

completely incomprehensible. The President of the United States has a unique take on an old proverb. He believes that if you find yourself in a hole, the solution is to keep on digging.

Here in Congress, however, we want to stop digging. On Friday, the Congressional Progressive Caucus and the Out of Iraq Caucus will co-host a forum featuring former Senator George McGovern and Mideast expert Dr. William Polk. They will be discussing their plan for ending the occupation, as outlined in their recent book, "Out of Iraq: A Practical Plan For Withdrawal Now."

We will also be joined by leaders from the military, and from diplomatic and intelligence communities, who will offer their expertise and input in a dialogue with Senator McGovern and Dr. Polk.

It is time for a 180-degree turn in the U.S. policy toward Iraq. It is time for the Congress to act out the mandate it received from the American people in November. It is time to get down to business and figure out how to extricate ourselves from Iraq, end the occupation and bring our troops home.

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

TRIBUTE TO SPECIALIST DUSTIN R. DONICA, TEXAS WARRIOR

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

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, General Douglas MacArthur said: "A true leader has the confidence to stand alone, the courage to make tough decisions, and the compassion to listen to the needs of others. He does not set out to be a leader, but becomes one by the quality of his actions and the integrity of his intent."

Tonight, I want to talk about that kind of leader, Army Specialist Dustin Ross Donica, 3rd Battalion, 509th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 4th Airborne Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division of Fort Richardson, Alaska.

Dustin grew up in Spring, Texas, outside of Houston. His nickname was Double D. He enjoyed teasing his sister, Courtney. He loved to joke around with his family and his friends, and he was known by many for his unique sense of humor. He was very, very close to his family.

He was especially close to his only sister, with whom he shared an unbreakable bond. They were called the "Irish Twins," born 1 year apart. The two often told others they were actually twins.

Dustin always described himself as a modest person, although looking at his

life, this modest son of Texas accomplished extraordinary accomplishments. Even at a young age, he was known as the hero who grew up down the street. That was because of his attitude about service and about loyalty.

In 2003, the Klein High School graduate left the University of Texas and enlisted in the United States Army.

When Dustin was asked about joining the Army, he said, "I've grown up in a very privileged area. When most people of my generation are asked to do something, their first thought is, how will this benefit me? I need to do this so that my first thought is, how does it benefit others."

No wonder people said Dustin had a sense of honor and duty, traits that are very rare in our culture.

When Dustin was deployed to Iraq, he sent his sister a teddy bear. The teddy bear was wearing an Airborne uniform complete with a Donica patch on the pocket. He wanted the bear to serve as a reminder that he was fighting to keep her safe and he was always constantly thinking of her.

Mr. Speaker, you know, there's something all-American about a teddy bear. Dustin was constantly concerned for the well-being of his family back home. Even though he was in the combat war zone, all of Dustin's phone conversations with his family ended, "Remember, I love y'all. Take care. Be safe."

One of Dustin's last requests was that his parents visit his close friend, Logan. Logan had served also in Iraq, and he was being treated in the United States for his injuries. He was a very close friend of Dustin's, and Dustin asked that his parents provide Logan comfort by visiting him in the hospital in the United States.

But on December 28, 2006, at the dynamic age of 22, Double D., Dustin Donica was killed in Iraq, conducting combat operations against the anti-Iraqi forces in the city of Karmah in the Al Anbar Province.

As in many other times in his life, Dustin was standing guard, protecting his fellow soldiers in arms when he received his fatal injuries.

Now, the media has taken it upon themselves to assign a number to this patriot. Dustin's legacy is more than just a number. He was an American fighting man. He was the only son of the Donica family. He was totally committed to America. He was not a media number. And Dustin Donica's name was the example of bravery, courage and duty.

Dustin, like those who came before him, stopped at nothing to defend freedom. Our American duty, the duty for all of us that are left behind, is to honor America's sons, like Dustin Donica. In the words of President Calvin Coolidge, "The Nation which forgets its defenders . . . it too will be forgotten."

Dustin was a man who loved life, family and country. His parents, David and Judy Donica said, "We loved Dustin. He will be missed by us and those that knew him."

This is a photograph of Dustin Donica, Mr. Speaker. And yesterday Dustin was laid to rest with full military honors in Klein Memorial Park Cemetery in Texas.

These words from one of Dustin's favorite songs, "American Soldier" by Toby Keith, describe the commitment of courageous men like Dustin who we are proud of, men who are proud to wear the uniform of the United States soldier. It goes like this, Mr. Speaker: "An American soldier, an American, beside my brothers and sisters, I will proudly take a stand. When liberty is in jeopardy, I will always do what's right. I am out here on the front line. So sleep well tonight. Sleep in peace, America, because I'm an American soldier."

These young Americans like Dustin are a rare breed, Mr. Speaker. They are the American breed, and we thank them and their families.

And that's just the way it is.

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The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ELLISON). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MCCARTHY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. MCCARTHY addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

NO ESCALATION OF TROOPS IN IRAQ

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

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor this evening to voice my strong opposition to President Bush's apparent decision to send up to 20,000 more troops to Iraq. Tomorrow evening the President will try to persuade a very skeptical public that more troops are needed in Iraq. But regardless of the number he suggests tomorrow night, I will oppose any efforts to escalate the war by sending additional American troops.

Mr. Speaker, it appears President Bush has learned nothing from the results of the 2006 election, nor has he listened to the suggestions of the bipartisan Iraq Study Group or his own Joint Chiefs of Staff who said as late as last month that they saw no reason to send more troops to Iraq.

Instead, President Bush has chosen to stick his head in the sand, not listen to anyone and continue on a course that is not going to make Iraq any safer for either our brave troops or for the Iraqis themselves.

It is time to bring an end to the war in Iraq. President Bush has lost the support of the American people who have grown frustrated by the continuing loss of American troops. They are rightfully asking the question, why must our troops continue to serve as referees in a civil conflict between Sunnis and Shias?