

Now, I said that back on September 14, 2001, trying to caution all of my colleagues, many of whom had voted against defense bills, now rattling sabers, feeling this bravado of let us go to war.

Now I have to ask, was that a false bravado because now, as war has gotten chaotic and has gotten hard and difficult, now they cower, and I have great concern.

So I ended with: "We cannot have the bravado of today and then run at the first sound of the guns."

Please remember this day when it gets hard.

The gentleman I am about to yield to, the gentleman from California (Mr. LEWIS), was chairman of the Defense Appropriations Committee, and I remember him well because I had served as the chairman on the House Armed Services Committee at the time and served with Mr. SMITH, and when we came out after Oklahoma City, then-President Clinton, very concerned about terrorism, and we passed our first anti-terrorism bill here in the House and many people were like, wait a minute, that was a domestic act of terror.

No, President Clinton began to focus abroad, not only upon the Russian Mafia, but he was also focusing on Osama bin Laden and other terror. It can be debated whether or not he took great vigilance on that front or not, but let me post a real compliment to Mr. Clinton because he turned to Hugh Shelton.

General Shelton was at the time the commander of Special Operations. I was very upset coming out of the House conference on the anti-terrorism bill because JOE BIDEN and I were trying to bring the country to roving wiretaps, but the country was not ready for it. So then it was defeated.

I then get on the phone and call General Shelton and bring him up to Washington, D.C., and I asked him a simple question: What are the top ten unfunded requirements that you have given Special Operations, the missions that you have to do in the dark world to secure America but you don't have the resources to accomplish them?

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He sat down and he detailed them. More importantly, as President Clinton then named him, appropriately and wisely, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, he worked then with JERRY LEWIS and prepared the force. So when America was hit on September 11 and we immediately sent those special operators into Afghanistan, they were prepared, they were equipped, they were trained to fight in the dark world and special operations, and JERRY LEWIS, his leadership, was responsible for that.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from California such time as he may consume.

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for those

very, very poignant remarks laying the foundation for all of us to understand just how serious this challenge is that we are about.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to oppose the resolution before us and urge those who are voting for it, or considering it, to carefully reconsider their decision.

Section 1 simply expresses all of our support for our troops who are fighting for our freedom and freedom in the world in Iraq.

All of us agree with that piece of the statement, and each of us has expressed our support and encouragement to our troops in our own way and our own time.

The second section challenges the President's, actually the Commander in Chief's, request for a surge in Iraq.

Much has been said about our going to Iraq because of the prospect of weapons of mass destruction in the hands of the madman Saddam Hussein. We presumed their presence, as most of the leaders of the world and most of the intelligence communities of the world so presumed. Not finding weapons of mass destruction does not set aside the importance of eliminating the force of Saddam Hussein from the face of the Earth.

It was my honor to lead one of the early trips to Iraq following the fall of Saddam. We were about to consider an \$87 billion supplemental to help finance our presence in Iraq. I wanted to take a team of Members who would reflect much of the Congress, so that trip included conservatives and moderates and liberals. It also included within us Members who had voted to support going to war and those who had voted against it.

We visited most of Iraq, Mosul, Tikrit. We spent time in Baghdad. We visited the killing fields where over 500,000 bodies of Iraqis lie, Iraqis who were murdered by Saddam Hussein. We saw the golden palaces and visited the industrial sites suffering under Saddam Hussein's neglect. We saw the economic conditions, the handbasket conditions left by Saddam Hussein.

We stopped out of country on our way home to consider the fact that there was this supplemental appropriations before us when we returned, some \$87 billion, discussing what we had experienced. And the experience had a tremendous effect upon all of our colleagues. It is properly summarized by the statement of one of our Members who said: "You all know where I have been coming from. I voted against the war. But after we have seen what we have seen over this long stay in Iraq, I am afraid what I am about to do is going to be very, very unpopular at home but I don't know how we can do anything else. Sometimes," he said, "you have to be ahead of your people; sometimes we are elected actually to lead."

That was almost 4 years ago. And fast forward to today. Saddam Hussein is gone, he is dead, and he is buried. But the extremists jihadi Islamic ter-

rorists remain and continue to impact the entire Middle East. That is why we must succeed in Iraq. That is why we cannot afford to withdraw troops now.

Watching our floor debate last night, my wife turned to me and said, "They want us to redeploy or withdraw. They want us to retreat." She said, "George Washington did not retreat when our country was in danger." She questioned why we find ourselves in this kind of circumstance today.

I was reminiscent of that early time in our history when our Nation was threatened. The French came to our rescue, our assistance, and indeed played a major role in our future Commander in Chief himself being successful.

Americans should never forget that. The Statue of Liberty stands on Ellis Island as a reminder of the French view of that young America, its potential, a land of hope where freedom could reign and opportunity indeed might abound. For that and many other reasons we love France, and the French people are our friends.

But France is not entirely the same country at this point in its history. She no longer provides such a leading light for the world. No longer is it presumed that the French language should be the language of the international world. Today, about 10 percent of the French population is Muslim. Much of that population is middle class and something less than a middle-class opportunity.

Within that group, there abounds the voice of Islamic extreme. There are those who advocate jihad and who would wipe France as we know it off the face of the Earth.

We should not consider withdrawing now, because a stable Iraq is vital to our national interests and is an important part of our ability to promote peace and economic opportunity in the entire world. It is a critical battleground in our war against terrorism.

If we succeed in Iraq, we will have taken a gigantic step towards stamping out the source of terrorism that exists in that part of the world. If we are not successful in Iraq, we will meet extremist Islamic activism elsewhere. 9/11 was only a part of a beginning. If we do not stop extreme Islamic jihadists in the Middle East, we will see it again, and most likely we will see it again here at home.

Review with me for a moment where we have been in Afghanistan and Iraq and where it may take us. Al Qaeda was nurtured and gained strength in Afghanistan. America had played a key role in forcing the former Soviet Union to cease its incursion in Afghanistan. The Islamic extremists who surround the likes of Osama bin Laden took advantage of the vacuum of Afghanistan, and used it as a training ground that would provide the terrorists an opportunity to spread their jihad around the world and spread terrorism with it.

America cannot allow the likes of Osama bin Laden to have places like