

This is not a new organization, Mr. Speaker. The Navy Chaplain Corps traces its inception to the Second Article of Navy Regulations adopted on November 28 of 1775 by the Continental Congress. This event occurred prior to the signing of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776, or the Constitution of September 17, 1787.

From the outset of the Continental Navy, due consideration was given to divine services and the placement of chaplains aboard ships. This Act provided a place for religion and chaplains in the Navy.

Additionally, the United States Army Chaplaincy was officially created by an act of the Continental Congress in July of 1775 upon the urgent request of General George Washington.

Mr. Speaker, the reason I wanted to come to the floor is because these rumors at the Pentagon I hope are nothing more than rumors because I cannot think of anything more important to a man or woman in uniform, whether they be young or old, than to have a chaplain that they feel very close to. And our chaplains wear the uniform. Our chaplains wear the helmet when they are in combat situations.

I would share with you, Mr. Speaker, just two paragraphs of a letter I wrote to Secretary Rumsfeld on April 28, 2004.

"Dear Mr. Secretary, I write to you today to urge you in the strongest of terms to reconsideration your decision to consider outsourcing our military chaplains.

□ 1245

"The service that they provide, not just to soldiers, airmen, sailors and Marines, but also their families here at home and overseas, are irreplaceable."

I also would like to share with you the last paragraph that I wrote to the Secretary: "One of their most valuable qualities is that they are trained by the individual service that they represent. These men and women are more than just priests, reverends, or rabbis. They are also soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines. How can you possibly justify selecting a civilian with absolutely no military experience to advise our troops in the field? Replacing the uniformed chaplain would be a crucial mistake. I hope you will consider these facts before you reach your final decision."

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to tell my colleagues that those of us on the Committee on Armed Services, both Republican and Democrat, we are very concerned about this. We have talked to the leadership of the Committee on Armed Services, our subcommittee chairmen, as well as our ranking member, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON); and also the chairman, the gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER), and I believe that we will come together as Republicans and Democrats in the Committee on Armed Services, as well as here on the House floor, to discourage and to deny the decisions, should one be forthcoming

from the Department of Defense, to outsource our chaplains. It is just absolutely unacceptable.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I will insert the entirety of this letter to Secretary Rumsfeld for the RECORD at this point.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, April 28, 2004.

Hon. DONALD RUMSFELD,
Secretary of Defense, the Pentagon,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SECRETARY: I write to you today to urge you in the strongest terms to reconsider your decision to consider outsourcing our military chaplains. The service they provide not just the Soldiers, Airmen, Sailors and Marines but also their families here at home and overseas is irreplaceable.

The work of the military chaplain is multifaceted in that they serve the troops in the field but equally as important, their wives and families supporting them on the home front. The military chaplain, regardless of service shares a common bond with their fellow soldier in the field, regardless of their religion, they are brothers-in-arms.

This work is not new either. For example, The Navy Chaplain Corps traces its inception to the Second Article of Navy Regulations adopted on November 28, 1775 by the Continental Congress. This event occurred prior to the signing of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776, or the Constitution on September 17, 1787. From the outset of the Continental Navy, due consideration was given to divine services and the placement of chaplains aboard ships. This act provided a place for religion and chaplains in the Navy. Additionally, the United States Army Chaplaincy was officially created by an act of the Continental Congress in July of 1775 upon the urgent request of General George Washington.

I would like to share with you part of a personal account that I recently received from a chaplain serving in Iraq: "Twice a day I go to the 'Cave' . . . the combat operations center, which is housed in a former palace, poorly lit and the hub of fighting the battle. I stand in the corner and pray for each person/position and those they represent. I don't know many of them, but God does. I pray for wisdom, strength, mercy, endurance and God's presence for each warrior, all those they serve or represent. I cover the Cave and the battlefield as I look at live imagery projected on the wall. I don't know how the Marines do it . . . but the COC is loaded with strake-looking Marines. The senior NCO's all look like NFL lineman. The junior officers look like marathon runners and the mid-grade officers look like NFL linebackers . . . the senior officers are lean, tanned and serious . . . deadly serious. The place exudes the warrior spirit. If you are a civilian I can't explain it and won't apologize for it. If you are a veteran you don't need to have it explained . . . the warrior spirit."

Mr. Secretary, you must understand, these chaplains provide so much more than spiritual guidance. They are counselors and confidantes to those who have witnessed first-hand the horrors of war. This service does not stop at the warfront; their fellow chaplains are providing the exact same service to those who mourn the recent loss of a loved one in this conflict. You need to understand the severity of this decision, their presence in the field, on ships and on base are necessities.

One of their most valuable qualities is that they are trained by the individual service that they represent. These men and women are more than just Priests, Reverends or Rabbis, they are also Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines, how can you possibly justify selecting a civilian with absolutely no

military experience to advise our troops in the field? Replacing the uniformed chaplain would be a crucial mistake, I hope you will consider these facts before you reach your final decision.

Thank you for your consideration, I look forward to hearing your decision on this matter.

Sincerely,

WALTER B. JONES,
Member of Congress.

Mr. Speaker, I close this way because all of us in the House know that we have men and women overseas serving this great Nation in Afghanistan, Iraq, and other parts of the world who have given their lives for this country.

I close by asking God to please bless our men and women in uniform and their families. I ask God in His loving arms to hold the families who have given precious children dying for freedom. I ask God to please bless the House and Senate. I ask the good Lord three times, please God, please God, please God, continue to bless and save America.

DISCOUNT DRUG CARD

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BURNS). Pursuant to the order of the House of January 20, 2004, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, President Bush is in my home State of Ohio, campaigning for maybe the 25th time. He knows he has to spend a lot of time in Ohio because of what has happened to the Ohio economy since George Bush has been President.

Ohio's lost one-sixth, one out of every six manufacturing jobs has left the State, some 170,000 manufacturing jobs every single month in the Bush administration; but as he travels throughout Ohio, he is going to stop in Dayton and do a little program, Ask President Bush, and the members of the Ohio delegation put a list of questions we would like to ask the President about the new Medicare prescription drug discount card that the gentleman from New Jersey asked about earlier. I would like to go through some of these questions, hoping, as we pose these to the President and wrote him a letter, that we can get answers to them.

We asked the President, is it true that the Medicare law allows drug and insurance companies offering discount cards to change covered drugs and discounts weekly? Does this not mean that seniors may choose a card one week and pay for it and be stuck with it for a year that will be worth little or nothing to them the next week? We ask, if seniors are guaranteed discounts that last as little as 1 week, why must they sign up for a discount card for the entire year and only that discount card?

The \$600 annual benefit will mean a lot to very low-income seniors, but this benefit lasts only 2 years. Many of the same seniors may be unable to pass the

assets test required for the low-income benefit that will take effect in 2006.

We ask the President, why give low-income seniors help now and then pull the rug out from under them in 2 years, give them the help before the election, and after the election, the help's not there? If the Federal Government acknowledges those seniors need assistance, why are we excluding them after the Presidential election?

Ohioans can save, we found, almost 50 percent by importing prescription drugs from Canada, same drugs, same dosage, same manufacturer, from what the price is in the United States. With the cost of popular drugs rising at triple the rate of inflation, we are asking the President how he can deny seniors and all Americans access to these safe, more affordable drugs from Canada and France and Germany, when all over the world people are paying so much less.

The law creating the discount card program expressly prohibits the government from negotiating prices for prescription drugs, but the VA's price negotiation system has proven effective. We asked the President, why are America's seniors being denied the benefit of the government's buying power to leverage for lower prices?

We pretty much know the answers to these questions because this drug discount card simply will not work. The more we know about it, drug prices go up 25 percent in a year. The discount card will give maybe 10 or 15 percent. That is not price savings. That is really an insult. When we look at this, it is pretty easy to understand why.

This prescription drug bill, the Medicare bill, was written by the insurance companies and written by the drug companies for the insurance companies and for the drug companies. President Bush brought the drug and insurance companies into the Lincoln Bedroom or into the Oval Office or somewhere in the White House and let them write this legislation. It is now the law of the land that now hurts our seniors, and there is not a real surprise there when the drug industry's already given President Bush tens of millions of dollars for his reelection. The word on the street in Washington is the drug industry will donate \$100 million to the President's reelection campaign. The insurance industry is not quite as wealthy, not quite as generous, but will donate and has already donated millions of dollars to the President's reelection campaign. So it should come as no surprise that this is the kind of drug bill we get.

Then to add insult to injury, the gentleman who wrote the language in the bill dealing with the discount drug card is, number one, a friend of the President's; and, number two, he has a discount drug card company. So we have got the drug industry writing the drug bill. We have got the insurance industry helping the drug industry write the drug bill, and now we have the discount card company writing the language for the discount cards.

That is why America's seniors feel betrayed, because this Medicare bill is not for America's seniors. It is for President Bush's reelection campaign, for his fund-raising, and for those companies that are so powerful in this city.

ABUSE OF IRAQI PRISONERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 20, 2004, the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. BEREUTER) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, as the chairman of the House delegation to the NATO Parliamentary Assembly and currently the president of the assembly, I have frequently had to reassure parliamentarians that the outrageous and false allegations they had heard about the way detainees were being treated by the U.S. at our Guantanamo detention facility were not true. Since I had been part of a small number of Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence members to visit Guantanamo, actually the first congressional delegation to visit, since the HPSCI members and staff have made several such trips and have given oversight to this interrogation and detention facility, and since I am a former military intelligence officer, I knew I could conscientiously give such an assurance.

Now, however, from Abu Ghraib prison, and perhaps from elsewhere, we have reports, with photographs, graphically telling and showing outrageous abuses of Iraqi detainees by U.S. military personnel and possibly by military contractors. The international damage to the credibility and reputation of our country and our military absolutely cannot be overstated, especially in the Arab and Islamic communities. The alleged actions by at least a few members of our military, already confirmed by very recent disciplinary action, makes the job being done by our dedicated and courageous military personnel in Iraq and Afghanistan just that much harder and much more dangerous. The extraordinary gravity of this matter, the insensitivity and the degrading abuse which has apparently been visited upon Iraqi detainees call for swift and just accountability.

What has allegedly happened is so foreign to our country's principles and traditions and those of our Armed Forces that these people conducting or condoning such abuse do not deserve to be called Americans. If the use of such tactics of physical abuse and sexual humiliation is not dishonorable conduct, I do not know what is. If supervisors of such military personnel were inappropriately unaware or unconcerned about such conduct, then this is a clear case of dereliction of duty; and this accountability should apply several levels up the chain of command. If military contractors were involved, at a minimum the contract with the firm which employed them should be immediately terminated.

Mr. Speaker, it is hard to imagine a more politically damaging set of actions, hopefully by just a few individuals, for American and for coalition efforts to replace the brutal regime of Saddam Hussein and to win the hearts and minds of the Iraqi people. We must have swift accountability, just accountability, and a demonstration that the American people repudiate such conduct and will not let it continue or happen again.

Mr. Speaker, I include an editorial at this point from this morning's Omaha World Herald.

UGLY AMERICANS

When U.S. soldiers at Baghdad's Abu Ghraib prison (and, some documents suggest, elsewhere) abused and humiliated prisoners of war, they committed two serious wrongs.

First, in sheer human terms, there is a code to be followed for prisoners' treatment. It exists for good reasons, starting with simple decency and progressing to the hope that rules observed by one side will be observed by the other. These soldiers trashed such considerations.

Second, they did immeasurable harm to the goals of America and its allies to bring about a peaceable and effective transfer of limited self rule to Iraqis. They rendered considerably more dubious the prospect of inculcating a stable, beneficial democracy in the Middle East. (If this is what democracy brings, who would want it?)

The six men who engaged in the actual acts (pyramids of naked detainees, false electrocution threats and more) face criminal charges. They should. In addition, six supervisors will receive a reprimand that can end their careers by rendering promotions impossible. A seventh will draw a lesser penalty.

An internal Army report in February pointed to flaws in the command structure at Abu Ghraib and elsewhere. For one thing, an intelligence officer whose duty was eliciting information from the prisoners was effectively put in charge of their day-to-day jailers—a dangerous practice, as events have shown. Additionally, the military policy responsible for the prisoners appear to have had little or no training in proper handling of detainees.

Such flaws cry out to be remedied, and apparently that will now happen. But that still leaves the question, what happened to common sense? America, for all its good intentions, is already regarded with suspicion by many in the Middle East and in Iraq in particular. Who could suppose that when knowledge of these abominable acts leaked, as was bound to happen, it would do anything less than throw gasoline on an already smoldering fire?

The United States needs to find some way to make clear in Iraq that this is not the norm, and that Americans, too, are repelled by what they saw. This isn't supposed to happen. We're the good guys. But try telling that today to the average Iraqi

THE CREDIBILITY GAP AND LEADERSHIP PROBLEMS OF PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 20, 2004, the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, there is a new section in