

My Wars Book Reception

House Rayburn Building, Room 2123

5 – 7 PM Wednesday, September 19, 2001

“World War III”

I'm grateful to my esteemed longtime friends, Communications Chairman Billy Tauzin and ranking democrat John Dingell for a gracious opportunity to discuss my book “My Wars” before this prestigious audience – especially during this tragic national emergency.

However this old World War II hawk asks your indulgence in a departure from normal friendly book signing receptions. I expected it to be delayed, but this meeting today represents our determination to promptly return to normalcy.

Our war today, fast becoming an international war of the free world against depraved terrorists fanatics, transcends any review of World War II and inter-government conflicts in my book – All other subjects pale in comparison or timeliness to our oncoming lengthy war.

But there may be some relevance for communicating my war experiences today – my remarks come from the perspective of a patriotic combat veteran of six amphibious landings during World War II, by far the largest, most international involved war in history. Additionally, as a long serving FCC commissioner, my comments were often quoted about the Vietnam and Middle East conflicts or wars. Then too, for what its worth, I'm a very senior survivor of what Tom Brokaw characterized as the “Greatest Generation,” a glorified group that is becoming more rare each year!

1049

My own feelings about this war are masterfully summarized in a syndicated column in the Washington Post by Robert Kagan, a senior associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, I quote a pertinent paragraph:

One can only hope that America can respond to yesterday's monstrous attack on American soil – an attack far more awful than Pearl Harbor – with the same moral clarity and courage as our grandfathers did. Not by asking what we have done to bring on the wrath of inhuman murderers. Not by figuring out ways to reason with or try to appease those who have spilled our blood. Not by engaging in an extended legal effort to arraign, try and convict killers, as if they were criminals and not warriors. But by doing the only thing we now can do: Go to war with those who have launched this awful war against us. Over the past few years there has been a nostalgic celebration of "The Greatest Generation" = the generation that fought for America and for humanity in the Second World War. There's no need for nostalgia now. That challenge is before us again. The question today is whether this generation of Americans is made of the same stuff.

Please let us make no mistake this time: We are at war now. We have suffered the first, devastating strike. Certainly, it is not the last. The only question is whether we will now take this war seriously as seriously as any war we have ever fought, whether we will conduct it with the intensity and perseverance it requires. Let's not be daunted by the mysterious and partially hidden identity of our attackers. It will soon become obvious that only a few terrorist organizations are capable of carrying out such a massive and coordinated strike. We should pour the resources necessary into a global effort to hunt them down and capture or kill them.

We must also welcome and appreciate the outpouring of international support of many fair-minded and freedom loving nations. But since our very own security and freedoms were desecrated, we cannot be dependent on consensus approach. We must take direct and aggressive Pattonesque action. (Quote part of Patton's initial tough speech to the 9th Infantry Division at Ft. Bragg)

Also, I assume we are no longer insisting that Israel be moderate in their response to attacks on their civilians.

Now to emphasize a few points of my own. First let's reject all terrorists claims that this is a religious war. Their depraved actions have nothing to do with any just concept of religion. Our fight is for what religion generally embodies good versus evil, right versus wrong; human dignity and freedom versus tyranny and brutality. Any terrorists self-justifying claims that this is a holy war is a malicious distortion. What kind of religious interpretation assures the blessing of Allah and perpetual heavenly after-life for the diabolic thoroughly plotted murder of thousands of innocent civilians in a country not at war. What a hideous way to earn a blessing. I'm sure millions of responsible truly religious Islamics are rejecting the inhumane onslaughts of the murderous extremists.

And speaking of religious fervor, what happened to the old fashioned patriotism of TV evangelists Jerry Falwell and Pat Roberts? Did they lose their minds? It is unthinkable, but it sounds like they received a massive donation from Islamic extremists. Talk about giving aid and comfort to the enemy! Perhaps the good Lord may give Jerry and Pat what they deserve – massive desertions from their ministries and the “700 Club” by the disenchanting patriotic American evangelists.

Jerry and Pat – for Christ's sake and your own sake, admit your unfortunate error in timing and judgment and apologize! You will, no doubt, be pardoned because of your long record of constructive work.

Actually, one of my principal objectives was to salute our re-invigorated national unity and the solid leadership by President George W. Bush. “W” is the patriotic son of a heroic

World War II combat pilot who was our President and an unheralded guiding leader in our impressive victory in the Middle East War. I quoted senior President Bush in a speech at the outbreak of the Middle East “you can’t be the Land of the Free, without being the Home of the Brave.” The inspirational phrase, applies again today. Our current Bush president has been abruptly caste as a “war” President and he is doing a commendable job.

I also urge the media to observe wartime patriotic responsibility and restraint. The public should be pleased by the supportive reports and the shared outrage of our current media.

As a former radio and print newsman, I’m a natural supporter of First Amendment rights for a free press.

However, I was a strong critic of the negative adversarial, often inaccurate, reporting during the Vietnam War.

After 32 months overseas experience in WWII with a supportive press and patriotic home front, it was difficult to understand the morale destroying adversarial press in Vietnam. I could not accept what I perceived as an almost frantic zeal to discredit the military and the government of our own country, and inadvertently give comfort to the enemy and undermine national will. Remember the Vietnam enemies, in fact all our enemies, had and have complete control of their press. Unfortunately, I believe the negative ^{press} ~~prices~~ in Vietnam played a major role in undermining national will, and ultimately, in the inglorious unnecessary defeat of American forces for the first time in the proud history of our nation. I also noted that in two major impressive USA military victories, World War II and Desert Storm in the Middle East, the military benefited from a patriotic united home front and a supportive press.

I mention this now because we must not allow a Vietnam type adversarial press to develop. The majority of responsible citizens who have become much more sophisticated in evaluating news and certainly thousands of old veterans (like me) will reject a Vietnam type adversarial press that criticized our efforts and undermine national will.

For example, this is no time to emphasize the inadequacy of our intelligence system. If true, it was our own homemade bi-partisan inadequacy. We did have numerous general alerts of impending terrorist action, but nothing of the magnitude of suicidal terrorists crashing plane loads of innocent people and children into big American industrial and military symbols. Their overall aim is to disrupt and destroy our democratic way of life and denigrate the foundations of our free society. Sophisticated international intelligence certainly is not my area of expertise, but is it possible that we need a tougher, meaner, more conniving CIA that departs from normal decent American democratic principles when dealing with a murderous hate-mongering enemy? And no doubt we need much stricter, even more inconvenient, security checks now being instituted at our airports.

One international specialist stated Bin Laden is determined to stop the United States from occupying the lands of Islam in the holiest of places including Jerusalem and the holy Mecca. A Middle East expert states "Bin Laden and his cells will not cease their vicious opposition until the United States leaves the region" – that undoubtedly means Israel too. Now as an ordinary American citizen not state department smart, I pose a naïve question: Is Holy Mecca maintained as an open city and peacefully available to all Islamics at any time? If not – why not? Good idea, poor idea? Old rejected idea?

But the terrorists did not negotiate so that is not our immediate problem. The inhuman assaults on our citizens and freedoms must be forcefully stopped.

The United States is a powerful force on a conventional battlefield but scattered, hidden terrorists are difficult to pinpoint, to fight and destroy. In fact, a Pakistani hostile militant group characterized reports of the American Tomahawk missile attack in 1998 as “weapons for cowards too afraid to risk their lives in combat or to look the enemy in the eye.”

This is an insulting under estimation of American resolve reacting to a treacherous attack. Remember, the chief admiral commanding the huge Japanese amphibious fleet in 1943 who warned, “I’m afraid we have awakened a sleeping giant.” We faced and defeated a tough resourceful suicidal enemy in the pacific while fighting another major enemy in Europe. We obviously were not afraid to face tough resourceful enemies. My tough troops of my 45th Division aggressively faced and defeated the enemy.

The American public and press must realize that in any war there will always be confusion, casualties and errors that are inherent to all parties in combat. We re-assured ourselves in WWII combat, by saying remember the enemy is more confused and outgunned than you are. Battle often became a nightmare of confusion decided by small groups of determined fighting men. An aroused America has always been blessed with brave resourceful fighting men.

So this is no time for an adversarial press creating a disenchanting public and undermining national will. This is no time to dwell on the negative, trivialize our efforts, and question reasons for covert or military actions or to headline casualties accidents or human error. This could give

comfort to a diabolically evil enemy that is more scheming and brutally fanatical than either Hitler or Hussein. And remember, our enemy has absolute control of his press – He uses it for propaganda to undermine our national will and military resolve.

If we undertake a dangerous military land operation in mountainous Afghanistan, it might make sense to hire some Russian-Afghanistan veterans along with revolutionary Afghanistan natives as military advisors.

One afterthought, Japanese Americans proved their loyalty to the United States in WWII by volunteering an expert regimental combat team, the famous 442nd, to fight the Germans. They became the most awarded and highly cited unit in Italy. I was there and marveled at their heroics. One of their notable wounded heroes is the very distinguished Senator from Hawaii, Dan Inouye.

If feasible, with our military plan, we suggest that first generation of other loyal Arab Americans volunteer for a similar combat team.

This is also a reminder that all or a great majority of Arab Americans are loyal to America which is now their own country. They must not be mistreated like thousands of loyal Japanese-Americans were in World War II. We need national unity and respect for all nationalities in our great American mix.

I believe good decent people of all religions and nationalities go to their individual reward in their own version of heaven. This includes Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, Jews, Catholics, Mormons, Protestants and all the others. In a lighter view, as I get older I became

much more ecumenical. I now embrace all religions because I don't want to blow any kind of merciful salvation on a religious technicality.

A final word, I was proud to serve as an FCC Commissioner, sometimes Chairman, under the Commerce Communications Committee oversight of such heroic patriotic leaders and strong defense proponents as Senator Ted Stevens a Flying Tiger during WWII; Chairman Fritz Hollings, Dan Inouye, John McCain as well as House Chairman Billy Tauzin and ranking Democrat John Dingell, Fred Upton and Bart Stupak. The communications committees are in strong patriotic hands. In fact, this is true of the entire Congress, the President and the Administration.

Our cause is just and America is once again a united determined force for the good versus evil. With superior fighting men and technology, strong all-out support from a united patriotic home front, supportive allies and a strong dedicated President and Congress we will win this war, defend international freedom and achieve the longed-for universal peace.

We will prove to the world and to ourselves that America will always be the land of the free and the home of the brave.

So thank you for your indulgence. Now, if you need recreational relief, read the prologue and Chapter I of my book; for dramatic historic moments of World War II, read Chapter II, III, and IV V & VI, for comic relief, read Chapter XVII, purely anecdotal. We are giving away books here, I'll be glad to inscribe them to you. Order blanks are available for those that want additional books.

God Bless America, and particularly hosts Chairman Billy Tauzin, ranking democrat,
Big John Dingell and Eddie Fritts, NAB President. To all of you individually, May the Lord be
with you, but not too soon.

Has Been
Office of Chairman James H. Quello

Sept. 18

This is the speech I prepared for the book signing scheduled for September 19th in the Rayburn building which was appropriately postponed.

Some excerpts may even be considered noteworthy concerning my perspective.

So indulge this old veteran of 6 combat amphibious landings and 2 1/2 years of a relatively soft ~~assignment~~ job at the FCC.

Best,
Jim

Jim:
I really enjoyed reading this moving patriotic address!
Dick W.