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WE MOURN THE PASSING OF SHEIK SATTAR BUZAIGH AL RISHAWI -- (House of Representatives - September 18, 2007)

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The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. Pence) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, scripture tells us to mourn with those who mourn and to grieve with those who grieve. I rise today to join our allies and his family and neighbors and friends to grieve the passing by assassination last week of a courageous Iraqi in Anbar province, Sheik Abdul Sattar Buzaigh al Rishawi, a man 37 years of age that I had the privilege of meeting this last April when I visited Falluja in Ramadi.

It was there that I learned from General Odierno, as well, in our nearly 1-hour meeting with Sheik Sattar about how what has come to be known, Mr. Speaker, globally as the Anbar Awakening was born. You see, it was this Iraqi sheik, whose father had been killed by al Qaeda in Iraq, his three brothers had been murdered by al Qaeda, who said sometime in late 2006, "I have had enough." What the general told me, and the Sheik affirmed, as he came across the river in Ramadi, sat down with the Marines perhaps in the same room where we are pictured here, and said, "How can we, as Sunni sheik leaders, work with you, American forces, and the Maliki government to rid Ramadi, to rid al Anbar of al Qaeda?"

It was the end of a bloody year in 2006, just a few months earlier that Ramadi was at the very center of what was called the Triangle of Death. According to National Intelligence Estimates, Ramadi was so far gone that it could not be reclaimed militarily. But Sheik Sattar stepped forward. He had a vision for driving terrorists from his community. As General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker reported to Congress last week and independent organizations, like the Brookings Institution, a left-leaning think tank, have confirmed, because of the leadership of Sheik Sattar and over 42 other Iraqi sheiks that he recruited, Anbar province is transformed. The city of Ramadi is transformed. It has truly been a miraculous turnaround with the virtual elimination of al Qaeda in western Iraq being the result.

Iraqi military leaders say to the world media, "We considered the sheik our first line of defense." President Bush just 10 days ago met with Sheik Sattar in Ramadi to celebrate the first anniversary of the Anbar Awakening. Of his passing, the interior ministry named a national police brigade after him. The leader of that ministry said, "We will be building a great statue for Sheik Sattar Buzaigh al Rishawi at the entrance of Anbar province so it will be a witness to his great accomplishments and those of the people of Iraq."

Amidst the thousands who gathered for his funeral on Friday in Ramadi, his brother would say, "All of Anbar is Abu Risha, so Abu Risha has not been killed." He went on to say, "I pledge to you, my father, my brother, my cousins, we will follow the road taken by Sheik Abdul Risha. We will follow it until we kill the last terrorist in Iraq." I was pleased to see that even this Sunday U.S. military forces took into custody a man believed to have been involved in his assassination.

We mourn with those who mourn. In my meeting with Sheik Sattar, he said a few things to me I will never forget. He said, "Congressman *Pence*, when you go home, tell your people that we in Anbar believe that an attack on an American is an attack on an Iraqi." He said, "Anyone who points a weapon at an American is pointing a weapon at an Iraqi." He also looked at me, at age 37, wearing those flowing robes with a pinstripe suit underneath them, he looked at me, and he said through those warm brown eyes, he said, "Anyone who tells you that Iraqis don't like Americans is lying to you." He said, "Iraqis love Americans." And then he asked me, sitting at Camp Falluja and Ramadi, why we would even discuss permanently leaving Iraq.

He was a man of hope, a man of courage, a man of conviction. I mourn his loss as should every American and every freedom-loving citizen of the world mourn the passing of Sheik Sattar.

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