

more, and should the people demand more from us, regardless of which side we are on? We did not know all of the facts, and that bill would not have passed if we did know all of the facts.

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

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

#### EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time of the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS).

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

There was no objection.

#### MISSION ACCOMPLISHED, I THINK NOT

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

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I watched the weekends events somewhat in horror, but also somewhat in recognition that our troops on the ground, our enlisted officers, Reservists and National Guard, operate under the most heinous conditions, and certainly the actions that we have seen in the abuse of Iraqi prisoners is not to be excused, but I lay the burden more on the policymakers and those who have extended the stays of those civilian troops, 6 months, 12 months and 18 months, those who made the statement a year ago May 1, "mission accomplished." The burdens of disarray of the military in Iraq lay at our feet.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that we cannot, as a Congress, do nothing. I would hope that we will hear more potently from the President, the Secretary of Defense, and the Joint Chief of Staff on the solutions in the aftermath and the crisis of a so-called mission accomplished.

Although those acts were to be not tolerated, we must find the trail of hierarchy that created such havoc that our soldiers who were there to liberate, have turned into those who would perpetrate such acts. That is what I want to speak about this evening: Mission accomplished, I think not. Until we pass what I am now calling, and we are now reviewing and hoping to write as legislation for this House, the Welcome Home Act of 2004. Mission accomplished, I think not. Until we write legislation for those combat veterans who have come home from Iraq and Afghanistan, really, the Vietnam War of the 21st century.

And what do I believe is appropriate for those wounded and those individ-

uals coming home from this war? First of all, an apology and explanation by this administration for the war and the present status of the conditions in Iraq and, yes, Afghanistan. Provisions for long-term mental health needs for those veterans, both wounded and those not wounded and their families; immediate treatment for trauma, mental trauma if you will, that will be ongoing and that we have already discovered in some of our military hospitals today; continuous educational opportunities for these young men and women, and maybe even the Reservists and the National Guard who now come home with a whole different attitude about life and their future; family counseling, so that the terrible murder of a military spouse of a returning veteran cannot happen again; enhanced opportunities for homeownership so our military families are not in cramped conditions after the military person leaves the particular branch and so they are not Nicole Goodwin, an Iraqi combat veteran who is now homeless, walking the streets of New York; health care for 10 years so that those ailments generated by the combat situation and the Veterans Hospital will not maintain and keep, we will have care; long-term health care and rehabilitation when the veteran's benefits run out; military whistleblower protections so that those individuals who have seen things in Iraq that should not happen, such as what happened in the prison and the abuse of prisoners or what is happening in terms of those individuals who are outside of their job description of which they were brought into the military, where carpenters are being police officers and truck drivers are being gunners, we need to find out what is wrong with this system and this war.

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Provisions for those who are severely injured with long-term understanding of those severely injured and the families who lost loved ones. Who is attending to those families after the burial? Who is comforting them, and what are the resources being provided for those families? And so I would suggest that a lump-sum payment under the Welcome Home Act of 2004 be made to those families of the severely injured and those who lost loved ones out of the profits of the Iraqi oil fields.

Mr. Speaker, mission accomplished, I think not, until the Welcome Home Act of 2004 is both legislatively presented to this Congress, until we acknowledge the wrongness of this war by giving some dignity to those who are coming home, who are coming home to lonely places, to homelessness, to bad health care, to the inability to provide for their family. We must provide for these severely injured veterans as well as those families who have lost loved ones because, as we know, the toll of those dying continues to rise; and 736, Mr. Speaker, is not the last count that we will have. How can we

claim a mission accomplished unless we present the Welcome Home Act of 2004 alongside a final resolution to the conflict in Iraq?

#### NATIONAL SECURITY

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

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, the President, as you can see from the poster, said at his press conference last week that he was not aware of any mistakes that he had made. Let me tell my colleagues and him a few mistakes he has made, three major mistakes:

First, in the immediate aftermath of 9/11, the Bush administration chose deliberately to mislead the people of New York about the safety of the air and the environment in the aftermath of that disaster. We now know from the Inspector General of EPA's report that the White House instructed the EPA to mislead the people of New York. The former administrator of EPA, Mrs. Whitman, said 2 days after the disaster the air is safe to breathe, when they had no test data to show that.

Because of that misleading, Federal, State, and city government followed policies that have resulted in catastrophe. We now know from recent medical reports that an absolute majority, most of the first responders, the heroes, the fire officers, the police officers, the construction workers who descended on Lower Manhattan to help with the rescue operations, most of them now, 2½ years later, have serious respiratory disorders which will probably plague them for the rest of their lives. We know that women who live within a mile, 1.6 kilometers, of the World Trade Center, today are giving birth to low birth weight babies at twice the natural rate because the White House chose to mislead the American people.

Second, the White House chose to get us into a useless, stupid war in Iraq to divert our attention from the war against us by the Islamic terrorists. We know that there were no weapons of mass destruction, contrary to what they told us in Iraq, no great stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction. We know the Iraqi people did not, as the White House told us they would, greet our troops as liberators. We know that when the President stood there before the sign and said mission accomplished and said that major combat was over, he was wrong. We know this administration did not plan adequately for an occupation. We know they sent too few troops there to properly secure the country. We know they fired General Shinseki because he had the impudence to say the truth in advance. We know that they disbanded the Iraqi army without having enough troop strength to replace it and they are now trying to reassemble it.

We know, in short, they got us into a quagmire and so thoroughly alienated

the rest of the world by the arrogant attitude of this administration that we cannot get any significant help, we cannot internationalize the conflict, we cannot share the burdens or at least we cannot do these things as long as George Bush is President because no one trusts him abroad anymore.

But perhaps the greatest mistake that this administration has made is that this administration has not and does not take seriously enough the terrorist war being waged against us by the Islamic terrorists. From before 9/11, when this administration ignored many warnings, to this very day, they refuse to spend the money necessary to protect the American people. Two months after 9/11, leaders in Congress proposed to spend \$10 billion to protect our chemical and nuclear facilities and our transportation terminals against attacks that could kill or wound hundreds of thousands of people. President Bush said he would veto such an appropriation. It was not done. This administration refuses to spend the money to buy the weapons grade plutonium and uranium now in the former Soviet Union that can easily be smuggled to al Qaeda to make atomic bombs because they care more about tax cuts for the wealthy than about protecting the American people. It is a mistake not to prevent al Qaeda from going nuclear by buying that plutonium and uranium quickly.

This administration inspects only 2 percent of the 6 million shipping containers that come into this country every year, any one of which could hide a chemical or biological or nuclear weapon. It is a mistake not to insist that no container is placed on a ship bound for the United States until that container is inspected and certified and sealed by an American inspection team in the foreign port.

This administration will not spend the funds to protect our commercial aviation. It is a mistake not to place a missile deflection system on every commercial airliner as the Israelis are doing by this summer so that we do not have to worry about our airlines being shot out of the sky by shoulder-fired missiles. In short, it is a mistake not to place the priority where it belongs, on protecting the American people from terrorism instead of protecting tax cuts for the wealthy.

Mr. Speaker, if the President wants to know about some mistakes, here are some mistakes. Here are some mistakes that he can correct if he is willing to protect the American people at the cost of the tax cuts for the wealthy. His major mistake is his priority. Tax cuts for the wealthy, yes. Protect the American people from terrorism, no. That is some mistake.

#### REPORT OF 30-SOMETHING CAUCUS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from Flor-

ida (Mr. MEEK) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to address the House and the American people on this afternoon. I must say that this is not only a great opportunity but a historic opportunity to address the House. I was very honored to see and hear the Democratic leader, NANCY PELOSI, share her appreciation for the 30-Something Caucus that she created here in this House to address the American people on a weekly basis. And so this is our first evening coming together. We will have some Members that are 30-plus, maybe in their lower 40s, but all of the ladies that will come forth tonight, they are all in their 20s, so they do not quite want to admit that they are in the 30-Something Caucus, but we do have Members that have been in this body and as a part of this body on the Democratic side who came in at a very young age.

I think, Mr. Speaker, Members of the House and also the American people, it is very important that we have Members here so we have a diversity of not only representation but a voice as it relates to the future and especially for those individuals, I am 37 years old and I am going to be in a situation very soon, I have young children that are going to have to attend college. So what is happening right now in this House and what is happening in this country is so very, very important to me, not only as a Member of Congress but also to individuals that work hard every day.

I just wanted to rehash what the leader shared with us a little earlier today when she took the floor this evening, about maybe 30 minutes ago. She created a 30-Something Caucus. Leader PELOSI did, amongst House Democrats. There are 14. We work day in and day out to make sure that we talk about the issues and point out issues that are happening here in this House and making sure that we have results or recommendations for results. There is only so much that we can do in the minority; but if we continue to work hard toward those issues, then we can bring about the kind of change that is needed for the country, that means for individuals that are Democrats, Republicans and Independents. Also, this is going to provide an opportunity for us to be interactive with the American people through e-mail and also through other means of communications to make sure that we provide the best kind of representation that is possible, especially for individuals that are approaching college, parents that are thinking about sending their children to college, making sure that it is affordable and that it is there for them.

I would like to call on the gentleman from California (Ms. LINDA T. SANCHEZ), who has been such an outstanding Member of this body and also a good voice not only for her district in California which she represents, the

39th District, but being my freshman sister here in this 108th Congress.

Ms. LINDA T. SANCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, I am here this evening to talk about an issue that is very near and dear to my heart and that is the need for access to higher education. A long time ago, a college education was reserved for the well-to-do, not something that an ordinary citizen could readily achieve. But over time, that changed and now a college education is no longer a privilege of just a few but a necessity to achieve any kind of job security in our very fluid economy.

But, sadly, just as a college education has become an absolutely crucial component of obtaining a good job, the Bush administration is making it harder and harder to access and afford a college education. As a 30-something Member of Congress, and I will admit to the gentleman from Florida I am in my 30s, I am here to speak on behalf of young people who are struggling to achieve the American dream of a decent college education. Rather than burdening today's young people with overwhelming debt, there are several things that we can do to help. We need to slow down the tuition hikes and encourage States to maintain their commitment to higher education. And we should double the Pell grant award and make it available year round.

Finally, we should implement Senator JOHN KERRY's idea for \$50 billion in tax credits to help Americans afford all 4 years of college. The typical loan debt has nearly doubled over the past 10 years for the average student, with 64 percent of students needing to borrow money to finance their college education. I too struggled to make college and law school a reality. As it turned out, all seven children in my family were fortunate enough to obtain a college degree. But we all did it with the assistance of Federal grants and Federal loans, loans, I might add, that I will be paying off until I am in my 60s.

Despite the fact that we came from immigrant parents who did not speak much of the language when they first got here and were of limited economic means, all seven of my brothers and sisters and I graduated from a college institution. Most amazingly, however, my mother returned to school after the youngest of her seven children started kindergarten and she went to night school to earn her 2-year degree and later transferred to a 4-year institution and graduated from college in her late 40s to become a bilingual education teacher. That is how strongly she believed in a quality education and in showing and demonstrating to us that education was truly the key to the American dream in this country.

I find that the current atmosphere that works against students who are trying to finance their way through school is really something that undermines many of the American values that we hold dear. Overwhelming debt