

I think it is imperative in the days and weeks ahead that in whatever forum, in whatever way, this House go on record as reaffirming that constitutional prerogative with specific reference to the issue of what we should do about Iran.

If there is to be consideration of military action involving Iran, in my judgment, such consideration would be reckless and premature at this time and under these facts. But if there is to be consideration of military action, it should be careful, deliberate, thoughtful consideration done under the auspices of this Constitution.

America's greatest resource in the area of national defense is the men and women who step forward voluntarily to serve this country and wear the uniform of this country. They step forward because of their faith that we are a country that follows the rule of law, and not the edict or desire of any one man or woman irrespective of what office he or she is elected to. It is my concern that that faith would be eroded and indeed misplaced if we do not follow the rule of law in this crucial instance.

This House needs to affirm our constitutional prerogative in this matter. There should be no consideration of the initiation of any preemptive hostilities against Iran or anyone else without the careful, thorough, constitutional consideration that such a question mandates and demands.

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

(Ms. NORTON addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

BIG OIL AND ENERGY INDEPENDENCE

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

Ms. KAPTUR. Madam Speaker, I imagine that I am not the only Member who hears from constituents regularly when oil companies report record profits, particularly with gas prices being what they have been over the past year.

Last Friday, the New York Times had this headline: World's Largest Oil Companies Gushing Profits. The Times story followed a report that ExxonMobil, the world's largest publicly traded company, had enjoyed the largest annual profit for any company in history, almost \$40 billion in 1 year, at a time when extraordinarily high gasoline prices were punishing the budgets of almost every family in our country and punishing the budgets of every business in our country.

Did ExxonMobil lower the prices at the pump to adjust for these egregious

profits? Absolutely not. In its first order of business, it spent almost \$10 billion to buy back its own stock, and then it took some of its profits to create a disinformation campaign against the panel on climate change.

And, finally, this week what did ExxonMobil do? It went after the State of Alabama, and lawyers for the company asked the Alabama Supreme Court to overturn a \$3.5 billion punitive damage award that was made by a jury 3 years ago when it found that Exxon had defrauded the State of royalties for natural gas production in Mobile Bay. Actually, the original fine had been \$11.9 billion.

You know, it must be hard being a giant oil company these days. It must be hard work making so much money you don't know how to spend it. That is not a problem most American families can relate to, but that is the problem that the giant oil companies face today.

The New York Times article reported that the world's 10 biggest oil companies made more than \$100 billion in profit in 2004, more than the gross domestic product of all of Malaysia, and their sales were more than \$1 trillion more than the gross domestic product of Canada.

The Associated Press reported earnings of ExxonMobil, ChevronTexaco, ConocoPhillips, BP, Royal Dutch/Shell, their earnings exceeded \$142 billion, enough to buy every person in the United States 175 gallons of midgrade gasoline. Those combined profits, said the AP, surpassed the gross domestic product of Iraq and more than 160 other nations.

Keep in mind, 6 years ago before President Bush was placed in office, crude oil futures were trading below \$15 a barrel, one-fourth less than today. The price of oil when President Bush was placed in office was \$23.19 a barrel; last month, it was \$52.25 a barrel. The dollar value of imports to the United States for the first 11 months of 2001, President Bush's first year in office, was \$69.9 billion, but last year it was up 187 percent to \$201.2 billion. When will we learn the true cost of our dependence on foreign oil?

It is no surprise that the world's largest oil reserves are located in the Middle East: Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates. And the hot new area, of course, for exploration is Africa; and I imagine that may be a reason President Bush this week announced a new U.S.-Africa Command.

Not to take a back seat, the Peoples Republic of China has offered more than \$5 billion in grants and loans in Africa, not out of the goodness of its heart, because we saw the compassion of the Chinese Government in Tiananmen Square, but China is interested in Africa's natural resources, including oil. And now the Bush administration is trying to play catch-up.

A cynic would say you could look at that list of nations and probably dis-

cern where the next war will break out, but that would be tantamount to saying that the Bush administration started a war with Iraq over oil, and we all know that cannot possibly be true.

But it is not hard to make the case between record high gasoline prices, record high oil company profits, and record high U.S. trade deficits.

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The American people understand the connection. They live the connection every day, and they expect this Congress to do something about it. Not 25 years from now, not 20 or 15 years from now, but this year, to move our Nation toward energy independence with dispatch.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF IRAQ RESOLUTION

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

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Madam Speaker, today we got word that a fellow Representative from the State of Georgia, Representative CHARLIE NORWOOD, has gone home to Augusta after battling cancer here in Washington, DC. at various facilities. And he has handled his affliction bravely, and he has been an example of a great fighting spirit. We wish his family the best, and he is in our prayers as he continues his battle.

Today, Madam Speaker, I rise to give the people of the Fourth District of Georgia a voice in the debate on Iraq.

Today, I introduced the first bill of my young congressional career, House Resolution 140. I look forward to presenting plans soon to directly better the lives of my constituents and others in need throughout this great country.

However, the conflict in Iraq is consuming our time, thoughts, and funds; and people of goodwill must speak when given the opportunity, and this is my opportunity to speak.

In order to move toward an end to the Iraq war, we need to push for two things: number one, ending troop presence, U.S. troop presence, on the streets of Iraq; and, two, securing the Iraqi Government.

United States troops engaged in street patrol throughout the country expose themselves to massive violence, and it is arguably keeping this war going long past the time it should have been completed. Our troops are doing an excellent job, Madam Speaker, but the insurgents use their presence throughout the country to justify attacks on them, and actually 60 percent of the Iraqi people support those attacks against our servicemen and -women on the streets of Iraq.

So why do they continue to be sent out into the streets of Iraq, into a world of explosive devices and sniper bullets without adequate armor? Madam Speaker, I am tired of seeing our troops lose their precious lives for

this seemingly unending cause. So I am requesting in this resolution, House Resolution 140, that they be taken off the streets and allowed to focus on a mission that would truly help bring about an end to this war once and for all.

Make no mistake, the job of hunting insurgents throughout Iraqi neighborhoods is noble, but this is a job for the Iraqis, not American troops who should be on their way home. The time has come for a new strategy, Madam Speaker, one that focuses on taking our troops out of harm's way and pressuring the Iraqi Government to finally take the mantle.

Once that government is up and running, they will be able to put the Iraqi military into action; develop a plan to ensure Sunnis, Shias, and Kurds benefit from Iraq's vast oil resources; create jobs; and do the numerous other things necessary to bring peace to that troubled land.

We must also consider the lives of millions of Iraqi civilians. Are the insurgents using our presence, the presence of United States troops, on the streets of Baghdad as an excuse to blow up neighborhoods? Would they be better protected if we significantly reduce our presence? I believe so, Madam Speaker, and it is another reason that the President and the Secretary of Defense should consider instituting this plan. This is a practical solution to that seemingly unsolvable problem.

The use of the Iraqis will reduce war expenses as well, lessening the burden on the American taxpayer and bring about a quicker conclusion to this conflict.

Madam Speaker, it is time to bring this war to a responsible end for the American people, for the Iraqis, and for our brave troops. And I will continue to do all I can to help make this a reality.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from the Virgin Islands (Mrs. CHRISTENSEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

THE PROPOSED TROOP ESCALATION IN IRAQ

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

Mr. CARNAHAN. Madam Speaker, I want to congratulate the gentleman from Georgia on his legislation, and I look forward to working with him on those efforts with many others here in the House.

When the American people and this Congress stand in unity, great change is possible. Last fall from every corner of our Nation, we spoke loud and clear to demand an end to the Bush adminis-

tration's open-ended stay-the-course policy in Iraq and start a new direction. That unity has changed control of this very Congress, led to the departure of Secretary Rumsfeld, helped drive the bipartisan consensus behind the Iraq Study Group recommendations.

Yet the Bush administration, in response, proposes another escalation, a so-called surge. As I said last month on this floor, the escalation plan flies in the face of military experts, of the bipartisan Iraq Study Group, Democratic and Republican leaders in this Congress, and the American public. This Congress has a solemn duty to listen and take action.

Recently, the mother of a young soldier being deployed back to Iraq told me, Congressman CARNAHAN, I am one of those mothers who is against the war in Iraq. But my son volunteered to serve his country. Please be sure they get the support and equipment they need to come home quickly and safely.

That mother's heartfelt request is a powerful example of our national unity and resolve to support our troops and oppose the escalation policy that is not making the Iraqi Government more self-reliant, not making the Middle East region more stable, and not making our country safer.

Next week, after this Iraq war has extended longer even than World War II, this Congress will have an historic, long, and thorough debate about the escalation plan. I believe the result will be a bipartisan vote reflecting the reality that a fourth U.S. escalation is the wrong direction for our country.

When this Congress acts in unison with the American people, great change is possible. In the weeks and months ahead, I believe this Congress will undertake its constitutional responsibilities with all seriousness and dispatch to continue this solemn debate, to exercise detailed oversight, and to use the tools available to us to change the direction of the war, to support our troops, to de-escalate the war, and to escalate the political solution in Iraq.

Working together, great change is possible.

THE WAR ON TERROR

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Madam Speaker, I hope the gentleman from Missouri would just suspend a moment before he leaves the floor.

I would like to have the privilege to address the subject matter that he raised and the issue of the Iraq Study Group. And it is somewhat of a long book to read through, but I had a conversation this afternoon with the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WOLF), and I have lifted some things out of the Iraq Study Group's report that are clearly part of the President's agenda in Iraq,

"The New Way Forward," and Mr. WOLF assures me that the entire strategy in Iraq is right from the Iraq Study Group.

So I point out to the gentleman from Missouri, and I would be happy to yield to him if he had a response, that the plan and the strategy of the President's for a new way forward in Iraq is not flying in the face of the Iraq Study Group. In fact, it follows directly down the path of the Iraq Study Group. If the gentleman from Missouri would care to engage, I would certainly be willing to yield.

I came here to talk about that subject matter, in fact, Madam Speaker. And as I listened to my colleagues in preparation for this 60-minute Special Order, I will just take from the top some of the notes that come to mind.

And one is, from the beginning, the gentleman from New Jersey spoke about ExxonMobil's highest corporate profits, the highest corporate profits, perhaps, ever in the history of the country, and the promise by this Pelosi Congress to provide energy independence. And then the gentlewoman from Ohio also spoke about ExxonMobil's profits, and the details of that were such that they have \$40 billion in profits. Did they lower prices at the pump?

Well, yes. Prices at the pump are a dollar a gallon cheaper than they were when oil prices were up to \$75 a barrel. In fact, the prices at the pump almost directly reflect the lowering of the prices and the cost of the barrels of crude oil.

And then, of course, the argument that there was a class action lawsuit against them for \$3.5 billion. And one might take that as a concern until one sees that that, Madam Speaker, is Alabama. Well, Alabama is a venue shoppers' State of choice. Someone who has a lawsuit, and the attorneys across this country know this, when they want to bring a class action lawsuit, they look around and they say what State has favorable laws; what State produces favorable juries. Where is the class envy so focused and where they have a belief that you can put 12 men and women on a jury and they would lay out a punitive case against a company because they see a company as somehow or another an evil Big Brother.

That is how you end up with these \$3.5 billion or maybe \$9 billion punitive damages in a class action lawsuit.

We have dealt with this, Madam Speaker, in the Judiciary Committee in the years that I have been in this Congress, and we passed legislation out of the House, and not successful in the Senate, that would allow a company that operates in multiple States, in fact, maybe internationally, to be able to ask that a case that has been venue shopped and taken to a State where there is a minimal amount of economic activity but a maximum amount of punitive damages offered by the juries there, a State that has that kind of reputation, we have passed legislation here in the House that would allow