

war. But I can assure you that as I go around my district I hear no clamor or even a weak desire to go to war against Iraq.

Saudi Arabia had much more to do with the September 11 tragedies than Iraq did. I heard yesterday that one of the main financial backers of the terrorists is from Kuwait. Yet we are not talking about going to war against Saudi Arabia or Kuwait, nor should we. We have been too quick to get involved in ethnic or religious disputes around the world. We have been too quick to drop bombs on people who want to be our friends. We turned NATO from a defensive organization into an offensive one in Bosnia.

Chris Matthews on "Hard Ball" the other night said, "In the past we always had the world on our side because we did not go to war unless we were attacked."

He strongly questioned this eagerness to go to war against Iraq. He said in a recent column that the American people are being "herded into war." A war that he says will just lead to more hatred of the U.S.

David Ignatius, the nationally syndicated columnist for the New York Herald Tribune and The Washington Post wrote on March 15: "How can the United States sell a war against Iraq to skeptical Arabs and Europeans? A good start would be to level with them and admit there is no solid evidence linking Baghdad to Osama bin Laden's terrorists attacks against America."

The Joint Chiefs of Staff have questioned this eagerness to go to war against Iraq. Yesterday, William Raspberry, the very highly respected columnist for The Washington Post, in a nationally syndicated column repeated words he had written a dozen years ago. He wrote: "The prospect of a bloody war with no price worth the tens of thousands of American lives it would cost can make you a little nervous. I am getting a little nervous. It is not that I doubt the ability of America's fighting forces to take out a third-rate power like Saddam Hussein's Iraq. My doubts concern the purpose for doing so. Saddam is being described as a ruthless and power-mad tyrant bent on achieving political control of the Arab world. I do not question the description, but it does seem to me that most of the current saber rattling is coming from Washington, not Baghdad." And Mr. Raspberry continued: "I wrote those words a dozen years back when the first President Bush was contemplating the invasion of Iraq. Why are we rattling sabers now? The reason I recall my earlier doubts is that they are so much a carbon copy of my present ones." Mr. Raspberry says: "Maybe it was a mistake not to wipe out the last scrap of Iraq's military power back then, not to mow down the surrendering republican guard like shooting fish in a barrel. But surely the failure to do so then cannot justify a unilateral attack now."

Mr. Raspberry said: "We should not become the playground bully of the

word." In 1990, Saddam Hussein, who I am not praising or defending in any way, had invaded Kuwait and was threatening to go further.

We had to act and I voted for the original Gulf War. However, we later found out the Iraqi military strength had been greatly exaggerated. The so-called "elite" Praetorian Guards were surrendering to CNN camera crews or anybody who would take them. Hussein has been greatly weakened since then in almost every way. Let us not exaggerate his strength this time. If he starts to attack us, I will be the first to support a war effort, but please let us not provoke war. Let us not change the name of the Department of Defense into the War Department once again. We should not try to be the policemen of the world. We should try as hard as we can to reestablish our reputation as the most peace-loving Nation on the face of the Earth.

PRESCRIPTION DRUG BENEFIT

(Ms. WATSON of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. WATSON of California. Mr. Speaker, Medicare does not cover the cost of prescription drugs, and as a result, approximately 10 million medical recipients nationwide lack any prescription drug coverage. It is estimated by the Kaiser Foundation that seniors spend on average \$1,756 per year for prescription drugs.

Due to the extraordinary cost of prescription drugs, millions of seniors will, A, have to choose between proper medication and rent; B, have to choose between proper medication and groceries; or, C, have to suffer because of improper doses of unaffordable medicines.

Mr. Speaker, I challenge this Congress. How dare we. How dare we affect the quality of life for our seniors by withholding funding for prescription drugs. How dare we dismiss our seniors with a poorly funded mandate that will not cover their needs. How dare we allow our Medicare seniors to be squeezed by an industry lobby when life and death is on the line.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to honor our seniors, respect their age and wisdom and their contributions to America. Fully fund medical prescription drug coverage.

PERMANENT ESTATE TAX REPEAL

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow the House of Representatives will consider a proposal by the Republican majority to permanently repeal the estate tax.

Now, we had a vigorous debate over the estate tax last year; and I along with many others supported a reform

of the estate tax that would lead to the exemption of 99½ percent of the estates in the United States of America. But to take and permanently repeal the tax as will be proposed tomorrow for the largest estates will be an extraordinarily expensive measure and add dramatically to the deficit of the United States and ultimately undermine the Social Security trust fund of the United States.

Permanent repeal would cost \$740 billion, B, billion dollars, over the next decade after 2012. But if we were to instead say, well, let us exempt the first \$5 million of everybody's estate, now that seems like a pretty reasonable step. We do not want people, for instance, in my district or in Oregon who own forestry, tree farms, to go out and prematurely harvest the trees so they have to pay their estates taxes. We do not want people to have to break up their small businesses so they can pay their estates taxes. Those things are well and good. We could do that. We could easily do that.

The current law will exempt by the year 2009 the first \$3.5 million of each estate. So let us just round that up to \$5 million. So if we did that, that would reserve \$400 billion in taxes or \$400 billion of money that would not be drained from the Social Security trust fund to help pay for the retirement of the baby boom.

Now, it is true that there would be some 4 or 500 estates a year worth more than \$5 million who would have to pay taxes to support the 53 million people on Social Security.

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I believe that they can afford that burden. Some say, well, we know they should not pay taxes twice. Well, guess what, most of them will not pay taxes twice. In fact, the way the current laws are set up, many of these estates have unrealized capital gains, and if those estates are exempt from taxation, not even the lower rate of capital gains will be paid.

The American working people have to pay day in, day out a substantial portion of their income to Social Security, day in, day out a substantial portion of their income in income taxes, but these people with the estates worth more than \$5 million would never, ever pay a penny in taxes. The unrealized capital gains would be rolled over into the estates, the estates would be tax-exempt, all at a cost of \$400 billion to the rest of the United States of America, the rest of the taxpayers in this country.

This is not fair. It is not fiscally prudent, and the Republican majority should be ashamed of pushing this through at this time of financial crisis. We are looking at a \$300 billion deficit this year. The Social Security lock box that they had us vote on seven times, which I voted for seven times, has been busted open and depleted. There is nothing, nothing going into it over the next 10 years, and for the next 10 years

after that; if they permanently repeal the estate tax for estates worth more than \$5 million, in fact, the Social Security trust fund will continue to be drained.

So we will threaten the benefit of 53 million Americans' Social Security benefits to benefit a handful of extraordinarily wealthy families. This is not the America that I know and I love.

The estate tax was put in place nearly a century ago by a Republican president because the accumulation of wealth generation to generation was creating extraordinary disparities in our society, and the idea was, well, those people should help carry a little bit more of the burden, but if this becomes law, if they are successful tomorrow, as I suspect they might be, then many of these estates, many of these families will never, ever contribute to the collective burdens of citizenship in the United States, much as many corporations are now setting up phony overseas offices in Bermuda and Luxembourg to avoid paying taxes on overseas or U.S. earnings.

We will ultimately, if they are successful, be a country where only wage-earning Americans pay taxes and those that live off the accumulated wealth of their predecessors and the largest corporations will not contribute a penny. This is not right, and my colleagues should vote against this legislation tomorrow for fiscal prudence and for fairness.

PRESCRIPTION DRUG COSTS

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

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about outrageously high drug prices and what we pay for drugs in the United States compared to what the rest of the world is paying.

There is a group down in Florida, and they have been doing this research for a number of years, called the Life Extension Foundation or the Life Extension Network, and they have been doing research in terms of what Americans pay for prescription drugs and what the average European price for those same drugs, made in the same FDA-approved facilities, under the same FDA-approved methodology. These are the exact same drugs, and let us look at some of these.

One that we became very familiar with in the last several months is a drug that is made in Germany. It is called Cipro. We bought an awful lot of Cipro when we started having anthrax mailed to places in Washington and New York. Cipro is a very effective antibiotic. The average United States price for a 30-day supply is \$87.99. That same drug in Germany sells for \$40.75.

The story gets worse when we look at some of the more expensive drugs. Let us take the drug Claritin, for example, which is going off patent here in the

United States, but it still sells for about an average of \$89 for a 30-day supply in the United States. That exact same drug sells for \$18.75 over in Europe.

A drug that is technically off patent in the United States, the FDA has approved what they call a special extension of the patent, Glucophage, one of the most commonly prescribed drugs for diabetes sufferers, which is one of the most common diseases in the United States, but Glucophage, a 30-day supply in the United States sells for \$124.65. That same drug in Geneva, Switzerland, sells for \$22.

Mr. Speaker, as we look down this list, it becomes almost embarrassing that we allow this situation to exist, and the real culprit is not so much the pharmaceutical industry. They are doing what any industry would do, and that is, taking advantage of market opportunities. No, the real problem is that our own FDA stands between Americans and lower drug prices. It is not so much shame on them. It is shame on us.

Now we passed a very important amendment last year on a vote of 324 to 101 saying that as long as it is an FDA-approved drug made in an FDA-approved facility, that those drugs can be imported and reimported by both consumers and wholesalers and a local pharmacist.

Let me show my colleagues one other drug that is fairly near and dear to my heart. It is a drug that my 85-year-old father takes. It is called Coumadin. When I first started putting these charts up a few years ago, the average price for a 30-day supply of Coumadin was about \$38. In just a little over 2 years, that price is now over \$64.

Now, we asked the drug companies what has changed. I mean, do we have new doctoring regulations or new lawsuits that they have to settle? Have they had to spend more money getting approval? The answer is no, nothing has changed, except the price. It has gone from about \$38 to about \$64, almost \$65 in the United States, but here is what really frosts me. The price over in Europe averages only \$15.80 for the same drug.

We are going to have some pitched debates over the next several weeks about prescription drugs, whether or not we should extend coverage, and I believe that we need to do something to help people who are currently falling through the cracks, but if we fail to deal with the critical issue of price, then it is shame on us.

Let me explain how this gets important. Let me first of all show this chart. This is according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the National Institutes of Health Care Management, the last year we have full numbers for. The average Social Security recipient in the United States got a 3½ percent increase in their COLA on their Social Security. At the same time, prescription drug prices in the United States went up by 19 percent. Nineteen per-

cent. That is unsustainable, and ultimately, we in Congress need to do something about it.

My answer is let us open markets, let us allow some competition to exist, and we will see a real change.

I think it is important that we do address the issue of prescription drugs, but according to the Congressional Budget Office, and they are our official scorekeepers, they are the ones who are bean counters, prognosticators, they tell us over the next 10 years their best estimate is that seniors, people over the age of 65, and look at all these numbers, this is how much they estimate seniors will pay for prescription drugs over the next 10 years. That is \$1.8 trillion. There is not enough money in the Federal Treasury to come up with that and continue to fund the other legitimate needs of people here in the United States of America.

The reason I put 35 percent under that, to give a point to why it is important that we do something on reimportation this year, is that I estimate we can save at least 35 percent. Here in Washington a billion dollars gets lost once in a while. In fact, the old expression, a billion here, billion there, pretty soon you are talking about real money, but if we multiply the 35 percent minimum savings that I think we can get with reimportation times \$1.8 trillion over the next 10 years, we can save American consumers \$630 billion. That is real money, and that is real money out of the pockets of either our seniors or the taxpayers here in the United States.

I believe that we as Americans ought to pay our fair share of the research cost for pharmaceuticals. I am not here to beat up on the pharmaceutical industry because they have done a lot of wonderful things. There are millions of American that are alive today and living better lives because of what they have done with their research. I think we should pay our fair share, but shame on us if they continue to force us to subsidize the starving Swiss.

PRESIDENT'S EDUCATION BUDGET IS A BROKEN PROMISE

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

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening to question the fiscal responsibility of the current administration and to question their priorities.

On May 23, I came to this great House floor to vote for positive sweeping changes to our Nation's education programs, along with 384 of our colleagues who passed H.R. 1, the Act to Leave No Child Behind. H.R. 1 passed this House and it also passed the other body and was signed by the President this past January. Members of Congress on both sides of the aisle stood next to the President to sign the legislation we believed would finally make education what it should be, a number one priority.