

same countries where garnering multi-lateral and bilateral support is critical to solidifying political reconciliation in Iraq.

The President has consistently stated that he wants to win the hearts and the minds of Iraqis. However, the ongoing use of Blackwater contractors that are consistently beyond legal reach is not the way to achieve that goal. Blackwater is clearly the realization of former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld's vision of a "hollow military," where everything that can be privatized and outsourced will be.

Blackwater appears to be held above the law, as the State Department continues to make little effort to hold it accountable, while continuing to award contracts amounting to over \$1 billion since 2000, \$300 million of which were awarded as no-bid contracts. Clearly it is time for a new direction beyond the failed policy in Iraq, which has been further deteriorated by the administration's use of inept privatized security contractors.

That new direction begins with outlining a clear statement on appropriate and detailed contingency plans for a reasonable redeployment of troops from Iraq, including consideration of force protection for military and civilian personnel and a need to continue to protect our vital national security interests as mandated in Representatives ABERCROMBIE, TANNER and TURNER's bill, H.R. 3087.

As such, the passage of H.R. 3087 is a clear step in the right direction, that our men and women in uniform not sacrifice another 3,800 lives without a clear strategy for redeploying our troops. We recognize that, since the planning of the redeployment of our troops from Iraq is a complex status, we must plan accordingly as to not repeat the mistakes made in the original planning for the Iraq invasion and post-war occupation.

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

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

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

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

HONORING OWSLEY BROWN

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

Mr. YARMUTH. Madam Speaker, it is my distinct honor to rise today in recognition of my good friend and a

great citizen of my hometown of Louisville, Kentucky, Owsley Brown II, as we mark the end of his 46-year career at Brown-Forman.

In Louisville, Owsley is well known for his success in business. He worked his way up to the top of his family business, and his leadership turned it into a giant in the wine and spirits industry. That fact is all the more astounding, considering that among the top companies in the industry 50 years ago, only his Brown-Forman remains a leader in the field.

The global expansion has taken the company to heights only dreamed of back then, and the branding under his watch was absolutely unprecedented. Jack Daniel's, a tiny acquisition of a half century ago, has practically superseded the term whisky itself. But in Kentucky, of course, we take the most pride in Brown-Forman's home-grown bourbons: Early Times, Old Forester and Woodford Reserve.

Owsley Brown's reputation in business comes not only from making money, but from creating an environment in which people want to work. Owsley himself takes great pride in the fact that the average tenure at Brown-Forman, 14 years, is three times the average for a Fortune 500 Company. The reason for this is simple. For many of these employees, Owsley Brown gave them more than a job; he gave them a home.

But Owsley's place in our community only begins with what happens in the walls and barrels at Brown-Forman Corporation. Through the philanthropy of Brown-Forman, Owsley set the standard for what it means to be a good corporate citizen. His commitment to social responsibility can be seen throughout his work for the Century Council, of which Brown-Forman is a founding member, and in every facet of Louisville life.

His dedication to the arts has been critical to Louisville's developing a scene in which music, theater, independent film and visual arts of every stripe have thrived, helping to forge our community's unique and exciting character. His philanthropic devotion to health care has helped make Louisville home to some of the best facilities, doctors, and medical innovation in the world.

What's more, as Owsley helped to make Louisville a vibrant 21st-century city, he never lost sight of the need to preserve Kentucky's natural beauty. In fact, he has served as a powerful force in protecting land from overdevelopment, particularly along Louisville's scenic riverfront. Long before conservation hit the mainstream, Brown-Forman began implementing policies to reduce the company's environmental footprint and enhance the environment around us.

So as Owsley took Brown-Forman to new heights worldwide, our community reaped the rewards. We are fortunate in Louisville, for even as a corporation sees its leader pass the torch into other

capable hands, Mr. BROWN remains one of our most generous and responsible citizens. His triumph and business exceeds the success of the bottom line. The true achievement he oversaw and engineered was creating a company of fine character and impeccable integrity, just like the man himself.

I urge my colleagues to join me in honoring my good friend, Owsley Brown, thanking him for all he has done and wishing him luck as he enters this next chapter of life.

Owsley, you and Christy now have time to see the world, and I have no doubt that you will use that time to change it.

COSTA RICA CAFTA REFERENDUM

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

Mr. MICHAUD. Madam Speaker, I rise tonight in strong opposition to the lies being told to the good people of Costa Rica about the importance of the CAFTA referendum they are about to vote on.

I went to Costa Rica last night to share some basic truths. The pro-CAFTA government is now telling the people of Costa Rica how wonderful passage of CAFTA will be for them.

Remember when the Mexican Government said exactly the same thing to the people of Mexico during a debate on NAFTA in 1993? What happened with the passage of NAFTA, 1.3 million Mexican farmers have been displaced.

The country's growth rate has stagnated. Wages have actually declined, and the country's environmental policies have been successfully challenged and chilled throughout NAFTA's outrageous corporate regime.

NAFTA and CAFTA have actually increased protectionism by restricting free commerce in lifesaving medicine. One hundred priests in Costa Rica have come out against the flawed trade model; and just this past weekend, hundreds of thousands of good Costa Rican citizens protested this referendum. Out of a country of 4 million people, that shows how strong opposition is, and it should be.

Voters are being told by the United States Government that we will retaliate if they do not vote in favor of this referendum. The people of Costa Rica can rest assured that the U.S. Government will not retaliate. In fact, let me quote a letter last week sent from our Senate majority leader, HARRY REID, and the Speaker of the House to the Ambassador of Costa Rica: "The decision as to whether or not Costa Rica joins CAFTA and votes yes or no on their referendum on October 7 is the decision of the people of Costa Rica."

The letter goes on to say: "We understand that it has been asserted by some that there is a link between the referendum vote and Costa Rica's continued participation in the Caribbean Basin Initiative. We are not aware of

any connection between the two. Participation in CBI is not conditioned on a country's decision to approve or reject a free trade agreement with the United States."

As someone who has supported trade preference for Latin American countries like I have, the most recent the Andean countries, I can confirm that there will be absolutely no retaliation against the country or voters no matter what the outcome of the referendum. The people must look beyond the scare tactics being waged in this campaign.

How will CAFTA affect Costa Rica? Voters, all they have to do is look to Mexico to see what CAFTA has done to them. Since the passage of NAFTA, poverty in Mexico has increased. The middle class has declined. Many Mexicans are fleeing to America in hopes of finding a better wage and a life for their families.

Who benefits under NAFTA and CAFTA agreements? The multinational corporations, not the people. We have seen that corporations and their friends in the government will employ dirty tricks, election fraud, and tell outright lies to ensure that they continue to be able to exploit workers and ruin the environment.

This is a historic and important vote for the people of Costa Rica. I believe it is time for the United States and Costa Rica to go back to the drawing board and develop a new trade agreement that all sides can be proud of. The United States renegotiated Peru, Colombia, Panama and South Korea. We should do the same thing with the agreement with Costa Rica. It is time to develop an agreement that benefits our workers and communities.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WALZ of Minnesota). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Delaware (Mr. CASTLE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 928, IMPROVING GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY ACT

Mr. WELCH of Vermont, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 110-358) on the resolution (H. Res. 701) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 928) to amend the Inspector General Act of 1978 to enhance the independence of the Inspectors General, to create a Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2740, MEJA EXPANSION AND ENFORCEMENT ACT OF 2007

Mr. WELCH of Vermont, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 110-359) on the resolution (H. Res. 702) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 2740) to require accountability for contractors and contract personnel under Federal contracts, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 3648, MORTGAGE FORGIVENESS DEBT RELIEF ACT OF 2007

Mr. WELCH of Vermont, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 110-360) on the resolution (H. Res. 703) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 3648) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to exclude discharges of indebtedness on principal residences from gross income, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 3246, REGIONAL ECONOMIC AND INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT ACT OF 2007

Mr. WELCH of Vermont, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 110-361) on the resolution (H. Res. 704) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 3246) to amend title 40, United States Code, to provide a comprehensive regional approach to economic and infrastructure development in the most severely economically distressed regions in the Nation, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

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DRUMBEATS OF WAR ARE COMING AGAIN

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

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, out of a sense of duty and a growing fear, I rise to say that I hear the drumbeats of war coming again from this administration. This time, Iran is in the cross-hairs.

It's ironic that the alarm has sounded today, the birth date of Mahatma Gandhi, and the United Nation's first World Nonviolence Day in honor of Gandhi's commitment to peace.

Perhaps the contrast between the man of peace and an administration of war will underscore the need and the urgency for Congress to act before the President orders a military strike.

I listened and sounded the alarm in 2002 regarding Iraq. But the President and the Vice President had already set in motion their invasion plan, and those who got in the way were called unpatriotic and uncaring or worse. Back then, too many in the media, the Congress and across the Nation were willing to accept a war without justification or justice. Now, at least the American people overwhelmingly recognize the tragic consequences of the Iraq war and the occupation.

At least one development in 2008 may make this time different than 2002. The Internet has grown exponentially. Today, credible and factual information is readily available. The blogosphere is on fire sounding alarm, and we will have no one to blame except ourselves if we let this administration take us to war in Iran. Go to your computer and Google "Iran war." The search yields 74 million hits. Let me read a few of the top search results:

Day One: "The War with Iran."
"Iran: The next war," in the Rolling Stone.

"America's hidden war with Iran," Newsweek.

"Is U.S.-Iran war inevitable?" Time magazine.

"The Iran plans," the New Yorker.
And "The U.S. trains gulf Air Forces for war against Iran."

Some see the same signs as I do, and they are writing across a broad spectrum of the media, trying to be heard above the beats of war. However, the President and Vice President are using friendly fire from the right-wing media to lull the Americans to sleep, while they lay the groundwork and shop for a Gulf of Tonkin-like provocation to launch a military strike.

Journalist Tim Shipman of the Telegraph in London writes "American diplomats have been ordered to compile a dossier detailing Iran's violations of international law. Some U.S. diplomats believe the exercise will boost calls for military action by neoconservatives inside and outside the administration."

In the New Yorker, renowned journalist Seymour Hirsch says, "The revised bombing plan for a possible attack, with its tightened focus on counterterrorism, is gathering support among generals and admirals in the Pentagon.

Hirsch adds, "A Pentagon consultant on counterterrorism told me that, if the bombing campaign took place, it would be accompanied by a series of what are called short, sharp incursions by American special forces into suspected Iranian training camps. Cheney is devoted to this, no question."

Now, does that sound like a diplomatic solution to you?

For at least a year we've been lulled into believing that the administration cannot fool the American people again. But I say this is just the kind of wishful thinking this administration is hoping for. It gives them time to spin the rhetoric and plot the missile tracks into Iran.