

I say I regret that because, as we probably know, more than half of our Nation's military retirees have chosen to retire near a military treatment facility. That is their family. We as a Nation asked them to leave their parents, leave their loved ones to go to places like Korea, Vietnam, Persian Gulf, Panama. We are getting ready to ask them to go to places like Afghanistan.

In doing so, for many of them, they lose the ability to maintain their nuclear family, so their family becomes the Air Force, the Marines, the Army, the Navy.

Since they were 18 years old, they were told they could go to a military treatment facility; but now because of the draw-down in the Department of Defense, there are not as many doctors as there used to be, and because the defense budget is tight, the Department of Defense made the decision that for those who have reached the age of 65, you cannot go to the base hospital anymore. You have got to find a private sector doctor. You have got to leave the family. I think that is a tragedy.

Again, over half of our Nation's military retirees intentionally bought a home near a base so they could use that base hospital, and now the same Nation that can provide \$16 billion in foreign aid, the same Nation that can waive the budget rules to bail out the airlines, give their corporate executives 20 and \$30 million a year to run those companies into the ground, the same Nation that can spend money left and right, waiving the rules anytime they feel like it for those who really have not earned it to this extent are going to tell our Nation's military retirees that because you do not fit quite right into the budget we cannot find the money to solve your problem.

Mr. Speaker, I am asking for an amendment that has already passed this House overwhelmingly about a year ago right now. There were 406 of my colleagues who voted to say to our Nation's military retirees that they could continue to use that base hospital and that Medicare is going to reimburse that base hospital for their care. After all, the sailors, the soldiers, the Marines, the airmen paid their Medicare taxes just like everybody else; and if it is their choice to go to a military treatment facility, then that is where they ought to be able to go.

Unfortunately, the law now blocks them from doing so. We sent that bill over to the Senate; and unfortunately the Senate chose to take our language that says they have to do it and said to Medicare, they may do it, they can reach an agreement if they feel like it.

Well, the bureaucrats at Medicare did not feel like it; and so now our soldiers, our sailors, our airmen, our Marines, our coast guardsmen, they are the ones that have to suffer.

Mr. Speaker, I am asking for a real simple thing on the defense authorization bill next week. I am asking for an opportunity for this House to speak in favor for fulfilling the promise of life-

time health care to our Nation's military retirees and a Nation that is going to find \$320 billion to defend itself that just last week spent an additional \$40 billion on defense, one would think we could find a hundred million or so to do that for our Nation's military retirees.

I am particularly disturbed, Mr. Speaker, that you have put the word out that if I so much as ask for that amendment that you are going to pull the defense authorization bill. Let me say that again. If an elected representative of the people of south Mississippi so much as asks for a recorded vote on an amendment to fulfill the promise of lifetime health care for our military retirees, the Speaker of the House says he will not allow that bill to take place at all.

Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent for 2 additional minutes.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair cannot entertain that request.

Mr. TAYLOR of Mississippi. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

□ 2330

HEALTH CARE FOR MILITARY RETIREES

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

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Mississippi.

Mr. TAYLOR of Mississippi. I would like to thank my colleague from Hawaii and my other colleagues for bearing with me.

Mr. Speaker, the point I want to make is, I wish this Member had the power to keep some bills from coming to the House floor. I wish I could have kept NAFTA from coming to the floor because it has lost so many jobs for my fellow Mississippians and every American. I wish I could have kept portions of that tax bill that saw to it that half of the \$1.2 trillion in benefits went to the wealthiest fat cats in America, not the average Joes.

Mr. Speaker, if you can find the time and waive the rules to give the fat cats a tax break, you can find the time and you can waive the rules to let our military retirees go to the base hospitals. I am asking for an up or down vote. Be a decent human being and give us that vote.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

REGARDING ASPECTS OF SEPTEMBER 11 EVENTS

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

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues. I am due on a TV broadcast that starts rather soon. I know this sounds rather late, but it is prime time back in my own California.

I rise to address several aspects of the recent tragedy, the recent outrage. I want to associate myself with the statements of the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BONIOR) when he came to this floor and talked about how important it was that we treat everyone with dignity and with respect, and decried several incidents involving discrimination against those of the Muslim, Sikh and Hindu faiths.

Let us, though, also applaud the 99.999 percent of Americans who in fact today are treating their fellow Americans with tolerance and respect. I had a large public meeting in my district in which one of the two leaders of our Islamic community commented that, yes, we should all treat everyone with respect and, yes, he was chagrined by some recent reports. But he only wondered how much worse it would be in any other country in the world for any other minority group. And, in fact, in our own country in the 1940s, we did not act with the same level of respect and tolerance that we are showing today.

Let us remember that America is not anti-Muslim and not anti-Islam. In fact, the last three military engagements of the United States were for the purpose of defending Muslim people. We restored the independence of Kuwait. We then went on to save the Bosnian Muslims from genocide. And then we bombed a Christian country, Serbia, because of what Serbia tried to do to its Albanian Muslim minority. And now American and NATO troops are engaged in Macedonia for the purpose of achieving a just result for the Albanian Muslims who are a minority in that country. So let us not only condemn every act of intolerance, but let us applaud an overwhelming majority of Americans who are acting with tolerance even at a time when emotions run high.

Let me comment on those who suggest that we modify our foreign policy in the Middle East in order to placate Osama bin Laden, the Taliban, and other extremists. These calls do no honor to the greatest generation and its response to Pearl Harbor. After Pearl Harbor, there were some who suggested that all we had to do was change our foreign policy in the Far East, allow Japan to conquer all of China, and then we could avoid conflict. Instead, the greatest generation made the greatest sacrifices to win the greatest victory. It would be a dishonor to that generation for us to act any differently now that we have suffered the greatest loss of American life on American soil since our Civil War, a loss of life two to three times what we suffered at Pearl Harbor.

But not only is appeasement dishonorable, it is also, in this case, impossible. Because what motivated Osama bin Laden was a hatred for the fact that American troops are somehow "defiling" the soil of Arabia by being stationed there in defense of the Saudi and Kuwaiti regimes. Remember that if

those soldiers were not there, Saddam Hussein would control not only Kuwait but also Saudi Arabia, also the Emirates, and he would control 70 percent of the world's oil reserves. But even a withdrawal of American soldiers from the Arabian peninsula would not be enough. It would just whet the appetite of Osama bin Laden, who will not rest until every Arab leader who is even moderately pro-American is displaced and killed, including the entire Saudi royal family.

But even that would not placate bin Laden, who would demand not what Arafat is demanding with regard to Palestinian-Israeli relations but the total destruction of 5 million Israelis. But even that would only whet his appetite. Bin Laden will not rest until every girl in every part of the world is kicked out of school, until the concept of female illiteracy is enshrined worldwide. I do not think that appeasement of bin Laden is possible. But even if it were, if you can change American foreign policy in the Mideast by an act of great terror, then what about those who disagree with our policy in Colombia or Kosovo, Macedonia, Sumatra, Sri Lanka or Taiwan? If we establish the policy that terrorists can change our foreign policy, then every terrorist will try to control the only superpower by an act of super terror.

We must stand by our friends in the Middle East and show that we cannot be controlled by terrorists.

□ 2340

ASSISTING AIRLINES AND AIRLINE EMPLOYEES

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PLATTS). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, many times the legislative process proceeds as the American people watch, and there is sometimes much confusion. There is no obligation for any of us to take the added time that this House sometimes does not allow to be able to discuss a very important subject.

Because I come from an area that is heavily impacted, as I would imagine most of my colleagues, by the legislation that we have just passed, I believe it is important to discuss extensively in the brief time that I have, or at least broadly, the legislation that dealt with the Air Transportation System Stabilization Act that was debated today.

For the first time it appeared, since the heinous acts of September 11, 2001, that many Americans might say they were back to business as usual. There was a divided debate, I consider it a healthy debate, on the approach that we should take for something that all of us agreed with, that is, to provide assistance to the airline industry pursuant to the Federal actions that were

taken after the September 11, 2001, heinous terrorist actions.

We, the United States Government, grounded the airlines of America. Certainly we have the responsibility to compensate them for Federal actions that resulted in large losses of revenue. At the same time, let me say to the American people that that grounding also took into account the safety of Americans, to be able to protect them and to turn to the tragedies that occurred and to prepare ourselves for what should happen next.

I have no quarrel with the fact that we acted, and I certainly realize that we impacted those airlines as we did so. So this Air Transportation System Stabilization Act has merit from the perspective of giving direct aid to the airlines based upon accounted-for losses during that time.

But my question becomes, because no legislation is perfect, why there is such a disparate representation of those losses? The Democratic staff of the Joint Economic Council says that during that time frame, the airports or airlines lost \$360 million to \$1 billion. The aid that we have given them, direct aid, is \$5 billion. I would hope that helps to restore them, but I also hope that that may increase their generosity.

Why do I say that? Because the difficulty I have with the legislation today is that the broad concept of employees who may be laid off now or perspective, or for those employees who really want to have jobs, as opposed to unemployment insurance, what guarantee do we have that this airline industry will be sensitive, that they will pull their bootstraps, tighten their belt and work hard to reinvest in their airlines and build the airlines and build employment?

Loan guarantees in this legislation were \$10 billion. I would hope that as those particular support systems are in place, that we will find the airlines being able to sufficiently rebuild, that the laid off or furloughed employees will return.

There are hundreds of letters that I received, probably many from Continental Airline employees, all believing that this package was going to save their jobs. I pray to God that it will, because I want them to work and to have the ability to have a livelihood. But I am sure that many of them are not aware that this package does not carry with it any protections for workers.

That is why I supported the Hastings amendment that provided unemployment benefits, extended them from 26 to 78 weeks, a year-and-a-half, provided 26 weeks of unemployment insurance benefits for workers who would otherwise not qualify, possibly the skycaps or contract workers who are now suffering. What about our cab drivers, who cannot even afford to pay their daily rental fee? This Hastings amendment also extended job training benefits from 26 to 78 weeks so that we could re-

train individuals and also provided them with health care.

In addition, this bill could have been an omnibus bill and included the federalization of security. It did not. To my traveling public, I say to you, get on the airlines. But I also say that we have the responsibility to work over a period of time to direct our attention towards security.

Then we also have the opportunity and the responsibility to ensure that we do not act in fear, we do not act recklessly; that we provide an overall bill that does two things, to keep the airlines strong, and, as well, keep the working people of America strong.

I would hope that this coming week we will make good on the promise of the gentleman from Illinois (Speaker HASTERT) and as well our leader, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GEPHARDT). We will pass real worker assistance so the hundreds who have written me will have written me not only to support the airline industry, but as well to support the working people of America. I believe that this is crucial. I believe that we must do that, and that is the reason that I made the votes that I did, not voting for the martial law, wanting to extend the time of debate, but supporting the legislation and as well the motion to recommit to protect the American workers.

ASKING FOR COMMON SENSE AND REASON

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Georgia (Ms. McKINNEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. McKINNEY. Mr. Speaker, our Armed Forces are poised to conduct military strikes in foreign lands. My own State of Georgia is contributing significantly to our overseas forces with troops being committed from the 116th Bomber Wing, the 117th Air Control Squadron, the 293rd MP Company from Fort Stewart in Augusta, and the 224th Joint Communications Support Squad, Brunswick, Georgia. And I have no doubt that men of the elite 75th Ranger Battalion from Fort Benning are currently or soon will be deploying overseas.

Our Nation suffered a terrible injury last week with the attacks in New York, Washington, D.C. and Pennsylvania. Many thousands of our innocent civilians were unjustly taken from their families and loved ones, and we as a Nation must now respond. But just how we should do that, both internationally and domestically, is now giving rise to considerable debate.

We have heard the Bush Administration's call to arms to fight the first war of the 21st century. I understand that our Nation's full military resources are soon to be turned against not just the terrorists responsible for last week's attack, but international terrorism generally. Our intelligence agencies have allegedly identified terror cells in some 60 countries, and that