

It is my pleasure to join with the Collinwood High School community and the citizens of the 11th Congressional District of Ohio in honoring this group of Hall of Fame inductees for their remarkable achievements. I encourage them to continue to demonstrate outstanding professionalism and leadership and thank them for the contributions they have made to their communities.

PRECIOUS LITTLE TIME REMAINING TO ENSURE A SUCCESSFUL IRAQ

HON. JOHN D. DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 4, 2004

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, it was a year ago that President Bush landed on the USS *Abraham Lincoln* and pronounced that major combat operations in Iraq had ended. The banner strung across the command tower of the carrier read "Mission Accomplished", and the President's words that evening gave the American people, and the families of those in Iraq, that our men and women would soon be coming home.

If this was a perfect world, our President's made-for-TV excursion would have made the perfect Hollywood ending to mercifully short war. Sadly, this is not a perfect world. War is never perfect, it is messy. It is grotesque, and it does not end on any schedule but its own.

The month that marked the year anniversary of announcing the end to major combat operations has been the bloodiest of the war. Since May 1, 2003 over five hundred men and women have been killed, including Private Holly McGeogh of Taylor, Michigan, killed when her vehicle hit a roadside bomb. Almost three thousand more have been injured. Many of our returning young men and women will have an even tougher fight ahead of them as they adjust to life in a wheelchair or with a prosthetic limb.

I say this, not to heap criticism on a situation where young men and women are risking their lives. I say this because one year after the tyrant was toppled we still have a long way to meet our goals. The men and women stationed outside Fallujah and Najaf can tell you that major combat is still a fact of life.

Today we have little more than eight weeks before we turn some measure of sovereignty to the Iraqi people. And much like a college student trying to cram before finals, our Iraq policy is now at a fever pitch trying to right the wrongs of a poorly planned reconstruction effort. General Eisenhower once said, "In preparing for battle I have found that plans are useless, but planning is indispensable." Sadly, today we are watching the results of cavalier planning.

The arrogant manner in which pre-war criticism was dismissed is tragic in hindsight. General Shinseki's belief that it would take 200,000 more troops to provide post-war security led to his unceremonious dismissal. Presidential economic adviser Larry Lindsey estimated the war would cost at least \$150 billion, rather than pay for itself as Vice President CHENEY asserted, led to his forced resignation. The wholesale dismissal of the Iraqi army created hundreds of thousands Iraqis unemployed with bitterness towards the US as

their only severance. Ironically, it's has been the dismissed generals who have tried to foster the tenuous truce in Fallujah.

Mr. Speaker, I voted against giving the President the authority to go to war in Iraq. Yet once engaged in battle, I believe we must do all we can to bring the troops home safely, provide them with the equipment needed to keep them safe, and to have a plan to bring them home. We have had none of these?

For all the vaunted leadership of this White House, with all accusations thrown around by their allies in Congress that impugn the patriotism of those that might question the President, our military is bearing the brunt of their poor planning. The hollow rhetoric from the President and his allies has not put more troops on the ground, has not brought more countries into the coalition, has not unburdened America of the costs of the reconstruction, and has not brought our brave men and women home to their families. Challenging terrorists and insurgents to, "Bring it on" is not a policy; it is a substitute for bravery that threatens our soldiers in the field.

This April has been the deadliest month of combat we have had since the Vietnam War. We all hope and pray that the months ahead will not be so brutal. I am not asking that President present the Congress and the American people with a detailed plan of how long we will be there; how much it will cost; who will take charge; and a myriad of other questions. I know that in war a plan can easily be overtaken by events. What I ask, one year after his now infamous speech, is that he just be honest with us. Respond to our questions, put our soldiers before other concerns, and level with us. We are a great nation, the Congress is a great institution and the voice of the people. We have precious little time remaining to ensure a successful Iraq.

It is my hope, that a year from today, that we can mark the end of this bloody month as the true turning point for the future of a free, prosperous, and democratic Iraq.

BI-PARTISAN REGIONAL SUPPORT FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA FAIR FEDERAL COMPENSATION ACT OF 2004

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 4, 2004

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, today, for the first time, I am not alone in introducing a bill for a federal contribution to address the District's structural imbalance. I am grateful to my Republican and Democratic colleagues who, in generously joining me today, have made this the first structural imbalance bill to have critical bipartisan regional support. Their sponsorship is particularly valuable because these are the members of Congress who know the District best because they are from the region—Government Reform Chair TOM DAVIS, Appropriations Subcommittee Chair FRANK WOLF, Congressional Black Caucus Chair ELIJAH CUMMINGS and Representatives JIM MORAN, CHRIS VAN HOLLEN, and ALBERT WYNN. Montgomery County Council Executive Doug Duncan has authorized me to say that he supports the bill as well. These Members recognize the importance of federal support to

compensate the District for federally imposed requirements in order to forestall another fiscal crisis in the nation's capital, while the District itself continues on the path of improvement of its finances and services that the Congress has acknowledged.

This bill ranks as one of the most important I have introduced during my seven terms in Congress. Because of its significance, I have delayed introducing other bills this year until I achieved bipartisan support in order to make the Fair Federal Compensation Act my first bill of 2004. Without this bill, the long-term viability of the District of Columbia is at risk. This risk arises from a structural imbalance caused by expenditures rising faster than revenues. Notwithstanding this dangerous situation, the District is able to balance its budget every year and avoid operating deficits by maintaining tax rates and debt that are among the highest in the nation. District of Columbia Chief Financial Officer Natwar M. Gandhi has issued forecasts that show that in the out years, the structural deficit will overtake the city's diminished and inadequate tax base, not because of overspending by the D.C. government but because of the cost of federal requirements and statutes imposed on the District.

Today's bill is different from structural imbalance bills I have introduced in the past. This bill has as its predicate a May 2003 Government Accounting Office (GAO) report, which made three major findings—the first concerning the size of the imbalance, the second concerning its federal origin, and the third regarding the unavailability of options internal to the D.C. government.

First, the GAO confirmed that the District has a structural imbalance that it found is between \$470,000,000 and \$1,100,000,000 annually, the first determination that is based on a precise methodology for valuing, documenting and calculating the imbalance. This congressional report confines two prior privately commissioned reports that arrived at similar conclusions, a 2002 McKenzie study commissioned by the Federal City Council (an organization of regional and local business leaders) and a Brookings Institution study under the leadership of former Congressional Budget Office Director, Alice Rivlin, who also served as a chair of the former D.C. Control Board (Financial Management and Assistance Authority).

The GAO's second finding was that D.C.'s structural imbalance is caused by federal mandates and is therefore beyond the reach of D.C. government officials and taxpayers. The federal government retains 42 percent of real property, the most valuable in the city, for its own use; requires the city alone to provide costly state services, such as special education, although the District is not a state and lacks a broad state tax base; requires the District to provide services to more than 200,000 federal employees, who earn 66 percent of the income produced here; and prohibits taxation of federal workers to help pay for these services. These costs to the city trace directly to the federal government and only the federal government.

The GAO's third finding is that the only two options available to the District government are raising taxes and cutting services, each of which the GAO said it could not recommend. Rather, the options are to "change Federal procedures and expand the District's tax base or provide additional financial support and a