

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, today is Earth Day, and the President is coming to my home State of Maine to speak about the environment.

Unfortunately, the administration has taken us backward in protecting the environment, and Maine is worse off because of it. In August, the EPA rolled back pollution controls for coal-burning plants in the Midwest and just recently announced plans to allow more mercury to be emitted into the air, just as we find that many parts of Maine do not meet quality air standards.

This is not just bad for air. It is bad for jobs. When the EPA rolled back mercury regulations in August, hundreds of pipe fitters were laid off because the pollution-control equipment they installed was no longer needed.

Protecting our air is not a partisan issue. Clean air improves public health, saves money, and can create jobs for Americans. The administration cannot just "outsource" the responsibility for protecting our environment to another country.

JOHN KERRY AS COMMANDER IN CHIEF?

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

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. Mr. Speaker, Colonel Bud Day, former Vietnam prisoner of war for over 6 years, recalls in his book on how Jane Fonda, Ramsey Clark, and JOHN KERRY energized the enemy through their accusations and hurt them as prisoners of war.

Mr. Speaker, I was shot down over North Vietnam at that time. I can remember the anger and the disparaging remarks that JOHN KERRY made about our service. I remember the rage in all of us from his slander.

I am proud of the men and women that I served with in Vietnam and those that are serving us at great risk today in Iraq and Afghanistan and all over the world.

Even today, JOHN KERRY votes against defense, the military, veterans, and intelligence bills that would enforce the safe return of our men and women. We do not need someone that would vote like a Jane Fonda as commander in chief.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair would remind Members that personal attacks on Members of the Senate do not comport with the rules of the House.

JOHN KERRY'S ACCUSATIONS AGAINST AMERICAN SOLDIERS IN VIETNAM

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

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, when Americans watched U.S. troops take Baghdad through embedded media, they saw the American GI in his true character. They saw a GI who was compassionate, who was honorable, and who had great courage. In a way they saw also the GIs of Vietnam because in many cases those were the sons and grandsons and granddaughters of people who had fought in Vietnam, people who had the same character, the same honor, the same courage.

□ 1100

Yet we have had a person who is running for President, Senator JOHN KERRY, describe those people as having murdered 200,000 people in Vietnam, being stoned on pot 24 hours a day, that is he said 60 to 80 percent of them, and ravaging the country in a Genghis Khan-like fashion.

I think Americans have a choice. If you feel that your son or daughter did those acts in Vietnam, if that was a true characteristic of American GI's in Vietnam if you served in Vietnam, if you think your husband conducted himself in that fashion, perhaps you want to vote for JOHN KERRY. If you think that is a wild-eyed, nutty statement that is not an appropriate statement for somebody running for President of the United States, vote against JOHN KERRY.

TROUBLING REMARKS BY JOHN KERRY

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

Mr. GIBBONS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today also to highlight some very troubling remarks by JOHN KERRY, who is now seeking the Presidency of the United States, our Commander-in-Chief.

In 1971, KERRY testified before a Senate committee that communism was not a real threat to the United States. He went so far as to say that the U.S. was "reacting under Cold War precepts which are no longer applicable."

Mr. Speaker, that was 1971. I think we can all agree the Cold War was very much applicable and continued to be for the next two decades.

Now JOHN KERRY has the gall to compare our efforts in Iraq to Vietnam.

Mr. Speaker, as a veteran of Vietnam War, I take great offense to Mr. KERRY's statements, then and now. Our efforts in Iraq have liberated millions of civilians from a brutal dictator that has used weapons of mass destruction against his own people.

The world is a safer place without Saddam Hussein in power, and the United States is a safer place with President Bush as Commander-in-Chief.

KERRY PLANS TO ELIMINATE SMALL BUSINESS FEDERAL CONTRACTS

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

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, the Nashville Business Journal recently ran an article entitled "Kerry Plan Would Cut 100,000 Government Contracting Jobs." This was reporting on JOHN KERRY's plan to eliminate 100,000 private sector contractor jobs. Apparently, he does not feel that the private sector provides much bang for the taxpayer buck. His solution is bigger government, less competition.

According to the Professional Services Council, small businesses would bear the brunt of KERRY's return to big government. Last year, small businesses competed for and won \$63 billion in government contracts, equaling more than 25 percent of the Federal Government's contracting budget.

Study after study has shown that contracting with our Nation's small business sector reduces the cost to taxpayers, conserving taxpayer dollars. That should trump favors to special interests and big business any day.

Mr. Speaker, those of us in touch with folks outside the Beltway know small businesses make this country run.

DISPARAGING THE HONORABLE SERVICE OF VIETNAM VETERANS

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

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, 30 years ago a Vietnam veteran went to the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations and he delivered a stinging indictment of our American troops, all of the American troops serving in Vietnam. He stated that murders and other crimes were "not isolated instances, but crimes committed on a day-to-day basis with the full awareness of officers at all levels of command."

That individual who alleged that our military openly and systematically violated the Geneva Conventions more than any other body is now running for President, and that is Senator KERRY.

Many of these charges rose from the Winter Soldier Investigation, where activists gathered to describe these war crimes. It was later learned that many of those who confessed these war crimes never served near a battlefield. It was a fraud.

Senator KERRY disparaged the honorable service of all the countless veterans who served in Vietnam with these charges, and he should apologize for what he said against his fellow veterans.

IN DEFENSE OF JOHN KERRY

(Mr. LARSON of Connecticut asked and was given permission to address

the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, especially with so many in the gallery today, I rise to defend JOHN KERRY from the onslaught on the floor today, a decorated veteran in Vietnam, a person who received three Purple Hearts and the Silver Star for serving with distinction. And now, because he is a candidate for President of the United States, he receives the unbridled attack from the opposition.

We ought to rise above this here on the floor of the House and across the Nation in this debate. What we need to do is focus on the issues that this country desperately needs to address, seniors that need prescription drugs, people that are out of work and unemployed.

What we need is leadership, the kind of leadership that JOHN KERRY provided in the fields of Vietnam, that he has provided with distinction in the United States Senate, and that he will provide as President of the United States.

THE BENEFITS OF MEDICARE'S NEW DRUG PROVISIONS

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

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. Speaker, for too long seniors have been paying extraordinary high prescription drug costs with no relief measures in sight. But thanks to the recently signed Medicare and Prescription Drug Improvement and Modernization Act, Medicare will now provide drug cards to all seniors who need them at a cost ranging from a \$30 maximum each year to free.

These cards, even for those who would get them for free, are completely voluntary. They will be made available to seniors beginning June 1 of this year. Low-income seniors will have a \$600 annual credit on their card. Seniors can sign up for a Medicare-endorsed discount card as early as May 3.

Seniors are encouraged to find out what card is best for them by calling 1-800-MEDICARE and asking about drug savings. Seniors and their families can visit www.medicare.gov to find out more about which card is best for them where they live.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage all seniors and people who care about them to inquire about enrollment, to see if this is a better plan for them, and to begin immediately saving on their drug costs.

CREDENTIALS NEEDED FOR THOSE ATTACKING JOHN KERRY

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

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, I came to the floor to talk about Earth Day, but listening to what is going on out here makes me think I will change my subject.

I spent 2 years, 1968 to 1970, as a psychiatrist in the United States Navy taking care of people who lived through what JOHN KERRY went to war about, and for anybody to come out here and attack his war record, you have to have pretty good credentials.

Now, if you served and showed up for drills at your local National Guard, I think those would be acceptable credentials. But if you were in the National Guard and you did not show up, you were AWOL for a whole year, you have got real nerve to start an attack on JOHN KERRY's character.

During that war many people on both sides of the issue, whether we should go to war or were against the war, acted bravely. But some people were simply not available. They never showed up for their flight physical. They were not there.

ATTACKS ON JOHN KERRY SHOULD NOT BE COUNTERNANCED

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

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, one of the things America abhors is a sneak attack. President Roosevelt in this Chamber described December 7 as a day that would live in infamy.

What I saw a few minutes ago is a sneak attack on a Member of the U.S. Senate by a bunch of my colleagues who came down here and disparaged him, contrary to the rules of the House. The Speaker repeatedly admonished them for violating the best traditions of this House, and my colleagues continually came to the Chamber to continually violate those traditions of this House.

Mr. Speaker, I want to give notice that we have a long time in this election period coming up, and we have problems deciding what we are going to do about Iraq, and it is not going to help us if we turn this into a Chamber of personal assassination.

Let me just say, there is a lot of nerve in this Chamber attacking a guy who has a Bronze Star, a Silver Star and Purple Hearts in the tradition of his Nation, and it should not be countenanced by the Speaker ever under any circumstances, whether Democrats are in the Chamber to object or not.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I have a parliamentary inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD). The gentleman will state it.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I just want to raise a question. Is it proper, is it appropriate, is it a violation of House rules for Members of this body to attack Members of the other body by name?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. When a Member of the Senate is a presumptive nominee for President, it is proper and fair to speak about the Senator's

record, but not to make personal attacks.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding this person is not even the nominee of his party yet.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has not purported to identify an actual nominee.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, I have a parliamentary inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman will state it.

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, is it appropriate for the Speaker, who presides over this Chamber, when there is a clear and direct personal attack using personally disparaging comments about a Member of the United States Senate on a repeated basis, is it appropriate or allowable for the Speaker to interject and prohibit that activity, even without a Member of the Chamber expressing a concern?

In other words, does the Speaker have the ability to exercise preemptory power to enforce the rules of this House when there is a sneak attack disparaging the personal integrity of a U.S. Senator?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. That is the Speaker's role, and the Member should have seen the Chair admonish those not following the rules.

HONORING THE GARDEN GROVE ELKS CLUB

(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. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Garden Grove Elks Lodge 1952 for their contributions to my community of Garden Grove, California.

The Garden Grove Elks Club is just one of thousands of Elks chapters across this Nation. They operate on the ideals of charity and patriotism, contributing to schools, police and fire departments, and also working with their youth in their community.

The Elks Club consists only of volunteers, those citizens who strive to make a difference based solely on the goodness of their heart.

I would also like to recognize Elks Lodge 1952's newly installed officers: Dave Offhaus, Dave Skelton, Gary Mueller, Randy Barrows, Lynn Johnson and Jim Faulkner. I wish these new officers much luck in the coming year, and I would also like to extend my appreciation for all that they do for our community.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will clarify what he had said to the gentleman from Washington.

In the event that a Member does need to be interrupted for improper references to presidential and nominated