

During a press conference in the Rose Garden President Bush claimed that “these have been months of steady progress.” And in this House chamber last week Prime Minister Allawi echoed the President, reminding my colleagues “not to forget the progress we are making in Iraq.”

President Bush and Prime Minister Allawi can say we are making progress in Iraq, but the facts simply do not support their claims. Attacks against Iraqis and U.S. military personnel over the last couple of weeks are dramatically higher than they were in the weeks after the handover of power to the interim Iraqi government. Today on average 70 attacks occur on a daily basis, compared to 40 to 50 in July. Over the past 2 weeks these attacks have killed more than 250 Iraqis and 29 U.S. military personnel. How in the world is that progress, Madam Speaker?

President Bush also ignores the real dangers surrounding the scheduled Iraqi elections in January. At his press conference last week, the President said the elections are still possible based on the situation on the ground. His reason is “because the Prime Minister told me they are.”

Well, neither the President nor the Prime Minister could provide any evidence to support their steadfast belief that the January elections must proceed despite the realities on the ground.

That same day, Iraq’s most powerful Shiite leader threatened to withdraw his support for the elections. And UN Secretary General Annan also voiced concern that elections may need to be delayed due to security concerns on the ground.

Madam Speaker, even President Bush’s cabinet is providing contradictory information regarding the January elections. Last week at a Senate hearing, Defense Secretary Rumsfeld raised the possibility that some areas of Iraq might be excluded from voting in January. Secretary Rumsfeld said, “Let’s say you tried to have an election and you could have it in three-quarters or four-fifths of the country, but in some places you couldn’t because the violence was too great. Well, so be it. Nothing’s perfect in life.”

That is what Rumsfeld said. Image that.

How could Secretary Rumsfeld conclude that the Iraqi people would consider such an election legitimate if a significant portion of the Iraqi people were not allowed to participate?

Fortunately, there has one member of the President’s Cabinet that is not afraid to put aside the President’s talking points and speak the truth. This weekend, Secretary of State Powell refuted the President’s claims that progress is being made in Iraq. Not only did Secretary Powell say the insurgency in Iraq is getting worse, he also supported Senator KERRY’s contentions that the U.S. occupation of Iraq has increased anti-American sentiment in Muslim countries.

Secretary Powell also refuted Secretary Rumsfeld’s outrageous statements about the January election. What Powell said is, “For the elections to have complete credibility and stand the test of international scrutiny, I think what we have to do is to give all the people of Iraq an opportunity to participate.”

Now, I obviously agree with what Secretary Powell says, but it is no wonder the situation in Iraq is so tenable. We have a President who either refuses to believe there is a problem in Iraq or does not think it is a problem to mislead the American people about how serious the situation currently is.

We also have an administration that never seems to be on the same page. One cabinet official is saying one thing while another one is saying just the opposite.

So, Madam Speaker, this is no way to lead a war, clearly. It is a flawed rationale for the war to begin with, in failing to have a plan once Baghdad fell, and President Bush’s record essentially has not been good. It has been a failure.

He failed to provide the troops with the equipment they needed, and he also failed to implement his reconstruction plans in Iraq, and he has left, essentially, Iraq in chaos. I do not think the world can afford another four years of this failed leadership on behalf of the Bush administration.

HONORING IRVING HARRIS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 20, 2004, the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Ms. DELAURO. Madam Speaker, I rise to honor the extraordinary legacy of a dear friend who passed away this past week. An advocate, philanthropist and leading voice for children, Irving Harris left an indelible mark on our society.

Recognizing early on that the key to children’s success lay in their most formative years, birth through three. Inspiring, developing and supporting scores of programs and organizations dedicated to improving the lives of disadvantaged youngsters across the Nation, he founded the Erickson Institute, a child development graduate school and the Ounce of Prevention Fund, a public-private partnership that created and promoted community-based initiatives to improve early childhood development.

He also helped create and fund the Yale Child Study Center which is nationally recognized as leaders in the field of children’s trauma, addressing those children who have been exposed to violence.

Irving was also a leader in the development of Zero to Three, the national center for infants, toddlers, and families, whose work to support families and promote the healthy development

of babies and toddlers had a tremendous impact in communities across the Nation.

Irving’s work rightly brought him national recognition as a leading voice for children across the country.

Irving Harris was one of those rare individuals with roots in the world of business and finance, who used his hard-won wealth and influence to help others less fortunate. His work and his diligence and dedication was not only remarkable but it was unceasing, a reflection of all that we strive to be. His sincerity was marked by the principles he instilled in his own family, in his children and grandchildren who today carry on his work on behalf of the other children of America.

Through education, public policy development, grant making and advocacy, Irving Harris’ vision and leadership earned him recognition and many honors and awards over the years. He served many organizations, including the National Commission on Children and the Carnegie Corporations’ New York task force on meeting the needs of young children.

It was for me personally an enormous privilege to work with Irving Harris over the years, and working now with his son, Bill, and with his grandson, David. Irving Harris knew that our young people represent the future and that we as a community and a Nation must give them the tools that they need in order to succeed. He recognized this simple fact many years ago and dedicated his life to fulfilling that important goal.

I say today, thank you, Irving, for the difference that you have made in this country, and the millions of lives that you have made better through your vision, your passion, and your generous spirit of mind. You have been an inspiration to all of us.

Today my thoughts and my prayers and love are with the Harris family.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m.

Accordingly (at 1 o’clock and 6 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until 2 p.m.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ISSA) at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

The Rev. Thomas K. Spence, Jr., Retired Pastor, Presbyterian Church, Sanford, North Carolina, offered the following prayer:

What do You require from us, O Lord? Is it not to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with