Mr. HENSARLING. Well, again, it illustrates just how valuable the tax relief has been to our economy. We have spoken this evening at length about over 4 million new jobs. Four million new jobs in the future that have been created. 4 million new paychecks. That is what compassion is all about. Compassion is not measured by the number of welfare checks that are printed in Washington. It is measured by the number of paychecks that are printed over the United States of America.

Our GDP growth, 2 1/2 years straight where each and every quarter of economic growth has been over 3 percent. We have consumer spending that is advancing, we have 4.2 percent during the third quarter. Retail sales are up. Real disposable income for our working families is up since we passed the tax relief package in our economic growth legislation. And manufacturing, which has faced many challenges in recent years, manufacturing production is continuing to expand. We have increases in productivity, and the list goes on and on and on. And all of this is threatened if we permit the Democrats to take that tax relief away and pass a huge tax increase, because that affects real people all across America.

Let me give you another example. I talked earlier about the fact that we are enjoying the highest rate of homeownership in the history of the United States of America. I mean, home ownership, part and parcel of the American Dream. Well, somebody has to go out and help renovate those homes and build new homes. And one of those gentlemen is in my congressional district back in Texas, a gentleman by the name of Gil Travers of Travers and Company. He is a home builder. Prior to us passing the economic growth legislation with the tax relief, he had just a handful of workers; but once we passed the tax relief, he had 3, 4 times extra workers. He hired a lady named Jan, who was unemployed, to help him clean up some of his job sites. She got so busy that she had to hire two people who were unemployed to help her clean up the job sites. And this gentleman by the name of Calvin and another lady by the name of Christy, all because of tax relief.

And yet this week the Democrats want to raise taxes on Travers and Company Home Builders. They want to jeopardize the pay checks of Jan and Calvin and Christy and replace them with welfare checks, and they call that compassion.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Talking about our homes and construction and home sales. In October, home sales reached 7.1 units in October. And the thing that is so interesting is that is just off the historic high of home sales which was in June of 2005, when there were 6.4 million units that were built or were sold. So whether it is new homes being built, whether it is existing homes, the home sales, how amazing that we are seeing home sales reaching such high numbers in both the new construction and the existing home sales category. And I yield back to the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. Speaker, as you know, the 30-something Working Group comes to the floor to share not only with Members but also with the American people about what is happening good here in the Capitol and also what is happening bad here in the Capitol, and hopefully they can move towards positive change here in the Capitol.

Mr. Speaker, it saddens me to report the fact that this Congress, need it be whatever poll you look at, the American people by 33 percent think that we are doing a good job. Thirty-three percent of the American people feel that this Congress is doing a good job. I would tell you that if it was a grade system, Mr. Speaker, I would assume that, and Members, I would assume that that would be a failing grade.

I have two children that attend school. And if their grades were based on a 33 percent performance, I do not think that they would be moving to the next grade. And it is important, Members of Congress, Mr. Speaker, as we start to look at our responsibilities to the American people, not just to our constituents in our districts, but to the American people, because of them sending us here in Congress that they federalized us to come up here and run this country in the way that it should be.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to remind the Members that this is the people's House. It is not my House. It is not Mr. RYAN's House. It is not Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ's House. Mr. Speaker, all due respect, it is not your House. It is the people's House.

In the Senate, I must add, and we must let all of the Members, we must remind them in the Senate someone can be appointed to the Senate. Of course they have elections. But in a time, let us just say, Mr. Speaker, like in New Jersey, the Governor of New Jersey, the new Governor of New Jersey has the opportunity, who was a U.S. Senator, to appoint someone to be the new U.S. Senator from the State of New Jersey.

But in the House, with a seat being vacated, let us just say someone from New Jersey is appointed to be the Senator. He cannot appoint someone here to the House of Representatives. He would have to set a special election for that seat to be filled constitutionally. So this is the people's House. And so when we start talking about the people of the United States of America, we are closer to them than any other, I think, than any other branch of government.

I would like to say that on the heels of President Bush's speech today on Iraq's economy, I could not help, and Mr. RYAN and I just returned from Iraq. We visited three cities in Iraq and we went to the infamous Green Zone and Baghdad visiting our troops. Many of them were members of the Army, soldiers, some Mr. Speaker, on their third deployment to Iraq.

I could not help but pay attention, and I got a copy of the President's
speech and he released a 35-page, 32 pages if you look at glossy cover and all, 35 pages of his strategy for victory there in Iraq.

But he talked about the economy today in Iraq. But I cannot help but say, and to the Honorable Mr. RYAN, by the fact of him following our lead here under this Republican majority, Mr. RYAN, by the fact that he would have good if the President could have talked about our U.S. economy. I think the reason why he did not talk about the U.S. economy is the fact that we have record deficits, some of them over the next 10 years deficits. That is not the Kendrick Meek report. That is not the Tim Ryan report. That is not the Congresswoman Debbie Wasserman Schultz report. That is reality.

We are record-breaking as it relates to borrowing money. Members, from foreign countries. This President, along with this Republican majority here in the House and in the Senate, has achieved $4.5 trillion in borrowing money nations and we have done this in 42 Presidents before him. They were only able to, among all of those Presidents, I mean all of them, I am talking about since we became a country, $4.1 trillion that have been achieved. And I want to correct myself. I am sorry. I have so many numbers here. Mr. Speaker. I want to correct myself. I am glad Mr. RYAN brought this over. $1.05 trillion by this President. I said four and I will correct myself right now because I believe in making sure that we give good information. 1.05 trillion, this President, the last 4 years, 2001 to 2005; and he is not done yet. 1.01 trillion, 42 Presidents in the history of this country, Republican, Democrat, and in their lifetime for some of them very early on were members of the Whig Party. From 1776 to 2000, 224 years, Mr. Speaker. And this is from the U.S. Department of Treasury. This is not from the National Democratic Party or anything like that. We just want to make sure, Mr. RYAN, that we have our third-party validators here.

Maybe the President, Mr. RYAN, could have talked about the fact that health care costs increased over 60 percent of the last 10 years, or if the President did not talk about some of these things, I mean he did not talk about, Mr. Speaker, this ongoing culture of corruption and cronyism and incompetence. This is not the Kendrick Meek report. This is just today's papers. This is just today that is outlining a culture of corruption and cronyism and incompetence. So when historians look back on the 109th Congress and the contributions that we made, they are also going to look at the void in leadership and leading this country in the way that they should lead.

We used to give speeches here on the floor, Mr. RYAN, and you know full well about putting burden on future generations.

Well, I can tell the Members right now, Mr. Speaker, and this is not me speaking. They can check with any of the Federal Accounting Offices or the reports or the auditor generals that put out reports on an annual basis. We are putting this generation in the present in jeopardy.

So I am so glad that we have the opportunity tonight to talk to the Speaker, and I am so glad that the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN) is here, and I am glad that we have a level of consistency for the American people to come to the floor and share this information. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Ohio.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding to me.

And I think he is absolutely right. That is the most startling statistic that he has shown us with the money that we have borrowed from foreign interests because we come to the floor nightly, sometimes for a couple hours a night, to talk about the future of the country. And there is no more important aspect of the President's job than the future of the country than our fiscal stability. And right now we have a Republican Congress, House and Senate, and the President, who are borrowing money consistently from foreign interests, that the federal agencies that do the reports or the auditor generals that put out reports on an annual basis. We are putting this generation in jeopardy.

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Group have to do with all of this, what does our group have to do with all of this? Listen, this is the future of our country. There is no greater issue for the 30-somethings or the 20-somethings or those kids in school right now or those college students right now. There is no greater issue.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. MEEK of Florida. I yield to the gentleman from Massachusetts.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, I think that is a very important statistic to discuss during the course of our conversation. The interest payments that the American taxpayers are required to make every single year amount to some $300 billion on the debt that has been accumulated because of the policies of this White House, this Republican House of Representatives, and this Republican Senate.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. MEEK of Florida. I yield to the gentleman from Ohio.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, the Republican majority tomorrow is going to extend or reinstate tax cuts for the wealthiest people in the country.

Mr. DELAHUNT. And how are they going to pay for them?

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Up to $70 billion, they are going to go to the Chinese, to the Saudi Arabians, Mr. Speaker, to the Japanese governments.

Mr. DELAHUNT. To the Koreans.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. To the Koreans, and we are going to borrow the money. There is no one, Mr. Speaker, that could possibly hear this argument, no Member of Congress that could possibly hear this argument and not think to themselves why would we cut taxes by $70 billion for the wealthiest people in the country and have to borrow the money from the Chinese to pay for it?

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will continue to yield, I think it should be rephrased. Why should we give more money from foreign governments and from foreigners who invest in this country to pay wealthy Americans money? This is not a tax cut. This is a welfare program financed by non-Americans, to a substantial degree, to provide money impossible income to the most affluent among us. I dare say this sacrifices our national security.

We hear many in this Chamber, particularly on the Republican side, express concern about China. We are in the position here where we need China to fuel our economy. We need many of those Middle Eastern nations who are not democratic to fuel our economy. As Mr. RYAN and Mr. MEEK pointed out, in excess of $1 trillion has been borrowed from foreigners to pay for tax cuts for the most wealthy of Americans.

This makes no sense, Mr. Speaker. It makes no sense from a national security perspective. It concerns the United States’ concerns about China and China’s being a potential adversary, why do we continue to borrow money from the Chinese communist regime? Why, Mr. Speaker? It is a question I would like to have some body answer.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I am not sure, quite frankly, if there is a good answer. I mean, what could possibly be the good answer? And the rhetoric that we get from our friends on the other side is that the tax cuts are stimulating the economy. The tax cuts are creating jobs. And this is laughable. Where? Where? In the Delphi Corporation? Ford just announced they are cutting 30,000 jobs. General Motors? Who is creating the jobs? And I heard the money from China. A little bit earlier he had a company in Texas that went from two jobs to four jobs.

I mean, that is laughable. Ford cuts 30,000, and the argument coming from the other side is there is one company in Texas that went from two jobs to four jobs. Now, that is economic growth.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, here in the 30-Something Group, believe in third-party validators. Some are U.S. Government agencies. Some are groups with great credibility, third-party validators. We believe in making education in the way that we should. And we cannot even bring our proposal to the floor. Do my colleagues know why? They say Democrats are lazy, that they do not want to work. Guess what. We have a number of plans to put this country back in order and make sure that we clean out this deficit spending that the majority is doing, and they will not allow us in the Ways and Means Committee to come to the floor and put our proposals on this floor and let us do it on an up-or-down vote. What they are doing is they are borrowing from this generation and future generations.

Just a few weeks ago, what was it, 14-something billion dollars they took from students, they took from parents that are trying to educate their children? We are getting our clock cleaned by China that, I must add, we are borrowing money from to give billionaires and millionaires tax cuts. We are borrowing money from them. They have more engineers. As a Member of Congress that represents a father or mother that wants to see their daughter become an engineer, forget about it. Unless they are a millionaire or a billionaire, that is the only way she is going to get to college so that she can be able to make this country strong. We are weakening this country and giving subsidies to companies that go overseas, Mr. Speaker, to have more revenue than they are going to have here on U.S. soil, to have better opportunities for our young people.

No Child Left Behind, Mr. Speaker, was a piece of legislation that we all thought at the beginning that could be a bipartisan work product that we can fund to help our future generations and present generation so we can compete against other countries. No. What we are doing now is we are making it easier for U.S. companies to send our jobs overseas, to have here on U.S. soil, to have better opportunities for our young people.

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they have to put in their newsletter to their constituents that you need to look at that college fund that you are setting aside for your child, because, guess what? You need to increase it. Because we just made life harder for you.

Why do we make life harder for you? We made life harder because we had to make sure that the oil companies had their subsidies while they are making record breaking profits. We had to make sure that the millionaires and billionaires get their tax cut.

It is not just our report. Just pick up the paper. Just take a look at what is going on in this Congress right now. It is not that. It is not the fact that, oh, well, we had to cut the student loan and student opportunities, we had to cut Medicaid and we had to instruct the Veterans Affairs Committee to cut out of their budget millions for veterans to make their lives longer, to make those health care clinics for veterans have fewer hours.

Gentlemen, in some areas of this great country of ours, there are clinics that are only open for 1 day a week for the veterans. One day. So now we have instructed, or the Republican majority has instructed, that we all voted against it, to then cut over $600 million. So that means that maybe they will be open for half a day, Mr. Speaker.

And the President today wants to talk about the economy in Iraq. Wants to talking about what we have done with Iraqi contractors. Please. Why do not we talk about what we have done in U.S. cities?

Mr. DELAHUNT. If the gentleman will yield for a moment. You know, how about building some roads here in the United States? How about rehabilitating schools and constructing new schools with taxpayer dollars generated at the Federal level.

I am saying that for the United States here, what about our fellow citizens who were ravaged and are expressing frustration over every single day in the national media in the aftermath of Katrina, and Rita, and other natural disasters, who are living in cars. What about doing something here, Mr. President, for Americans, rather than assuming the cost of nation building in Iraq?

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I think the President is sincere, and I am not saying this facetiously, he is not the President of Iraq. He is the President of the United States of America. And I do not say that to be flippant. I say that because this President’s sole focus throughout his first term and into the second term has been Iraq.

And to give a speech today as Ford announces that they are cutting 30,000 jobs in the United States of America, as Delphi is in bankruptcy, as General Motors is having great difficulty competing, he is giving a speech on the Iraqi economy. It is like we are having a bad dream. I mean, come on. At some point, should not someone around the President or somebody in this Congress tug him on the shirt sleeve and say, hey, Mr. President, we need you. We need your help. This country needs a domestic economic policy.

Borrowing money from the Chinese to subsidize the top 1 percent is not a domestic agenda.

Mr. DELAHUNT. At a minimum, the American people deserve a debate. They deserve a debate. They deserve a debate about the implications, not just in terms of money, but the implications for the economic future particularly of your generation, by virtue of the costs that are being borne by American taxpayers, let alone my sons and daughters and your generation with their blood in Iraq.

I mean, from what we can infer, since the American taxpayer is bearing almost the entire burden of nation building in Iraq, let us have a debate about the concept of nation building as a key critical ingredient in the foreign policy of the United States.

Because that, I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, is a marked transformation in traditional Republican principles. We have heard, even in the course of the current campaign last year, the President announcing, Presidential campaigns, a denigration of nation building in terms of our foreign policy. And yet, what we have done is we have earmarked upon a nation building exercise as part of our foreign policy. We have embraced and embraced by this Republican Congress.

And the Republican majority gets a big fat F because we have been, and as ranking member of oversight on the Homeland Security Committee, we have worked time after time again and put forward proposals to make sure that U.S. cities are prepared for a terrorist attack.

Interoperability. Mr. Speaker, I want to break that down for the Members. That is making sure that first responders can talk to one another, which we learned from 9/11, that firefighters could not talk to police officers, police officers could not talk to firefighters, they could not talk to the port authority, they could not talk to others as it was helping them get out of those buildings. And guess what? Lives were lost. Lives were lost.

Mr. DELAHUNT. From September 11 of 2001 to today, has anything changed in terms of our preparedness for a major terrorist attack such as we experienced in New York and here in Washington? Has anything changed according to the 9/11 report of any consequence, of anything substantial whatsoever? Is it the MEEK of Florida. Well, do not ask me, I mean, look at what the 9/11 bipartisan commission said. I was watching Tim Russert, one of the respected reporters here in Washington, DC, at NBC. And he had the chairman, who is a Republican, past Republican governor, and the vice chairman that was a Member of this House, respected Democrat, on both sides of the aisle they respect him.

And they both said that the administration, present administration, Mr. Speaker, and the Republican majority, gets a big fat F. They did not want to grade. Well, let me just put it this way. They did not want to grade it, but they
said that it is low. Okay. And I think it is important that we understand that interoperability that was a big issue that first responders asked for, they could have saved not only first responder lives, but American lives if they could have talked to one another, because they did not have the ability.

Okay. You would assume that we would run out and get that done. No. We did not get it done. The Republican majority did not get it done. It was not prioritized. The money went there, but guess what? There is a bunch of politics that is going on as it relates to the money and the execution of making sure that U.S. cities have what they need.

Now, Americans again, another example, looked at what happened in Katrina. The Coast Guard could not talk to the police officers. The police officer could not talk to the military. The military could not talk to fire departments that came down to help. Fire departments could not talk to game and fish that were on boats trying to rescue people.

Why? Because the interoperability is not there. We mandate highway dollars, the National Guard, and a State trooper in the State of Florida. I can tell you right now, sometimes we used to be told, you need to write those seatbelt tickets. Why? Because the Colonel of the Florida Highway Patrol says so? No. Because if we do not write seatbelt tickets and we write speeding tickets to folks not wearing their seatbelts, we will lose our Federal money.

You think that if this Congress did that as it relates to making sure that we have interoperability that would save lives if a terrorist attack was to happen? Now it is not a secret. Wherever Americans are living now, Mr. Speaker, first responders could not talk to one another, because the dollars have not been prioritized as it relates to the money that happens on behalf of U.S. cities.

I want to make one other point, a couple of points if I may, and I will be quick. Failure to secure the materials for weapons of mass destruction in the national priority. We still do not have HAZMAT uniforms for many of our first responders that are out there.

Failure to improve air cargo inspection as a priority.

We want to shake down people at the magnetometers when they walk through the TSA. Meanwhile, we have containers being placed on these commercial flights that we know of.

Failed to implement an airline passenger prescreening program based on consolidated terrorist watch lists. Still, you have the administration, you have the majority that has failed to do that. We have proposals to do that. I am Ken Delahunt. We have talked to the TSA. Talk to me, from me, it is on a partisan vote and it goes down if it is heard at all, especially not on this floor.

Failed to review and make changes in the congressional intelligence oversight process. I am going to tell you right now, there are some things that we should have great oversight on, but I hate to report, there are things that the majority here have a certainty to have a hearing on. I just want to make sure the Members of the House understand, the majority rules here. They set the agenda. They say when something is going to happen. I mean the Republican majority. They set the agenda. They make sure that we have these hearings and they denied hearings as relates to this.

For Republicans to say, well, the Democrats are stopping us from doing certain things, we cannot stop them right now, Mr. Speaker, the Republican majority. That is something that the American people have to do. I can tell you right now, it is not political rhetoric. This is reality. I want to be very clear.

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For Republicans to say, well, the Democrats are stopping us from doing certain things, we cannot stop them right now, Mr. Speaker, the Republican majority. That is something that the American people have to do. I can tell you right now, it is not political rhetoric. This is reality. I want to be very clear.

Mr. DELAHUNT. They are excellent points. I think your idea about taking your one ticket and allowing a victim of Katrina and the natural disasters that befell our Gulf States, invite them to come and sit in this gallery is an excellent concern which I know my good friend from Florida (Mr. MEEK) shares as well. Mr. Ryan of Ohio. I think that the key point to this whole thing with the Katrina scenario is that the President ran on he was going to make the country stronger, that he could protect us better than his opponent, which is fine. Katrina happened. It was not a surprise attack. It was not a surprise that Katrina hit the gulf coast. This hurricane was on the Weather Channel for 5 days. And we say, were we really ready? Unfortunately, as Mr. Hamilton and Governor Kean said, that there will probably be another terrorist attack in the United States. We don’t want that to happen, of course, but we are not going to have 5 days to prepare for a terrorist attack in the United States. You are not going to be able to turn on the Weather Channel and they are going to say, a terrorist attack is coming for New York City and you have 5 days to prepare for it. That is the number-one responsibility that we have.

Mr. DELAHUNT. They are excellent points. I think your idea about taking your one ticket and allowing a victim of Katrina and the natural disasters that befell our Gulf States, invite them to come and sit in this gallery is an excellent concern which I know my good friend from Florida (Mr. MEEK) shares as well. We had our Governor and FEMA represent to your exchange and cannot help but consider asking our colleagues on both sides of the aisle to allow these seats to be filled by American citizens who have had their lives disrupted and their futures placed in doubt and listen to this President tell them that things are good in America and that their government is helping them. Maybe that might prompt some action, Mr. Speaker. Because just recently, 2 nights ago, there was on one of the networks a story about Americans living in the gulf coast, some areas don’t even have power. And they are asking Louisiana and they are asking Mississippi to carry the weight on the cost of recovery. Meanwhile, we have people walking on this floor with a straight face coming here talking about we need tax cuts to help the economy and my constituents need a tax cut, because of the upper crunches and billionaires that are getting it.

I want to thank my colleagues for allowing me to get these points out because it is important that we share this information.

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FEMA could have learned from some of those mistakes and dealt with the preparedness issues that they were really poor on and the aftermath response issues that they received incredibly poor marks on. You would think that they would have fixed it. But in our case, FEMA and the Florida government represented to us that we were the model State. I say this not to be too specific about any one State’s preparation, but FEMA and the Florida government represented that our State was the most prepared.

We can tell you that if our State and their response to Wilma is the pride and joy, is the model for preparation in disaster response, then we should all be deeply concerned about the other 49 States and their preparedness and potential response for a natural or a man-made disaster like a terrorist attack.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I think this goes right to the point that our friends on the other side, as much as we like some of those other friends, are unable to govern. They just don’t know how to do it. There is just total incompetence, from the economy, from the poverty levels, the macroeconomic situation, balancing the budget, lack of fiscal restraint, fiscal inadequacy in borrowing $1 trillion from foreign interests over the past 4 years. They just are unable to govern the country. They have had their chance. They have controlled the House and the Senate and the White House, they have had a chance to implement their agenda, and nothing seems to be going right.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. You are absolutely right. On top of that, because we are about third-party validators and it is not all about just what we say, you have Governor Kean and Mr. Hamilton who the other day gave them a list of Fs on almost every major aspect of preparedness and what we should be doing in terms of response to a terrorist act. It is not just one more example of their lack of caring, of their lack of competence, of the cronyism, of the corruption. Find a C word and this Republican leadership and the administration absolutely fit the bill.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Can the gentleman from Ohio just de- scribe the total lack of competence.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. It is a culture. It is a culture. It is a system.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. That you just for the filling in of the facts. The list goes on in terms of the cronyism that is rampant through this administration. So you have corruption. You have cronyism. Then you have, as the gentleman from Ohio just described, total lack of competence. Example after example. The proposal on Social Security. The way they handled Katrina. The way they handled Wilma. The deficit. We have an $8 trillion deficit.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Iraq.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Iraq. You have an $8 trillion deficit now. We have got corruption, cronyism, incompetence.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. It is a culture.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. It is a culture.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. This is not a one-time event.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. I must say that never before in the history of this country has there been leadership, all of these issues of cronyism and corruption, never before at these levels in the history of this country. It is not the Kendrick Meek report, the Debbie Wasserman Schultz report, or the Tim Ryan, the one on Florida, that job. You have Mr. Savavian, who was the procurement director in the White House. He has been fired because he was accused of wrongdoing.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. He had the opportunity to resign and then the next day he was indicted. Go ahead.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Thank you just for the filling in of the facts. The list goes on in terms of the cronyism that is rampant through this administration. So you have corruption. You have cronyism. Then you have, as the gentleman from Ohio just described, total lack of competence. Example after example. The proposal on Social Security. The way they handled Katrina. The way they handled Wilma. The deficit. We have an $8 trillion deficit.

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Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman would yield, I will.

Mr. DELAHUNT. This is a quote from October 28, a column by Bill Gertz and Rowan Scarborough, again, people that would not agree with me or my colleagues on this side of the aisle. Here is what they said: Defense officials tell us the scandal involves massive corruption in Iraq related to the United States and international funds meant for reconstruction efforts and the failure of the administration to control these funds.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. He was the ranking member on a subcommittee that has requested for months an oversight hearing just simply on these allegations, and I am met with silence. Let me tell you that is wrong. It is a disservice to the American people. It is a disservice to the institution, not a single hearing in 3 years.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman would yield, I thank my friend and the gentleman from Massachusetts and colleague on the Judiciary Committee.

I have been to Iraq for the express purposes of oversight of those construction projects, about $12.5 billion administered by the Army and the bribery of that $16.5 billion to entities, the sea bees. Yes, I actually faced a number of questions from the people in Iraq. I did not get to the bottom of that. I do not know that they are in a position to actually have oversight on this in that fashion, but your point that you have made is one that is somewhat new and fresh to me. I have done due diligence, I think, to an extent to see where that money’s been spent there. I would very much like to sit down with you and have this conversation so that we could bore into this.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, but the American people have a right of transparency and watching and hearing and from these people. You make that effort and I understand that you do and you ask questions, but we need to do this in the light of day. There is pervasive corruption ongoing in the rebuilding of Iraq. It is offensive, and this comes from conservative columnists as well.

Mr. DELAHUNT. I think we are coming back for another hour, so we will get him on the other side here.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. I hope he yields to us for the time we are yielding to him because we only have about 6 minutes left.

Mr. DELAHUNT. I think we are coming back for another hour, so we will get him on the other side here.

I will just make this statement and ask for your comment. We have been at war for almost 3 years. It will be 3 years this March. We have not had a single oversight hearing on Iraq in the committees that I serve on, including the House International Relations Committee. Not one.
Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Just a few examples of what you are talking about, we are talking about the role of the White House in promoting misleading intelligence when it came to how we got into the war and the Iraq's weapons of mass destruction or lack thereof. We are talking about the responsibility of senior administration officials for the abuses at Abu Ghraib. We are talking about the role of the Vice President's office and the award of Halliburton contracts, no information on their ability. The identity of the energy industry campaign contributors that met with the Vice President's energy task force.

We could keep going about the corruption, the lack of information, the lack of competence, and in fact, when we come back at our next opportunity in our next hour, we will continue to go on about that.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. How about the gentleman, I cannot remember his name, the weeks ago came up who had $87 million worth of contracts in Iraq he was in charge of and he was stealing money, hundred of thousands of dollars. In the 1990s he was convicted of fraud, but yet, this administration hired him that is incomprehensible. That is cronyism. That is an inability to execute the proper role of government.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, we just got back from Iraq. We are not even a week out of Iraq. We visited three Iraqi cities, and it was my second trip. I can tell you this, that when you hear uniformed personnel say, well, you know, some of the money, I mean it is like you know people take some of the money for themselves; it is something that happens here in Iraq. This is an Adam Smith kind of thing. This is the U.S. taxpayers' money, and we are just saying, oh, well, you know, that is the way things happen over here.

Let me tell you, when the auditor general really starts to report what is happening with the money we are giving, that is being taken away from U.S. cities and the U.S. taxpayer, meanwhile the majority says, oh, let us govern, we will make sure that we are fiscal and we are responsible, well, when we come back in the next hour I want to talk about being responsible. I think it is important we do that. We will be back in an hour.

I just want you to give the Web site out before we close.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. 30somethingdems@mail.house.gov.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank Mr. DELAHUNT, Mr. RYAN, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ and to thank the Democratic leadership for allowing us to have the hour. We would also like to say it is pleasure and honor to address the House of Representatives.

IRAQ

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. McCaul). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I appeared to address this Chamber and appreciate the opportunity for some dialogue with my colleagues from the other side of the aisle and particularly Uncle Bill from Massachusetts whom I did yield to the last time we held this kind of a session, and so we have a little engagement going.

I think it is constructive dialogue that we have. I know we disagree often. We are looking for the best thing for this country all together, Mr. Speaker, and disagree with the method of how we get there, and sometimes we disagree with our definition and analysis of how we approach these things.

So to begin my hour, Mr. Speaker, I would like to address some of the concerns that we had in the previous hour, many of which I did not hear in great detail, some of which the philosophy I heard ad infinitum here one or 2 hours a night after our session every week for the last months.

One of the great deals that came up, Mr. Speaker, was the issue of weapons of mass destruction, and yes, I have been to Iraq. I have been there three times. The last time there was I came back the latter part of August, and I make it a point to get to the place where some of the other Members of Congress have not gone. I make it a point to find soldiers there, generally I ask for Iowans, anybody here from Iowa. We sit down and talk, and I meet with people all the way up the line to the top brass and also to the U.S. ambassador, representatives of the Iraqi government. I have tracked this through the history of the liberation of Iraq and on through to this point that we are today.

It says a great deal, Mr. Speaker, to hear some of the leaders of the party on the other side and a very small number of people on my side of the aisle who have lost their faith, lost their faith in their own judgment, Mr. Speaker. In fact, we had this debate here in this Congress in the fall of 2002, and this Congress voted by a solid majority to endorse the President's authority to use force to enforce the resolution of the United Nations in Iraq, that somehow is to be enforced, Mr. Speaker, and without that, there would have been no teeth whatsoever to the United Nations.

Our President did that. We knew that was going to be the case. We knew when the debate took place in this Chamber that there was going to be a majority decision. I would like to think when we meet here to have these debates, Mr. Speaker, that we stick with the decision of the majority. That is the will of this body. When will the will of this body be followed? The will of the Senate is reflected and that resolution makes its way to the White House, where statutory legislation the President signs it, if it is a resolution the President takes account of the judgment of the House of Representatives and the judgment of the Senate. The judgment of the House and the judgment of the Senate was to endorse the President, the commander-in-chief, and Congress, the President to use authority to enforce the United Nations resolutions, particularly 1441. The President did that.

There is a long argument as to why he did not have an alternative, and our House was engaged, and the American people and our troops were engaged, and they were engaged in a war in Afghanistan, this extraordinary war in Afghanistan, extraordinary grateful today, to have that opportunity to be free.

If anyone doubts that, look back in your mind's eye to last January when the Iraqis went to the polls to elect their interim parliament. Eight to 8.5 million of the Iraqis went to the polls to vote, and they voted and they dipped their finger in the purple ink. They pequeño, and they, in fact, defiantly marched out of there with their purple fingers in the air. When they were threatened with their very lives for going to the polls to vote in that January, there were 108 attacks on the polling booths in Iraq by suicide bombers, all terrorists, trying to intimidate the entire country from voicing their voice of freedom, their voice of directing their national destiny through their elected leaders. Yet, they went to the polls and those whose threats and, in fact, upset the predictions from the other side of the aisle, Mr. Speaker.

So the people that did not have faith that there could be legitimate elections in Iraq saw them happen, and those people that were so invested in failure, that they could not abide admitting that there was a success, began to explain it away.

Well, we had kind of an election, kind of a legitimacy came out of the mouth of John Kerry. So how much more legitimate can you get when people defy a threat of death to go for their first time and vote for the first time in their lives, and legitimately, their argument can be made the first time in all history on that piece of real estate. They had that courage to take advantage of that opportunity, and they voted in greater numbers in percentage-wise than Americans did in the presidential election.

Yet, we had people over here that said, well, it is a kind of legitimacy; it really is not a real election; we really do not know how many people that did not participate that would have if somehow or another they believed in the process, had more courage or been less threats on their lives. Yet, they voted in greater numbers than Americans did, and they call it kind of a legitimacy. That was January.

October 15, by then this new parliament has written a new Constitution, another milestone, a milestone that set on the calendar a sequence of events that need to take place in order