

Why is this initiative important now? Although we have heard some good economic news, positive economic growth, a growing stock market, a strong housing market, we have also heard some not-so-good economic news. The budget deficit is still too high.

Now, Democrats say the only way to cut deficits is to raise taxes on the American family. Does that sound familiar? It is the same refrain we have heard from them for years. We have a deficit, but it is not because we are taxed too little. It is because Washington spends too much. And in Washington we have a spending problem, not a taxing problem; and much of this Washington spending, Mr. Speaker, is pure waste, fraud, and abuse.

Recently, we passed a budget resolution in Congress asking every authorizing committee to make recommendations for eliminating waste, fraud, and abuse in their jurisdictional areas. We asked them to find savings equivalent to one percent of their budget. Something nobody ever does around here, find savings. We asked for only 1 percent and the Democrats fought us every step of the way, saying it is impossible to save money in Washington without gutting Federal programs.

Mr. Speaker, they are wrong.

Let me cite just a few examples. The Department of Housing and Urban Development made \$2.6 billion in section 8 overpayments. Almost 10 percent of their entire budget just disappeared into thin air. That is enough money to pay the down payment for 300,000 people to get into their first homes. Now, instead of using it to help families, the Washington bureaucracy just wasted it. And Democrats want to raise our taxes to pay for more of this?

The Medicare program paid out \$13.3 billion last year to people who did not even qualify for the program. That is enough money to pay one-third of the cost of a prescription drug benefit program for our seniors this year. But instead of using the money to help seniors, the Washington bureaucracy just wasted it. And Democrats want to pay our taxes to pay for more of this?

In another example, as you heard my colleague, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. FEENEY) say, the National Parks Service spent \$800,000 on an outhouse and it does not even work. The only thing it flushes is the money of the hard-working American family down the drain. And Democrats want to raise our taxes to pay for more of this?

The list goes on. Social Security pays benefits to dead people. Over the past 5 years, law enforcement has arrested over 7,000 fugitives who were illegally receiving food stamps. They include 1,500 accused drug offenders, 31 murderers, 45 sex offenders and child molesters, and hundreds wanted for assault and robbery. Over a 3-year period, the illegal food stamp practice known as trafficking has cost taxpayers \$660 million. And Democrats want to raise our taxes to pay for more of this?

Twenty-three percent of the people having their student loans discharged

due to disability actually hold down full-time jobs, costing the Federal Government \$40 million a year. And Democrats want to raise our taxes to pay for this?

Medicare pays five times as much for a wheelchair as the Veterans Administration does. Five times as much for the same wheel chair? Why? Because the Veterans Administration will competitively bid the wheelchair and Medicare will not.

Fortunately, the Republicans in the House just fixed this one without any help from the Democrats.

Mr. Speaker, these are just a few examples of the Washington waste, and we are just scratching the surface. One can see that many Federal programs routinely waste 10, 20, even 30 percent of their taxpayer-funded budgets and have for years.

Mr. Speaker, in the real world if you lose that much money, you will go broke or you will go to jail; but in Washington it is just an excuse to ask for even more money from the taxpayer next year. Mr. Speaker, this has got to stop. There are a thousand different ways we can save money in Washington without cutting any needed services and without raising taxes on the hard-working American families. When it comes to Federal programs, it is not how much money Washington spends; it is how Washington spends our money. And that is what the Washington Waste Watchers is about.

BE HONEST WITH AMERICAN TROOPS

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

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, this week U.S. deaths in the war in Iraq surpassed the number of lives lost in the first Persian Gulf War, 220 Americans have died, another today, with over 740 wounded. If you recall back in February, Army Chief of Staff Eric Shinseki, a soldier's soldier, testified to this Congress that several hundred thousand soldiers might be necessary for the occupation of Iraq.

He was immediately attacked by Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz, who termed General Shinseki's assessments as wildly off the mark. Wolfowitz said, "I am reasonably certain that the Iraqi people will greet us as liberators, and that will help us to keep requirements down."

Secretary of the Army Thomas White sided with Shinseki, not Wolfowitz, sealing his own fate. White announced his resignation 2 months later. General Shinseki himself stepped down as Army Chief of Staff and retired from the military about 5 weeks ago, June 11; and neither Secretary Rumsfeld nor Mr. Wolfowitz attended the ceremonies honoring General Shinseki for his lifetime of service to our country. Then

last week, Secretary Rumsfeld admitted that the Bush administration does not know how long the occupation of Iraq will last. Secretary Rumsfeld also was forced to admit he does not know how much the occupation will cost. Indeed, the costs have doubled from \$2 billion a month now to \$4 billion a month, and the costs are rising daily.

There are approximately 150,000 U.S. troops in Iraq. Secretary Rumsfeld would say only that they may be there for the foreseeable future and the number could be increased if necessary. Mr. Wolfowitz has not been heard to say that Secretary Rumsfeld's estimate is not wildly off the mark, even though it is very close to what General Shinseki predicted.

As far as the Wolfowitz prediction that Americans would be greeted as liberators and that would keep the force level low, it bears noting that more than 30 Americans have been killed in Iraq, with more casualties every day, since President Bush landed on that flight deck and said that peace was at hand.

A close look at the record will reveal that Secretary Rumsfeld's predictions about U.S. force levels in Iraq are skyrocketing. As recently as 2 months ago, he was predicting that our force levels could be reduced by 30,000 by the end of the year; but a Time Magazine article I will include in the RECORD tonight shows that the idea appears to be shifting closer to what General Shinseki told us initially, and today General Wesley Clark warned that our U.S. Armed Forces are overstretched because of Iraq and we need to take measures to take care of our men and women in uniform. Reserves need to be called up and we need a rotation plan because, let us face it, we are going to have to sustain the force in Iraq for some time. And I would add, sending Marines trained for aggressive combat to do policing is an absolutely inappropriate deployment.

We can look back to the date of May 1 when our soldiers were led to believe that they would be coming home in June. Then they were told on May 24 that maybe they would come home in August. And then Secretary Rumsfeld said last week they would be home by September. And then Major General Buford Blount said today that troop levels must remain at the current level and all bets are off.

This is not the way to treat the men and women who are giving their lives in the interest of this country. I have a very simple statement and that is: stop jerking our forces around. Treat them with the respect that they are due.

It is very odd to me that General Tommy Franks announced his retirement with 160,000 men and women under his command in the field.

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I can remember back to Vietnam, when General Abrams stayed the course right to the very end; in World War II, when our generals stuck it out through thick and thin.

Strange things are happening. Maybe we do not know all the facts, but I want to voice my concerns tonight about the safety of our men and women in uniform and the importance of rotation and a definite time when they can take a break. They deserve it. If that requires a draft in our country, so be it, but no General or any President or any Secretary of Defense or any Under Secretary of Defense should have our men and women in harm's way without the rotation that they are due for the absolutely incredible job that they have done for us.

In the RECORD tonight I would like to place several articles that document the statements of many of our soldiers who are in Iraq today, and I would commend them to my colleagues and say God bless those who are in the field for us. We are thinking of you every minute that we hold these positions here in Washington. We want to bring you home as quickly as possible. We want to meet our worldwide obligations, but, absolutely, you deserve a break, especially those who have been there in the Persian Gulf for over a year now. It is long overdue.

[From Reuters.com, July 16, 2003]

U.S. SOLDIERS COMPLAIN OF LOW MORALE IN IRAQ

(By Sue Fleming)

WASHINGTON.—Fed up with being in Iraq and demoralized by their role as peacekeepers in a risky place, a group of U.S. soldiers aired their plight on U.S. television on Wednesday and said they had lost faith in the Army.

Told several times they would be going home only to have their hopes dashed this week, a small group of soldiers from the 3rd Infantry Division in Iraq spoke of poor morale and disillusionment with Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld.

"If Donald Rumsfeld were here, I'd ask him for his resignation," one disgruntled soldier told ABC's "Good Morning America" show.

Asked by a reporter what his message would be for Rumsfeld, one said: "I would ask him why we are still here. I don't have any clue as to why we are still in Iraq."

About 146,000 U.S. troops are serving amid mounting security threats in postwar Iraq. The death toll has now equaled the number killed in the 1991 Gulf War.

Sgt. Filipe Vega said they had expected to return home soon after the fall of Baghdad on April 9. "We were told the fastest way back home is through Baghdad and that's what we did. Now we are still here," he complained.

The 3rd Infantry Division was the first U.S. unit to enter Baghdad after driving through southern Iraq through Kuwait.

Sgt. Terry Gilmore described a phone call with his wife Stacey when he told her he would not be coming home soon.

"When I told her she started crying and I almost started crying. I just felt like my heart was broken. I could not figure out . . . how they could keep us here after they told us we were coming home."

In Washington, a Pentagon spokeswoman said she understood the frustration, but said morale was still high. "It's obviously a frustrating situation for some of them, but it does not represent the entire 3rd Division."

She added: "When you get down to the individual soldier level, you can clearly see the dedication."

The wives of two of the soldiers appeared on the same show. "Just send my husband

home—send all the soldiers home. They have done the job they were supposed to do," said Rhonda Vega from Hinesville, Georgia.

Stacey Gilmore said U.S. troops were ill-prepared for the post-war phase. "They were told after the fighting ended they were coming home. All I know is that morale is low and they are just hanging in there, sticking through it."

[From Time Magazine, June 26, 2003]

IRAQ: WHEN CAN WE GO HOME?

(By Tony Karon)

President Bush faced a call this week from a senior member of his own party's foreign policy establishment to "level" with the American people about Iraq. Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Richard Lugar was not harping on the whereabouts of Saddam Hussein's alleged weapons of mass destruction; he was urging the president to give the electorate a more realistic picture of the scale and duration of the U.S. occupation mission in Iraq, and to impress on them the importance of staying the course. Fresh from a visit to Baghdad, Lugar warned: "The idea that we will be in just as long as we need to and not a day more—we've got to get over that rhetoric. It is rubbish! We're going to be there a long time."

A similar warning came from Thomas Pickering, who had served the first President Bush as UN ambassador and had headed up a Council on Foreign Relations study on Iraq which concluded that the U.S. mission had lacked "vision and strategy." Pickering, too, urged Bush to make clear that the current U.S. deployment of some 200,000 troops in and around Iraq would have to be maintained for a long time to come. Or, as General John Abizaid, who will assume command of the Iraq mission from the retiring General Tommy Franks next month, put it in congressional testimony this week, "for the foreseeable future."

For obvious domestic political reasons, the Bush Administration going into the war had downplayed the scale and duration of a post-war occupation mission. When then-Army Chief of Staff General Eric Shinseki told legislators that such a mission would require several hundred thousand U.S. troops, his assessment had been immediately dismissed by Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz as "wildly off the mark." Wolfowitz explained that "I am reasonably certain that (the Iraqi people) will greet us as liberators, and that will help us to keep requirements down." Six weeks ago, Defense Secretary Rumsfeld was still suggesting the U.S. force in Iraq could be reduced to 30,000 by the end of the year. But the prevailing assessment in Washington appears to be shifting to the idea of a figure closer to Shinseki's.

The changing assessment in Washington is being spurred by the realization that the security problem confronting U.S. and British troops in Iraq is not simply maintaining order in the face of looting and lawlessness, but instead that coalition forces are facing what appears to be an escalating guerrilla insurgency. And that means the occupation mission is costing not only American treasure—currently an estimated \$3 billion a month—but also American lives. U.S. forces come under attack every day in Iraq, and they have suffered combat casualties at a rate upward of one death every other day. Six British MPs were killed near Basra on Tuesday and eight were wounded in a second incident; a U.S. Marine was killed en route to help ambushed comrades Wednesday; two U.S. troops were reported missing overnight Thursday in Baghdad, and later in the day Centcom announced that a Special Operations soldier had been killed and eight wounded by hostile fire during an operation

southwest of Baghdad. Two Iraqis employed to help restore Baghdad's electricity supply were among those killed in a rocket attack on a U.S. convoy Thursday, while saboteurs blew up two important oil pipelines earlier in the week, apparently recognizing their ability to disrupt power supplies by targeting some of the country's 4,000 miles of oil and gas pipelines.

The coalition body count is mounting steadily in the postwar insurgency, despite two large sweep operations north of Baghdad last weekend designed to eliminate resistance. U.S. commanders have begun to acknowledge that they're facing an organized insurgency, blaming remnants of the old regime and jihadists from other Arab countries who had come to Iraq to fight the U.S. More worrying are the attacks that have occurred this week south of Baghdad, in predominantly Shiite areas. An insurgency confined to the Sunni minority is more easily contained than one whose base extends to the Shiite majority.

Average daily temperatures in Baghdad now are upward of 110 degrees, and U.S. troops who had hoped to be home in time for July 4th cookouts instead find themselves facing an enemy indistinguishable from the (often hostile) civilian population. And the enemy's strategy is to avoid ever presenting himself as a visible target, hoping to sap American morale and alienate the U.S. from the local population through hit and run attacks, and sabotage of reconstruction efforts.

Washington is hoping to lighten the load with an infusion of some 20,000 troops slated to be sent—in small contingents, mostly at U.S. expense—from those NATO countries that supported the war. But the number that actually arrive in Iraq may shrink somewhat if it turns out they're headed into a counterinsurgency mission rather than a more pedestrian peacekeeping affair. This week's British casualties, in what had ostensibly been the most tranquil part of Iraq, won't help Washington's recruitment efforts. Britain's own force levels in Iraq had been reduced from 45,000 during the war to around 15,000, although following the latest incident the government faces conflicting pressures to both increase and reduce its exposure in Iraq.

More robust contributions have been asked of India and Pakistan, but while the leaders of both countries are inclined to comply, both face strong domestic opposition. The U.S. is also embarking on a plan to train and equip a new Iraqi national army comprising some 60,000 men, although that project will likely take years to complete. In the short term, despite local recruitment and the planned deployment of more foreign troops, most, if not all of the heavy lifting will remain the preserve of the U.S. and British forces.

Iraq, of course, is not the only peacekeeping mission requiring the attention of the U.S. and its allies. Some 11,000 coalition troops remain deployed in Afghanistan against the Taliban and al-Qaeda, while peacekeeping duties are the preserve of the 4,800 foreign troops grouped under the banner of the International Security Assistance Force, whose small numbers confine its work to the capital, Kabul. A number of U.S. legislators and South Asia experts are quietly warning that the security situation there is in danger of unraveling in the face of Taliban resurgence and internecine warlord conflicts, and that turning the situation around requires either expanding the terms of the U.S. deployment to stabilizing Afghanistan, or else significantly expanding ISAF. (ISAF has one advantage in that it has drawn on major troop contributions from NATO members that had opposed the Iraq war—Turkey, France and Germany.)

The U.S. exit strategy from Iraq has always been to install a stable, friendly Iraqi government whose oil revenues would give it financial independence and withdraw the bulk of the force that had overthrown Saddam's regime. But the scale of the challenge of remaking Iraq forced Washington to adapt its plans. When U.S. viceroy Paul Bremer arrived to take the reins from the hapless Jay Garner he chose to keep political authority in U.S. hands rather than betting prematurely on any Iraqi group. To the chagrin of most of Iraq's many political factions, Bremer has put talk of a transitional government in the deep freeze, and instead plans to draw Iraqis into a much slower process of consultation over a new constitution. That, of course, leaves the occupation authority without an Iraqi face, which further inflames nationalist passions—but managing an occupation mission such as Iraq invariably throws up mostly lesser-evil choices.

It was clear from the moment Bremer took over that the process of achieving the Bush administration's political objectives in post-Saddam Iraq might take years of patient nation-building. But what has become equally clear, in recent weeks, is that it may also require winning a second war, of counterinsurgency.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GINGREY). The Chair reminds all Members to address their remarks to the Chair.

WASTE, FRAUD AND ABUSE

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

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about our efforts towards reducing waste, fraud and abuse in the Federal Government. It is a problem that has been plaguing the American taxpayers for far too long. With so little accountability on the Federal level, our government has grown like an unchecked cancer, basically ransacking and pick-pocketing the taxpayers pocket, wasting taxpayer dollars so the Federal Government does not have the dollars it needs to get the job done.

How does this happen? It happens by disregarding erroneous tax returns; by Medicare making thousands of overpayments, refusing to improve their bookkeeping system; in effect having the government waste, fraud and abuse occurring so that we do not have the taxpayer dollars necessary in those areas we want to have it.

Before I begin, allow me to address some specific areas that are of interest to me so we can begin the process to start to reform the Federal Government to address the issue of the deficit and hopefully bring our budget back in line to balance.

Go back, if you will, and imagine if the Federal Government was actually able to account for that \$17.3 billion back in 2001 or that \$20 billion in overpayments that they made in that same year. If we were able to do that, we

would be able to bring our Federal deficit that year within eight points better than we did that year. Eight points, eight percent, it is not that much, but at least it is a step in the right direction.

Today we have already heard of the creation of a new organization of dedicated freshmen members of Washington's Waste Watchers. This is a group that is dedicated to literally cut the fat to address the issue of waste, fraud and abuse, to try to reverse the years of neglect on the Federal level when it comes to Federal spending.

When I go back to the folks back in the 5th Congressional District in New Jersey where I represent, I hear countless times from those people of how hard it is to send in their tax dollars from their hard-earned paychecks that they make each week, to send it down to Washington only to hear all the stories in the press of how we spend the money down here. When they hear that money is being misspent, wasted, their response is shock and disappointment.

Mr. Speaker, Americans did not send us to Washington just to spend their money. They sent us here to spend their money in the right way, not to waste their money, not to abuse their money, not to lose their money, but to spend it to help those needed recipients, as we intended to.

It is time that we in Congress start putting some pressure on those Federal agencies to get their books in order, to crack down on fraud and abuse, to cut the waste.

I sit on the Committee on the Budget, and we had the Inspector General folks from the Department of Education come in, and they spoke of improper loan forgiveness for false death and disability claims and questionable handling of student loan funds. What this means is that there is less dollars to go into the classroom for the textbooks and overcrowded classrooms because we sent the Federal dollars we want to there.

But this is just one example. There are so many more that we are going to hear as we go on in this program.

Examples on the Medicare program, which pays as much as eight times the cost of other Federal agencies for drugs and programs, Medicare that when you compare it to programs like the VA, the VA spends \$130 for a wheelchair, Medicare \$571. Medicare versus the VA, VA spends 700 bucks for a bed. Medicare spends around 1,700 bucks, a 230 percent increase for the same program. Medicare from 1996 to 2002 spent \$83 billion in improper payments.

We also had some testimony from some other people, people from the Inspector General's office in the Department of Health and Human Services. They told us that upwards to 5 percent or more of all funding that goes into Medicare is misused and wasted. This House just voted on a \$400 billion package for prescription drugs. Five percent of \$400 billion comes to a potential \$20 billion of more waste, fraud and abuse.

How do we avoid this problem in that area? There is a couple of recommendations. One is to have accounting mechanisms in place for all the money that is spent. It is not there. Secondly is to have verification mechanisms for the employees and have those employees be held responsible and accountable and, thirdly, have more resources for the Inspector Generals to conduct the audits to find that waste, fraud and abuse that we are talking about here. That is just another example that our constituents back home hear about of waste, fraud and abuse on the Federal level.

Mr. Speaker, I remind my colleagues that the American people did not send us to Washington, the American people did not elect us to be Members of Congress to spend their money ineffectively. They sent us here to make sure that the money is spent efficiently and effectively. They sent us here to make sure that there is not that waste, fraud and abuse.

U.S. FOREIGN POLICY AND POST- WAR IRAQ

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

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, as one of the cochairs of the Democratic Study Group on National Security, along with the gentleman from California (Mr. SCHIFF) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. ISRAEL), I am very delighted to stand on the floor this evening to talk about American foreign policy and post-war Iraq.

I certainly want to extend appreciation to our leader, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI), for having the foresight and vision to establish our Democratic Study Group on National Security.

I supported the President's decision to go to war against Iraq and remove Saddam Hussein from power. I am also pleased that this regime can no longer victimize the Iraqi people. The United States military has done very well, a superb job, and I am very proud of our soldiers, our sailors, our airmen, but we cannot let go of Iraq just yet.

As the world's only remaining superpower, we must recommit ourselves to peace, diplomacy and nation building now that the war is winding down.

The United States of America is a strong Nation, with the strongest military in the world, but with that force must exist a strong diplomatic strategy. The situation in Iraq teaches us that we cannot simply overwhelm a regime with force and then disengage from the area. If we do not back our strength of action with strength of diplomacy, then we will fail in our goal to provide a rebuilt, free democracy in Iraq.

I am concerned that there is a lot more that still needs to be done to make Iraq a safe and secure country, more than the United States can