

are not in a wartime situation while they are being trained. The people in Iraq are being trained and fighting at the same time. They need more than training, they need combat capability that is nonexistent on their part.

That is a democracy that is less than 4 years old. Their constitution is less than 18 months old. The Iraqi Army and the police force, 4 years ago, was there to support the dictator, not democracy. So if you expect, from the ashes of the dictatorship, a functioning democracy in 4 years, I think you are sadly mistaken. It took us 11 years to write our own Constitution.

Why am I hopeful that we can still win in Iraq? No. 1, there is evidence with the new strategy that we can defeat and destroy al-Qaida in Iraq. No. 2, every time an Iraqi soldier is killed or a policeman is murdered, someone takes their place. Every time a judge is assassinated, somebody else comes along and says, "I'll be a judge." What more can you ask? We are losing troops, and it is heartbreaking. The enemy that we are fighting understands that Americans don't like the taste of war—and that is an asset, not a liability. We are not a warring people. It is not our nature as a people to go to other places and take land from people and dominate their life. It is our nature to allow people to chart their own destiny and to be partners economically, while the enemy wants no part of that.

So what I hope we will do is take these amendments that will come to the floor and ask ourselves one simple question: If this amendment passes, what affect does it have on our military commanders to execute this new strategy that is clearly working? If this amendment passes, how does it affect al-Qaida in Iraq and throughout the world? What affect would it have on the voices of moderation that are giving their own lives to change their own country in Iraq? If this amendment passes, how does it affect Iran?

The one thing I learned from this last trip is that al-Qaida overplayed their hand, and we are taking advantage of it. Iran is trying to destabilize Iraq now more than ever. Don't mistake these new alliances between coalition forces and Sunni Iraqis to be a political reconciliation. The bad news from my trip is that the Iraqi Government is paralyzed, the political leadership in Iraq—Sunni, Shia, and Kurd—are unable to get their act together at this point. New elections would be good for the Sunnis.

Mr. President, how much time do I have?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Twenty seconds.

Mr. GRAHAM. We will talk more about this. The good news is, the surge is al-Qaida's worst nightmare. They have been rejected by the Sunnis in Iraq, and if we stay on them, we can destroy al-Qaida in Iraq. The bad news is, the current political infrastructure in Iraq is incapable of making the hard

decisions for the moment. We have to think of new ways to push them.

There is much more to follow.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Pennsylvania is recognized.

#### TRIBUTE TO ALEX GEORGE, SR.

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I rise for a brief period of time to pay tribute to a Pennsylvanian who just passed away this past week, a constituent of mine whose family I have known for many years. I think he is like a lot of people in our communities and in our States who lead lives of service and struggle and achievement, and often their lives are not the subject of big stories and headlines.

When I think of Alex George, Sr.—who is the father of Bill George, or William George, who is the president of the AFL-CIO in Pennsylvania—I think of those people who grew up in parts of western Pennsylvania, where over many generations steel was the foundation of the economy, and in places like where Mr. George lived, Aliquippa, PA, which is a very strong community that had a thriving steel industry that is now largely gone from the city and that community. It is not nearly what it was when thousands of people were employed.

Alex George, like a lot of Pennsylvanians and, frankly, a lot of Americans, lived a life of triumph where he had to overcome difficulties in his own life, and then he became a union leader of the Amalgamated Association of Iron and Steelworkers, which was the fore-runner, of course, of the modern day Steelworkers Union that his son, Bill George, joined many years later. We think of his life today and what he did for the labor movement of western Pennsylvania, and Pennsylvania generally, and also what he did as a law enforcement officer. He was a police officer as well in his later years.

I rise briefly to pay tribute to him and his life of work for the benefit of labor, doing everything possible to make sure they have lives that are rewarded, in the sense that they are allowed to organize and allowed to have the opportunity to have the dignity of their labor be part of the fabric of their lives. We pay tribute to Alex George today and the many others who built the middle class in America. He is the proud son of Aliquippa, PA.

In a special way, I express my condolences to the entire George family, and especially Bill George, president of the AFL-CIO of Pennsylvania. Alex George leaves behind three sons: Bill, who I have mentioned, Robert, and Alex, Jr., as well as nine grandchildren and many great-grandchildren. In the spirit of condolence, but also in the spirit of tribute, I pay tribute to Alex George and the legacy he leaves behind for the George family and for the labor family of Pennsylvania.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### MILITARY READINESS CHALLENGES

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, our country is home to some of the finest fighting forces in the world, and we can all be very proud of that fact. We need our military to be the best trained, the best equipped, and the most prepared force on the planet. Tragically, however, the President's war in Iraq and his use of extended deployments is undermining our military's readiness today.

The current deployment schedule hurts our ability to respond to threats around the world, it causes our servicemembers to leave the military service early, it weakens our ability to respond to disasters at home, it unfairly burdens family members, and it intensifies the combat stress our servicemembers experience.

We need to rebuild our military, and the first step is giving our fighting men and women the time they need at home to prepare and train for their next mission.

Today I rise to address the readiness challenges that threaten our military strength and ultimately our Nation's security.

More than 4 years into the war in Iraq, our troops are stretched thin, our equipment is deteriorating, and the patience of our Nation is wearing thin. We have seen 3,600 servicemembers die, thousands upon thousands more have been injured, and month after month our fighting men and women are pushing harder and harder. Troops leave loved ones for months and years and put their lives on the line without complaint. We owe them the best treatment and the best training possible.

Unfortunately, the Bush administration has fallen short in those areas. One of the major problems for our troops, for their families, and their communities is the growing gap between the time troops spend in battle versus the time they spend at home. This gap is alarming, it is disheartening, and it is a disservice to the brave men and women who put themselves in harm's way each and every day.

Sadly, our forces are being burned out. Many of our troops are on their third or even their fourth tour in Iraq and Afghanistan. Months ago, the Department of Defense announced that their tours would be extended from 12 months to 15 months. And on top of all that, they are not receiving the necessary time at home before they are sent back to battle.