

Last week, Robert Dreyfuss wrote an article in *The Nation* that I would like to enter into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. He explains that the CIA is currently training Syrian rebels, some of whom have Sunni fundamentalist ties, at the same time that it is fighting Sunni rebels in Iraq. Recently, dozens of Syrian soldiers fled to Iraq, only to be killed by Iraqi Sunnis. He asked the question:

When will the United States learn that it doesn't know enough about the Middle East to go charging in there, seemingly without a clue about what it all means?

So here we are: 10 years of neoconservative hawks preaching that we can franchise American democracy and freedom; 10 years of quicksand diplomacy; 10 years of wrong answers, and we still don't know the question.

What has been the cost of all of this? And I don't mean financially. Because, yes, we've spent probably a trillion or more on this war, or will. Yes, as we speak, we are cutting food assistance to kids in this country and funding for R&D that would drive our economy. But we can't appropriate a sum of money to fix the real cost of Iraq. We can't pay back the lives of 4,486 American men and women who have died there, or the roughly 2,000 broken soldiers who came home and took their own lives.

The wounded—physically and mentally. The soldiers who didn't know how not to be a soldier. The families living with a hole in their hearts, and the families living with someone they no longer recognize. Ten years of young men and women leaving their families, living in hell, and coming home to unemployment and to homelessness. To a country that has forgotten it's at war at all. To a country that seems to think a yellow ribbon magnet on their bumper is the only kind of support that our troops need.

And the cost in Iraq? Untold deaths. Let me rephrase that: unknown deaths. We can only guess at the destruction that we have left in our wake: 115,000 Iraqis? 600,000? You can find a number. What was the long-term impact of that on their environment, water, and health. What happens when someone lives in constant fear of becoming collateral damage?

Today, Iraq is a sad shadow of a society that once boasted the best infrastructure in the region. Instability and violence fester on this very day, and now it teeters on the brink of an inevitable civil war.

This is the legacy of our last 10 years, and I still don't understand why. I hope this anniversary will remind us that a whole new generation of veterans are waiting to help reintegrate into civilian life. I believe it's time to elevate our level of commitment to these veterans.

I am introducing a bill to create a commission on veterans care to investigate what we as a society can do to help our men and women come home. I hope it will remind us that no lives, re-

gardless of nationality, should be taken lightly. I hope it will remind us as to why the next time. And I hope it won't take another war to get that answer.

THE CIA TAKES OPPOSITE SIDES IN SYRIA AND IRAQ

Mr. McDERMOTT. What, really, could be more bizarre than this: as the United States ramps up its aid to Syria's ragtag rebels, whose backbone is comprised of radical Islamists and Sunni fundamentalists, some with ties to Al Qaeda, the CIA is busily engaged in combat inside Iraq with the very same radical Islamists and Sunni fundamentalists, some with ties to Al Qaeda.

Yep, that's right.

We're backing the same guys in Syria that we're fighting in Iraq.

Of course, we shouldn't be involved in Iraq in any way, shape or form, but try telling that to the CIA. According to the *Wall Street Journal*:

The Central Intelligence Agency is ramping up support to elite Iraqi antiterrorism units to better fight al Qaeda affiliates, amid alarm in Washington about spillover from the civil war in neighboring Syria, according to US officials.

The stepped-up mission expands a covert US presence on the edges of the two-year-old Syrian conflict, at a time of American concerns about the growing power of extremists in the Syrian rebellion.

The *Journal* notes that this isn't an accident. It was the result of a carefully thought-out White House decision:

In a series of secret decisions from 2011 to late 2012, the White House directed the CIA to provide support to Iraq's Counterterrorism Service, or CTS, a force that reports directly to Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, officials said.

The CIA has since ramped up its work with the CTS—taking control of a mission long run by the U.S. military, according to administration and defense officials. For years, U.S. special-operations forces worked with CTS against al Qaeda in Iraq. But the military's role has dwindled since U.S. troops pulled out of the country at the end of 2011.

The paradox, obviously, is that Maliki, the guy we're helping in Iraq, is an ally of Iran's and is sympathetic to President Assad of Syria. That's because were the Sunni-led rebels in Syria to seize Damascus and topple Assad, they'd turn their wrath next door against the Shiite-led Maliki regime, and funnel weapons and fighters to support the Sunni-led rebels in Iraq.

That's not stopping the United States, though, from boosting the fortunes of the Syrian rebels by funneling aid and support to them and coordinating the flow of weapons from Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Turkey. Meanwhile, as *The New York Times* has been reporting for a while, the same CIA that is trying to squash the Sunni rebels in Iraq is actually training Sunni rebels in a secret program in Jordan, to fight in Syria.

Oddly enough, the rest of the media hasn't picked up on the *Times* reports on the CIA training efforts in Jordan, and the *Times* itself hasn't elaborated. How many gangsters are in the CIA training in Jordan? What are they doing?

It all comes together in the recent reports that dozens of Syrian soldiers, loyal to Assad, who fled into Iraq recently, were then massacred by Iraqi Sunni crazies.

We blundered, bungling, into Iraq in 2003 without knowing really a damn thing about the country we invaded. When will the United States learn that it doesn't know enough about the Middle East to go charging in there with guns, seemingly without a clue about what it all means?

□ 1010

A CALL FOR A BALANCED BUDGET

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Montana (Mr. DAINES) for 5 minutes.

Mr. DAINES. Mr. Speaker, I arrived here in Washington, D.C., to serve the people of Montana and my country with a bit of a different resume than many folks have here in Washington. You see, I've spent the past 28 years in the private sector working to grow businesses, having to balance a budget and create good jobs.

I loved my job in the private sector. But when I looked at Washington and the path our economy and our country was on, I knew that things needed to change. So I ran for Congress because the challenges facing our Nation were far too great to just sit back on the sidelines.

As Montana's small businesses know, you can't spend more than you take in. Year after year of Federal deficits with no end in sight doesn't lead to prosperity, doesn't lead to growth—it leads to financial ruin.

I'm also the father of four great kids—two in college and two in high school. They know that as a family, we have to plan ahead for the future. We need to create a budget and then live within our means. These are the same principles that my parents passed down to me. These are the values that Montana families live by each and every day.

Those values are exemplified in Montana's own State legislature, where the only constitutionally required duty is passing a balanced budget. In fact, when our legislature in Montana adjourns in just a little over a month, they will have given Montana a balanced budget, just like they did last year and the year before and the year before that. It seems simple: live within your means and spend no more than you take in. But it's not so easy here in Washington.

Right now we're presented with two very different visions for our country, two visions that will lead to two very different outcomes for this country.