

not long ago about this very same issue, and I think it is a bogus issue, Mr. Falwell; and I would like to see your financial records and Mr. Robertson's and all other religious organizations' financial records who are criticizing us for wanting to reimport pharmaceuticals so Americans pay a fair price.

So please, all of you religious organizations who are concerned about this, as you say you are, let us see your financial records and let us know that you are not taking large amounts of money from the pharmaceutical companies to put out this kind of tripe.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will remind the Member to address his remarks to the Chamber.

AMERICANS SHOULD KNOW THE TRUTH ABOUT IRAQ

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

Mr. HINCHEY. Mr. Speaker, the decision to go to war is the most profound decision that any nation can make. It should be done, of course, judiciously and only with the utmost of care and only as a last resort. This is especially true of democratic republics such as ours, when the actions of the government must be with the consent of the governed.

In order for the governed to give their consent, that consent, of course, must be informed. And it is the responsibility of the government to inform its citizens in an honest and straightforward way with regard to the background and information that it has that causes it to make such profound decisions.

On January 23 of this year, the President of the United States in this room addressed the Joint Session of the Congress as well as the people of the United States. And in that address he made a number of assertions with regard to the state of Iraq and why it was important for us to engage that country in hostility. Among those statements he made was one with regard to the importation of processed uranium from Niger. The President said in his statement that the British Government had informed them that the Government of Niger was importing processed uranium, and that was in the context of Iraq's trying to develop a nuclear weapon.

Now, we know that the President had that information on a first-hand basis. He did not have to quote any information from the British Government. He had it on a first-hand basis because the Vice President of the United States back in March of last year went to the Central Intelligence Agency and asked them to conduct an investigation as to whether or not Iraq was importing processed uranium from Africa.

The Central Intelligence Agency then asked former Ambassador Wilson, who

had a long and distinguished career in the Foreign Service including positions in West Africa, asked Mr. Wilson if he would go to Niger to discover whether or not it was possible for Niger to export processed uranium to Iraq for the purpose of building a nuclear weapon.

Ambassador Wilson went there. He spent a considerable amount of time, something in the neighborhood of close to 2 weeks. He interviewed dozens of people. He came back and reported to the Central Intelligence Agency that he found no reason to believe whatsoever that any processed uranium has been exported from Niger. Why? Because the uranium companies there are owned by essentially European countries and the controls are very, very strict and rigid. He examined a number of people who were involved in the companies and their controls, as well as people in the Niger Government. He came away believing there was no way that processed uranium could be exported from Niger to Iraq.

He reported to the Central Intelligence Agency. The Central Intelligence Agency obviously then reported to the Vice President of the United States, who we can only imagine and expect reported to the President of the United States.

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Nevertheless, the President then came here before the House and said that Niger was exporting processed uranium to Iraq when the government, our government, the administration knew, based upon firsthand information as a result of a CIA-sponsored investigation, that that was not the case. In addition, though, now we know that is not the case because we have the report of Mr. Wilson and we have other information that can only compel us to conclude that the President was wrong in his statement; and, in fact, he has admitted he was wrong in that statement, blaming Mr. Tenet.

Also in that address before a joint session of the Congress, the President mentioned the presence of vast quantities of chemical and biological weapons that were also in Iraq, according to his statement to that joint session. He also said that there were delivery mechanisms that were in Iraq and that those delivery mechanisms could be armed very, very quickly with those biological and chemical weapons and they could be used to bring those weapons into conflict against countries in the surrounding region, including Israel, against others, and that this constituted a direct threat to the United States and to our allies.

It has been now nearly 3 months that we have been searching for chemical and biological weapons as well as the means to deliver them in Iraq, and we have found absolutely nothing.

Based upon these two sets of facts, one has to question, what else did the President say that was false and why did we go to war in Iraq? This Congress needs to initiate a full and complete

congressional investigation as to the causes surrounding our entry into that war and the prosecution of that war, and it must do so forthwith.

NEW LAWS FOR EDUCATION SAVINGS

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

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I want to talk tonight a little bit about the importance of a college education and some of the laws that this Congress has passed to encourage better savings for education.

Some of the concerns that we need to consider is the fact that individual students and their parents in the future probably are going to be have to be more responsible for coming up with a larger share of the funds for their kids' college education.

Benjamin Franklin once said, "An investment in knowledge always pays the best interest." As we move to a high-tech economy, that is certainly truer than ever. High school dropouts earn an average of \$360 a week, while high school graduates earn \$506. Two-year college graduates earn \$598 a week, and 4-year college graduates earn on an average \$796. Over a life of work, a college graduate can expect to earn \$620,000 more than a community college graduate, \$810,000 more than a high school graduate and a whopping \$1,115,000 more than a high school dropout.

In addition to dollars, education gives a person more options to do what they want to do in life. This is one of the reasons I tell young people who visit me to study hard. It is also why I started the LeGrand Smith Scholarship Fund for high school seniors from the 7th Congressional District of Michigan. Finally, it is why I have pushed for tax savings for parents and grandparents to save for their children's and grandchildren's education. Simply put, there is nothing that can brighten a young person's future more than education.

The cost of education, while still worthwhile given the earnings difference, it is very expensive. Under present trends, a child born today can expect to pay about \$125,000 for 4 years at a State university, about twice that much for a private university. There is a lot of Federal and State government scholarships, tax benefits, work study programs, subsidized loans and financial aid for people in college.

Congress has also created two tax-favored savings programs in recent years that help families save for education, and these two I think are important.

The Coverdell Education Savings Account allows eligible taxpayers to contribute up to \$2,000 a year. These contributions are taxable, but the accrued earnings when a person takes them out are not taxable. The accounts are flexible and can be used to pay for educational expenses in grade school, high school or college. They can be even

used to defray the costs of home school education. In addition to tuition, the money can be used for books, supplies, equipment, tutoring, services for children with special needs, Internet access, et cetera. These accounts are open to taxpayers earning less than \$220,000 a year for couples.

Another option, as I conclude, Mr. Speaker, is the 529 plan. These are tax-deferred educational savings programs that put contributions under management like pension programs. They are often State-sponsored and provide good flexibility. Contributions can be made in a lump sum or in installments, and many States also contribute when a person starts spending that money for a college education. In Michigan, we contribute \$1 for every \$3 deposited.

I would encourage every friend and family member to think about educational savings for their children, their grandchildren, their nephews, their nieces. The expense of college education is daunting, but investing some now will allow for compound interest and growth over time. For example, even with the current low prospects for a return on earnings, saving just \$80 in a month can grow to \$31,000 over the 18 years it takes a child to be ready for college. It is important to get started right away.

Mr. Speaker, education is important. Everybody should be looking at the advantages of saving now.

PERHAPS PRIME MINISTER TONY BLAIR WILL ANSWER CONGRESS' QUESTIONS ABOUT INTELLIGENCE ON IRAQ

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

Mr. MCDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, Thursday will be a very historic day. Prime Minister Tony Blair of England will be scheduled to appear in this room before a joint session to make a speech and perhaps receive the Congressional Gold Medal. I understand it is not ready yet so he probably will not get it just now.

It was also in this very same room that President Bush said in his State of the Union speech that "the British government has learned that Saddam Hussein recently sought significant quantities of uranium from Africa." It turns out that information Mr. Bush had was already understood to be bogus. Our CIA had already told the British that. Yet the President included that fact in his State of the Union message. Apparently, the British indicated they had other information in addition to the crude forgeries indicating that Iraq was trying to buy uranium from Niger.

This has put President Bush in an awkward position. As people in the administration seek to blame one another and now the British and now the French and now the Italians, why and how did this happen?

Mr. Speaker, we have an historic opportunity. In Parliament, the Prime Minister faces MPs and responds directly to their questions. If we had the British system, we could go to Mr. Bush directly to solve this conundrum instead of relying on Ari Fleischer. Perhaps Mr. Blair will be kind enough to allow us the privilege that British MPs enjoy and we can ask him what happened. I really want to know. Don't my colleagues?

When we debated the award for Mr. Blair for the Congressional Gold Medal, I objected. I said it was either too early or too late. Either it should have been done when we did not know what was going on, or now that we have got some real questions, it is too late to give it to him. We have got to solve the question of what happened.

I feel even more strongly now that we ought not to proceed in the absence of answers to our questions. It appears that Mr. Blair may have misled our President or at least our President's speechwriters about whether good information existed indicating that Iraq was in the process of buying the components of nuclear weapons.

This is not a small thing. Perhaps Mr. Blair was responsible for the administration's discredited claim that one of the September 11 hijackers met with Iraqi intelligence in Prague. Perhaps Mr. Blair was the source of the administration's discredited claim that Iraq was buying special aluminum tubes for the manufacture of nuclear weapons. These and many more statements made by Mr. Powell, Mr. Rumsfeld, Dr. Rice, Mr. Fleischer and even the President have been found to be incorrect.

We have not been told why our officials made so many misstatements about Iraq prior to going to war. If our leaders were led astray by the Prime Minister, we surely should not honor them with the Congressional Gold Medal. Of course, we certainly ought not to subcontract our decisions on war and peace to a foreign country's intelligence apparatus. How much we may like Mr. Blair means nothing. We ought to trust our own people.

So maybe the problem is with ourselves. For example, why do we spend \$30 billion on intelligence and yet no one is capable of fact-checking a State of the Union speech? Why have we sacrificed the lives of more than 200 young Americans? We have been told they would protect our country from immediate danger posed by Saddam's barrels of nerve gas and biological toxins and nuclear weapons and al Qaeda and all the rest, but the information was weak, bad and apparently manipulated.

I think the people of Iraq are better off than they were before the United States took out the Saddam Hussein regime, but I am not sure that these Americans who died there were supposed to die to improve the lives of Iraqis. I think they were ready to die to protect their own country, the United States of America, from weap-

ons of mass destruction that threaten our shores and our people.

I am sure that the young people from Britain who have died were similarly protecting their own country.

Perhaps Mr. Blair will answer our questions when he comes to the Chamber on Thursday. Perhaps as Head of State Mr. Blair will take personal responsibility for the errors that pervaded the intelligence he repeatedly cited and not let people who work for him take the blame. Perhaps Mr. Blair will set an example for our own President to follow. That would be worth a Congressional Gold Medal.

HIGH COST OF PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

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

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Mr. Speaker, I rise again tonight to talk about the high cost of prescription drugs, and I am going to be showing a chart and talking about what I think are some pretty stubborn facts. But before I do, I just want to remind the Members of something that Abraham Lincoln said over 100 years ago: You can fool some of the people some of the time, you can even fool all of the people some of the time, but you cannot fool all the people all the time.

Earlier, my colleague, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON), rose and showed some righteous indignation about some of the kinds of advertising that are going on right now, and they are now saying that somehow if we are in favor of opening up markets to give Americans access to world-class drugs at world-market prices that somehow we are in favor of abortion, which is just a ludicrous argument to make. It says a lot about those groups, and I think my colleague, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON), raised some of the questions about the ethics of those groups who are sending out those brochures and running those ads.

I think it is fair to ask where the money really comes from, and I think we all know where the money really comes from, but at the end of the day I think we ought to ask ourselves about the ethics of the pharmaceutical companies, the companies who are actually paying for those ads, the companies who actually develop and sell RU-486.

Why is it that they want to change the subject? Why is it they do not want to talk about the real issue? They want to talk about anything they can except this chart.

The reason is simple. They cannot defend this chart. They cannot even explain this chart. I have asked them to explain this chart. Let me go through some of the numbers on this chart.

These are not somebody else's numbers. This is not some goofball group from Florida. This is not some left wing or right wing extremist. These