

late April. She has been on active duty since February 9. She has not slept in her own bed next to her own husband in 4 months and 6 days. We still have no idea when this nightmare can be over for us. We understand a call to duty for our Nation. We truly do. However, she did not join the National Guard with an open-ended deployment and a war zone in mind. None of them did. We always thought the Guard was for short deployments and emergencies only. She tells me that morale with her soldiers is extremely low. There are short tempers, long days, fear, crying soldiers, and no idea when it can be over for them. That is the root of our anguish. These people have been uprooted from their lives and jobs, and they answered that call, yet no one can answer their most-asked question: When can I go home?

"The average soldier is not a stupid order taker. We have a highly intelligent military, and they realize what is going on back home with the controversy around the evidence of weapons of mass destruction. I cannot speak for other soldiers, but it disturbs my wife deeply to think that she could be over there risking her life and living a daily heartbreak based on distorted testimony.

□ 2015

It makes her feel like a pawn of political agenda, not an American doing good in the world. All of this together most certainly influences her ideas of retention. We need the truth, not someone's version of the truth, not some of the truth but all of the truth. And we need to know when we can be reunited to live our lives together."

That is Ron Macek, Rockford, Illinois.

This is another letter:

"I am a veteran and a former intelligence analyst who spent 3 years in the Middle East peering over Saddam's shoulder. It is always disturbing when political leaders distort intelligence information to justify pet policies. It discredits intelligence agencies and the analysts who dedicate their time and lives to protecting America.

"Good intelligence analysts are sure to express multiple possibilities for unexplained events. They are also careful to delineate between what they know and what they think. It is a mistake to turn an assessment into policy. It is a shame that some analysts will tell the administration what they want to hear just to appease leaders. An investigation into this matter will prevent this from happening again." John Laesch, Bloomington, Illinois.

"I am a veteran of both the Korean and Vietnam Wars. I have seen firsthand the price we pay when we commit blood and treasure into a foreign land. It is a terrible price that is never replaced. If there is the slightest suspicion that the war in Iraq was promoted under false pretenses, then we should know about it. Such an occurrence would be a terrible misuse of gov-

ernment resources and the American people's trust. I request that you support an independent commission to investigate the handling of this matter." Robert P. Harrison, Arlington Heights, Illinois.

"As a former Naval officer married to a retired Navy man and with a daughter currently serving in Qatar, I'm probably one of the last people you would normally see signing a petition of this nature. Nonetheless, here I am. I question this administration's motivations and feel that our Commander in Chief has a lack of respect and regard for those he has placed in harm's way in order to further a set of goals of his own. His taunt of 'bring it on' is unsettling on its own, but coupled with the increasing evidence that our involvement was ill-advised and based on purposely unsubstantiated or twisted evidence only serves to increase my belief that the administration has an agenda wholly divorced from our national best interests." Pamela Faulkner from Illinois. More tomorrow.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BURNS). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. SMITH) is recognized for 5 minutes. (Mr. SMITH of Michigan addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

LETTERS FROM OHIO IN SUPPORT OF INDEPENDENT COMMISSION TO INVESTIGATE ALLEGED DISTORTION OF EVIDENCE OF IRAQ'S WMD PROGRAMS

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

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to be here and share the concerns in their own words from my constituents in northeast Ohio and other constituents around the rest of the great State of Ohio. As the gentlewoman from Illinois said, the previous speaker, this was a petition that was signed by literally tens of thousands, perhaps hundreds of thousands of Americans. I have with me tonight letters that accompanied the signing of the petitions, almost 3,000 letters just from Ohio, just one State, almost 3,000 letters alone. The petition said Congress should support an independent commission to investigate the Bush administration's distortion of evidence of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction programs. There were hundreds of thousands of signatures and tens of thousands of letters. Let me share some of them from Ohio.

Reverend William Trego of West Jefferson, Ohio said:

"It is shameful that a Nation with the brilliant legacy of the United States would stand before the leaders of the world and present a case supported with distorted and at times out-

right false information. We were sold a bill of goods."

From Wadsworth, Ohio, Michael Kovack:

"As a mobilized reservist for Operation Iraqi Freedom, I implore you to create a committee to examine the basis for sending us into harm's way. We must ascertain how this happened and, if error is found, never allow it to happen again."

Tom Gentry Jr. of Akron, Ohio, in my district said:

"This is a scary time for our country. Never have we been in so much danger of violent attack from without and attacks on our liberty from within."

From Strongsville, Ohio, David Koch said:

"From the very beginning, the allegations about Iraq sounded too convenient and very fishy. Now it is widely coming to light that the Bush administration grossly exaggerated and fabricated many claims. When I tried to warn people at the beginning, I took the heat from friends and family who shunned me as an idiot. It is time for the truth about the Iraq war to be made known to the American public."

From Brecksville, Ohio, Aaron Clark wrote:

"The President used lies and half truths to convince the American people to go to war. This is serious and needs to be investigated without delay."

There are hundreds and hundreds, in Ohio 2,500 letters just like this; in Illinois, the gentlewoman from Illinois mentioned more than twice that number; in California and across the country, literally tens of thousands of letters like this.

From Cincinnati, Ohio, on the other end of the State, Mark Light writes:

"As an elected Representative to your constituents, it is your obligation to back any efforts that will lead our Nation to the truth regarding such important matters. The citizens of this country have every right to know the truth when their lives and resources are at stake. Any actions other than total support of an investigation are essentially efforts to hide the truth from our citizens."

George Hennigin from Akron, Ohio, in my district said:

"The philosopher Baruch Spinoza once wrote: It has been the one song of those who thirst after absolute power that the interest of the state requires that its affairs should be conducted in secret. But the more such arguments disguise themselves under the mask of public welfare, the more oppressive is the slavery to which they will lead. Better that the right counsels be known to the enemies than the evil secrets of tyrants should be concealed from the citizens. They who can treat secretly of the affairs of a nation have it absolutely under their authority; and as they plot against the enemy in time of war, so do they against the citizens in time of peace."

Roberta Hunter from Columbus, Ohio said: