

not prepare for a long war. Certainly not George Bush's war. And if Tom Hartman is right in his assessment, we do not need to prepare for Dick Cheney's war either.

We have had some discussion in this body about war, and one of my colleagues from Pennsylvania did what Major General Smedley Butler said we ought to do. He visited the young men and women who have been asked to fight this war, who are on the front lines of Donald Rumsfeld's long war. There he was compelled to make a change, a change in his conviction, that perhaps this is not the right war for America; and he came back to this Congress and he said so. I am talking about my colleague from Pennsylvania, Mr. MURTHA.

We need to really think about where we are as a country. We need to think about who we are as a country, as Americans. What does it mean to be an American?

Look at the people of Haiti who have nothing but their hopes and aspirations in democracy. And despite dictatorship and coup d'etat and dictatorship and coup d'etat again, they went to the polls and they demanded that their votes be counted.

We, too, have, in this country, the opportunity to express ourselves at the ballot box. The way I stand here is the way all 535 Members of Congress stand here, because people choose to participate or people choose not to.

In my case, I was put out of Congress because I spoke up about September 11. And the people of the Fourth Congressional District of Georgia said, we are not going to stand for that, and they sent me back, showing the power of the vote, as the people of Haiti have demonstrated to the world the power of the vote. I would hope all Americans would value the power of the vote and exercise it.

#### OFFICIAL TRUTH SQUAD

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CONAWAY). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. PRICE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the courtesy that the leadership has extended me in hosting this hour. We are going to talk about a number of things this hour, but I think it is important for the folks at home to know what this hour is. This is called the leadership hour, and what that means is that the leadership of the Republican party allows individuals to come to the floor for this hour. The leadership of the Democrat party allows individuals to come to the floor and speak about topics that are of interest to Congress and of interest to the American people, of interest to the world.

And what you have just heard is an interesting presentation that, apparently, the leadership of the Democrat

party endorses. I am not certain what, how one would describe it or how one would categorize it, but it was more fiction than truth. I would love to hear the other side, the leadership of the other side stand up and say what they disagree with about what has just been presented.

You know, when I go home and I talk to constituents, one of the things that they say over and over and over again is that they just cannot understand the tone that is going on in Washington. What is going on? Why are people so angry? And I do not understand it, frankly.

We are all elected here to come solve problems, and that is the challenge that we have been given. But the tone that we get so often is this culture of cynicism. It is a culture of pessimism. It is a culture of negativity. To make statements about our members of the executive branch and leaders who are elected in ways that just have no foundation does a disservice to everybody.

So I am a member of the freshman class, and as a member of the freshman class we get together once a week. And one of the things that we talked about toward the end of last year was we need to try to raise the level of the rhetoric here. We need to try to put a more positive message out because of the tone that we so often hear in Washington.

So we have developed what we call the Official Truth Squad. This is a group of individuals who are willing to come to the floor and talk about messages, talk about things that are of interest to the American people in a positive light and also to bring truth to the debate. Because, as you oftentimes hear, those who have been watching, we are given great latitude in what we can say and, in fact, it does not have to be the truth. Many people put issues out here and things are not countered, so people begin to believe them. You know, they say that in Washington, if somebody says something three times, that makes it true. Well, it just is not so, Mr. Speaker, as those around the Nation know.

So what we would like to do is to talk about things in a truthful way to try to make certain that we counter much of the negativity that has been presented. You know, Senator Moynihan had a wonderful, wonderful quote that he had. It was, you know, everybody's entitled to their opinion, but they are not entitled to their facts. And I think that is so true.

So this afternoon, what we, the Official Truth Squad, are going to be talking about is national security. It kind of dovetails with the discussion that we have just heard.

I am pleased to be joined by many of my colleagues in the freshman class and others, and I would like to introduce first to talk about national security, Congresswoman JEAN SCHMIDT. Congresswoman SCHMIDT is from Ohio. She comes with great expertise, representation at the State level, and has

a passion for not just America, a positive passion for America, but a passion for national security and national defense.

So, Congresswoman SCHMIDT, I would like to yield to you and have you bring us some words about national security.

Mrs. SCHMIDT. Mr. Speaker, Congressman PRICE, I rise today to speak on the importance that we as a Nation do all that we can to prevent another terrorist attack on our homeland.

Like many of my colleagues, I will never forget the attacks of September 11. My daughter lived in New York City at the time. I remember that morning all too well because I did not know where she was. I did not know how close she was to the proximity of the attacks. For hours and hours, literally, almost 2 days, I could not get through to her, worrying about her safety and her well-being, worrying about how she was. My husband and I were so blessed and so grateful that she was just scared, but certainly safe.

But, you know, thousands of other people were not lucky like us. Thousands of others lost their loved ones in that attack. We must do everything in our power to prevent another attack from happening.

I rise today to congratulate the hard-working men and women of our intelligence agencies and the first responders on preventing another attempt like 9/11. I, like most Americans, wake up each morning safe, proceed with my day without even worrying about the threat of an attack because I know, from law enforcement to our national security apparatus, thousands of highly trained professionals are diligently watching and working. Men and women using the latest technologies and a lot of muscle are hard at work around the clock making sure that those that want to hurt us are kept at bay.

I hope everyone understands that the desire of the terrorist organizations to launch a deadly attack has not gone away. It has not subsided. They are out there. They want to attack us.

What has changed is our ability to thwart the attacks. That ability has dramatically increased. The latest in database technology, coupled with surveillance technologies, is proving to be a powerful force in identifying potential attackers. We owe a great deal of gratitude to these men and women on the front lines of our defense here at home as well as abroad.

Just this week the media reported that some 200,000 people across the globe are on our watchlist, persons that we have reason to believe wish us harm, wish us death, wish our Nation destruction.

□ 1400

But most importantly, 200,000 persons we have already identified as potential threats. When we wake up each morning and turn on our television sets and there is no news of an attack, we do not even think that there might have been one. That in itself is a tribute to

the hard work of our national security team. We go about our lives without fear of an attack each day because of the job they are doing. We must give them every tool needed to complete their mission. Their mission is not only important; it is a matter of life and death.

Much has been said about the National Security Agency's surveillance program in the media. Much of it is nonsense and distortion. Mr. Speaker, I asked my constituents in a survey what they think of the National Security Agency's surveillance program. Over 2,000 people have responded to date. Almost 80 percent support the program, eighty percent is a huge supermajority of folks representing all kinds of ideologies and political affiliations. Eighty percent. The media just does not always get it, Mr. Speaker, but the American people do.

The American people first and foremost want to be safe in their homes and go about their lives without the fear of another attack. They exhibit far more common sense than the media ever gives them credit for. One of our colleagues from the great State of Texas has a great saying that Texas could use a whole lot less of Washington and Washington could use a whole lot more of Texas. Unfortunately, someday, I believe, and I really hope and pray in the very far distant future, we may well be attacked again. That attack may well be much larger in scope than we ever could believe, much larger than 9/11. On that day I hope and I pray we can say honestly and wholeheartedly we did everything we could to prevent it.

It is our job, Mr. Speaker. It is our job as Members of Congress to make sure that Americans are safe, safe and free, safe and free from the terrorist attack of yesterday and tomorrow. We have to continue to do that. To do nothing less is not just irresponsible; it is un-American.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Ohio for her leadership on this issue.

And what a moving story that was about the communication that you had with your daughter, and it brings back the memory of September 11 to all of us and where we were and what we were doing that day.

As Members of Congress, as you know, we have some opportunities to get some information about our intelligence and about what things are happening in the world that we are not often able to share, and I am moved by the stories like that that I hear; but I also, when I go home, tell folks that the fact that we have not been attacked again is not a mistake. It is not a mistake. We have thousands, millions of men and women who are just working night and day to make certain that we are safe as a Nation, and I am proud of that fact. I am proud of that fact.

Joining us now is Congressman TED POE. Congressman POE is a judge from Texas, a leader in his area, his commu-

nity and his State and certainly in our Nation, and an individual who has such an incredible fund of knowledge as it relates to national security and specifically border security. I know that in Georgia we have got major challenges. I know that in Texas there are major challenges.

So I yield to Congressman POE to discuss some things about national security and border security.

Mr. POE. Thank you, Dr. PRICE. I appreciate this opportunity to share this time with you and discuss the things that are important to our country.

As you know, my background has always been one that enforced the law, law enforcement, down in Texas. I prosecuted, and then I tried cases as a judge for 22 years, and now I am here. So I probably see things from maybe a different background and perspective than many other people. And I always like to relate what is going on today to history. As our good friend, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Mrs. SCHMIDT), just said about September 11, we are working on 3½ years since that event occurred, and it is still fresh in the minds of many Americans.

On that day I was driving my Jeep to the courthouse, and I am listening to the country western station here on the radio that a plane had hit the World Trade Center. And then a few minutes later, a second plane hits the World Trade Center. People on the highway that morning, some of them were pulling over to listen to the national broadcasting of what was occurring, that attack on America. Then the third plane crashes in Pennsylvania because some good people on that plane, some real American heroes, took control of that situation and saved some building, either this building or the White House, from being hit that morning. And then that fourth plane that hit the Pentagon.

And later that day, I, like many other people, was watching television, and I noticed that when those planes hit the World Trade Center that there were thousands of Americans, thousands of people from all over the world, when those planes hit the World Trade Center, they were running as hard as they could to get away from that terror, that terror in the skies. I am not faulting them for that, but that is what took place.

But there was another group of people, not very many, but a group of individuals who, when those planes hit the World Trade Center, they were running as hard as they could to get to that terror. They were volunteers; emergency medical technicians; firefighters; and cops, police officers. And while it is very important that we continue to remember the people who died that day, we also need to remember the people that lived because those first responders did the first duty of government, which is to protect the public; and we will never know how many lives they saved. Many of them gave their own lives that day, because it is the duty of

our country to protect America, to protect us against criminals that live among us and to protect us against those criminals that live in other lands that want to do us harm. And we cannot say enough about those first responders that are still working throughout our country protecting us at home.

Because of those events, one thing led to another and we took the war on terror to the enemy. And now we have the greatest military ever assembled on Earth in Iraq and Afghanistan and other parts of the world fighting and winning the war on terror.

I was privileged, as many Members, to go to Iraq. I got to go there a year ago on election day, one of two Members that were there on election day, January 30, when Iraq had their first free elections in the history of their country. But I was also there to see our military, and I think it is very important that if Members of Congress are going to send our young men and women into combat, we ought to be there on the ground to see firsthand what the situation is like. That is why I went. That is why I am going back.

And it is interesting to me, Dr. PRICE, how there are some who criticize what is taking place in Iraq and Afghanistan but yet refuse to go there to see what it is like. I have invited those people to go with me. Some of them are down the hallway. We call that the U.S. Senate. To go with me, I will plan the trip and all they have got to do is show up. But if we are going to send people into combat, we need to see what it is like so we can make better judgment calls on this end. But our troops, the morale is tremendous.

It is interesting how we see a lot in the media about the war on terror, but very seldom do we ever see an interview of some soldier, sailor, marine, somebody in the Air Force, a personal story about their reflections on what they are doing in the war on terror.

Some people ask, why are we fighting the war on terror over there? Well, there is more to it than that. We are also fighting the war by establishing a democracy in Iraq and Afghanistan because democracies are the enemy of terrorists. They do not want democracies. They want chaos. They want dictatorships. They want a safe haven where they can strike throughout the world. So that is why the war is there in Iraq and Afghanistan. It is because those two countries are going to be democracies, just like Japan and Germany were democracies at the end of World War II. And the cynics and the skeptics, oh, they lived back then too, said it is not going to happen, that the Japanese cannot have a democracy and certainly not the Germans. Now look at them. Democracies, world powers today.

So democracy, of course, takes time. It took us 7 years to free ourselves from the British. The British did not get the point. They came back in 1812, burned this building down, and we had

to fight them again. And the Iraqi people are doing a tremendous job of securing their own nation.

I had a general tell me when I was in Iraq, and he said this in a kind way but he was serious, about the Americans being there and the Iraqi security forces. He said, If the Americans stay much longer, we are going to start charging them rent for being here. And what he was saying was another version of what the plan is. The plan is relatively simple: secure the stability of the country, train the Iraqi security forces, and let them take care of their own country. And that is what is going on. And we see now on a daily basis the casualties of the Iraqi security forces. Those people are giving up their own lives for their own democracy, fighting the war on terror.

So we are winning that war. The national security, public safety, is an obligation of this country, at home, overseas, and to fight that war wherever it occurs.

Just one other thing I would like to mention. I do not want to take up too much of your time, Doc, but there is a third area where we have to have national security. It is not just locally with our first responders, our police officers, and our small towns and big cities. It is not just overseas where we have the war on terror going and our military doing a good job working with the CIA and the FBI. But then we have the national security issue of the dignity and sovereignty of this country, and I am talking about border security.

I live down in southeast Texas. The southern Texas border, some have said, is a war zone because it is an area of national concern for three reasons: we have the narcoterrorists coming across the border. Those are drug dealers that are armed better than our own sheriffs, bringing in that cancer to sell throughout the United States. That is a national concern. It is also a national security problem.

The second thing is we have those next terrorists that come into the United States. They are probably not going to fly over to Reagan National Airport, get off the airplane, look around and see what damage they can do. They are probably not going to do that. But they are probably going to come across our Texas border, our southern border, and do some harm to us. We know that that is the plan of many of those terrorists because our borders are open.

And, of course, we have the third problem of just purely folks coming here illegally. It is not that people are coming here that is the problem. It is the way they are coming here. If we are going to have the rule of law, the government has the responsibility to support and make sure the rule of law is enforced.

One example of how our national security maybe needs to be revved up a little more on our southern border, let me speak specifically about our narcoterrorists. I have been down to

the southern Texas border with our sheriffs, and we had 16 of the Texas border sheriffs up here last week. I do not know if you saw them or not. It would be hard to miss 16 Texas sheriffs walking down Pennsylvania Avenue.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. They are big.

Mr. POE. They were impressive fellows. And let me tell you something, Doc. They look like Texas sheriffs. You have that image. They all look like that. But they are concerned about border security as well, and it is more than just the terrorists that are coming over. It is the narcoterrorists that are coming in. But one of them not too long ago took this photograph.

□ 1415

His deputies took this photograph. This is a photograph in the Rio Grande River taken from the Texas side looking over to the Mexican side. In this, you have a raft. You see there are six or seven individuals who are all dressed in black camo outfits, armed with AK-47s. You will see one of them right here, an AK-47. On their backs they have backpacks which were later determined to be cocaine, bringing it to the United States.

And who are these people? It turns out that probably these individuals are Guatemalan mercenaries hired by the drug cartels to bring drugs into the United States. It is an epidemic, it is a border war, and it is a violent war.

So I would just hope that we in Congress can make sure that we enforce the rule of law, enforce the first obligation of government, which is to protect the public. Public safety is our number one concern.

Let me just conclude by saying that we should make sure that people throughout the world know that this country believes in freedom and liberty because of all of the benefits of it, whether you are here in the United States or some other country, like Iraq or Afghanistan.

President Kennedy said it probably better than anybody when he made the comment that let every nation know that, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we will pay any price, we will bear any burden, we will meet any hardship, we will support any friend, and we will oppose any foe to assure the survival and success of liberty. He couldn't have said it better.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Congressman POE, I thank you ever so much for your leadership in this area. Your knowledge is just so very, very helpful to all of us, not just in Congress but literally across the Nation. As you were relating your story about where you were on 9/11, we all have those stories, and I get chills listening to you and what you were describing. I remember that day just as clearly as everybody else.

It is just phenomenal when you think about again the fact that we have so many wonderful men and women working right now to make certain that that doesn't happen again and for bringing clarity to what is happening

in Iraq, the positive news that is coming from Iraq.

As the Official Truth Squad, we have got some truths I would like to just share with the American people and with our colleagues, because you oftentimes don't hear of all of the good things that are happening over there. We are making incredible, incredible progress, regardless of what you think about how we got there or the like of it, incredible progress. I know this is tough to read, but I will go through a few points.

In August of 2004, about a year-and-a-half ago, there were only a handful of Iraqi army battalions in the battle, in the fight. Today, there are 100 Iraqi Ministry of Defense combat battalions in the fight, in the battle.

In July, 2004, there were no operational army division or brigade headquarters. Today, there are eight brigade headquarters and 37 battalions that have assumed battle space.

In July, 2004, again about a year and a half ago, there were no operational special police commandos, public order, mechanized police or emergency response units under the Ministry of the Interior in Iraq. Today, there are 28 such battalions in the fight.

November, 2004, just a little over a year ago, there were there 115,000 trained and equipped Iraqi security forces. How many today? 227,000 trained and equipped security forces. There are more if you count all of the local police officers.

The experience and ability of the Iraqi forces has increased remarkably. This is General Peter Pace who said just a week ago in December the Iraqi armed forces had more independent operations than did the coalition forces. Did you hear that, Mr. Speaker? The Iraqi forces were providing more independent operations than the coalition forces. That didn't make any headline. You didn't hear that on the news or read that in your newspaper. That is progress for freedom, it is progress for liberty, and it is progress for, frankly, I believe the stability of that region certainly and ultimately the world.

We are sharing some thoughts, Mr. Speaker, about national security, and the operation Official Truth Squad is pleased to have Congresswoman MARSHA BLACKBURN join us again. Congresswoman BLACKBURN is just an incredible leader from Tennessee. She has I know a great interest in the area and great expertise in what it means to provide national security, homeland security and to fight for liberty and freedom.

Congresswoman BLACKBURN, thank you so much for joining us today.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Thank you so much. I thank the gentleman from Georgia for his exceptional work on the Truth Squad and his commitment to this, to being certain that we get the message out.

You know, I, like you, believe in the American dream and believe in the goodness of this great country and

search each and every day for ways that we can all work together to be certain that we preserve freedom and hope and liberty for future generations. I think that is a worthy goal.

We had talked about national security one night on this floor. Yesterday, we talked about economic security. Today, we are back on the national security focus. I like what you are saying, because you are addressing the military efforts that are taking place so that we are fighting terrorists over there and we are not having to fight them over here.

As Judge POE was saying, we have got different fronts in this war, with our first responders and the work they do on our home streets, with our border agents and the work they are doing along the border, and then also with our military operations. I think it is something that we want to keep our focus on as we address this situation in the Middle East and being certain we are addressing taking this fight to the heart of where terrorism has had its breeding ground and addressing it right there on their own soil.

A couple of points, too, I think that we need address as we talk about homeland security and we talk about national security and the war on terror. Things that we want to remember is our President and the leadership, our military leadership, has told us from day one, this is going to be a very long war. It is not going to be easy. But this is going to be a long war, and we need to remember that and use that to keep it in perspective.

We feel like we take two steps forward and one step back so very, very often, and it is going to be a long time. But preserving freedom and the fight for freedom, that is a worthy, worthy goal.

I think another thing we need to keep in mind is that when all of this started in 2003, our President and our military leadership said, basically, it is a seven-step process and told us at that point we would go in, secure the country, they would appoint an interim government, they would appoint a constitution writing committee, they would go through the process of writing that constitution, ratifying that constitution, then they would hold their national elections and install their national government, and then the seventh and final point will be to dissolve the coalition.

Right now, the Iraqi people are in the process of installing that government; and following that government standing up on its feet, then we will begin to dissolve the coalition.

Another thing we have to keep in mind, I love your points, Mr. PRICE, about what is taking place there and the progress that is being made. One of the things that I have enjoyed talking with my constituents about is how dealing with Iraq has to be an orderly process, and a part of that orderly process is being certain that we do some things in conjunction with other

things. We want to be certain we raise up the military at the same time we are raising up the government so that one can support the other.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I want to make certain that people are hearing what you are saying. Because so oftentimes we hear there is no plan, the President doesn't have a plan, we don't have a plan. But what you have said so clearly is that when the President talked about this in the spring of 2003, 3 years ago, that he outlined a seven-step process. As far as I can tell, we are on the sixth step of that. So the plan is there.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. That is correct, and I thank the gentleman for those comments. That is correct. Going through an orderly process. And now as that government is standing up, and that is the sixth step, and as we move forward, we look at being certain that the military operations and your government operations, and you need that infrastructure. We know in our own Nation it has worked well to have divisions in our government with your executive and legislative and judicial branches. So as we stand the military up and the government with those different branches standing up, we also have an eye on education and what is being done to help lift the people.

We forget many times that many of these individuals did not have access to an education. When I first went into Iraq in October of 2003, one of the things that stunned me and one of the facts that I was really quite amazed to learn was that the country's population was about 65 percent female and, out of that, about 70 percent of that female population was considered to be illiterate. That is so troublesome to know, with the education process for women, the education process for children, the fact that young girls are able to go to school, and putting in place the schools, I think it is 2,800 schools that our U.S. military has helped to rehabilitate and get the doors open. And, of course, USAID has supplied notebooks and backpacks and the things that are necessary to begin to put that quality of life in place.

So it is the ability to go in and assist with those processes and the functions of the military, the government and the community, the quality of life that will enable Iraq to stand up and to stand on their own two feet and to enjoy, enjoy successes, and that is what General Pace was speaking of, with their forces actually conducting more operations than the coalition forces. I think that is really quite remarkable.

You think of how far they have come in 3½ years. To us, many times, yes, we live in a world where we expect instant everything. We watch a 30-minute TV show or a one-hour TV show, and we want the problem solved within that period of time.

Freedom is a little bit harder. It doesn't move quite that quickly. Three-and-a-half years, look how far

they have come in their steps to freedom and their steps to readiness.

I will close with saying my last trip into Iraq over New Year's this year and spending time with some of our troops and then spending time with three women who are each one running a different woman's organization in Iraq was a very touching time. One of the things they repeatedly do is to express thanks to our coalition forces and then to place a reminder with us, don't leave us now. Do not leave us now. Be certain that we are standing on our own two feet before you leave us.

I thank the gentleman again. The freshman class is doing a wonderful job with the Truth Squad. It is always a pleasure to come and stand here in this wonderful hall before this great body and join you in talking about the good work that is being done and the focus of this Republican Conference to address the security of this great Nation.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. I thank the gentlelady for coming and being such an integral part of the discussion and the leadership in this House of Representatives. Again, I think it is incredibly important that we appreciate that those that say that there is no plan, hasn't ever been a plan, that that is just not truthful.

Again, we are the Official Truth Squad, and the truth of the matter is that there has been a plan, and that plan was outlined very eloquently by the gentlelady from Tennessee, a seven-step process. The final step is to have coalition forces leave, and we are on the sixth of seven steps. So we are moving incredibly well and orderly, moving through a process that is bringing about freedom and liberty to people who, frankly, may never have even hoped that it could occur.

The gentlelady was so appropriate in defining those different areas of the Nation that we are addressing, not just the military but standing up the government, education, educating individuals who in their wildest dreams could never have dreamed of the opportunity to have the kind of education that they are able to receive now because of their freedom.

As a physician, I know that the health care services that are being provided there in Iraq now are of a higher quality than before and accessible to all, which certainly was not the case before.

So truth, truth is so incredibly important when you talk about public policy. If we don't deal in truth when we talk about these issues that come before our Nation, then it is difficult to reach the right conclusion. It is difficult to reach the right solution. So that is why we are so enthusiastic about the need and the importance of truth.

□ 1430

I have been searching for a number of quotes on truth. This is one that I am very fond of. George Washington, in a letter to Edmund Randolph in 1795 said

that there is but one straight course, one appropriate course, one straight course, and that is to seek truth and pursue it steadily.

Seeking truth and pursuing it steadily. And I think that is what is so imperative, because so often you hear from the folks who want to blame America first, all of the things where they have stretched, stretched is being generous, the truth; and so it is appropriate that we come here day after day, literally, and put forward to the American people the appropriate information that is necessary for individuals to have the truth.

And the other quote that I have shared with folks before is the one from Senator Moynihan, that is, that everyone is entitled to their own opinion, but not their own facts. And so with that, I would like to talk about another aspect of truth. And one of the things, as I mentioned before, we have some great latitude in this Chamber to talk about things and to say things that may not necessarily be so.

Just yesterday, as a matter of fact, in one of the speeches that was given from the well on the other side, a Member of the other side said, we are talking on this side of the aisle, that is, the Democratic, the minority side, Mr. Speaker, that we embrace and we appreciate our troops and veterans. That is a wonderful thing.

But meanwhile, this is the statement on the floor, meanwhile in the President's budget it talks about cuts in veterans affairs, cuts in veterans affairs. I know this is a little hard to read over here, but, in fact, the truth of the matter, in particular \$34.3 billion for medical care a \$3.5 billion, 11.3 percent increase over the 2006 enacted level, and an increase of 69 percent since President Bush took office.

So what you see here is the allegation, and here is the truth. There are a couple of other ways to show that, to demonstrate that with certainty, and it is even more vivid. This chart, this graph, shows the Department of Defense military discretionary budget in billions of dollars from 2000 to projected 2007. That asterisk there is because we have not adopted the 2007 budget yet, will not do so until later this year.

But the President's proposal is listed. What you see here are the levels of expenditures, Federal expenditures for the Department of Defense. Now remember the allegation is that there are cuts in the military: 2000, \$287 billion; 2001, \$303 billion; 2002, \$328 billion.

You notice that we are going in a direction that looks like it is increasing. Only in Washington can a cut be an increase. Only in Washington can a cut be an increase: 2003, \$365; 2004, \$376; 2005, \$400 billion; and last year, \$411 billion.

Now I do not know about you, Mr. Speaker, but where I come from those are not cuts, those are increases, and appropriate increases, appropriate increases to our defense establishment

and to the veterans who are serving so well.

What about medical care? You hear about veterans medical care. All the time the allegation was, as was in that quote just yesterday, that veterans medical care is being cut. Well, here is the before and after. 1995: what happened in 1995 was that the Republicans took control of the House of Representatives, and you see before then the gradual increases, mostly fixed to inflation, sometimes not even at inflation.

And then the entire budgetary allotment for medical care, veterans medical care, is in the yellow bars there from 1995 to 2005. And what you see is an increase from \$16.2 billion to \$29.9 billion.

Mr. Speaker, that does not look like a cut to me. That does not look like a cut to America. That does not look like a cut to veterans. They know the truth. And it is so important. You cannot reach the right conclusions, you cannot reach the right solutions if you are not talking truthfully. So we are pleased to come to the floor and talk about what is true.

What about discretionary spending on veterans, not just medical care, but discretionary spending on veterans? This is the same kind of graph: before 1995 and since 1995. Again, remember the allegation is that this money, discretionary spending for veterans, is being cut.

Well, Mr. Speaker, again, I mean, my eyes may deceive me sometimes, but I cannot for the life of me figure out how moving from \$17.6 billion in 1995 to \$30.7 billion in 2005 could ever be described as a decrease or a cut.

This is a commitment by the Republican leadership and the Republican House to make certain that we appropriately, appropriately, provide resources for veterans, our military individuals who serve us so incredibly well.

But, again, truth. The truth is that the resources have been increased every single year, that there has been no cut. And so I am pleased to have the opportunity to be able to come and share that kind of truthful information with the American people.

I am honored to be joined right now by another colleague, another gentleman from Texas, another judge from Texas, Congressman GOHMERT, who has a wealth of experience in his State and is a true leader in the area of national security knowledge and intelligence.

So we appreciate Congressman GOHMERT you coming and joining us today. Please, I look forward to your remarks.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that from my good friend from Georgia. And it is an honor to not only be on the floor here, but to serve with the kind right honorable gentleman from Georgia, a physician to the body before he got here and now a physician to the heart of America since he is here. So that is an honor.

But, you know, you were talking about, and to observe the House rules

we do not call people by their first names here, so, Dr. Price, you were talking about truth. And one of the great disappointments over the last few decades has been the United Nations. It should be an integral part of our national security.

Yet it has failed miserably. It has taken the wrong side so often, and yet we had an administration and a President who wanted someone as an ambassador to the U.N. who would be truthful, call things like they were.

And as we saw in the Senate, when it came time to confirm Mr. Bolton, they threw on the brakes. Oh, my gosh, this guy can be rude. He will actually tell people what he thinks. We do not want someone going to the U.N. representing the United States that tells them what he thinks. Goodness, that might offend them. They need some offending.

We needed Mr. Bolton in there. Son of a gun, that is his history. He tells people what he thinks. He got to the U.N. and he has been doing that, but without any thanks to the Democrats in the Senate that blocked it at every turn.

But as we look today, a matter of national security is what is happening with Iran. Iran wants to have nuclear weapons. They have said that Israel has no right to exist. They want to nuke it out of existence. This is a dangerous country. And so what have we done? Well, we are sending that to the U.N. to let them see what they can do.

Well, we are better off with Mr. Bolton there helping us and representing our interests. But the trouble is, that is one person in a myriad of people who are just overwhelmed with self-interest. And I really rise in frustration to the toothless tiger that we call the United Nations. You know, it was born out of the best of intentions. It was born out of the greatest and noblest aspirations, that we would bring peace to a war-torn world and justice to the oppressed.

Yet what has happened is living proof that there is no such thing as institutional evolution. What has evolved has not been a higher, better entity in the United Nations. The U.N. has devolved into a mire of self-aggrandizement and self-absorption. They provided wealth to family members in the U.N., wealth to their own cronies, along with some of the most evil oppression in history.

The U.N. sometimes barks, but never has any bite. It reminds me of a school teacher I had once years ago who often defended the bullies in our class and would lash out at anybody that tried to defend themselves against the bully. She would not help the oppressed; she took up for the bullies. That is what has started happening with the U.N.

They do not want to help address the issue of bullies; they want to turn their heads, continue to help family members and cronies. But anyway, the U.N. has been a willing accomplice to some of the world's worst, most oppressive people; and sometimes it has been one of the biggest obstacles to people's liberty, freedom, and self-respect.

We all know, or we should know, that referring Iran to the U.N. is problematic because of the lies and the intentional distortions. Iran has said that they want to destroy another nation, and yet the U.N. has shown they have no stomach for doing what is required. They pass resolution after resolution. But when it comes to putting teeth in anything, they just do not do it. They will try to justify what they are doing.

I mean, I guess asking the U.N. to protect us would be tantamount to saying let us send in Scott Ritter to protect us from an oncoming train. I mean, he will notice the train's existence, try to justify why it is about to run over him and everybody on the track, but he will do no good. The U.N., that is the kind of actions they take. They try to justify things' existence, lash out at those being bullied, but not do what needs to be done.

The U.N.'s word means nothing, and its corruption and deceit are an embarrassment, and it is no longer an advocate or a defender of truth and justice. In fact, they are often the impediment to those very things. It is high time we confronted them with that.

And I would submit, Dr. Price, that sending an item to the U.N. for action is a bit like sending raw food to a kitchen that is filled with corruption, confusion, and selfishness. You are lucky if they act in that kitchen before the food spoils. And even if they do act before the food spoils, odds are they are going to consume it, and you will never see it again.

That is kind of what it is like when you send something to the U.N. They are either going to let it spoil, let it go rotten, or they are going to use it to their own self-fulfillment. What a sad nightmare this once great dream has become in the United Nations. I hope and pray that they will assist us with this international problem in Iran, because it involves our own national security. Some want to turn their heads and say, just like they did with Hitler, well, if we just let him have a little bit of what he wants, then he will leave us alone.

But that kind of ambition and that kind of desire for world conquest does not ever go away. It continues to proceed on, and in some cases unimpeded where you meet pacifists, Dr. Price, I saw back a couple of years ago a bunch of signs being held by protesters about the war in Iraq. And they actually said this: war never brought about peace. That is it. War never brought about peace.

I thought, my goodness, these people never studied history. War never brought peace? That is the only time there has been any kind of sustained peace where people had liberty during that peace is when there has been a war and the good guys won.

So it is unfortunate that we have uneducated people who do not know history, refuse to learn from history. But I appreciate so much your efforts at bringing truth. And as you and I

have talked about, and you have said, sunlight is one of the best disinfectants there is.

So bringing truth out, I know at times we struggle as we listen to things that were not true. It is like there is a culture of deceit in this body, and the people need to know the truth.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Congressman GOHMERT for his kind words and for his truth. Sometimes truth is a bitter pill to swallow.

□ 1445

Mr. GOHMERT. But you prescribe that, do you not?

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. But the area of support that the United States has received for freedom and for liberty around the world from the United Nations is often time lacking. And that is a bitter pill to swallow, but it does not mean that you do not keep working. It does not mean that you do not keep trying. But I think it is important, the perspective you bring, to maybe hopefully wake up some Americans who need to hear the information and appreciate that the U.N. needs to be moving in a bit of a different direction.

I thank you so much for your participation.

Mr. GOHMERT. If the gentleman would yield for one more moment, you come from a background as a physician of healing people. I come from a background of being a judge and chief justice and wanting to see justice. And it is amazing how we can work together and America allows that kind of freedom. So thank you for your efforts at bringing about what they used to say, as Superman started, truth, justice and the American way.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. I thank Congressman GOHMERT so much for your comments and for your participation.

What we are doing is the Official Truth Squad. The Official Truth Squad is primarily a group of freshmen Congressmen and women frustrated by the tone in Washington, frustrated by the animosity and doing our doggonedest to raise the level of discussion, raise the level of the rhetoric, be a little more positive, and put out the word that, yes, there are individuals in Congress who love this Nation, who believe that it is the finest Nation on the face of the Earth and are proud of the work that we are doing and trying to correct the record sometimes, bringing truth to light.

To that end, I think it is important that we sometimes highlight statements by people who may have a certain forum or a certain podium that simply is untrue, because it is important that somebody stand up and say, no, that is not the case; and I refer now to comments that were made just this past Sunday by former Vice President Al Gore.

He was visiting Saudi Arabia and he was talking to an audience there, and oftentimes when he talks sometimes there is a bit of hyperbole, but this is

not hyperbole. These are flat-out lies. This is just not the truth. What he said was that the U.S. government has committed "terrible abuses" against Arabs after the September 11, 2001, attacks. He went on to say that the United States "indiscriminately rounded up" and held in "unforgivable conditions."

Now, I ask you, Mr. Speaker, where is the evidence for that? I ask you, where is the evidence for that? That is as unconscionable and irresponsible a comment as I have ever heard uttered.

I ask the Democratic leadership, are you supportive of these comments? Is that what you believe? The silence from the other side really is, again, a disservice to the debate. It does a disservice to the Nation, frankly.

So I call on my colleagues to stand up and be counted on this. If you got the evidence, then let us show it. But to make those kind of comments, especially overseas, there used to be some protocol or some common courtesy that former members of the executive branch, especially when traveling overseas, would not criticize a sitting President or the United States. Well, those common courtesies are long since gone.

Again, that is kind of what the Official Truth Squad is all about, raise the level of the rhetoric and hopefully be able to bring some truth to light.

I have a few minutes left, and I wanted to talk about the National Security Agency and the domestic terrorism surveillance. When I talk with constituents back home in Georgia and I ask them and I ask big groups, tell me if you were running the country and you knew that there were certain cell phones or certain telephones of communication devices that were owned or utilized by terrorists, international terrorists, and you knew that, and you knew when one of those individuals was going to make a call into the United States, would you want to know who they were talking to? Would you want to know what number they were calling?

I have not gotten a single person yet to tell me that they would not want to know that. Not one.

The American people know the truth about this program, this domestic terrorist surveillance program. They know that what this government is doing is protecting them. It is protecting them. So much so that when the discussion initially occurred about this program, the Members on the other side, many Members of the other side stood up and just shouted it down, just said awful things about the individuals performing it, awful things about its being in place.

Then they heard from their constituents. Most districts, it is 65, 75, 80 percent of folks at home who believe this type of program is appropriate. We are not talking about listening to American calls. We are talking about, appropriately so, to calls from known terrorists, outside the United States into the United States. I would suggest to the

House, Mr. Speaker, I would suggest to the American people that if we were not doing that, if we were not doing that, we would be irresponsible.

Well, the Members on the other side of the aisle certainly got that information at home. Because this past Sunday on Meet the Press Mr. Russert had the sitting ranking member of the House of Representatives on the Intelligence Committee, Representative HARMAN, and former Senator Daschle, who was the minority leader in the Senate when this program began, and asked them some very specific questions.

One of the questions he asked was, Senator Daschle, were you briefed? He was talking about this program. Senator Daschle's response, it goes into long details, but, yes, we were briefed. We were briefed.

As the President said, if he wanted to break the law, why did he come to Congress and tell him what he was doing? So the truth is that this is an appropriate program. The truth is Congress knew about it in the appropriate ways.

Representative HARMAN was asked, do you support the program? And she says, I still support the program. This is the thing they are arguing so much about and complaining so much about.

Senator Daschle, should the President stop this program? Senator Daschle replies, no, absolutely not.

Mr. Russert asked Representative HARMAN, do you think the program should be stopped? Representative HARMAN, no, I think the program should go on.

So, Mr. Speaker, truth is an important thing to talk about when we are discussing about matters of public policy.

As Congressman GOHMERT and others have mentioned, I am a physician. I am an orthopedic surgeon. I practiced for nearly 20 years in the Atlanta area, and I know if you do not listen to the right results of tests, if you do not investigate, if you do not get the right information, if you do not get the truth, you cannot make the right diagnosis. And the same is true in public policy. If you are not talking about things in a truthful manner, if you are not putting out information that is accurate, then there is no way that you can reach the right solution.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud of the leadership that the Speaker is providing. I am proud of the leadership the Republican leadership is providing about the area and the issue of national security. Because this is not a Republican issue, it is not a Democrat issue, it is an American issue, and it may be the most important thing that we have to do as Members of the House of Representatives.

So my hope and prayer truly is that all Members of the House and the Senate will work together in this most solemn, solemn of challenges and tasks that we have and ensure the protection of our Nation.

#### RESIGNATION AS MEMBER OF COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FITZPATRICK of Pennsylvania) laid before the House the following resignation as a member of the Committee on Science:

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
Washington, DC, February 15, 2006.

Hon. J. DENNIS HASTERT,  
Speaker, House of Representatives,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Effective today, February 15th, I resign my seat on the Committee on Science pending my appointment to the Committee on International Relations.

Sincerely,

RUSS CARNAHAN,  
Member of Congress.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the resignation is accepted. There was no objection.

#### 30-SOMETHING WORKING GROUP

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

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, we appreciate the opportunity once again to come to the floor of the House of Representatives as the 30-Something Working Group. Myself along with KENDRICK MEEK, Mr. MEEK from Florida, and also Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ from Florida, we have been coming here now, Mr. Speaker, for a couple of years talking about the condition of the United States, our fiscal situation, Mr. Speaker, our investment situation or lack of investment in the United States of America, and also what we believe is the Democratic Caucus and Leader PELOSI and STENY HOYER and the issues that we are trying to put forward.

It has been a very interesting week here for the Democratic Caucus, Mr. Speaker. We had a wonderful guest, George Lucas, the famous writer, director, producer of the great Star Wars movies; and he was here to talk about the innovation agenda that the Democratic party is beginning to put forward. And we have, Mr. Speaker, an innovation agenda to keep America competitive in the 21st century.

As we look at what has been happening here in the United States, this kind of breaks down into two or three separate categories. One, if we want to be a strong country, we have got to start here at home; and we got to start making the investments here in the United States. Research and development, education, health care, alternative energy technologies must start here; and we must begin to grow our economy here, Mr. Speaker, if we are going to be of any good to anyone else here in the world.

Unfortunately, our friends across the aisle on the Republican side have failed miserably in their attempt to try to balance the budget here in the United

States of America. We have, as citizens of this country, regardless of what political party you belong to, we have as a country an \$8.2 trillion national debt, \$8.2 trillion dollars. Each citizen in this country owes \$27,000 to our national debt. If a baby is born today, that baby owes \$27,000 to the United States government to help us pay our debt. If you are a senior citizen, you owe \$27,000 to the United States Government. And if we keep going down the path that we have been on, and here it is, \$8.2 trillion as of Valentine's Day, 2006, and your share of the national debt is \$27,500.

Mr. Speaker, we have a real situation in the United States of America. So not only do we owe this, not only does each person owe that, what do we do? So if we are running a \$400 billion annual deficit or \$300 billion, what do we do to fund business in the United States of America? We have got to go out and borrow the money. And this President in the first 4 years of his term borrowed more money from foreign interests than every single administration prior to his in the last 224 years. This President borrowed \$1.05 trillion from foreign interests in 4 years, more than every other president before him.

Is that making America stronger, Mr. Speaker? I do not think it is. I think it weakens our country. And here it is. This President in a Republican House and a Republican Senate has borrowed \$1.05 trillion from 2001 to 2005. And all of these Presidents did not borrow as much from foreign interests as this one has.

And that puts us, Mr. Speaker, that puts us at a position of weakness because guess who we are borrowing the money from to pay the bills. We borrow some from U.S. interests, but this is a chart that outlines who else we are borrowing this money from. \$682 billion we have borrowed from Japan; \$249 billion we have borrowed from China; \$67.8 billion from OPEC.

□ 1500

Are you kidding me? We are borrowing money from OPEC to help fund and plug the hole in our annual deficits here? Meanwhile, they are making money hand over fist. This is a very dangerous situation that we are in, Mr. Speaker, because here is the end result. Here is where the rubber meets the road.

As we all take out loans to pay for our homes or our cars or our kids' education, unfortunately you cannot just borrow the money at zero percent interest. You have got to pay interest on the money you borrow. So the interest on \$8.2 trillion is a lot of money. So what does that mean for our annual payments that we have to make just on the interest?

This chart is the 2007 budget in billions of dollars. This big red bar that gets up to \$230 billion is what we are going to pay in the 2007 budget projected on interest on the debt, just the