

RELATING TO THE LIBERATION OF
THE IRAQI PEOPLE AND THE
VALIANT SERVICE OF THE
UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES
AND COALITION FORCES

SPEECH OF

HON. KENDRICK B. MEEK

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 17, 2004

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to this very flawed, very inadequate and blatantly political resolution.

Every Member of this House wants to honor our troops. That view is truly non-partisan. Each of us is deeply grateful for the patriotism and courage our troops have exhibited in Iraq, and for the sacrifices that they and their families are making. But House Republican leaders should be ashamed of themselves for playing politics and trying to score political points by pushing this partisan resolution through the House, and using the brave men and women in our armed forces as cover in order to do it.

This resolution does not even mention the thousands of wounded soldiers from this war, many of whom I met at Walter Reed Army Hospital in Washington, DC. Their sacrifices will not end when they come home and leave the military. For those who lost limbs or suffered other serious, debilitating injuries, their sacrifice will be with them for the rest of their lives. That is certainly true for the parents, brothers and sisters, spouses, children and friends of the 564 Americans who have lost their lives so far in this Iraq War.

They clearly deserve our recognition and our gratitude, but they are not mentioned in this resolution.

Republican leaders are so single-minded and so dead-set on justifying the President's decision to go to war that they use the opportunity to honor our troops as an excuse to explain away the war. And they purposely excluded Democrats in the drafting process so that they could have it their way, and their way alone. Their failure to reach across the aisle and make this resolution bipartisan is wrong and disgraces the memory of those who serve, and those who have sacrificed, and those who have died.

As written, this resolution states that the "United States and the world have been made

safer by the removal of Saddam Hussein and the Baath party from power". There is certainly not unanimity on that point. The Bush administration has tried hard to change the reasons the President took this country to war. We were told that Saddam Hussein was hand-in-hand with Al Qaeda; that he was constructing weapons of mass destruction; and that he had a program to create nuclear weapons. We were led to believe that Iraq was arming itself to attack us—and to attack us imminently.

But now little of what they told us appears to be true. It now appears that the President's rationale for war in Iraq was fundamentally and deeply flawed. Judging from the 27 people killed in a car bombing in Baghdad this afternoon or the 200 people killed in Madrid only 6 days ago, it appears that the undisputed enemy that all Americans recognize, Al Qaeda, is as strong as ever. No weapons of mass destruction have been found. The sober warnings from the President about an Iraqi nuclear program were exaggerated and based on discredited and unverified reports.

So, while every Member of Congress is glad that Saddam Hussein is no longer in power and no longer a menace to the people of Iraq, it is certainly not clear that removing Saddam Hussein has made the United States any safer, or that it was worth the terrible cost of 564 American lives, thousands of Americans wounded, and over \$150 billion—so far.

It seems to me that, if the Republican leadership really wanted to salute the troops involved in this year-old war, they would join with Democrats to draft a resolution of praise and honor that every Member would support. Even more fitting would be an immediate vote on legislation to ensure that all of our troops are properly armed and outfitted, and that they and their families will be taken care of. The President's budget request shortchanges our troops and the generations of American soldiers before them.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I will vote against this resolution. We must support our troops with action, not with political rhetoric.

TRIBUTE TO SERGEANT AARON
SCHARF

HON. JOE BACA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 22, 2004

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I pay tribute today to the life of Sergeant Aaron Scharf. Aaron recently passed away at the age of 33 and left an incredible legacy of community work and innovation in his chosen profession. He was not only dedicated to improving his community but also to fulfilling his responsibilities as husband, father, son, and friend. It gives me no greater pleasure than honoring his memory today.

To all those who knew Aaron, he was energetic, determined, and purposeful. He consistently exhibited generosity of spirit, love for his fellow man, and dedication to his work. He was never afraid to challenge the status quo in his own humble and unassuming manner. These qualities undoubtedly left an immeasurable impression on his friends, family, and co-workers.

Graduating from Chaffey High School in 1988, Aaron already knew his calling. The son of a police officer, he joined the Fontana Police Department in 1989 and graduated from the Police Academy in March of 1991. His special details throughout the years included the Narcotics Unit, Gang Unit, Drug Enforcement Task Force, the FBI Gang Task Force, and Special Enforcement Detail. Aaron was a truly special man. He provided an incredible service for those he loved with no thought of additional compensation.

Throughout his time serving for the Fontana Police Department, Aaron exhibited tremendous passion, pride, and a deep resolve to fight for the people of the Inland Empire. He was a beloved part of his family and a respected member of his community. His kind and passionate spirit was an incredible resource and blessing to those who knew him.

I join today with family and friends in paying my respects to Sergeant Aaron Scharf, beloved husband, father, and friend. He is survived by his wife, Shana, and his daughters, Amanda, Ryan, and Camryn. He was a generous and gentle man who fought for what he believed in. He will be deeply missed by all.

SENATE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Title IV of Senate Resolution 4, agreed to by the Senate on February 4, 1977, calls for establishment of a system for a computerized schedule of all meetings and hearings of Senate committees, subcommittees, joint committees, and committees of conference. This title requires all such committees to notify the Office of the Senate Daily Digest—designated by the Rules Committee—of the time, place, and purpose of the meetings, when scheduled, and any cancellations or changes in the meetings as they occur.

As an additional procedure along with the computerization of this information, the Office of the Senate Daily Digest will prepare this information for printing in the Extensions of Remarks section of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD on Monday and Wednesday of each week.

Meetings scheduled for Tuesday, March 23, 2004 may be found in the Daily Digest of today's RECORD.

MEETINGS SCHEDULED

MARCH 24

- 9 a.m.
Governmental Affairs
Investigations Subcommittee
To hold hearings to examine problems facing the credit counseling industry, focusing on cases of misconduct among credit card counseling agencies and their for-profit service providers and what solutions may be available to repair the industry. SD-342
- 9:30 a.m.
Commerce, Science, and Transportation
To hold hearings to examine port security. SR-253
- Indian Affairs
To hold hearings to examine S. 1529, to amend the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act to include provisions relating to the payment and administration of gaming fees. SD-562
- Armed Services
Strategic Forces Subcommittee
To hold hearings to examine the proposed Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2005, focusing on strategic forces and capabilities. SR-222
- 10 a.m.
Appropriations
Defense Subcommittee
To hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates for fiscal year 2005 for the Department of the Air Force. SD-192
- Appropriations
Energy and Water Development Subcommittee
To hold hearings to examine the Bureau of Reclamation's Animas-La Plata Project. SD-124
- Environment and Public Works
To hold hearings to examine the environmental impacts on the United States natural gas supply. SD-406
- Judiciary
To hold hearings to examine the nomination of Paul S. Diamond, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania. SD-226

- 11:30 a.m.
Energy and Natural Resources
Business meeting to consider pending calendar business. SD-366

- 2 p.m.
Armed Services
Airland Subcommittee
To hold hearings to examine Navy and Air Force aviation programs in review of the Defense Authorization request for fiscal year 2005 and future years defense program. SR-232A

- 2:30 p.m.
Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs
Housing and Transportation Subcommittee
To hold hearings to examine the real estate appraisal industry, focusing on related issues involving financial markets and community investments, risk management, and consumer protection. SD-538

- Energy and Natural Resources
Public Lands and Forests Subcommittee
To hold hearings to examine S. 433, to provide for enhanced collaborative forest stewardship management within the Clearwater and Nez Perce National Forests in Idaho, S. 2180, to direct the Secretary of Agriculture to exchange certain lands in the Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests in the State of Colorado, and H.R. 1964, to assist the States of Connecticut, New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania in conserving priority lands and natural resources in the Highlands region. SD-366

MARCH 25

- 9:30 a.m.
Armed Services
To hold hearings to examine the role of the U.S. Northern Command and U.S. Special Operations Command in defending the homeland and in the global war on terrorism, in review of the defense authorization request for fiscal year 2005; to be followed by a closed session in SH-219. SH-216
- Commerce, Science, and Transportation
To hold hearings to examine cable rates. SR-253
- Foreign Relations
To hold hearings to examine proposed legislation to amend the African Growth and Opportunity Act to expand certain trade benefits to eligible sub-Saharan African countries. SD-419

- Appropriations
Interior Subcommittee
To hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates for fiscal year 2005 for the Department of the Interior. SD-124

- Appropriations
Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Subcommittee
To hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates for fiscal year 2005 for the Department of Health and Human Services. SD-192

- 10 a.m.
Appropriations
Commerce, Justice, State, and the Judiciary Subcommittee
To hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates for fiscal year 2005 for the Department of State. SD-116

- Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs
Economic Policy Subcommittee
To hold an oversight hearing to examine national flood insurance repetitive losses. SD-538

- Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions
Employment, Safety, and Training Subcommittee
To hold hearings to examine hazard communication in the workplace. SD-430

- Appropriations
VA, HUD, and Independent Agencies Subcommittee
To hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates for fiscal year 2005 for the Environmental Protection Agency. SD-628

- Veterans' Affairs
To hold joint hearings with the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs to examine the legislative presentations of the National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs, AMVETS, American Ex-Prisoners of War, the Vietnam Veterans of America, and the Military Officers Association of America. 345 CHOB

- 1:30 p.m.
Appropriations
Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee
To hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates for fiscal year 2005 for programs under its jurisdiction. SD-192

- 2 p.m.
Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs
To hold hearings to examine the President's proposed budget request for fiscal year 2005 for the Federal Transit Administration, Department of Transportation. SD-538

- 2:30 p.m.
Foreign Relations
To hold hearings to examine the nominations of Thomas Bolling Robertson, of Virginia, to be Ambassador to Slovenia, Miles T. Bivins, of Texas, to be Ambassador to Sweden, and Michael Christian Polt, of Tennessee, to be Ambassador to Serbia and Montenegro. SD-419

- Armed Services
Strategic Forces Subcommittee
To hold hearings to examine national security space programs and management in review of the Defense Authorization request for fiscal year 2005. SR-232A

- Energy and Natural Resources
Water and Power Subcommittee
To hold hearings to examine S. 1085, to provide for a Bureau of Reclamation program to assist states and local communities in evaluating and developing rural and small community water supply systems, S. 1732, to direct the Secretary of the Interior to establish a rural water supply program in the Reclamation States to provide a clean, safe, affordable, and reliable water supply to rural residents, S. 1727, to authorize additional appropriations for the Reclamation Safety of Dams Act of 1978, and S. 1791, to amend the Lease Lot Conveyance Act of 2002 to provide that the amounts received by the United States under that Act shall be deposited in the reclamation fund. SD-366