

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H. RES. 557, RELATING TO THE LIBERATION OF THE IRAQI PEOPLE AND THE VALIANT SERVICE OF THE UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES AND COALITION FORCES

Mr. DREIER, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 108-438) on the resolution (H. Res. 561) providing for consideration of the resolution (H. Res. 557) relating to the liberation of the Iraqi people and the valiant service of the United States Armed Forces and Coalition forces, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

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

(Mr. DEFAZIO addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take the Special Order time of the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO).

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

There was no objection.

THE REPUBLICAN MEDICARE BILL

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

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, if the Republican Medicare bill is so good, why do they have to sell it so hard? That is a question I have been asking myself lately. I bet it is a question the American people are starting to ask too.

When AARP boss Bill Novelli came out for the Bush Medicare privatization bill last year, he launched a \$7 million ad campaign to convince seniors he had made the right decision. America's seniors knew better, and 45,000 AARP members quit in protest.

Rather than learn from AARP's mistake, the President is repeating that same mission, this time at taxpayers' expense. The Bush administration is spending almost \$14 million on a nationwide taxpayer-financed TV advertising campaign, the goal of which is to "educate" seniors on why the new Medicare drug law is not as bad as it appears. Interestingly in this election year, he is running those ads at taxpayers' expense even though the Medicare bill does not take effect for 2 more years.

The Bush administration's Medicare ads were suspect from the start. With the slick look of a campaign spot, they assure seniors that the bill guarantees the same Medicare, the same benefits.

It is not the same Medicare. They would not be spending the money and trying so hard to convince us if it were the same Medicare. It is not the same Medicare. All seniors will pay higher deductibles. Millions of seniors will pay higher premiums.

And in terms of more benefits, the new coverage is not even available until 2006. It is far from free, and it is actually less generous than the employer-sponsored retiree coverage many seniors have today. In fact, by jeopardizing these employer-sponsored benefits that some 12 million seniors have today, the new Medicare law is likely to leave millions of those seniors with less coverage than they have today.

"The same Medicare, more benefits." It is a catchy soundbite. The Government Accounting Office, the non-partisan Government Accounting Office, also said it is false advertising. In the people's name with their tax dollars. They said it was false advertising. Now newspapers tell us that the Bush administration is not just manipulating the news; they are inventing it. The administration is using the people's tax dollars literally to hire actors to portray reporters in staged "interviews" that look more like the Home Shopping Network than they do legitimate news, and they do a public disservice.

Even the conservative editors at The Plain Dealer, the largest paper in my State in Cleveland, called those ads phony. And that is just the beginning. News reports, real news stories written by real reporters say the \$13 million ad campaign, the infomercial-like interviews are just the tip of the iceberg. The administration is reportedly planning to spend another 80 million of the people's tax dollars to push the Medicare bill which is now law. The drug companies, close allies of President Bush and the Republican leadership in Congress, the word on the street is that the drug companies are going to contribute \$100 million to President Bush's reelection. No surprise that the drug companies came into this institution and wrote that language and wrote that Medicare law, the parts that the insurance industry did not write in the Medicare law. Those drug companies are also partners in the marketing plan. Drug giant Pfizer recently launched a traveling road show to talk up the law's new coverage. A less credible champion for drug affordability would be hard to find, Mr. Speaker, less credible than Pfizer. After all, it is the same company, Pfizer, that cut off supplies to Canadian pharmacies when my constituents are trying to buy drugs in Canada because they are so much less expensive. The same drug, same packaging, same dosage, just much less expensive. By the way, Pfizer's pitchman is former U.S. Republican Senator Bob Dole, the same Bob Dole who voted against Medicare in 1965, its creation, who was still bragging about his "no" vote 30 years later.

There is even more to this story. Last year Medicare's chief actuary, a government employee, the man responsible for actually drawing an honest fiscal picture to tell the Congress and to tell the American people, said the Bush plan would cost well over \$500 billion rather than the President's promise and Republican leadership's promise that it costs \$400 billion. After the bill was enacted, the administration released a revised estimate, surprise, and said actually it will cost about \$530 billion.

The Medicare actuary, a Federal employee, was forbidden by his boss, a Federal employee, a Bush political appointee, who is now, interestingly enough, a drug industry lobbyist, that Medicare actuary was prevented from releasing the plan's true cost under the threat that he would be fired if he talked to the American people about the real cost, if he talked to Congress about the real cost. When he was threatened, he was threatened with the loss of his job by a Bush political appointee who is now a drug company lobbyist.

These actions, Mr. Speaker, by the Bush administration and its drug company allies raise serious questions of judgment and serious questions of conduct by those elected officials and appointed officials, by the President, by the head of the Center for Medicaid and Medicare Services, now a drug company lobbyist. I hope these questions will receive careful scrutiny. And still they raise the basic question: If the Republican Medicare bill is so good, why do they have to sell it so hard using 80 million taxpayer dollars?

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

(Mr. MURPHY addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take my Special Order at this time.

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

There was no objection.

AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, last week there was a quote attributed to JOHN KERRY, the Democratic nominee for President, who said "I've met foreign leaders who can't go out and say this publicly, but, boy, they look at you and say, 'You got to win this; you got to beat this guy; we need a new policy,' things like that." He has not denied the statement.

Quite frankly, whether the statement is accurate or not, and I do not believe it to be accurate, America's foreign policy decisions are not designed to win popularity contests. They are designed to protect and defend America, her citizens, and her allies.

In the days since September 11, there have been those who actually seem to believe that if we had been more understanding of extremist regimes and terrorists that perhaps they would have left us alone. There is a troubling trend in this campaign season. It has become almost formulaic, and we are hearing it from everybody, from the Democratic Presidential candidates on down. Criticize the President, criticize our foreign policy, criticize our country, criticize what we offer, and do it as loudly and as often as they can.

The alternative to President Bush's bold, tough foreign policy that puts terrorists and rogue regimes on the run is one that relies on the international community to take collective action. We have been there. We spent 12 years letting the U.N. throw paper at Saddam Hussein while Saddam's military launched missiles at our pilots, at American pilots enforcing the U.N. no-fly zones over Iraq. For 12 years the U.N. turned a blind eye while such as France allowed its citizens to profit from the Iraq Oil for Food or, as some call it, the Oil for Palaces Program.

International consensus, multilateralism? These are terms the policy wonks and the intellectual elites love to use. They are terms that sound great on paper, but an unyielding dedication to them has proven disastrous in the real world. Multilateralism and collective action are terms that we in the real world know to mean that America should stop leading and let the status quo remain. Those who profited from a status quo that allowed Saddam to remain in power, that allowed terrorists to grow and flourish in Afghanistan do not want us to act.

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Nations that have neither the will nor the military capability to take on terrorism on a truly global scale should not criticize those that do.

It was 3,000 Americans, our buildings, our Pentagon that were targeted on September 11, and those responsible needed to know that we were going to do more than lob a few missiles. We have taken steps to reshape the world for the better, and whether this pleases the French is irrelevant. We alone have the capability and the responsibility to stamp out terrorism, and it is to President Bush's credit that he was not deterred by apologists for terrorists and Saddam.

Should America make a turn backward, back to the days when multilateralism and collective action were more important than promoting freedom and targeting terrorism, when we relied on the U.N. to slap dictators on the wrist and sit idly by as Afghanistan became a giant terrorist training

camp? If we take that step back, then we are signifying our weakness.

The debate is very clear: Do you prefer that we act preemptively to prevent another September 11? Do you believe swift, decisive action in lands breeding terrorism is preferable to emergency response on the streets of our cities in the aftermath of an attack? Do you want American foreign policy dictated by your elected leaders or those in Europe?

I think the answer to this is clear. We all know the answer to this and, certainly, when we read polls like this one from the Iraqi people who say their life is better today than it was a year ago, we know the answer to that question.

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

(Mr. PALLONE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take my 5 minutes out of order.

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

There was no objection.

TAX CUTS DO NOT CREATE JOBS

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

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to speak about the continual frustration that Americans feel when it comes to their jobs, or lack of jobs.

The American people are getting mixed messages when it comes to the economy, and we have a responsibility to give it to them straight and put in place the measures that are going to help.

The administration tells the American people that the economy is growing, and we hear today that a new survey shows that 28 percent of employers plan to add workers, but we have yet to see such strong growth. The Congressional Budget Office estimates only 4.8 percent of the gross domestic product growth in 2003, providing strong suggestions that the growth touted by the administration is not sustainable. Not only is that growth not sustainable, the American people are not feeling the effects of it.

My Republican colleagues will say, but the unemployment rate dropped in January. However, by stressing the unemployment rate has dropped to 5.6 percent, they fail to tell the rest of the story that paints the true picture of the job market in our country. Job

growth is not following economic growth. Profits are up, but job creation is not. It is that simple. The working-age population has increased by 2.4 percent and needed an additional 4.7 million jobs since March of 2001 just to support these new workers. Instead, jobs since then have decreased by 2.35 million, creating a gap of 7 million jobs lost in the job market.

There are not enough jobs to even sustain the growth in population, much less provide employment for all of our workers affected by plant closures, company downsizing, and the outsourcing. Each month, 125,000 additional Americans want to enter the workforce. These people are not to be confused with our currently unemployed workers; rather, these are Americans who have graduated from high school or college. And, the 112,000 jobs created in January do not even compensate enough for these new workers, much less help absorb the 2.35 million Americans who have lost their jobs since this recession began.

To make matters worse, the economy only created 21,000 jobs in February, and an additional 392,000 civilian workers left the workforce last month. However, the Labor Department's monthly unemployment statistics do not count that 392,000 unemployed workers. They do not count any of the 2.8 million Americans who constitute the "missing labor force," or those who have given up looking for jobs or left the labor market all together. Sure, the unemployment rate can drop if we do not count those who have already left the labor force. But, if we include these workers into the unemployment statistics, the country's current unemployment rate jumps to 7.4 percent.

And what have we done for those who have found themselves laid off or unemployed? The administration cut taxes and said tax cuts will create 306,000 jobs each month. Yet, in 8 months, a total of only 294,000 jobs have been created, not the 2,448,000 that this administration said tax cuts would create. Just a little short.

If the Republican majority is not going to create jobs, they should at least help the country's unemployed by extending unemployment benefits. Again this year, Congress left town before Christmas without providing unemployed Americans with a 13-week temporary extension of their benefits. It is March now, and Congress still has failed to act on this important benefit to unemployed Americans.

The need for extended unemployment benefits is real. This is the longest recession without job recovery since the Bureau of Labor Statistics began collecting data in 1939, since recovering from the Great Depression. This is the longest recession without job recovery. We do not need statistics to demonstrate that need. To those of us who hear from and visit with our unemployed constituents, it is equally clear.

We continue to hear the hollow argument that our recent economic growth