

HONORING THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF COLONEL D. GRAY HEPPNER, JR., M.D.

**HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN**

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 30, 2011*

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the extraordinary accomplishments of Colonel D. Gray Heppner, Jr., M.D., upon his retirement as the Deputy Director for the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research, WRAIR.

For over 100 years, scientists at WRAIR have expanded the frontiers of military medicine, taking the road less-travelled, from jungles, deserts, and battlefields to the laboratory and back, intent upon protecting the health of America's soldiers in harm's way. Undaunted by danger, WRAIR scientists developed the first vaccines for hepatitis and Japanese encephalitis, and the means to diagnose and treat deadly malaria. Today, on the battlefields of Asia, WRAIR's work mitigates the stress of combat, the fatigue of sustained operations and the fear of insidious Leishmaniasis, a parasitic disease spread by the bite of a sandfly. WRAIR's success in infectious diseases and military psychiatry is due to the resolve and dedication of an exceptional cadre of men and women, military and civilian.

Today, I salute a distinguished alumnus of WRAIR, Colonel D. Gray Heppner, Jr., a physician-scientist who dedicated his extraordinary 20-year career at WRAIR to developing malaria vaccines and biochemical defense in Asia, Africa, the Middle East, Europe, and the United States.

After earning his B.A. and M.D. from the University of Virginia, and studying Internal Medicine at the University of Minnesota, Col. Heppner worked in the lab of Professor John Eaton, researching antimalarial drugs and treating patients with tropical diseases at Joint Task Force Bravo in Honduras. When he was 34, he volunteered for active duty on the condition that he would be placed in the malaria vaccine research program at WRAIR.

While serving as an Infectious Disease Officer in the Department of Immunology, Col. Heppner, then a Major, suffered from a case of acute malaria, a known side effect from working with the potential vaccine. This experience gave Col. Heppner a unique perspective on the disease and fostered in him a renewed belief in the critical need for a vaccine.

From 1993–97, Col. Heppner and his family lived in Bangkok, where he served as the Chief of the Department of Immunology and Medicine for the Armed Forces Research Institute of Medicine. In this position, Col. Heppner was the principal investigator for Phase 1 and Phase 2 malaria vaccine trials on the Thai-Burmese border. In 1997, Col. Heppner returned to WRAIR to conduct pre-clinical, clinical, and field trials of malaria vaccines in Kisumu, Kenya.

In 1999, Col. Heppner became Chief of WRAIR's Department of Immunology, and in 2006 was promoted to Director of WRAIR's Division of Malaria Vaccine Development. In these positions, he led teams of dedicated scientists and physicians at organizations and institutions around the world—including USAID, the Gates Foundation, the Kenya Medical Research Institute, NIH/NIAID, and the Malaria Vaccine Initiative at PATH, among others to conduct human trials of innovative malaria vaccines in the United States, Europe, and East and West Africa. During this time, he also served as a member of the Special Medical Augmentation Response Team in Doha, Kuwait, working to develop countermeasures to biological weapons.

In 2008, Col. Heppner became Deputy Director of WRAIR. As an executive of the Defense Department's largest biomedical research institute, Col. Heppner was responsible for overseeing some of the most important vaccinal research in the world. In this position, he also supported WRAIR's transformation to the Department of Defense's Center of Excellence in Infectious Diseases and Psychiatry and Neurosciences.

As a member of the Council on Foreign Relations, Col. Heppner has advocated for vaccines to improve health, economic development, and political stability. Through his work with the Order of St. John, Col. Heppner has supported the St. John Eye Hospital in East Jerusalem in its mission to heal the blind of all faiths. Col. Heppner's work has been published in more than 100 peer-reviewed scientific publications and book chapters.

There is a long-standing tradition that WRAIR officers continue to develop vaccines in their retirement. Col. Heppner will be following in that tradition as he serves as Vice President for Clinical Development at Crucell, a global biotechnology company that specializes in vaccinal development for tuberculosis, Ebola, HIV, influenza, polio, rabies, and malaria—the very diseases that threaten soldier and world health. As journalist Michael Leahy observed in his 2006 Washington Post Magazine article, "Breaking the Cycle," "Gray Heppner . . . does not give up easily on a dream."

Mr. Speaker, it is my honor to recognize the exceptional career of Colonel D. Gray Heppner, Jr., M.D., and his extraordinary efforts in making our world a healthier and safer place.

AFGHANISTAN WAR POWERS  
RESOLUTION

SPEECH OF

**HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN**

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 17, 2011*

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the sentiment behind this resolution.

American and other NATO forces have been in Afghanistan for 10 years. That is a long haul and at times it seems that we are making little progress in achieving our objective. Like many Americans, I have serious questions about our strategy in Afghanistan. That being said, I oppose this resolution for three reasons.

First, the foundational argument of this resolution is simply wrong. Section 5(c) of the War Powers Act, the provision referenced in this resolution, states that Congress may, by concurrent resolution, require the President to re-deploy troops out of the line of fire if the President had never received congressional authorization for the deployment. But the Congress did authorized military operations in Afghanistan in 2001. Consequently, there is no sound legal basis for this resolution.

Second, the Secretary of Defense has indicated that an ill-timed and precipitous draw-down of forces could threaten the progress and the sacrifices we have made in Afghanistan. A withdrawal of troops in 9 months, as this resolution requires, could create a total power vacuum and be a recipe for anarchy in Afghanistan. The likely result could be a bloodbath with a high probability that al Qaeda will once again establish itself in Afghanistan.

Third, the President has announced that the United States will begin to re-deploy its forces in Afghanistan this Summer. Last week, General Petraeus indicated that the redeployment would begin as planned. The goal is to steadily, but responsibly, withdraw U.S. and NATO forces as we accelerate the training of the Afghan National Security Forces. I will closely monitor the progress of that effort in order to ensure that we follow through as planned.

Our decision to forcibly remove the Taliban regime in 2001 was the right one. The Taliban regime had allowed Afghanistan to become a safe haven for al Qaeda and a launching pad for the September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States. The United Nations, the Atlantic Alliance and the entire international community agreed that the U.S. response was appropriate and justified.

Although that decision was justified, serious questions remain about the best way forward in Afghanistan. I oppose this resolution. I will review similar future resolutions with a fresh eye based on the consideration of the situation in Afghanistan. We must see greater evidence that the Afghan National Security Forces are steadily assuming greater responsibility.