

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.