

our great Nation. Deborah Monette, a Federal employee at the National Nuclear Security Administration's North Las Vegas site office in Nevada manages a number of high-profile projects at the agency's Nevada test site. Her work includes stewardship of the Nation's nuclear weapons stockpile, nuclear test readiness, nonproliferation issues and emergency response programs. In that capacity, she has spearheaded critical counterterrorism initiatives for our country.

One of Ms. Monette's greatest achievements is the creation of the National Center For Combating Terrorism at the Nevada test site. The center is an intensive, hands-on training ground where Federal, State and local agencies and employees involved in combating terrorism can train for the wars of the future. It was established to provide a realistic test and evaluation laboratory for first responders.

She is a 30-year employee. I wish we would honor Ms. Monette and all Federal, State and local employees across this country.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WELDON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on House Resolution 231.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. INGALLIS of South Carolina). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will recognize Members for special order speeches without prejudice to possible resumption of legislative business.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DEFAZIO addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to speak in the place of the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

AMERICA'S ARMED FORCES: STRETCHED TO THE LIMIT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. SCHIFF) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, earlier this week, General Richard Myers, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, warned Congress that the stress on our Armed Forces of operations in Iraq and Afghanistan had raised the risk that it will take longer to prevail in conflicts elsewhere around the world. While General Myers stressed that American troops would still succeed, he acknowledged that the ongoing pace of operations has strained the military and would have a negative impact on operations, including the possibility of higher American casualties.

General Myers' candid assessment is both welcome and, to me, self-evident. A growing number of current and former military officers are expressing strong concern over the strain being placed on our Armed Forces, and for good reason: our Armed Forces are too small and the demands on them are too great.

"What keeps me awake at night," General Richard Cody, vice chief of staff of the U.S. Army, testified in a recent Senate hearing, "is what will this all-volunteer force look like in 2007?" General Cody's concerns are professional and personal. He is the father of two sons who are captains in the U.S. Army. Right now those sons are deployed on their second and third tours of combat since September 11.

Throughout the country, men and women in the Guard and Reserve are being called up repeatedly to serve. Indeed, the line between those in the Guard and Reserve and those on active duty is being blurred beyond recognition. We can no longer ask a small group of men and women to bear such a disproportionate and growing share of the burden. We must expand the standing Army and Marine Corps to provide adequate resources for our long-term national security.

When the Soviet Union collapsed in December 1991, American policymakers downsized the military in hopes of reaping a peace dividend. Our mistake at the end of the Cold War was to consider the vastly diminished threat of nuclear annihilation as signaling what one commentator called "the end of history." Even as the Soviet Union broke apart, new threats, failed States, radical Islamic terrorism and ethnic and religious strife quickly advanced to challenge the United States. The need for the forward deployment of large numbers of American troops in Western Europe may have largely disappeared, but the end of the bipolar international system has led to much greater instability elsewhere.

Before the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, the conflicts in Somalia, in Haiti

and in Kosovo, already demonstrated some of the challenges that we confront in the post-Cold War era. Throughout the 1990s, even as the U.S. military maintained a significant presence in Europe, South Korea and in the Gulf region, U.S. forces engaged in these large-scale deployments. American troops are still operating in some of these areas and participating in other smaller peacekeeping operations. Despite the high tempo of activity, the strength of the active duty Army and Marine Corps went from 929,000 in 1990 to 655,000 in 2000.

While we are fighting the war on terrorism and the Iraq war and trying to meet our other commitments, the strength of our active duty Army and Marine Corps has increased only slightly in the last 5 years. At the end of 2004, 671,000 Americans were serving on active duty in the Army and Marines and virtually all of the modest increase in troop strength has come as a result of stop-loss and other measures that have kept soldiers in the force beyond the period of their enlistments.

To meet its needs, the military has mobilized hundreds of thousands of Reserve and National Guard personnel to serve in Iraq and Afghanistan, with many called to service multiple times and others activated from the Individual Ready Reserve. Because the gulf between the expectations of those joining the Guard and Reserve and the reality of today's service is so great, morale has suffered and recruitment is down.

President Bush warned the American people that the war on terror would not be easy or quick. He asked the country to make a generational commitment to promote democracy around the world. But as this applies to adequate troop strength, the administration's rhetoric has not been matched with action.

The defense authorization bill increased end strength of 20,000 for the Army and 3,000 for the Marine Corps. It also authorized an additional 10,000 Army and 6,000 Marines to be added in the next 5 years. This expansion is a beginning. The administration and Congress, though, need to take steps to increase the size of our Armed Forces by a far more substantial amount. Recently, a bipartisan group of national security experts recommended increasing the active duty Army and Marine Corps by a combined 25,000 per year for several years. Former NATO Supreme Allied Commander General Wesley Clark has called for an additional 90,000 troops to be added to the Army's ranks.

Our Armed Forces are the best in the world, but even the best can be asked to do too much with too few. As we continue our missions in Iraq and Afghanistan and confront potential challenges in North Korea, Iran and elsewhere, we must acknowledge that our current force level does not meet our security needs.

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Beefing up our recruiting efforts will not be easy, but we have little choice.

The magnitude of the threats we face presents too great a risk to the Nation's security given our current strength of active duty military.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, we all hope and pray we never have to make need of these additional troops. But knowing we have a larger Armed Force if the urgency arises should help us all sleep a little better at night, including General Cody and his sons.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. INGALLS of South Carolina). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. GUTKNECHT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. GUTKNECHT addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extension of Remarks.)

EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take the special order time of the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. GUTKNECHT).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from North Carolina?

There was no objection.

IN SUPPORT OF LIEUTENANT PANTANO

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, Saturday was the final day of the Article 32 hearing for a Marine facing murder charges for actions he took against Iraqi insurgents in self-defense.

As I have discussed at length, a year ago in Iraq, Second Lieutenant Ilario Pantano made a split-second battlefield decision to shoot two Iraqi insurgents who refused to follow his orders to stop their movement towards him. Two and a half months later, a sergeant under his command, who never even saw the shooting and who was earlier demoted by Pantano for his lack of leadership abilities, accused him of murder. Now the case is in the hands of a hearing officer who must determine whether Lieutenant Pantano will face a court-martial.

Mr. Speaker, I stand here today, as I have many other nights and days, in support of Lieutenant Pantano. I have always maintained the innocence of Lieutenant Pantano, and I believe last week's hearings produced information that will ultimately prove his innocence. During the hearing, it became clear that the sergeant who accused Lieutenant Pantano of these actions was not a credible witness. This sergeant had been demoted for his inaccuracies as a leader. While testifying last week, he was forced to admit that he disobeyed recent orders not to grant interviews regarding this case.

Mr. Speaker, how can these charges move forward when this primary witness is someone who did not actually see the shooting and who cannot stick to one story about the series of events that took place?

I continue to maintain that Lieutenant Pantano is an exceptional Marine. During last week's proceedings, many Marines and sailors testified to his outstanding leadership; and not one person, aside from Sergeant Coburn, doubted the lieutenant's decision-making ability. I certainly hope that last week's proceedings will finally bring out the truth in this case.

General Huck has the ultimate say in whether these charges move forward to a court-martial. General Huck will evaluate the evidence that has been presented in this case. I believe the evidence will justify the immediate dismissal of all charges against Lieutenant Pantano so that he may return to duty and serve the corps and the country he loves so deeply.

Mr. Speaker, I continue to ask my colleagues to research this case and consider supporting House Resolution 167, my resolution to support Lieutenant Pantano as he faces this battle. I encourage all Members to visit his mother's Web site, www.defendthedefenders.org, and learn more about this fine young man. I would be proud to call him my son or my son-in-law.

We cannot send the wrong message to our men and women in uniform. To instill doubt into the minds of our Nation's defenders places their lives and the security of our Nation in jeopardy.

In conclusion, I want to briefly mention another Marine who was facing similar murder charges for actions he took in Iraq that were actually on videotape. Yesterday he was cleared of wrongdoing after the Naval Criminal Investigative Service determined that he acted in self-defense. In a statement, Major General Richard Natonski, the commanding general of the First Marine Division, said the Marine's actions were "consistent with the established rules of engagement and the law of armed conflict." Mr. Speaker, I hope that this Marine's case will serve as a precedent for the hearing officer reviewing Lieutenant Pantano's case, where there is not only no video evidence, there is not even one eyewitness.

I have the utmost faith and confidence in the United States Marine Corps that in the next few days there will once again be a decision made that will correct a wrong and allow Lieutenant Pantano to continue with his career.

Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD an endorsement of House Resolution 167 by the Los Angeles Deputy Sheriffs, Incorporated, Los Angeles, California, that asks President Bush, the House, and the Senate to please support H. Res. 167.

I close by asking the good Lord to please give strength to the Pantano

family, that the good Lord be with our men and women in uniform, and may God continue to bless America.

ASSOCIATION FOR
LOS ANGELES DEPUTY SHERIFFS, INC.,
Los Angeles, California, April 14, 2005.

Re Endorsement of House Resolution 167.

Hon. GEORGE W. BUSH,
President of the United States,
Washington, DC.

DEAR PRESIDENT BUSH: As members of the Board of Directors of an organization that represents approximately 7000 sworn Deputy Sheriffs and District Attorney Investigators, we know firsthand just how difficult it is for those engaged in military or law enforcement service to protect the public as well as maintain their own safety. We also recognize that the public is frequently unaware of the extreme difficulty placed upon those who serve in military or para-military organizations which often requires that irreversible, life and death decisions be made within fractions of a second.

We are certain that you are fully knowledgeable of the incident that gave rise to House Resolution 167 as well as the circumstances that propelled this matter into the public spotlight. We are also familiar with your unflinching record of support and respect for the men and women in uniform that proudly serve this great nation. Certainly, no one is better acquainted with their heroic exploits and the extreme difficulty in which they have been placed than the President of the United States.

Therefore, in keeping with House Resolution 167, we respectfully request that you employ your power as Commander in Chief to cause all charges against Second Lieutenant Ilario Pantano to be dismissed.

If there is anything that you believe that this Association can do to assist in this matter, please let us know.

Sincerely,

ROY BURNS,
President.
STEVE REMIGE,
Vice President.
ARMANDO MACIAS,
Secretary.
FLOYD HAYHURST,
Treasurer.
ROBERT CONNOR,
Director.
GEORGE HOFSTETTER,
Director.
BRIAN ROGGE,
Director.

SMART SECURITY AND MISSION UNACCOMPLISHED

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, last Sunday was the second anniversary of President Bush's now infamous "Mission Accomplished" speech in which he declared an end to major combat operations in Iraq under an arrogant banner declaring that the mission had been "accomplished." I do not know the President's definition of the word "accomplished," but I think just about anyone who is asked would say that the mission is very far from being accomplished in Iraq.

Let us consider the facts. To date, nearly 1,600 American soldiers have been killed in this war. Estimates of