build that, don't have Davis-Bacon in there. You have to have a merit shop to get that done.

If you want the knowledge base in the Midwest where the renewable energy is so when we build out all of our energy plants and we get that done, we can export that knowledge and go around the world, you've got to strike Davis-Bacon, Mr. Speaker. If you want the Midwest to be to renewable energy what Texas is today to the expertise on oil, you've got to strike Davis-Bacon. You can't have that provision in there.

We need to grow the size of the energy pie, Mr. Speaker, and we cannot suspend the laws of nature and nature's God. You can't suspend the laws of gravity. The sun comes up in the east around Maryland and the eastern shore. It doesn't come up around San Francisco, and if you believe otherwise, you're out there in Pe-la-la-losi-land.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair would remind Members to refrain from improper remarks concerning the Speaker.

Without objection, the 5-minute special order entered in favor of the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. GILCHREST) is vacated.

There was no objection.

UNDERSTANDING THE MIDDLE EAST

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. GILCHREST) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. GILCHREST. Mr. Speaker, I would like to talk tonight about Iraq and the Middle East in general, but specifically about the present crisis in Iraq. And what I would like to do is to explain the present crisis based on recent history and from my perspective, Mr. Speaker, what is the way forward. Is there a solution to the war in Iraq.

And the other thing I would like to discuss is this: Do the American people have a role to play in the conflict? And to discuss this tonight, I would like to frame the picture of the present crisis in Iraq by a couple of quotes from a book called ''Human Options'' written about, oh, I would say 30 years ago by the former editor of the Saturday Evening Post, a man named Norman Cousins. Two extraordinary quotes in this book. One is, Knowledge is the solvent for danger. The other quote is, History is a vast early warning system.

And so what I will do tonight is attempt to convey to the Speaker, the Members, and the American people the importance of knowledge in a conflict to find a solution and a reconciliation to the warring factions.

The other is history's advanced early warning system. Many people will say that 20 years from now we'll have hindsight to the present crisis. Twenty years after the war in Vietnam ended, former Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara said, If I only knew then what I know now. Well, if the former Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara read history in the fifties and the early sixties, he would have had a better understanding of the conflict in Southeast Asia, Indochina, the conflict between the French and the Vietnamese who were trying to seek sovereignty and get rid of Colonial rule. In other words, Mr. McNamara would have understood, with hindsight, the conflict in the war in Indochina before it started if he had a better understanding of its history.

And what I'm going to try to do tonight is give a better frame of reference for the present crisis from the historical point of view so we don't have to worry 20 years from now whether this policy was a good policy or not. We can't let the troops fight that long if it is not necessary. And so a history of the region of the Middle East will give us a better sense of the conflict and how to resolve and reconcile the vast, intricate, violent conflicts that exist there now.

I also want to quote a British author, Rudyard Kipling, who had to face the tragedy of his son being killed in northern France during World War I. This literary giant at the time made this comment soon after his son's death, but he spoke to all the young men who were dying in Europe during that tragic event of World War I, and Rudyard Kipling said this: Why did young men die because old men lied?

□ 2200

I'd like to paraphrase that quote in the present crisis today. I'd like to paraphrase that quote for foreign policy for the 21st century. Old men should talk before they send young men to die or old people should talk before they send young people to die. A country does not become strong by filling up its cemeteries.

Our role as legislators, as policymakers and the role of the American people, what is it? What is our role? What is the role of the American people? How do we support the troops in the Middle East and Afghanistan and Iraq? How do policy-makers, how does the administration, and equally as important, how do the American people support the troops in Iraq?

First of all, we recognize their stunning competence. The soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan and around the world from around the United States are stunningly competent. Why? Because they're well-trained. They're well-informed. They take the time to know what they're doing, to be competent at their job, to use technology, to be aware of the soldiers next to them. They work hard to be knowledgeable as soldiers.

Do we take the initiative to be informed and knowledgeable? The soldiers take the initiative. They volunteered. They go through boot camp. They go through very skillful training of the technology, of the weaponry, of troop movements, of how to protect each other, of how to move through villages at night, of how to find the enemy. The troops are competent because they take the initiative.

Now, do we take the initiative as legislators to be competent and informed about the conflict that we send them to? Do the American people take the initiative to become knowledgeable about all of the issues? Are we knowledgeable about the present crisis and past crises that have brought us to where we are today?

I want to tell you that I've been to many meetings around my district. I've talked to many, many people about the conflict. I've done my best to explain that the troops are competent, but in a certain measure, the policy is flawed.

And like many people, we often hear Americans say that we need to pray for the troops, for their safe return, for the end of the conflict. I will say that that's a very important thing to do, to pray for the troops.

I remember when I was in Vietnam in 1966 standing, what we called, lines where we were in bunkers and barbwire, and at night we had to stand the lines and make sure the enemy didn't sneak into the camp. And a chaplain came up and he would come up to the lines very often. His name was Chaplain Doffin, D-O-F-F-I-N. He's now a retired Baptist minister in Charleston, South Carolina. At the time, he was a young navy chaplain who often went on patrols with us.

And he came up to me while standing lines one night. We were having a wonderful conversation that became very philosophical. It was philosophical in 1966 about the present crisis at that time in Vietnam, and I asked the chaplain if he believed in prayer. And I asked the chaplain if he believed in prayer because we prayed mightily for the conflict to end as young soldiers, young Marines. We prayed mightily for the butchery to stop because that's what war is. It's brutal and it's tragic.

I said, ''Chaplain, do you believe in prayer?'' And he said, ''Yes, but when I cross the lines to go out on a patrol,'' which he would occasionally, ''I make sure I have my helmet, my flak jacket and my rifle.''

That means the soldier needs to be prepared. Believe in prayer, but that the soldier needed to be competent, the soldier needed to be informed, the soldier needed to be prepared.

Now, Mr. Speaker, what I'm going to do tonight is suggest to my colleagues and the American people that they should be prepared as the soldier is prepared. They should be knowledgeable and competent about this crisis. So I'm going to give you, Mr. Speaker, and the American people a reading list, and I want you to consider that this reading list is your helmet, your flak jacket and your rifle, and you are to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with the servicemen and -women who are now in harm's way. They are counting on you, like the soldiers when I went across the

line. When I went on patrol or operations, I was a squad leader, then a platoon sergeant, and the soldiers and the Marines standing right next to me wanted me to be prepared, wanted me to know what I was doing. They wanted me to be competent. They wanted to make sure I had my helmet, my flak jacket, my rifle, and I knew what I was doing.

So these soldiers in Iraq, they want us to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with them. They want us to be competent.

Now, the soldiers in Iraq are competent. They are sacrificing their time every day to serve this Nation. They don't watch television at night. They don't saunter around the malls looking for things. They don't pass their days idly. They pass their days with horrific, vicious, violent incidents. They serve this Nation. Are we willing to serve our Nation? Are we willing to serve those young men and women? And how can we do it? Well, by being competent.

I'm going to give a list of 10 books. I will say the 10 books at the end of this address as well.

The first is a very easy read, ''A Letter to America,'' just written by the former senator from Oklahoma, David Boren. ''A Letter to America.'' What should America be like in the 21st century? It's an extraordinary read. It's a view of how we would like America to be.

The second book is—you've heard it before—''The Iraq Study Group Report.'' Iraq Study Group. It's by James Baker and Lee Hamilton. And it has a strategy for dealing with the conflict that I think the American people should read and become informed of.

The third book is a book called ''Fiasco.'' It's a harsh word. It describes the present crisis in Iraq. ''Fiasco.'' If you want to know the problems we've seen in Iraq and what went wrong from the very beginning, read the book ''Fiasco'' by Thomas Ricks.

The fourth book is ''A Struggle For Peace,'' General Tony Zinni. Actually, I think it's called ''The Battle for Peace'' by Tony Zinni, and it's a book describing how we can find peace in the volatile areas of the world through dialogue, through consensus. We need a strong military, we need good intelligence, but the third thing Tony Zinni talks about is understanding the nature of the culture and having a dialogue.

The fifth book is ''Violent Politics'' by William Polk. He worked for President Kennedy and President Johnson. ''Violent Politics'' is a discussion from the American Revolution in which we were the insurgents, all the way to the present crisis in Iraq, and also talks, interestingly enough, about the 6-day war and how it was won between Israel and the Arab Nations. The war was won in 6 days, mission accomplished, but the horrific struggle continues. There is no end to the violence. ''Violent Politics'' is a discussion about insurgencies when diplomacy goes wrong.

Number six is called ''Treacherous Alliance'' by Trita Parsi. Interestingly enough, it's a relationship between the Israelis and the Iranians, or the Jews and the Persians from 1948, the inception of Israel, till today, the present crisis. But what it showed through most of the Cold War, Israel and Iran, who seem to be bitter enemies today, were quiet, secret allies from 1948 to 1991 because they had the same enemies. They were both bitter enemies of Russia, the Soviet Union. They were bitter enemies of Iraq and many of the Arab countries, especially Saddam Hussein. And so what the Iranians and the Israelis did was trade oil for technology. They were strong quiet allies.

Number 7 is ''All the Shah's Men'' by Stephen Kinzer, K-I-N-Z-E-R, ''All the Shah's Men.'' It showed a problem that we created, the United States, in our relationship with Iran, starting in 1953. We lit a slow fuse in 1953 because the United States, with the significant help of the grandson of Teddy Roosevelt, Kermit Roosevelt, planned in the American embassy in Tehran to violently overthrow the duly elected prime minister, Mohammed Mossadeq, of the Iranian people, with the help of the British. We kicked him out of office violently. Thousands of people were killed, and then we put in the person now known as the Shah, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, who did not believe in democracy, who was a harsh, dictatorial monarch. And that slow fuse was lit in 1953, and it blew up in 1979.

Number eight, ''The Silence of the Rational Center'' by Messrs. Halper and Clark. Basically, what they say, there are many people around this country, universities, former diplomats, diplomats who have a better understanding of the cultural, religious, historic facts of many regions of the world, especially the Middle East, but what they say in this book is it's not just enough to know. You have to take the initiative, use your ingenuity and your intellect and your courage, and begin discussing with the American people, with the Congress, with the administration what is wrong with our policy in the Middle East.

Number nine is a historic book, interesting though. It's called ''Why Vietnam?'' by Archimedes Patti, who was in the OSS, the Office of Strategic Services, a forerunner of the CIA, who was with the first Americans to meet Ho Chi Minh in 1945, who found that Ho Chi Minh wanted to work with the Americans to get the wording right in his Declaration of Independence from French colonial rule and be sure that he used the words, ''We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness.''

And Ho Chi Minh put that in his Declaration of Independence, those words, and Archimedes Patti, the author of this book, ''Why Vietnam?'' helped Ho Chi Minh do that.

The reason I suggest ''Why Vietnam?'' is because years later people had no historic understanding of Ho Chi Minh, that he, in fact, Ho Chi Minh, back in 1919 at the Treaty of Versailles in France at the end of World War I, was knocking at the door of America to ask for their help to gain his independence from the French. He didn't go to Russia to help gain his independence. He did not go to China to help gain his independence. He came to the United States, and because of not enough knowledge, not enough information, not enough inquiring politicians, did we have the war in Vietnam where 58,000 Americans died.

The last book, ''Human Options'' by Norman Cousins. ''Human Options.'' What are your options when you have a situation? What do you base your decision on, your opinion on? Is it good information? Is it a broad array of knowledge that you have or do you let somebody on the radio or the TV filter out and distort the information so you only get a small piece of it?

Knowledge makes you more informed, more competent and gives you hindsight in the present crisis. The military does it all the time. They're knowledgeable and they're competent and they're doing it now.

Mr. Speaker, what I would like to go through very briefly now is recent history that can help us in this war in Iraq to show what other leaders did in our recent past to resolve conflicts.

□ 2215

And I want to start with the Cold War, which ended at the end of World War II.

World War II was a war where you could bomb munition factories, you could bomb huge armies, you could bomb supply lines, you could bomb convoys. World War II was not an insurgency like we see in Iraq and Afghanistan. World War II is probably something of the past. We are now faced with an insurgency with violent politics, not a standing war.

And right after World War II, Winston Churchill coined the phrase ''An iron curtain has descended around eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.'' We were engaged in what was called the Cold War. We know that in the 1950s, Nikita Khrushchev said on a number of occasions, pointing to western diplomats in foreign countries and in the United Nations, he would say, ''We will bury you.'' ''We will bury you.'' And he had thousands of deployable nuclear weapons.

The point here, Mr. Speaker, is: What was President Eisenhower's response to that violent rhetoric? President Eisenhower's response was to invite Nikita Khrushchev to the United States to tour our cities, to tour our suburbs, and to travel through the beautiful farming regions of the United States. President Eisenhower's response to his violent rhetoric was dialogue. Let's sit down and discuss the issue.

1962, President Kennedy; what did he do when he found out there were

deployable nuclear weapons minutes away from the United States in Fidel Castro's Cuba? The military said we need to attack, we need to bomb, we need to get rid of those nuclear weapons. What was President Kennedy's response? Let's work through channels. Let's talk to Khrushchev. Let's have a dialogue. And the crisis passed.

Communist China said throughout the sixties that it would be worth half the population of China dying if the United States was wiped off the face of the Earth. And what was Richard Nixon's response to Mao Tse-tung's violent rhetoric? Richard Nixon's response? Dialogue. Nixon went to China.

Is China the flower of human rights today? Is there religious freedom in China? Is there freedom of thought, freedom of conscience? No. Are they better today than they were 30 years ago? They are, but they still do not have a country that is democratic. There is no democracy there. And there are human rights violations every day. But we have a dialogue with China. We don't have violent rhetoric about an evil empire. We have trade wars with China. China is better. Richard Nixon went to China.

I want to briefly mention Ho Chi Minh, Vietnam. Ho Chi Minh in 1945 wanted independence from the French. He wanted freedom for his people. In 1949, he would have never known that he was going to have to wait 30 years; it was 1975 before Vietnam was fully united and had complete independence. We did not have a dialogue with Ho Chi Minh during that same period of time that we were pursuing dialogue with Khrushchev, with Cuba, and with Red China. And as a result of not having dialogue, 58,000 Americans died, hundreds of thousands were wounded, and several million Vietnamese were dead.

Throughout that same period of time of the Cold War there was a wall dividing Berlin, east and west, and many people were killed trying to cross that wall. And Kennedy went to that wall and said, ''I am a Berliner,'' meaning there is freedom for the people in the city of Berlin because we believe in freedom. Ronald Reagan went to the Berlin Wall and said, Mr. Gorbachev, tear down that wall.

And when the wall was finally being torn down, there was a moment when no one knew what Gorbachev was going to do. Was Gorbachev going to bring in more Soviet troops and repair the wall and keep the Iron Curtain the way it was? Was it going to be like the Hungarian revolution in 1956, when the Hungarians revolted and wanted to be free, wanted their independence? What was going to happen? Was Gorbachev going to do the same thing that Khrushchev did in 1956? Well, what did President Bush do at that moment? He showed Mikhail Gorbachev that President Brezhnev signed the Helsinki Accords. And the Helsinki Accords talked about sovereignty, human dignity, and respect for international law.

President Bush, 1990, did not resort to violent rhetoric, threatening Mikhail Gorbachev. He quietly, deliberately, but effectively, showed Mr. Gorbachev that there was agreement with all European countries, including the Soviet Union, called the Helsinki Accords; that there was to be respect for human thought, human consciousness, freedom of religion, sovereignty, and international law. And what happened? The Berlin Wall came down, Eastern Europe became free.

Let's take a look at the same period of time, but concentrate just in the Middle East. Same period of time, 1948. The Cold War has basically just started. Israel becomes a nation, and it is, this week, celebrating its 60th anniversary, the independent country of Israel. It was carved out of an area known as Palestine in 1948. But when Israel was formed in 1948, it threw the entire region into what some people in the region said would be a 100-year war. That war between Israel, the Arabs and the Palestinians is now 60 years old. Must we wait 40 more years for peace?

I mentioned ''All the Shah's Men'' by Stephen Kinzer. 1953, the height of the Cold War, Kermit Roosevelt, the grandson of Teddy Roosevelt, unfortunately with the blessings of John Foster Dulles, the Secretary of State of the United States, staged a very violent coup in support of the British independent Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, today known as BP, because that Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, not a British company, but an independent oil company headquartered in Britain, wanted to extract as much oil as they could from Iran without sharing the proceeds, without sharing the profits.

And so Mohammad Mosaddeq came into power in 1950, and he nationalized the Iranian Oil Company because it was Iranian oil, and he wanted the Iranian people to have some of the benefits of that natural resource. And the British didn't like that. The British tried to get President Truman to stage a coup, and Truman refused to do it. Eisenhower, with much trepidation, allowed it to go forward. And what happened from 1953, when we staged the coup in Iran? In the embassy in Tehran we lit a slow fuse, and that slow fuse burned until 1979 when the Islamic Revolution was staged in Tehran in 1979 and our embassy was taken over.

The Soviet Union in the Middle East during the Cold War was like a roller coaster ride. Sometimes they were a friend of certain Arab countries and sometimes they were an enemy of certain Arab countries, depending on what the Soviet policy was.

Israel and Iran, we talked about that in the book ''Treacherous Alliance.'' They both shared a common interest. Neither country, Israel nor Iran, are Arab countries, obviously; the Israelis are Jews, the Iranians are Persians. The Israelis speak Hebrew, the Iranians speak Farsi. They had strategic interests that were similar. They had enemies that were similar. They had ideological differences, but they resolved those ideological differences and began quietly trading with each other. Those ideological differences were resolved because geopolitical realities trumped those ideological fantasies. Let me say that again. Israel and Iran, from 1948 to 1991, they had many ideological differences, but the geopolitical realities—that means, because of where they lived, because of the region—the geopolitical realities trumped their ideological fantasies, and they were quiet, but strong, allies.

We know during the period of the Cold War—the end of the Cold War anyway—in the Middle East there was a war between Russia and Afghanistan, 1979 to 1989. When that war was over, the Soviet Union declined precipitously as a super power. It lost significant influence in the Middle East and it limped home defeated by Islamic fundamentalists. Those same Islamic fundamentalists that we helped, the mujahidin, that we helped in the war against the Soviet Union, they then turned around and focused their attention on the western world.

But let me show you something that's interesting. During the war in Afghanistan, the Soviet Union, who was their enemy? The mujahidin was their enemy, but gradually turned into the Taliban and al Qaeda. Pakistan fought with the mujahidin. And who was the third ally against the Soviet Union? The United States. The United States, Pakistan, and the mujahidin fought with the Afghan and foreign fighters against the Soviet Union. Things are a little different today. Over one million deaths just in Afghanistan.

What happened at the same period of time in the Middle East just a few short years ago? Iraq and Iran went to war from 1980 to 1988. This was over border disputes, oil, and so on. 1,500,000 deaths. Not 1,500,000 casualties; 1,500,000 deaths. That's more deaths than all the Americans that died in World War I, World War II, Korea and Vietnam combined.

We are in a huge violent region today where these people, the Middle East people, are very used to violent politics and violent death. Can you resolve these conflicts with more violence? I think the answer is no.

What happened back in 1978 and 1979, a period of time when the Iranian Revolution took place, the Afghan war with Russia was about to take place, and the war between Iran and Iraq was about to take place, what happened when Jimmy Carter got Anwar Sadat and Menachem Begin together for a period of time in the United States? What happened? There was peace on the edge of conflict between Egypt and Israel. They reconciled their differences.

The last piece of conflict that I want to discuss in the Middle East during the Cold War, right at the end of the Cold War, was the Persian Gulf War when Iraq invaded Kuwait over border disputes. They felt that Kuwait was actually a part of Iraq historically.

When we went into the Persian Gulf War in 1991, there were very clear, defined objectives. And when those objectives were met, we came home. There was truly an international coalition; I mean, an international coalition that was so good the United States spent no money on the Persian Gulf War because those countries that did not contribute troops contributed large financial assistance. International financial assistance helped resolve that conflict. We had greater integrated diplomatic initiatives by the international community. And so the Persian Gulf War came, it was violent, and then it was resolved in a very short period of time.

The present crisis, Iraq, right now in the Middle East; what is it like in Iraq?

□ 2230

There are three great religions there, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, that at times throughout history have had violent interactions. But there are also many, many examples over the centuries where these three great religions have lived together in peace. Faith is a very important part. Religion is a very important part of the Middle East.

Oil exports are vital to the economic viability of the region. Oil exports are very important.

The geopolitical balance of power in the Middle East today is fractured. There are no more super powers. There is not a conflict between the Soviet Union and the United States. Saddam Hussein, who was one of the more powerful dictatorial leaders in the region, is gone. Who will have more influence there? No one knows. The geopolitical balance of power is fractured. So what direction will the Middle East take, and how can we be a part of the solution?

The Shiites and the Sunnis, these are both Muslim. They are both of the Islamic faith. But there are differences. But their differences are much greater than the differences between the different denominations in the Christian church. They are much different from Catholicism and the Protestants. They're different from the Baptists and the Methodists and the Episcopalians and the Lutherans and so on. And one of the major differences between the Shiites and the Sunnis is who has authority over the religion of Islam. There was a shift, a break, between the descendants of Muhammad. So authority creates significant differences in how religion works. And there are differences between the hierarchy of Shiites and the Sunnis; hence we see sectarian violence and we see intrasectarian violence. But I can tell you the vast majority of Arabs who are Muslim, who are Sunni, and who are Shia, especially in Iraq, have lived peacefully for centuries, have intermarried for centuries. And for the most part, there is not sectarian violence between the two religious groups. There is not intrasectarian violence within the Shias or within the Sunnis. This conflict has separated the two. But more importantly, the differences between the Shias and the Sunnis can be reconciled.

But make no mistake, there is a difference, a fundamental difference, between an al Qaeda member and a Sunni or a Shia. There is a significant difference between someone who is a Taliban and someone who is a Shia and a Sunni. And it is the same difference, if we go back 30 some years, to a group of people called the Khmer Rouge in Thailand led by a fanatical maniac called Pol Pot. He was a Thai. He was Southeast Asian. But to compare Pol Pot with the Khmer Rouge with any average Buddhist in Thailand would be completely out of the question, completely false.

So trying to lump all the Muslims together into one picture is a stereotype. That's a big mistake. Al Qaeda are terrorists. They are the enemy. The Taliban are very strict, ancient, primitive. They have a very primitive, ancient interpretation of Islam. But if you're a Sunni or a Shia and you're living in Iraq, you want your country to be at peace and you want to be modernized. We need to understand this culture a little bit better.

The war in Iraq has now more than 34,000 casualties. What does that mean, 34,000 casualties? That means more than 4,000 Americans dead that will never come home. That means more than 30,000 Americans wounded, hospitalized, disabled that will never be the same; $600 billion and counting, about $12 billion a month; global dissent; soldiers on their third and fourth tour in Iraq and Afghanistan; posttraumatic syndrome.

Now let me say something about posttraumatic stress syndrome. It's when you have a violent incident in your life and it doesn't go away if you're a soldier from Iraq when you go home. You just can't put it aside. Posttraumatic stress syndrome is nothing more than remembering your past, a year ago, 10 years ago, 6 months ago. You remember these incidents. You remember what a land mine in the middle of the road did to your Humvee or your tank or your jeep or your buddy. You remember that. The violent incident that occurred does not get forgotten any more than you remember what you did in high school or what you did in a picnic last week or whom you spoke to in a church last week or a birthday party that you had. Posttraumatic stress syndrome is basically 100 percent for anyone who has been in combat, 100 percent. Now, some people are able to deal with it, they digest it, and they move on with their life, and they're normal and they're successful. But for some, depending on their physiological capacity, they cannot forget that incident where they saw children blown to pieces, where they may have pressed the barrel of their rifle against another man's chest and pulled the trigger. Do you forget that? Children burned with napalm, violent conflict, do you forget it? You don't. You deal with it. But posttraumatic stress is a problem.

The troops are stunningly competent. Are we policymakers informed enough to deal with these issues in a way that we can bring the conflict to an end?

Does that mean, then, because of these casualties, because of this conflict, that we should leave Iraq right away? Let's talk about that for a second. We left Mogadishu, Somalia. And what did we leave behind in the early 1990s? We left behind chaos. So we can't leave right away without any consequences. What happened to the Russians when they left Afghanistan? We wanted them to leave Afghanistan, but who took care to look at the diplomatic effort to build up Afghanistan? Nobody. And look what happened to Afghanistan after the Russians left. It turned into a haven for al Qaeda and the Taliban.

But how many troops should we leave behind or leave in Iraq? That's a consideration. If we go back to 1954, the French were leaving Vietnam, and they left a group of soldiers at Dien Bien Phu, and they were all killed or captured. So we don't want another Mogadishu. We don't want another Afghanistan. We don't want another Dien Bien Phu in Vietnam in 1954.

General Petraeus says there is no military solution. Under the present situation, it doesn't look like there is a political solution. So what do we do? Well, we look beyond Iraq. If we just look at Iraq alone, there is no political or military solution. But to understand the way forward, we need to frame a regional strategy. So what does it look like?

Right now the U.S. military is a skeletal structure upon which Iraqi society rests. You pull the military out, it may collapse. We are the skeletal structure. So we need to be strategic about what we're doing there now, and being strategic means we look at the region.

First, the Palestinian-Israeli issue, unsettled since 1948. What has that caused? It is the biggest advertising recruitment tool for violent, radical al Qaeda. We need to begin to seriously resolve that conflict between the Palestinians and the Israelis.

Saudi Arabia, they live in a fractured Middle East. Saudi Arabia fears, a natural fear, that Iraq will be an Iranian satellite; so we need to deal with the fears of Saudi Arabia.

Syria, a secular Islamic country, not a fundamentalist Islamic country, still has concerns about its role in Lebanon and the Golan Heights that were taken from them in the 1967 war. We need to engage the Syrians at the highest levels.

Iran, they have historic fears of Iraq and Russia, now China. They are Persian. They speak farsi. They are not Arab. We need to engage the Iranians with no preconditions. We didn't put conditions on Khrushchev when we engaged him. We didn't have any preconditions against Mao Se Tung when we engaged them.

Turkey, what of the Kurdish question? We need to bring Turkey into the process of reconciliation.

The problems of the Middle East are centuries old. It is an interconnected, integrated region that must be brought together. An integrated region needs to be brought together with an integrated set of diplomatic efforts.

And by the way, the countries that I just mentioned, Palestine, Israel, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Iran, Turkey, Iraq, those countries in and of themselves without U.S. aid could deal and take care of al Qaeda.

It would be wise to remember Eisenhower's words: A country like the United States needs a strong military, strong intelligence, but it also needs consensus and dialogue. The third leg of the three legged stool, consensus and dialogue, is also a part of America's arsenal. And it includes exquisite diplomacy, which means trading, education, science, technology, cultural, social, and religious exchanges. That's what the third leg of that stool does. That is what diplomacy is. Eisenhower spoke to Khrushchev. Kennedy spoke to Khrushchev. Nixon spoke to Mao Tsetung. Knowledge is the solvent for danger, said Norman Cousins. The troops know that. The troops know the smarter they are, the better prepared they are, the better their day is going to be. Do the policymakers know that? Do the policymakers know what their role is in this war? Standing shoulder to shoulder with the troops means more than just praying for the troops. It means you also wear a helmet, a flak jacket, and a rifle. And what is that helmet, flak jacket, and rifle? That's knowledge. That's knowing something about the issue.

History is a vast early warning system. The Arabs, the Persians, the Israelis know the history of the last centuries of the Middle East. Do we? Sam Rayburn, former Speaker of the House, said, ''Any mule can kick a barn door down, but it takes a carpenter to build one.'' We need carpenters. A lot of them. Remember what Rudyard Kipling said when his son tragically died in northern France during World War I: ''Why did young men die? Because old men lied.'' And to paraphrase that today, old people should talk before they send young people to die.

The landscape of human tragedy since the dawn of time, who has been our enemy? Ignorance, arrogance, dogma. It leads to monstrous certainty, monstrous dictators, monstrous violence. Ignorance, arrogance, dogma. What's the antidote? More violence? Filling up our cemeteries?

The answer is knowledge replaces ignorance, humility replaces arrogance, and tolerance replaces dogma. Consensus and dialogue. A diplomatic initiative with the region. A full diplomatic initiative with the region. That comes out of the intelligence and the ingenuity of our arsenal. Certainly we need a strong military. Certainly we need a strong intelligence community. But we need the other leg of that arsenal, a regional diplomacy policy.

An international support structure, do we have it in the middle East? Do we have it with the Palestinian and Israelis? Are we working with an international support structure in Iraq and Afghanistan? Not enough.

□ 2245

Integrated security alliance. We had it with NATO. We had it with SEATO. We have it with OAS. The U.S. has it, and many countries want to join it. The integrated economic alliance. It is with the European Union. All of the Eastern European countries and the Balkans want to get into that integrated security alliance and that integrated economic alliance.

We can do that in the Middle East. We should continue the current military draw down strategically and responsibly, a reconciliation among the different factions to reduce the sectarian violence, an effort that is ongoing. And we should continue it.

Let's take a walk down Memory Lane going back to 1941 just at the very early stages of World War II. A number of countries signed what was called the Atlantic Charter. And the Atlantic Charter was to deal with sovereignty, freedom and independence. The Atlantic Charter led to the organization now known as NATO. That integrated security alliance kept the peace in Europe basically as a result of that from 1948 to the present.

I will say a little side remark. The Atlantic Charter, which talked about sovereignty and human rights, when Ho Chi Minh read it shortly after it was signed, he wondered if it would apply to Asians. That is what he said. And apparently it didn't for some time to come.

The Helsinki Accords, which we mentioned earlier, which President Bush reminded Mikhail Gorbachev of and so there was a peaceful solution to the tearing down of the Berlin Wall, the Helsinki Accords was signed in 1975 by a number of European countries, including the Soviet Union. And that Accord said the following, there should be territorial integrity, peaceful settlements of disputes, freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief, equal rights and respect for international law. That is what the Helsinki Accord said.

The Helsinki Accord gave people under the Soviet domination courage to strive for a better life. Look at Eastern Europe and many of the former Soviet Republics. They read the Helsinki Accords. It gave them hope to put aside their fear and their despair and dream for a better life to come and then make it happen.

The Geneva Convention, 1949, talked about the treatment of prisoners, all prisoners, not just certain types, but that all prisoners should be treated humanely. And I would suggest that my colleagues and those who are listening read the Geneva Convention. It is only 59 pages. You ought to have some understanding of who is a prisoner of war, who is an enemy combatant, is there some kind of difference between someone that doesn't come from a state or a country or wear a uniform? Read the Geneva Convention. It's 59 pages.

Mr. Speaker, I want to conclude my remarks tonight with a quote from a book, that was not on the list, written by Jacob Bronowski. It's called ''The Ascent of Man.'' It is about 30 years old. It is an interesting book because it talks about the evolution of science in human civilization. But there is a chapter in this book about World War II and the Holocaust. The author of the book had most of his relatives die in Auschwitz. But here is what Bronowski says about war, which is still applicable in the present crisis: There are two parts to the human dilemma. One is the belief that the end justifies the means, that push-button philosophy, that deliberate deafness to suffering that has become the monster in the war machine. The other is the betrayal of the human spirit where a nation becomes a nation of ghosts, obedient ghosts or tortured ghosts.

Where do we fit into that equation?

Mr. Speaker, before I finish, I did tell the listeners that I would reread the list of books that I call your helmet, your flak jacket and your rifle. So now are you ready to cross the line to stand shoulder to shoulder with the troops who are knowledgable and competent about what they do? And so we as policy makers, are we knowledgable? And what is the role of the American people?

The first book is ''A Letter to America'' by David Boren.

''Iraq Study Group Report'' by James Baker and Lee Hamilton.

''Fiasco'' by Thomas Ricks.

''The Struggle for Peace'' by General Tony Zinni.

''Violent Politics'' by William Polk.

''Treacherous Alliance'' by Trita Parsi.

''All the Shah's Men'' by Stephen Kinzer.

''The Silence of the Rational Center'' by Stefan Halper and Jonathan Clarke.

''Why Viet Nam?'' by Archimedes Patti.

And the last book, number 10, ''Human Options'' by Norman Cousins.

One more quote from Norman Cousins and the book, ''Human Options.'' This is us. Man is not imprisoned by habit. Great changes in him can be wrought by crisis once that crisis can be recognized and understood. And so if we have recognized the present crisis, great changes can take place.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mrs. BONO MACK (at the request of Mr. BOEHNER) for today and the balance of the week on account of the death of her father.