

HON. RON PAUL OF TEXAS BEFORE THE US HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES July 14, 2005

SUICIDE TERRORISM

Mr. Speaker, more than half of the American people now believe that the Iraqi war has made the U.S. less safe. This is a dramatic shift in sentiment from 2 years ago. Early support for the war reflected a hope for a safer America, and it was thought to be an appropriate response to the 9/11 attacks. The argument was that the enemy attacked us because of our freedom, our prosperity, and our way of life. It was further argued that it was important to engage the potential terrorists over there rather than here. Many bought this argument and supported the war. That is now changing. It is virtually impossible to stop determined suicide bombers. Understanding why they sacrifice themselves is crucial to ending what appears to be senseless and irrational. But there is an explanation. I, like many, have assumed that the driving force behind the suicide attacks was Islamic fundamentalism. Promise of instant entry into paradise as a reward for killing infidels seemed to explain the suicides, a concept that is foreign to our way of thinking. The world's expert on suicide terrorism has convinced me to rethink this simplistic explanation, that terrorism is merely an expression of religious extremism and resentment of a foreign culture. Robert Pape, author of "Dying to Win," explains the strategic logic of suicide terrorism. Pape has collected a database of every suicide terrorist attack between 1980 and 2004, all 462 of them. His conclusions are enlightening and crucial to our understanding the true motivation behind the attacks against Western nations by Islamic terrorists. After his exhaustive study, Pape comes to some very important conclusions. Religious beliefs are less important than supposed. For instance, the Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka, a Marxist secular group, are the world's leader in suicide terrorism. The largest Islamic fundamentalist countries have not been responsible for any suicide terrorist attack. None have come from Iran or the Sudan. Until the U.S. invasion of Iraq, Iraq never had a suicide terrorist attack in all of its history. Between 1995 and 2004, the al Qaeda years, two-thirds of all attacks came from countries where the U.S. had troops stationed. Iraq's suicide missions today are carried out by Iraqi Sunnis and Saudis. Recall, 15 of the 19 participants in the 9/11 attacks were Saudis. The clincher is this: the strongest motivation, according to Pape, is not religion but rather a desire "to compel modern democracies to withdraw military forces from the territory the terrorists view as their homeland." The best news is that if stopping suicide terrorism is a goal we seek, a solution is available to us. Cease the occupation of foreign lands and the suicide missions will cease. Between 1982 and 1986, there were 41 suicide terrorist attacks in Lebanon. Once the U.S., the French, and Israel withdrew their forces from Lebanon, there were no more attacks. The reason the attacks stop, according to Pape, is that the Osama bin Ladens of the world no longer can inspire potential suicide terrorists despite their continued fanatical religious beliefs. Pape is convinced after his extensive research that the longer and more extensive the occupation of Muslim territories, the greater the chance of more 9/11-type attacks on the U.S. He is convinced that the terrorists strategically are holding off hitting the U.S. at the present time in an effort to break up the coalition by hitting our European allies. He claims it is just a matter of time if our policies do not change. It is time for us to consider a strategic reassessment of our policy of foreign interventionism, occupation, and nation-building. It is in our national interest to do so and in the

interest of world peace.