

Now, Mr. Speaker, these are amazing examples. But what I think is even more amazing is that the Democrats want to raise our taxes to pay for more of this.

Mr. Speaker, these are but a few of the examples of the enormous amounts of waste that the Federal Government generates every single year, but these are only the tip of the iceberg when compared to the total amount of waste in Federal Government.

Mr. Speaker, as long as the Democrats continue to define the value of programs by how much we spend rather than how well or how effectively we spend, the taxpayers will continue to suffer.

□ 2045

Yet, Mr. Speaker, the Democrats still want to raise our taxes for more of this.

ASSURING FISCAL HONESTY AND ACCOUNTABILITY ACT OF 2004

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

Mr. CASE. Mr. Speaker, good evening and aloha.

Tonight, I rise to address again the single most important issue facing our country, now, next year, and well into the next generation, and that is our crushing budget deficit and the fiscal corruption of our Nation's finances; and yes, I do not use that word "corruption" lightly because that is what is happening.

I do so in solidarity with my fellow Blue Dog Members, people of sincerity who I respect and who have stood here for years and decades and argued for fiscal responsibility and with whom I today reintroduced the Assuring Fiscal Honesty and Accountability Act of 2004. That is the subject that I want to address briefly here tonight because I can assure my fellow citizens, beyond any semblance of doubt, that fiscal honesty and accountability have no place at today's seat of power here in Washington.

Perhaps I am overly simplistic, but on any issue I like to ask: First, is there a problem? Second, what exactly is it? Third, what is the solution? Fourth, how do we accomplish it?

The act that we introduced today addresses the fourth question: How do we accomplish it? And it starts with the fourth question because I do not know how anybody can doubt that we have a problem. We know we have one, and we know exactly what it is, the systematic pillaging of our Nation's fiscal and budgetary integrity and resources for short-term political gain. We know the general parameters of the solution, and today we have had a good interchange on that.

We know we have to eliminate waste, fraud and abuse, wherever it is. We know we have to balance revenues and

spending, but the reality is that we have lost our way on just how to get there.

We learned once in the eighties and the nineties that for us to have a realistic discussion and to make realistic decisions on the incredibly tough issues that go with the fiscal discipline territory, whether to raise or lower taxes and on whom, who and what to spend taxpayers hard-earned money on, and who not to spend it on, we had to set the rules of engagement and institute some basic checks and balances on natural political tendencies arising out of our reluctance, our abhorrence, of saying no. These rules were necessary, even though we had already placed limits on the amount of total national debt and required a separate vote to breach that national debt.

Those votes had become, as they are today and as we proved again today in the Committee on the Budget, a superfluous pro forma exercise as we now break through the \$7.5 trillion total debt barrier. These rules had fancy names like discretionary spending caps and pay-go or pay-as-you-go, but they all stood for the same basic concept, a concept we are all familiar with in our personal and business finances: Set the ground rules, the overall boundary of the finances as a responsible, achievable, sustainable level before making individual decisions, and then match those decisions to those rules. The caps were just that, overhaul caps or limits. We could move around under caps, but we could not breach the caps, and pay-go just said if we break the rules in one area, if we exceed in one area, we have to make it up somewhere else, a pay-as-you-go. It all has to balance one way or the other. And these rules worked up until 3 years ago.

We had reversed a fiscal decline and were heading towards surpluses, but then what happened was something inexcusable, and it was on the watch of the current administration because that is when people around here in the majority and downtown decided they did not like those rules, because those rules got in the way of radically reducing revenues, while at the same time busting spending up to record highs. Yes, let us not talk about whose responsibility the spending increases were. The rest is history; record deficits as far as the eye can see, record total debt, material risk to our very fiscal foundations.

The gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM) again said tonight a saying that I am fond of: In order to get out of the hole, you have to stop digging. That is what this bill says: Let us stop digging right now by using techniques that worked in the past and let us start climbing.

One would think the majority and the administration would be falling all over themselves to get out in front on this issue. After all, I hear tell they are the party of fiscal responsibility. What an incredible surprise here in Washington to discover that that is anywhere but the truth.

So, lo and behold, they are not. They do not mind discretionary spending caps, as long as it is only the programs that they do not like. They do not mind putting caps on them. But, by the way, the programs that they want to raise, the programs that are busting our budget, no, we cannot afford discretionary spending caps. They do not mind pay-go, sounds good, as long as it does not apply to those programs, as long as it does not apply to evaluations of revenues and taxes.

Well, any fool can see that when you set the rules, they have to apply to everyone. When you balance a budget, you cannot leave it with so many outs, so many holes, that it is dead on arrival. And that is what the absence of this discretionary spending caps and pay-go rules has done.

So our bill says to everybody, hey, simply, you say you stand for fiscal responsibility, prove it. Set some rules that work and then live with them.

I urge this bill's prompt passage. And to my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, who have stood here today talking about fiscal responsibility, I invite their cosponsorship. I think we can form a good team to provide some realistic budget rules.

SALUTING OUR SOLDIERS

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

Mr. BURNS. Mr. Speaker, 1 year ago today, one of the world's most brutal dictators still sat on his throne and boasted that he would defy the world with impunity, protected by massive armies, and threatened terror through weapons of mass destruction. We sent brave young men and women into harm's way to contest that point.

Where it is appropriate, we pause today and review the progress we made, not against the monstrosity and Saddam Hussein's regime but the total war on terror. Our troops have registered a string of unbroken victories. They have won every battle and every campaign. They have destroyed the staging areas and the hiding holes of those who attacked this Nation on September 11, 2001, and they have helped to restore the security of their fellow Americans.

They have driven the Taliban from control of Afghanistan and are restoring the government of that country to its people. They have destroyed the Iraqi war machine and captured Saddam Hussein and are restoring the government of that country to its people. They have liberated a nation that has endured the darkness of tyranny and brutality ever since Saddam's Baath party seized control of that unfortunate nation some three decades ago.

Coalition soldiers have purchased with their blood, their sweat, and their tears, the best and brightest chance for freedom and democracy that this Nation and these nations in the Middle

East have ever known. These men and women are not just troops, they are my neighbors. They are my friends. They are my constituents. They are fellow Georgians. They are heroes to all Americans.

For the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD and for posterity, the soldiers of Georgia's 12th District that have served in Iraq or Afghanistan thus far include the first of the 214th Field Artillery from Athens and Waynesboro, Georgia; the 878th Engineering Battalion from Augusta; the 513th Military Intelligence Brigade, Fort Gordon; the U.S. Army Signal School, Fort Gordon; the Eisenhower Army Regional Medical Center, Fort Gordon, Georgia; the 3rd, and the proud, Infantry Division from Fort Stewart, Georgia, did a marvelous job in campaign Iraqi Freedom; the 75th Engineer Detachment from Fort Stewart; the 165th Air Control Wing from Savannah, Georgia; the 117th Air Control Squadron from Savannah; the 165th Security Police Squadron from Savannah; the Air Combat Readiness Training Center from Savannah; and the first of the 75th Ranger Regiment, Rangers lead the way, from Hunter Army Airfield, Savannah, Georgia.

"Walk softly and carry a big stick," that is what Republican President Theodore Roosevelt said. These soldiers not only carried the stick for their countrymen, but they have swung it powerfully to convince the world that ours is not an idle threat, and because of that, we have won another victory.

We have eliminated a decades-long threat of Libyan terrorism, without a single shot being fired or a boot on the ground.

□ 2100

Once the dictator of that nation witnessed the professionalism and the resolution of our troops in Iraq and Afghanistan, he capitulated to the world community. That speaks volumes to the power of the American will in bringing peace and conciliation around the globe without having to go to war.

If those who threaten peace and freedom are convinced that we really mean business in defending it, they will back down. But make no mistake, they will test us. They have been doing that in Iraq and Afghanistan with pointless attacks on our troops and our allies. And if they sense a weakening of our will, they will attack with even more frequency and ferociousness. If they sense a weakness, sacrifices and the victories that we have won honorably in battle by our troops will be lost dishonorably by politically motivated criticism of our war efforts.

Not only will those who speak such words undermine and jeopardize our troops; they will likely invite terrorist attacks on our homeland. We need only look at the example of Spain to realize this is not mere conjecture.

Mr. Speaker, every Member of this House has a mission in this war. Our mission is much more simple and more

safe than that of the brave men and women who currently serve our country. We only have to show the world and our terrorist enemies that we are rock solid and that we will see this war through to final victory. We need to make sure our words of debate, both in this body and on the campaign trail, are chosen carefully to avoid even a hint of providing encouragement and aid to our declared enemies.

Our ammunition consists of words, but rest assured they are powerful weapons that can support our troops or those of the enemy. Mr. Speaker, to my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, let us commit today that every word spoken by us in this body and across the Nation will be in support of the American troops and not those of al Qaeda.

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

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

ON HOUSE RESOLUTION 557

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD. Mr. Speaker, I am deeply concerned about my colleagues on the other side in bringing to the floor House Resolution 557, which was just passed out with a "no" vote for me. This resolution is another attempt to divide this House on the Iraqi war while our young men and women continue to die, while parents, spouses and children suffer in their grief, and while we mourn their losses as a Nation.

Mr. Speaker, the Republicans did not involve a single Democrat in writing this resolution and, further, proposed a rule that allowed not a single amendment to be offered. We are here in this great House as a collective body to represent the people of America, and as the President constantly states, we are a Nation at war. Yet this House has chosen to ignore the Democrats and the people we represent in not involving us and including our position on this resolution. This is shameful, undemocratic, and an affront to our sons and daughters serving in this war.

Mr. Speaker, I share the view that the people of Iraq and the world are better off with Hussein in custody and his regime destroyed. Everyone agrees with that. However, the President told everyone in the Nation that combat was over on May 1, 2003. Yet every day young men and women continue to die in Iraq. Just today, a car bomb rocked Baghdad and killed more than 20 people. Over 500 Americans have died and over 3,000 have been injured, some seriously, during this war.

Our mission in Iraq has not been accomplished, the administration had no clear plan, our soldiers did not have the basic equipment that they needed, and returning veterans are being short-changed on the benefits that they rightfully deserve. This resolution did not speak to any of these issues.

Resolution 557 states that Americans and the world are safer now that Saddam has been captured. Mr. Speaker, the facts simply do not support this. The world has become a much more dangerous place. Just this past weekend, over 200 people died in Spain as a result of a terrorist attack. The invasion of Iraq has become a breeding ground for terrorists, and we live here in America under a cloud of constant fear. We are not safer. We are also raising a generation of children living in fear instead of relishing the joy of the innocence of childhood.

I have heard my colleagues in the House state that Libyan leader Mommar Qaddafi decided to disarm because of the invasion of Iraq and the capture of Saddam Hussein. This is another attempt to twist the facts. It is well known that Mommar Qaddafi began negotiations with the United States and Europe to disarm long before the Iraqi war and the capture of Saddam Hussein. Even Secretary Colin Powell recently acknowledged that. This claim is akin to the claim that Saddam had weapons of mass destruction.

This resolution clearly shows the Republicans are in denial as to why we went to Iraq and denial as to the constant state of security and stability in the world and are delusional as to how this war is affecting other countries. This resolution also failed to mention how isolated we are in the international community. The people of Spain just showed the world what they thought of this war when they voted out the power of their government that supported President Bush on the war.

I stand behind our courageous men and women in uniform who are bearing the burden of this military action in Iraq. I am deeply grateful to their patriotism, their courage, and their sacrifice. I regret that they were placed in the position of fighting a war for weapons of mass destruction that did not exist, but I honor their service.

I have recently introduced legislation that would provide \$50 million in funding to enable military families to get personal counseling upon return from this war and return from the service they have provided so admirably. I will continue to support our military men and women as they serve our country in this dangerous mission.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, our men and women in uniform deserve more than one line in this resolution that was passed on the floor. Surely our men and women in uniform, who have made the ultimate sacrifice, given their lives, deserve to be recognized and honored far greater than this. This was not outlined in the resolution just passed.