

Coral Springs that it “demonstrates a consistently high level of financial performance” and that its key strategic advantage is the “city’s effectiveness of running like a business.”

The city’s efforts to improve public safety have resulted in the city’s crime rate decreasing by nearly half over the last 10 years, the lowest crime rate in the State.

I rise to congratulate the City of Coral Springs, its citizens and its leadership for striving for the best and inspiring others to do the same.

SAVING STARVING CHILDREN AROUND THE WORLD

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise today as the Chair of the Congressional Children’s Caucus to emphasize the crisis in the lack of food for those around the world. As we have seen the rising food costs, we in America are suffering, but the rest of the world is in a crisis.

I believe it is imperative as we move into our appropriations process that we emphasize the importance of utilizing the food stock here in the United States to provide service and support around the world, and I believe it is even more important to focus on the impact on children.

I will convene a briefing that will draw upon the insight of food advocates from around the Nation to focus on how we can prioritize children in developing nations being provided foodstuffs and receiving priority over adults, for a malnourished child dies, a malnourished child has disease.

We are in a crisis. It is time for us to act to save the children.

THANK YOU TO THE 218TH

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, soldiers of the 218th Brigade Combat Team of the South Carolina Army National Guard, under the leadership of Brigadier General Bob Livingston, are successfully returning to South Carolina. For the past year they have been in Afghanistan as part of Task Force Phoenix working to build the Afghan military and police.

As a 28-year veteran of the 218th, I know firsthand of their competence and patriotism. These citizen soldiers have built one Afghan military battalion to be fully independent with 13 additional battalions to be operational by this summer. After overhauling the Afghani police forces to eliminate corruption, the 218th helped build an Afghan police force of 79,000.

Additionally, the 218th provided humanitarian relief, including the construction of schools, hospitals and

roads. They conducted 200 medical assistance missions and delivered 300 tons of food and supplies to the 37,000 Afghans.

At this time, we also remember the fallen. Staff Sergeant James D. Bullard, Sergeant Shawn F. Hill and Sergeant Edward O. Philpot lost their lives during the year-long deployment. These patriots gave the ultimate sacrifice in defense of American families by defeating terrorists overseas. Our thoughts and prayers are with their families.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th.

In addition to the information provided above, the 218th Brigade Combat Team has had extraordinary success in working alongside the Afghan forces. During the past winter—a time when Taliban forces often regroup—soldiers from the 218th, along with Afghan soldiers, stayed in forwarding operating bases around Afghanistan and took the fight to the Taliban. This action kept the enemy from gathering strength.

Due to the commitment and professionalism of the men and women of the 218th, the Afghan army now has a reenlistment rate of 55 percent—more than double the 20 percent a year ago. The percentage of Afghan soldiers ready for duty has gone up from 55 percent to 85 percent. Their absent without leave percentage has dropped to eight percent, and they have 29,000 recruits that have completed basic training.

The Afghan police continue to grow in size and ability. As a sign of success, this winter the police were able to defend and hold their 364 district centers. This is something they have not been able to accomplish since the beginning of Operation Enduring Freedom in 2001.

I appreciate the above factual information provided by embedded reporter Chuck Crumbo from Kabul, Afghanistan, in The State of Columbia, South Carolina, on April 27, 2008.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. WOOLSEY. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on House Resolution 1073 and House Resolution 49.

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

There was no objection.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker’s announced policy of January 18, 2007, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

BRINGING RECONCILIATION TO THE PEOPLE OF IRAQ

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentle-

woman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Madam Speaker, I rise to announce that Representative CHRIS SHAYS of Connecticut and I have introduced an important bipartisan bill in the House today that can help bring desperately needed reconciliation to the people of Iraq. The bill is called the International Partnership for Reconciliation in Iraq. By the standards of the Federal Government, it is a tiny outfit. But few government agencies have delivered more bang for their buck or done so much with so few people.

The USIP Institute has an impressive track record of conflict management and peace building in the Balkans, the Philippines, Nigeria, the Sudan, Rwanda and other parts of the world, including Iraq.

This bill is vitally important, because, as Ambassador Ryan Crocker has said, “reconciliation is perhaps the most critical challenge that Iraq faces right now.” Our bill would encourage reconciliation by supporting the work of a remarkable but unheralded organization called the United States Institute of Peace.

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The Institute was established by Congress 24 years ago today. It has 142 employees and a budget of \$32 million. It has been successful because it is unique. There is no other organization like it. It is a center and a clearinghouse for best practices in preventing and dealing with conflict. Its staff includes many of the world’s top experts in conflict resolution and peacebuilding. These incredibly dedicated experts travel to some of the world’s most violent places to facilitate reconciliation efforts on the ground.

And the Institute is impartial, it is nonideological. Its only axe to grind is peace. That is why USIP has gained the respect and trust in all sides in conflict. In fact, you can say the Institute is one of the world’s top brand names when it comes to making peace.

In Iraq, the Institute has been working to inspire reconciliation at the regional, at the national, and at the community levels. It has been particularly effective in the city of Mahmoudiya, which has been called the Triangle of Death. There, it has worked to bring Sunni and Shiite factions together. Its work has been so effective that the U.S. Army’s provincial reconstruction teams have asked the Institute to help with reconciliation efforts in other parts of Iraq. Not bad for an organization whose annual budget is less than what we spend in Iraq every 3 hours.

There is an excellent article on the Institute’s work, Madam Speaker, in the current issue of the National Journal, and I urge all my colleagues to read it.

The bill that Representative SHAYS and I introduced today would provide assistance to the Institute to do the