

# Opinion: Troops deserve praise for serving in Iraq

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Only time will tell whether President Barack Obama was right on Wednesday when he told troops recently returned from Iraq that "we are leaving behind a sovereign, stable and self-reliant Iraq ..."

But there can be no disagreement with his tribute (spoken in a TV interview) to the men and women who gathered in a hangar at Fort Bragg, N.C.:

"We must not forget the men and women who gave their lives, tens of thousands wounded, all those missed birthday parties, missed soccer games and missed dinners because folks were on their second or third deployment. We should not take that for granted."

It would behoove all of the politicians in Washington, D.C., to remember the president's words while they are glibly tossing around threats to take action against this nation or that – most recently it has been Iran.

The sacrifices made by the men and women of our armed services, many of them from the Guard and Reserves, have indeed been great. The war in Iraq has taken the lives of more than 4,400 Americans. (By some estimates, more than 100,000 Iraqis have lost their lives because of the war in the past nine years.) Many more have been injured. All have seen their lives drastically changed by the call to duty.

They have paid a high price to leave behind a "sovereign, stable and self-reliant Iraq," and we must never forget what they did.

When President George W. Bush announced nearly nine years ago that the U.S. military had invaded Iraq in an effort to rid the country of its belligerent dictator, Saddam Hussein, and destroy his weapons, no one imagined that the troops would still be there in 2011.

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