

purify and clean that pristine body of water. But today we are here to talk about the employees of Plum Island.

Mr. SIMMONS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his comments. It is always a pleasure to work with him across district lines, across State lines, but for the common good and for a common purpose.

The interesting thing about Plum Island is that over the 50 years of its sensitive and secure research, there have not been any significant accidents or issues that might concern us, but the question has to be raised: If all of the operating engineers, the people that operate the boats, the people that operate the water systems, the people that operate the incinerators and the air-conditioning systems of this sensitive biological research facility are taken off the island and are not there because of this strike, the people who are licensed to operate all of these facilities are not there and we bring in outside workers from other facilities around the country, which bear no relationship to this kind of research, what risks exist? I realize that the managers say everything is great, everything is fine. I do not believe it. I think that there is a security issue that we have to be concerned about. I think that the sensitive mission that takes place out there is being disrupted because of the strike, and it is over a few nickels and dimes of health benefits and health care.

Mr. Speaker, this is a ridiculous situation for us to be in, when this body has authorized and appropriated literally billions of dollars in the fight against international terrorism and yet we are shortchanging reliable, honest, decent workers right here at home, right out there on Plum Island.

Mr. GRUCCI. Mr. Speaker, I agree wholeheartedly with all of the comments and associate myself to them of the gentleman from Connecticut. One of the things that is hard for other people to understand is that when you look at the cost of living on Long Island and certainly out in that region, it is very costly, and to bring this to conclusion would be the right thing.

CONTINUED DISCUSSION OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION AT PLUM ISLAND RESEARCH CENTER

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

Mr. GRUCCI. Mr. Speaker, I rise to address the House today and to share in a colloquy with the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SIMMONS), and to continue this discussion that we have been having on Plum Island and Plum Island issues.

We have been talking about the need for this debate that is taking place about 50 cents for health care benefits to come to conclusion. One of the things that I have offered up, as I have been in constant communication with

the members and the leadership of Local 30, and I have been in constant communication with the White House on this issue, and I have spoken to the Under Secretary and to the Secretary of Agriculture on this issue; I have spoken to a number of people at LL&B on this issue to bring this thing to conclusion, and we have offered a mediator to come in to mediate these problems.

The gentleman whose name was put into consideration, and, I may add, has been accepted by the union as a viable alternative to the strike that we have going on out there, is the Commissioner of Labor for Suffolk County, Jack O'Donnell. Jack has a long and rich history in negotiating labor disputes between government and between labor and guiding them to a successful and complete resolution in the best interest of all parties concerned. We have not heard back from LL&B as to whether or not they would accept Mr. O'Donnell as the mediator, but we would encourage them to please consider this. It is very, very important that we bring this to conclusion.

There is an issue about safety on the island. We care very deeply about that. Plum Island's animal disease research work is being done at bio-safety level 3. We are concerned that any change in that would have a Draconian effect on the safety of the community and the people who live in that area, as it would now be able to do diseases and work on diseases that have no known cures. So one of the things that I worked on on the Committee on Science, as Plum Island was moving to homeland defense, was that an amendment be added that for any change in operation, the Department of Agriculture or the new Homeland Defense Department, must notify Congress so that we can have our voices heard on this decision, so that those who work on the island, those who live in that community, and those who share a common boundary with Plum Island can make sure that their quality of life is safe.

I yield now to my colleague, the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SIMMONS), representing the Second Congressional District, as we share common ground, not only with the Long Island Sound, but with workers on Plum Island.

Mr. SIMMONS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from New York. I have had the opportunity to go to the picket line in my district in Connecticut and meet and talk with all of the workers there. They want to get back to work. One of them said his wife is 7 months pregnant. He is concerned about the future of his job. She is concerned about whether he will have enough money over the next couple of months so that they can deal with the arrival of a firstborn.

Many of these workers have been out there for many years. They enjoy their work and they are good at it. But this contracting and recontracting and recontracting has degraded the numbers

of the workforce and has put tremendous burdens and pressures on them. To take away pay and benefits at the same time and to ignore binding arbitration requests and, in fact, it appears to ignore a request for mediation that was supposed to have taken place on September 4, is ridiculous under the circumstances.

Let me just share with the Chamber one situation we had a few years ago with the Naval Underwater Warfare Center in New London and in Newport, Rhode Island. When that facility was consolidated in Newport, all of the scientists who lived west of New London were now going to have to commute for an hour and a half to work. Many of the senior scientists retired or resigned because they did not want to do the commute. If Plum Island happens to be shut down because management cannot accommodate the marginal requests of the workers, where is this research going to be moved to? Ames, Iowa. And all of the dozens and dozens of skilled scientists and workers out there are going to have to make this critical choice: Do I move to Iowa, or do I find another job?

Mr. Speaker, we have a situation here which is ridiculous, because the capabilities of this facility that has been operated smoothly for 50 years is now at risk, and at a time when bioterrorism and threats to the food supply are so critical, it is absurd, it is absurd that the debate over these nickels and dimes for health care should be allowed to be sustained.

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Mr. GRUCCI. As my colleague will attest to, the work done at Plum Island has been exemplary. Those in the scientific community, those in the maintenance field, those who work on Plum Island have done an outstanding job, and it has just come to my attention that the teams did meet yesterday. We are hoping to bring them to conclusion.

I see that my time has expired, but let me close by saying I am squarely in support of the union and the labor movement on this. I think they are right. This is an issue of 50 cents, and for LL&B to close out any opportunity for them to come to conclusion is wrong. We need to bring this to a successful end.

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

(Mrs. DAVIS of California, addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. NORTON addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

IRAQ

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

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, during the August recess, I had the opportunity to meet with a number of my constituents from all walks of life and hear what was on their mind. The question that came up over and over was are we going to invade Iraq and, if we were, what did that mean? How many troops would it take? Would we have to attack civilian centers? How long would we have to stay in Iraq? Would our allies join us? How much would it cost? Who would rule Iraq after we invaded? How would this affect our efforts in Afghanistan? How would this affect our efforts to promote peace in the Middle East?

I have thought long and hard about this matter as I am sure all of my colleagues have. I believe the questions my constituents have raised are legitimate and require genuine and detailed replies. I also believe that as a Member of this body, I need to know in very specific detail how the United States will find and allocate the necessary resources for such a venture without jeopardizing our current priorities in Afghanistan and the Middle East.

Dismantling and destroying the al Qaeda terrorist network and stabilizing and restoring a functioning representative government in Afghanistan are top priorities for U.S. policy.

We are a long way from achieving these goals. Known al Qaeda and Taliban fighters continue to operate in parts of Afghanistan and Pakistan. Other top al Qaeda leaders are known to be in Iran. Al Qaeda funds have been relocated to Sudan. The task of creating a stable post-conflict government in Afghanistan has barely begun, and warlords are reasserting their hold over former territory. Development aid has been slow to arrive and even slower to take effect, and most is unable to reach very far beyond Kabul.

Mr. Speaker, I recognize that it will take years for Afghanistan to become truly stable and able to meet the needs of its own people, but right now the country is already beginning to slip backward. It is imperative that we stay the course and succeed in Afghanistan, and it will cost the United States a great deal in time, personnel, effort, and money.

Completing the mission in Afghanistan requires holding together the international coalition Washington assembled following the September 11 attacks. War in Iraq, especially any unilateral action, would almost certainly shatter that coalition and alienate significant partners. A unilateral U.S. invasion of Iraq will make it difficult to get Arab support for a fair and lasting

resolution to the Middle East conflict. It would also inflame anti-American sentiment in the region. Diplomacy and coalition building aside, the military challenges of war and especially its aftermath in Iraq are still quite formidable. Iraq, like Afghanistan, is a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural nation with no apparent popularly supported opposition. Armed paramilitary and clandestine organizations opposed to a U.S.-led occupation of Iraq are likely to engage in guerrilla attacks against American soldiers. Internal strife and even civil and ethnic war are even more likely. Experts on Iraq from both prior Republican and Democrat administrations have indicated that it could take a decade or more of U.S. troops occupying Iraq before it is stable once more.

I will listen closely to the speech that President Bush will deliver next week at the United Nations. I welcome the fact that the administration has decided to reach out to our allies and to work with the United Nations on this matter. The President has also made the right decision to come before Congress and seek specific authorization for any military action in Iraq. Many questions remain to be answered before deciding how best to prevent the regime of Saddam Hussein from developing or deploying offensive weapons against other nations.

In the meantime the U.S. and the international community must continue to put maximum pressure on the Iraqi regime and press for resumption of unconditional international weapons inspections. The President should continue to work through the United Nations Security Council, and the U.S. should exercise restraint and continue to build an international coalition, including Arab nations, dedicated to completing the job in Afghanistan and willing to work jointly for more genuinely representative government in Baghdad.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion let me just say that I am deeply concerned with the policy that the administration has articulated thus far on Iraq. It will take a far more compelling presentation to convince me and many of my constituents that war is the right and only course remaining for the United States to take in Iraq.

SEPTEMBER 5, 2002, LETTER TO PRESIDENT BUSH REGARDING IRAQ

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, I, too, just returned from a month in my district, and spent a good deal of time traveling the district and talking with my constituents. I have a district that in fact voted in the majority for George Bush, and yet, I found, widely traveling my district, talking to di-

verse groups of constituents, a lot more questions than certainty about the President's position on Iraq. In fact, there is a great deal of misgiving in my district, as I believe there is abroad in the land.

The gentleman who preceded me made an eloquent case on a number of points, and I will not repeat those but I will emphasize a few others.

I am today sending a letter, along with 17 other Members of Congress, to the President. We are pleased that the President has now recognized the constitutional authority of the Congress to declare war and about the fact that he will come to Congress for approval for a war against Iraq.

At this point, I would venture and hope that Congress would not be willing to grant such approval to the President, given the lack of specificity and the many questions that need to be answered.

Among the questions that need to be answered are the following:

What is the threat posed by Saddam Hussein to the United States? UNSCOM said they destroyed 90 to 95 percent of their weapons of mass destruction. Is there convincing evidence of renewed production of chemical and biological weapons? Is there evidence that Iraq has successfully produced a nuclear weapon? Is there evidence Iraq has produced a reliable delivery system for weapons of mass destruction?

Are there new developments that mean Iraq poses an imminent threat to the United States, and therefore requires immediate attention? A year ago, the administration did not seem to think that. What has changed in that intervening time? If not, would a policy of enforcing no-fly zones, vigorous weapons inspections, military sanctions be effective in containing and/or reducing the perceived threat, given the success of such strategies over the last decade?

Is there any convincing evidence that Iraq planned, authorized, committed, or aided the terrorist attacks that occurred on September 11, or harbored such organizations or persons? That would give some authority to act without a specific grant from Congress, but the administration has not made that case.

Is there convincing evidence that Iraq has shared its knowledge of biological, chemical, or nuclear weapons, or the weapons themselves, with other nations or terrorist organizations? How does the threat of Iraq doing so compare with the threat posed by Iran, Pakistan, China, North Korea, or a number of other nations that are known to possess weapons of mass destruction, some of whom are known to be sharing and selling such information?

How does the administration intend to assure Iraq does not become balkanized? This was the problem that was confronted by Colin Powell and the father of President Bush when they decided not to go to Baghdad, as they said at the time.