War II and the Korean War as a division officer on the aircraft carrier USS *Leyte*. Hal worked at the Lake Mead Naval Base and retired as a Navy Captain. He then worked as a partner and manager of Henderson Builders' Supply for 10 years, and was Vice-President for Nevada operations of Prudential Securities/Burrows Smith Division. Hal served on many active service positions including the Henderson Charter Commission, Civil Service Board, Western States Water Council, Clark County Bond Commission, Nevada Ethics Commission, and Nevada State Board of Education. In 1966, Hal was elected to the Nevada State Assembly, serving two terms, and served in the Nevada State Senate from 1988 to 1994. During this time Hal was a member of Rotary Club International, Masonic Lodge, Shriners, Veterans of Foreign Wars, and the American Legion. As a capstone to Hal's career, the Clark County School District honored him by naming a school after him, the Hal Smith Elementary School.

Hal's greatest accomplishment in life was his family. On June 1, 1940, Hal married his love Tina. Together they had three children: Victoria who married Colin Holman; Peter who married Marilyn Mendive; and Christy, who married John Winlow. They also have nine grandchildren, Danny, Marc, Erin, Christian, Derek, Amanda, Hal, Katie, and Whitney, and ten great-grandchildren, Isaiah, Danielle, McKenzie, Thomas, Ava, Benjamin, Maia, Grantham, Delaney, and Alexander.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to recognize CAPT Robert Hallock Smith on the floor of the House. My friend Hal served his family, Southern Nevada, and the United States of America with honor, and he will be greatly missed.

HONORING MR. STEVE HELLER,
TEACHER AT ADLAI E. STEVENSON
HIGH SCHOOL

HON. DANIEL LIPINSKI

OF ILLINOIS
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Thursday, June 22, 2006

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mr. Steve Heller, a teacher at Adlai E. Stevenson High School, who has been recognized by a Presidential Scholar student or his great skill, knowledge, and dedication in the classroom. It is my pleasure to be able to congratulate Steve on this commendation.

As a shining example within an extremely able and talented staff of teachers, Mr. Heller, achievement reflects the extraordinarily high quality of education available at Adlai E. Stevenson High School. The school's stunning record includes four Blue Ribbon Awards for Excellence in Education and several other prizes. It has been ranked by Newsweek and U.S. News and World Report as one of the top 100 high schools in America. As an integral part of Lincolnshire, Illinois, the perpetuation of its high standards through the efforts of

such outstanding teachers as Mr. Heller is of great benefit to students, parents and the wider community.

Mr. Heller's efforts have recently been highlighted by a nomination from a student on the Presidential Scholars program. This scheme, which started in 1964, sees two students from each state, and an additional 40 at large, selected every year by the U.S. Department of Education for their academic excellence along with exemplary work in community service and the arts.

Each of these star students has, since 1983, been asked to nominate one teacher that they felt was the most challenging and motivational in their academic careers. Mr. Heller was chosen this year for the commendation by his student and Presidential Scholar recipient Michele Trickey.

It is my privilege and pleasure to recognize Steve Heller, whose extraordinary efforts in education make him a beacon to his profession. I call on the House to join me in congratulating him and Michele on their achievements.

HONORING DAVIS HIGH SCHOOL
CHOIRS AND THE LLANGOLLEN
INTERNATIONAL MUSICAL EISTEDDFOD

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Thursday, June 22, 2006

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Davis High School Advanced Treble and Madrigal Choirs as they prepare to perform at the 60th Diamond Anniversary International Musical Eisteddfod to be held in Llangollen, Northern Wales, this July 4th to 9th.

The Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod began in 1946, following the devastation of World War II, with the mission of promoting international peace through music, song and dance. Nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in 2004, the Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod draws competitors from more than 50 countries. Luminaries such as Luciano Pavarotti and Charlotte Church participated as children in past competitions.

The Davis High School Advanced Treble Choir and Madrigal Choir are the only high school choirs from the United States to compete in the 2006 festival. Davis High School is only the second high school from California ever to represent their state and nation in this prestigious competition. The choirs are greatly honored to be part of an event whose purpose is the promotion of international peace and understanding through the bonds of music and friendship.

At a time when the need for cultural understanding among nations is great, the invitation highlights the choirs' cherished tradition of inclusiveness. Musically, they represent a legacy of more than 30 years for the Madrigal choir and an investment of more than five years in the development of the Advanced Treble choir. The distinguished invitation to Llangollen attests to the reputation built by predecessors and to the support of the wider Davis community. Funds have been raised in the community to ensure that every singer in the choirs is able to make the trip to Wales.