

as basically a staff officer—I never put myself in the category of those who rightfully claim combat status, but I did stay in the same tents, eat in the mess, slept in the bunkers with them—they are a very special breed, these young men and women who fought wars in harm's way to preserve our freedom.

Today I do my very best as a member of the Armed Services Committee to provide for a means of showing my respect for them and, indeed, my gratefulness to the American military for training me as a young person and for providing me with the GI bill of rights.

I have many emotions as I stand before the Senate tonight to express these views. I got to know Jim Webb well when he was in the office of the Navy Secretary and I tried to counsel him as best I could on his decision to leave active duty—which largely was not of his choosing but was dictated by facts very personal to him. Had he stayed in the Marine Corps I think he was destined to the highest of rank and the greatest of responsibility. He had to make a tough decision to leave the Corps and pursue other challenges. I mentioned, of course, for a brief period he became Secretary of the Navy. I was very proud of his service as Navy Secretary.

Several facts which I note from these articles and which I note from my own observation, again, are unquestioned. So many statements have been made by my distinguished colleagues about the honor and integrity of Bob Kerrey. His bravery and valor have been recognized many times, including being awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor.

I know during the Vietnam war we asked many young men—I repeat that, we, the United States of America, we the Congress of the United States and the President, the Presidents of the United States—asked many young men, and some women in a combat support status, to undertake very difficult missions under the most extreme and dangerous of conditions. They put their lives at risk to accomplish sometimes unclear missions while trying to minimize casualties within their own units.

Recently, I discussed this with members of the Armed Services Committee staff, combat veterans from Vietnam. We followed these stories about Senator Kerrey. We sat down and exchanged our own views. I deferred to them because two of them were in the thick of battle and they talked about the number of times throughout that war as veterans of ground combat that they took risks, themselves, personally, and risks to their men who were with them, to provide some measure of protection to the innocent non-combatant persons who had gotten entrapped in those battles in the dark nights and dusty days in that deep canopy.

Yes, they did take personal risks themselves. As near as I can determine, then-Lieutenant Kerrey, Robert Kerrey, took those risks himself.

They did so to protect the civilians in the combat zone. In that period of time, it was very difficult to determine who the enemy was; imagine that—who the enemy was. It was a very complex conflict into which we injected our men and women.

So we will never know exactly what happened that February night in that Thanh Phong, Vietnam, battle. But I respect the word of my former colleague, Robert Kerrey, and I urge other Senators to read these articles and decide for themselves. I believe each of us ought to make our own determination about this situation.

I conclude my remarks with a salute to the men and women who fought in that conflict and share with them my complete understanding, as near as I can base it on my own experiences. I salute them.

RESIGNATION OF DIRECTOR FREEH

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, the principal reason for my seeking recognition is to comment briefly on the announced resignation of FBI Director Louis Freeh. He has tendered his resignation effective in June of this year. I believe Director Freeh has done an outstanding job in a very difficult position.

I had considerable opportunity to work with Director Freeh in my capacity as chairman of the Subcommittee on the Judiciary and when I chaired the Senate Intelligence Committee. The Judiciary Subcommittee on Terrorism in 1996 had extensive hearings on Ruby Ridge, with Randy Weaver isolating himself, and action by the Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms units and FBI that led to a shootout which regrettably caused the death of a U.S. Marshall, Randy Weaver's wife, and Randy Weaver's young son.

During the course of that investigation, FBI Director Freeh had the courage to stand up and change very deeply ingrained policies in the FBI, changing their rules of engagement and their use of deadly force. I think that took some doing in the face of institutional opposition.

He led an outstanding FBI investigation into the bombing on Khobar Towers, personally making a number of trips overseas. That is a matter which has yet to see a final resolution, but there has been very able and excellent investigative work done by the FBI in that matter in a very difficult circumstance, working with officials from Saudi Arabia.

Director Freeh did a good job in campaign finance reform, taking positions which were sometimes in conflict with the Attorney General, technically his superior, in the Department of Justice, although the FBI Director has unique status, really, in that he has a 10-year appointment. So there were times when Director Freeh found it necessary to take stands in opposition to the Attorney General of the United States

and sometimes even in opposition to the President of the United States. While I didn't always agree with some of the details, it was my view it was a strong performance on the part of FBI Director Louis Freeh.

I think the Director also did an outstanding job in expanding the FBI's role in combating organized crime internationally, and his tenure has seen a vast expansion of FBI offices around the world carrying on very important counterespionage work and counterterrorism work. There has been an excellent level of cooperation established between the FBI and the CIA under the CIA leadership of George Tenet and, before that, John Deutch, with the FBI directorship under Louis Freeh.

There have been difficulties during Director Freeh's tenure with the FBI crime lab and with the investigation of Dr. Wen Ho Lee—on that subject, the Judiciary Subcommittee on Administrative Oversight and the Courts is continuing the inquiry—and also with the allegations as to the Hanssen case, the alleged spy.

But I think, overall, Director Freeh's tenure with the FBI has been outstanding. He brought to the position unique credentials, having been an FBI agent and assistant U.S. attorney, a Federal judge, and he had the capacity to know law enforcement while also understanding civil rights. When the problems arose in Ruby Ridge, he did not hesitate to change the long-standing FBI policies on the use of deadly force in recognition of civil rights, at the same time maintaining very strong law enforcement standards.

I think the President will have a difficult replacement assignment in finding another Director who can measure up to what Director Freeh has done. It is certainly a fact when law enforcement has faced tough issues, they have moved ahead and made many assignments to the FBI. Director Freeh's response on changing the FBI's use of deadly force was in sharp contrast to the refusal of the Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms units, and even the Secretary of the Treasury, to make changes when there had been clear-cut fault established as to the Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms unit.

I salute Director Freeh on the announcement of retirement and note his very excellent work and say we will have a tough time finding someone to fill those big shoes.

MIDDLE EAST PEACE

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD a "Commentary" on the mideast peace process.

There being no objection; the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows: