

hands of Fidel Castro and his thugs. The dictator's latest sweep, begun in March, has jailed more than 75 independent journalists and human rights activists.

Afraid and fearful, Castro has now moved to silence all dissent. Castro is a weak and insecure man, utterly afraid to be criticized or held to account. Yet some in Congress still do not get it. They imagine Castro is a man we can do business with. Instead, Castro and his psychotic torturers ought to be at The Hague facing prosecution for crimes against humanity.

Madam Speaker, Castro is a mass murderer, a cruel torturer, and anything but a benign revolutionary.

#### NATIONAL DEBT INCREASES UNDER PRESIDENT BUSH

(Mr. TANNER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TANNER. Madam Speaker, it has been 797 days since President Bush and the Republican Party embarked on their economic plan for our country. During that time, the national debt has increased by \$1,080,045,794,469. According to the Web site for the Bureau of the Public Debt at the U.S. Department of Treasury, yesterday at 4:30 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time, the Nation's outstanding debt was \$6,720,371,180,827. Furthermore, in fiscal year 2003, interest on our national debt or the "debt tax" is \$277,768,492,816 through June 30.

#### TSA AWARDED PORKER OF THE WEEK AWARD

(Mr. HEFLEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HEFLEY. Madam Speaker, the Transportation Security Administration is only a year old but is already wasting funds like an old-time Federal bureaucracy. The agency that is responsible for staffing the Nation's airports with security personnel is also responsible for nearly \$250 million of waste.

Given the new and enormous task of securing 429 airports around the country, there is bound to be some financial waste. But the extent of the TSA's largess is indefensible. It has overstaffed rural airports, paid security companies inflated rates, purchased more than a thousand baggage scanners with dated technology for a million dollars apiece, leased sport utility vehicles for \$200,000 a year rather than lease less-expensive sedans, and entered into a contract to recruit Federal screeners that escalated from the original estimate of \$100 million to nearly \$700 million, all of this on top of last year's \$410,000 expense just to furnish the offices of the director and his chief aides.

Madam Speaker, the TSA gets my Porker of the Week Award.

#### UNEMPLOYMENT AND THE ECONOMY

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

Ms. SOLIS. Madam Speaker, today I rise to address an issue very important to millions and millions of people in our country. President Bush has ignored our economy, and I point out to Members to look at what is happening in the 32nd Congressional District of California. Rates of unemployment have gone up dramatically. The national rate is about 6.4, and in one of my cities it is up to almost 11 percent.

What I think we ought to be doing in the House is starting to focus in on trying to replenish jobs and bringing back American values that our families so sorely need. We have many people serving as reservists in the military. Their families are suffering. We need to give them a child tax credit break, and we need to increase the minimum wage.

Madam Speaker, these are hard-working people. They have been suffering for over 2 years, and I know they are telling me in a strong way across the country that we need to focus on our economy. The rich have gotten their tax breaks, but what about the working poor? And what about the working-class families that we all represent in our districts? I would ask my colleagues to think seriously before we go on recess to provide an economic incentive package to help working families.

#### IRAQ'S NUCLEAR WEAPONS PROGRAM

(Mr. BURGESS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BURGESS. Madam Speaker, after the terrorist attacks of September 11, it became apparent that the United States needed to be more vigilant about terrorism and weapons proliferation and pay attention to prospects of weapons of mass destruction falling into the hands of groups that could use them against American interests.

The Bush Administration, the Clinton Administration, and the United Nations all agreed that Saddam Hussein possessed a significant biological and chemical capability in 1998 when the inspectors were withdrawn. There is broad agreement that Hussein, different from any other leader, had proven himself capable of using these weapons for offensive purposes and not merely a defensive posture.

There are efforts in the Congress to employ a full investigation into difficult issues to understand whether mistakes were made and to take action to fix them in fulfillment of Congress' important oversight responsibilities. To date, the chairman of the Committee on Armed Services, the Senate

Select Committee on Intelligence and the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence reject a broader probe of the WMD issue.

I believe Congress is exercising its oversight authority and has set in place procedures to review comprehensively and on a bipartisan basis the intelligence surrounding Iraq prior to the outbreak of war and to take into account any dissident views on the Iraqi threat.

#### GUERRILLA WARFARE IN IRAQ

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

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. Madam Speaker, since President Bush declared the end to major combat operations on May 1, 2003, our brave servicemen and women have continued to die in Iraq at a rate of one per day. Let us look at the figures: 412 wounded, 86 killed. And still the administration continues to downplay the gravity of this situation.

Our troops are facing insurgents who are clearly using guerrilla techniques and tactics; and even the new CENTCOM commander yesterday admitted that, in his opinion, this is a classic guerrilla-type war.

So why is it that the Secretary of Defense and the President are refusing to characterize it as such? We are starting down a slippery slope into another long, drawn-out guerrilla conflict, once again.

We need to find a viable solution fast. It is imperative that we give our troops all of the resources that they need to get the job done and confront the enemy, and we must continue to urge NATO to provide emergency assistance. We must bring our troops home as quickly as possible.

#### NORTH KOREAN REFUGEE CRISIS

(Mr. PITTS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PITTS. Madam Speaker, the actions of China and the UNHCR, in response to the North Korean refugee crisis, are reprehensible. China has deliberately failed to uphold the obligations under international law and the conventions that they have signed and has prohibited the UNHCR from carrying out its accepted mandates to assist refugees.

The Chinese government has prevented North Korean refugees from their right to apply for asylum. Any North Koreans who have tried to do this have disappeared, and the UNHCR has failed in its mandate to invoke binding arbitration against countries that prohibit it from carrying out its mandate.

Chinese officials fear a refugee flood, but refugees do not flee their country simply to find refugee assistance, they

flee because of wide-spread starvation, human rights violations and other terrible atrocities and sufferings.

Madam Speaker, the U.N. should condemn China as well as the UNHCR for their failure to uphold their obligations; and Kim Jong Il should step down from power; and the North Korean government should stop their brutal policies against the North Korean people.

#### IF NOT NIGER, WHERE?

(Mr. MARKEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MARKEY. Madam Speaker, welcome to the People's House Tony Blair. We need you. The Niger evidence that supposedly showed Saddam Hussein had reconstituted his nuclear weapons program turns out to be forged, but you say, wait, there is more.

We are aware of Niger, but Africa is a big continent. You say you have other sources, possibly a third country that thinks Saddam Hussein may have been buying uranium in some other Africa country. Our own CIA does not know what you know. Our National Security Council says it does not know what you know. Indeed, the President of the United States says he does not know what you know.

The American public needs to know the truth. You hold the key. Please, Mr. Prime Minister, redeem our trust. If not Niger, where were the nuclear materials, Mr. Prime Minister?

□ 1015

#### ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. BIGGERT). Members are reminded to address their remarks to the Chair.

#### ANTI-SEMITIC SENTIMENTS ON RISE AMONG BRITISH ACADEMICS

(Mr. MILLER of Florida asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to draw attention to the unsettling increase of anti-Semitic sentiments of many academics in the United Kingdom. Over the past year, a growing number of university professors in the U.K. have engaged in a boycott of scholars and research from Israel. Most recently, a professor at Oxford denied the admittance of an Israeli graduate student based solely on his Israeli citizenship.

So what has fueled this rise in academic anti-Semitism? One only needs to look at the policies of the Association of University Teachers, one of Britain's largest associations for higher education professionals. The AUT Web site states, "We also support the call by academics in the U.K. and else-

where for a moratorium on European Union and European Science Foundation funding of Israeli cultural and research institutions until Israel abides by U.N. resolutions and opens meaningful peace negotiations with the Palestinians."

The "academics" in the U.K. have taken a giant step backward from the tradition of teaching individual rights and liberties and free thought. This boycott of Israeli academics and philosophy, ideas that originate in the Middle East's only true democracy, is a clear indication that the values that gave birth to our own American free-thinking principles are no longer practiced by many of the U.K.'s educators.

#### IDENTITY THEFT

(Mr. EMANUEL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, I recently introduced bipartisan legislation with 19 colleagues called the Identity Theft Protection and Health Information Blackout Act of 2003. The legislation would protect Americans from identity theft and safeguard their private health information in the Fair Credit Reporting Act.

My bill would black out and protect sensitive, private health-related information by returning control to consumers and giving them the final say over what is off-limits to financial institutions. There is simply no reason why health information should be used in granting credit or in deciding whether to offer someone a product or a financial service. It is long past time to make this information confidential. Rather than opt in or opt out, we should black out your private health information.

Similarly, we are all aware of the identity theft epidemic in this country. The average identity theft victim spends nearly \$1,400 and 175 hours cleaning up his or her credit card record. In fact, ID theft has doubled in just the last year. It puts both businesses and the consumer at risk. This is not a business or consumer issue. It is one that we can come together on.

Mr. Speaker, my bill would put identity thieves out of business and ensure that Americans' private health information is given the strongest protections under the law. I encourage my colleagues to cosponsor the Identity Theft Protection and Health Information Blackout Act to that end.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. TAYLOR of North Carolina. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 2691.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from North Carolina?

There was no objection.

#### DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2004

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 319 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the further consideration of the bill, H.R. 2691.

□ 1018

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the further consideration of the bill (H.R. 2691) making appropriations for the Department of the Interior and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2004, and for other purposes, with Mr. LATOURETTE in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIRMAN. When the Committee of the Whole rose on Wednesday, July 16, 2003, the bill was open from page 101, line 4, through page 101, line 13.

Mr. HEFLEY. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the last word. I rise to engage the chairman of the subcommittee in a colloquy.

Mr. Chairman, this week, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced it was proceeding with the development of new voluntary guidelines to protect migratory birds from electrocution and collisions with power lines. This is an important development.

For the past 70 years, the Nation's rural electric cooperatives have provided power to millions of people in rural America. Distribution and transmission lines cross many miles of wide open spaces and sometimes those wide open spaces are filled with migratory birds. Under two laws, the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and the Golden and Bald Eagle Protection Act, electric utilities can be found guilty of so-called takings if birds fly into those lines or land on them and are killed. Many utilities have responded by redesigning the towers for new power lines and locating these lines outside of known flyways. Yet birds continue to fly into power lines and as things currently stand, these utilities are liable for penalties under these two laws. Mr. Chairman, no one in their right mind, when these laws were enacted, would have thought that these laws would be interpreted in this kind of a way.

The Fish and Wildlife Service has been very forthcoming in a series of meetings with myself and my colleagues, the gentlewoman from Colorado (Mrs. MUSGRAVE) and the gentleman from Utah (Mr. BISHOP). However, we ask you, Mr. Chairman, to join us in emphasizing to the Service the importance of resolving this issue. All of America, not just rural America, needs electric power and this problem has the potential of interfering with delivery of that power.

If I may, Mr. Chairman, I would like to yield a moment to the gentlewoman from Colorado who represents the eastern plains of Colorado and has spent an