

happened without the brave men and women of the United States military. Through their courage, commitment and sacrifice, we have managed to free an enslaved people. We have brought down a tyrant who killed as many as one million of his own people.

And thus, history will record that the United States brought a beacon of light and hope to a people who had only known misery, suffering, and brutality under Saddam Hussein. The future will judge us to have done right for the Iraqi people and for our nation.

We are, however, not naive about the challenges that lie ahead. Freedom and democracy take time and hard work. They take vigilance and dedication to truth and a commitment to justice. These are things that come with patience. The terrorists want to deprive the Iraqi people of their future. But Iraq can and will prevail.

Iraq's chance is now. Let us stand by the Iraqi people as they struggle to enjoy those rights and liberties that they denied for so long. Let us be motivated by the knowledge that we have helped make the world a better place for the Iraqi people and for all.

As our beloved former President, Ronald Wilson Reagan, would say: "You and I have a rendezvous with destiny . . . If we fail, at least let our children and our children's children say of us we justified our brief moment here. We did all that could be done."

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, ten days from today, on Wednesday, June 30, 2004, a historic day will occur in the cradle of civilization: the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) will formally transfer power and sovereignty to an Iraqi Interim Government (IIG). We are ten days to sovereignty.

This step will be the most dramatic to date in a series of planned moves towards more democratic and representative government in Iraq. Since the elimination of the brutal Hussein regime, which terrorized and abused the Iraqi people for decades, significant changes have taken place, helping to put the country on a path to democracy, respect for human rights and economic prosperity.

About 33,000 secondary school teachers and 3,000 supervisors have been trained as part of an effort to upgrade the quality of education and level of learning in Iraq. Nearly 2,000 schools have been rehabilitated and an additional 1,200 schools are expected to be completed by the end of the year. New textbooks are also being developed and utilized. No more government mandates for indoctrinating, inciting hatred or demonizing Americans, the West, or Jewish people through the use of school books.

Last month, the first of several planned sewer treatment plants came online, ushering in a new era of sanitation and public health in an area rife with disease. On the technology side, the total number of telephone subscribers in Iraq is now over 1.2 million, which includes 429,000 cell phone subscribers—representing a 45% improvement above pre-war levels.

And, Iraqis want to be the business leaders in their new country. Already, 2,500 micro-credit clients have applied and received small business loans to help them build a free economy with robust industry. It is important to note that inflation is dropping, and the New Iraqi Dinar has been stable for the three months since its introduction.

This progress has not come without great cost and sacrifice. Thousands of American

families have lost irreplaceable time with their loved ones as they serve the cause of freedom in Iraq. Some American heroes have not and will not return home. We mourn their loss. For those who served, a grateful Nation must ensure those returning get world class healthcare and the compensation to which they are entitled.

After June 30th, other milestones will be marked. Democratically held elections will be conducted in January 2005 to create a National Assembly. This representative body will craft a permanent constitution to strengthen and replace the transitional administrative law (TAL). The Iraqi people will then vote up or down in a national referendum for or against their own constitution. By the end of 2005, if all goes according to plan, the first democratically elected Iraqi government in history will take office.

President Bush put it very succinctly during his speech before the Army War College, when he said: "The rise of a free and self-governing Iraq will deny terrorists a base of operation, discredit their narrow ideology, and give momentum to reformers across the region. This will be a decisive blow to terrorism at the heart of its power, and a victory for the security of America and the civilized world."

The people in Iraq—like people everywhere—want to live free. And among the many reasons why democracy has a chance to succeed in Iraq—although success is not assured—is because the United States is not in Iraq as an imperial power. We do not seek to permanently occupy Iraq. Far from it. Our mission is clear: to liberate Iraq from tyranny. Thus, it is absolutely at the heart of America's interests to see Iraq's new sovereign government succeed in establishing law and order in a just and democratic manner.

Iraqis are a justifiably proud people with an ancient and rich history and culture. Like many other people, they are patriotic and do not like to see their country occupied by any foreign power, no matter how ostensibly helpful they try to be. The Germans and Japanese were undoubtedly relieved when the Allies formally returned sovereignty to their people.

Although U.S. troops remained in each country in large numbers for decades, the former Axis nations truly thrived only after it became clear to the great majority of people that they faced a choice: they could either roll up their sleeves and get to work rebuilding their war-torn nation, or they could look backwards and remain in a miserable state.

Today, Iraqis essentially face the same choice. If they keep focused on the task at hand—rebuilding their shattered country's infrastructure and creating jobs—they too can create an economic boom similar to that experienced by Japan and Germany.

We must not forget that rebuilding Germany, Japan, Italy after World War II was not easy. Democratic traditions take time to set roots. Italy's political system was not stable throughout almost the entirety of the Cold War. Japan essentially had one-party rule until recently. All three nations faced many upheavals and set backs along the way. But like the three defeated Axis powers, Iraq will also have the benefit of extensive international economic and financial assistance in rebuilding.

Unlike an imperial power, when a nation is militarily liberated by the United States, we are willing to put our resources, technologies and willpower to work for democracy.

Our enemies are well aware that the return of real and meaningful sovereignty to Iraqis will undercut one of their chief recruiting justifications—the occupation. That is why we have seen a decrease in terrorist attacks against U.S. and Coalition troops, and more of a focus against foreign contractor personnel and Iraqis involved in their new government.

The terrorists are increasingly targeting new regime officials, police recruiting stations, and personnel involved in development programs. The terrorists and insurgents understand—perhaps better than the U.S. news media—that if the new Interim Iraqi Government headed by Prime Minister Ayad Allawi and President Sheikh Ghazi Al-Yawar succeeds, the terrorists will be defeated.

If Iraqis establish enough basic security to allow for the systematic rebuilding of Iraq's destroyed infrastructure, and commerce and prosperity return to Iraq, the moral swamps from which disaffected young Iraqi men are recruited by insurgents, will dry up. And as democratic traditions and tolerance begin to take root, and the social and economic status of women are uplifted, the appeal of radical misinterpretations of Islam will also diminish.

It is not an accident that Wahabbism and other forms of militant Islam flourish in conditions of chaos, in failed states, in places of misery and suffering, and in communities where women are seen as less than second class citizens. Our task in Iraq is to make sure these conditions never return, and are instead replaced by prosperity, freedom, and tolerance.

When, over time, democracy takes hold in Iraq, other Muslims throughout the region will be able to use the experience of Iraq to refute the arguments of repressive regimes in the Muslim world who justify their corrupt and brutal regimes by saying that there is no other way.

But there is another way. A better way. We need to stick by the side of those brave Iraqis who want to create a free, open and democratic society in Iraq and are willing to risk their lives in order to do it.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

THE MIDDLE-CLASS SQUEEZE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GERLACH). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 55 minutes, which is half the time that remains from now to midnight.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I do not intend to use all the time, but I did want to spend my time this evening talking about what has been referred to in recent weeks as "the middle-class squeeze," basically an effort to point out how Republican policies, both at the presidential level and the congressional level, have made it more and more difficult for the middle class in the United States to get through the day or get through the year, despite Republican claims that the economy is getting better, that jobs are being created. The reality is that more and more people find it difficult to make ends meet.

Mr. Speaker, when President Bush took office, he inherited a \$236 billion

budget surplus, an economy that had created 22 million jobs over 8 years, and lowered poverty levels to their lowest rate in 20 years. Four years later, today, 8.2 million Americans are looking for work, unemployment is 30 percent higher, 1.9 million private sector jobs and 2.7 million manufacturing jobs have been lost, and the average household income has decreased by almost \$1,500.

However, recent statements by the Bush administration and my Republican colleagues in Congress are beginning to paint an increasingly cheery picture about our economy. Every day my Republican colleagues come to the House floor here touting a number of new jobs that are being created each month. They talk about how the stock market is on the rise and how our economy is beginning to rebound.

But despite this sunny economic forecast from the Bush administration, it seems that the American people simply do not agree. Recent polls show that fewer Americans than at the start of the year are willing to say that our economy is improving. In fact, the President's economic approval numbers are at the lowest level of his presidency.

So what is it that the American people know that the Republicans do not seem to know? And the answer is very simple, and that is that rising job numbers tell only part of the economic story. What the Republicans are not telling the American people is that about 90 percent of the new jobs that they are boasting about pay an average hourly wage that is less than the national average. What they are not telling the American people is that those lower-paying jobs are less likely to include health care coverage.

And what they are not telling the American people is that middle-class Americans are being squeezed by Republican policies that have allowed the price of health care, education, and gas to skyrocket and created record deficits. Essentially what they are not telling the American people is that they are paying the price, the middle class is paying the price, of the Bush administration and Republican policies here in the Congress.

When I talk to people in my district in New Jersey, Mr. Speaker, they are not telling me about how great our economy is doing or rejoicing about the number of new jobs being created. When I talk to these residents of my district, they are more likely to tell me about the explosion of health care and education costs. For those who did not lose their jobs during the economic slump, they are more likely to tell me about how they have watched the wages stagnate over the last few years or about how their son or daughter's college tuition keeps going up or that they are having to rely more on credit cards to make ends meet.

Let me talk a little bit, Mr. Speaker, about wages, and again refute some of the comments that are being made by

my Republican colleagues on the other side. When Republicans talk about all the new jobs being created, notice that they are not mentioning what kinds of jobs they are creating or how well those jobs are paying. As I mentioned earlier, 90 percent of the new jobs created since August of 2003, I guess about 10 months ago, are in industries that pay an average hourly wage that is less than the national average. About 1.3 million of the jobs created are in service sector industries with an average wage of \$15.42 an hour, 40 cents less than the national average, and 195,000 of these jobs are temporary jobs.

Approximately 580,000 of these jobs were in low-paying domestic industries that could not be outsourced, and I use as examples wait staff in restaurants and bars and retail workers, things that cannot be outsourced to other countries. Over 235,000 of the new jobs created since August of last year pay an average hourly wage that is over 40 percent less than the national average, and more than 148,000 pay 20 percent less. And if I could use my home State of New Jersey as an example, Mr. Speaker, the new jobs being created pay \$21,551 less than the jobs recently lost in my home State.

Let me talk a little bit about rising health costs because that is one of the issues that my constituents talk about the most, the cost, the rising cost of health care.

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These new jobs that the Republicans talk about not only pay less than jobs being lost, they are less likely to have health benefits.

In my home State, using New Jersey again as an example, there has been an 11 percent drop in the number of jobs offering health insurance. Nationwide, 43 million Americans have no health insurance, including 1.19 million in New Jersey; and millions more are underinsured. Underinsured means they may have health care part of the year, but not the whole year.

Mr. Speaker, for those workers that do have health insurance, they are watching their health insurance premiums skyrocket. Health care costs increased by 13.9 percent nationwide last year, the third year in a row of double-digit increases and the largest increase since 1990.

Let us go back to my home State of New Jersey again. In New Jersey, health insurance premiums have increased by 52 percent since the beginning of the Bush administration. Nationally, the increase in family health insurance premiums over the last 3 years has tripled the amount of the tax cut that the Bush administration talks about going to middle-income families over 4 years.

I would like to talk a little bit about rising education costs, because after health care, that is the issue that my constituents talk about the most. So far, we have covered wages and health insurance, but that is only half of it.

For those families with a son or daughter in college who have to face these rising education costs, the future does not look good, and in the last 4 years have not looked good.

In my home State of New Jersey, the cost of a college education has increased by 36 percent since the beginning of the Bush administration. Nationwide, tuition has increased 30 percent. Crunched State education budgets means that an estimated 250,000 college-qualified students were shut out of higher education in the fall of 2003 due to rising tuition or cutbacks in admissions and course offerings. These kids were simply shut out. They could not even go to school, primarily because of the cost.

Now, Mr. Speaker, as tuition rises, student loan debt continues to soar. Between 1997 and 2002, the typical undergraduate's debt rose 66 percent, to \$18,900; and more than one-quarter of today's 14 million undergraduate students will incur more than \$25,000 in debt to earn a degree.

Yet if you listen to my Republican colleagues on the other side, they have introduced legislation blocking student borrowers from locking in low fixed interest rates on their loans. That would mean the typical student borrower would pay an additional \$5,500 for their college loans, according to the non-partisan Congressional Research Service. The same Republican bill raises student loan interest rates. As a result, student borrowers will pay hundreds, even thousands, of dollars more for their loans.

Meanwhile, President Bush has failed to live up to a campaign promise to raise the depressed value of the maximum Pell grant to \$5,100. This was a promise he made during the campaign. This is the largest student grant program for low income students. He promised to raise it; but his 2005 budget would raise, instead, taxes on students, again, taking out college loans, forcing them to pay an additional \$3.8 billion over the next 10 years. So he is making it more difficult for kids to pay for their college education after he promised that he would basically increase the value of Pell grants.

Now let me talk about an issue that everybody is talking about. Again, I have to say that I hear more about health care costs and education than even gas prices, but obviously rising gas prices are a major issue.

Since the start of the Bush administration, the cost of gas has increased 48 percent, a simple statistic. In recent months, gasoline prices have increased rapidly in my home State. Just last week, the state wide average price of a gallon of regular in New Jersey was \$2. Compared to the prices at the beginning of the Bush administration, this represents an increase of 65 cents per gallon, a 48 percent increase.

Last week, the House Republicans scheduled votes on a series of energy proposals they marketed as a response to higher gas prices. But why is it that

none of the Republican bills address the consolidation of oil companies, something the U.S. Government Accounting Office has identified as one of the most significant factors affecting gas prices?

You see, the top 10 oil refiners control 78 percent of our oil supply. That is 22 percent higher than a decade ago. Coincidentally, some of these companies have reported record profits in the first quarter of this year. If Republicans were really concerned about doing something about gas prices, they would have joined me and 52 of my Democratic colleagues in calling last week for an investigation to determine whether gas companies are purposefully inflating prices at the pump.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that the American people deserve to know if these record profits are a result of a coordinated effort by the oil and gas companies to inflate prices.

Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to say, I think it all comes down to this: Yes, the economy is beginning to create new jobs, but it is creating the wrong kinds of jobs. The jobs that are being created are lower paying and are less likely to offer health insurance. For those people that have health insurance, premiums and health care costs are skyrocketing.

When you combine all that with rising education costs and gas prices, and take into account that the Bush administration and Congress have passed \$1 trillion tax cuts that mostly benefit the wealthy and pursued a variety of policies that hurt workers and their families, together, all of these factors answer the question of why the American people are not feeling very positive about our economy.

What Republicans cannot seem to realize is that when they talk about how the economy is improving, the American people know they are only being told half the story.

Mr. Speaker, I am not going to spend the whole time, but I just wanted to go into four issues again, or four areas, where what is characterized, I use the term middle-class squeeze, and I know a number of my colleagues and some of the media commentators are talking about the problem in the same way, the so-called middle-class squeeze. I wanted to talk about four issues again in a little more detail where you can see this squeeze.

One is paychecks; second is education; third is prices at the pump; and, lastly, is the debt burden, which I think ultimately is going to be the biggest problem that we face, not only as a government but also individuals and their households.

I talked a little bit about paychecks and workers feeling the squeeze. Declining real wages are putting the squeeze on middle-class Americans. Meanwhile, tax policies, Republican tax policies, shower huge benefits on the wealthiest 5 percent of taxpayers, and corporate profits have soared.

Middle-class Americans are noticing their paychecks do not stretch as far as

they used to; and yet some economists in the Bush administration insist that the economy is recovering, leaving most Americans to wonder what has happened to the better wages that should have come with this so-called recovery. The short answer is that these wages have essentially, Mr. Speaker, gone to corporate profits, to CEO pay and to tax cuts that reward wealth and not work.

In the last 3 months, average wages in the United States increased at an annual rate of just 2.2 percent, and the last two consecutive quarters have seen the slowest wage growth for any 6-month period on record. Meanwhile, over the last 3 months, the inflation rate was 3.9 percent. So if you think about it, that essentially means during the most recent stage of this so-called economic recovery that the Republicans boast about, most American workers actually took a pay cut.

This pay cut has taken place amid continued gains in worker productivity. So the workers are being more productive. The amount that the workers produce in an hour, obviously, is productivity. If middle-class workers are performing so well and if their hard work is paying off and making the economy grow, then why are their wages falling?

Middle-class Americans are getting squeezed by their employers and by government policies. Since March of 2001, corporate profits skyrocketed by 57.5 percent, while wages and salaries decreased by 1.7 percent. American companies raked in an enviable \$1 trillion in profit in the last 3 months of 2003 alone; but even while profits soared, companies froze pay. Now, they were not freezing the pay for the top executives; they were freezing it for the little guy, for the middle-class worker.

Again, these are the Republican policies. We have a Republican President; Republicans are in the majority in both Houses of Congress.

What is essentially happening is the Republican policies are making matters worse, shifting the tax burden from wealth to work; taxes on wages now average almost 24 percent; taxes on income from investments like stocks and bonds average less than 10 percent. That is why the stock market is soaring.

On top of that, President Bush's \$1 trillion tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans have helped to create a budget-busting record deficit of over \$500 billion, which adds to the burden on middle-class families through future debt repayments, rising interest rates, and a scarcity of Federal funds to help alleviate rising college and health care costs.

Now, I know that the debt issue is not one that a lot of people pay attention to; but, again, as I said, Mr. Speaker, I think ultimately that is going to cause the biggest problem for the middle class and this squeeze when this debt has to be paid off.

I mentioned education before, and I want to talk about that again in the context of the so-called middle-class squeeze.

Families are struggling to pay for the high-quality college education necessary to succeed in the 21st century. Between the weak national economy and shrinking State budgets, students and their families face rising college costs, while the Federal programs to help them are being undermined by Republican policies and the Bush policies here in Washington.

The cost of college is skyrocketing, and families are paying the price. The U.S. Department of Education tells us that tuition at 4-year public colleges has increased by almost 30 percent by 2001. As tuition rises, student loan rates continue to soar. Again, the debt issue.

Between 1997 and 2002, the typical undergraduate's debt rose 66 percent to \$18,900, and more than one-quarter of today's 14 million undergraduate students will incur more than \$25,000 in debt to earn a degree. Meanwhile, President Bush has failed to live up, as I said, to his promise to increase the Pell grants, and I talked about how his budget would raise taxes on students taking out college loans. I do not want to repeat that.

But clearly, these Republican policies are failing to make college more affordable for middle-class families. Just as they pay for Bush's \$1 trillion tax cut for the wealthiest Americans, middle-class families are finding they are being squeezed when it comes to a college education too.

I talked before, Mr. Speaker, about prices at the pump; and now I would like to just elaborate a little bit on the middle-class squeeze as it relates to prices at the pump. I refer to it as the Bush gas tax.

After 3 months of record-high gas prices, middle-class families are feeling squeezed by prices at the pump. Experts agree that high gas prices are the equivalent of a tax on consumers, wiping out any benefits of the Bush tax for middle-class families. That is why we call it the Bush gas tax.

After 3 months of record-high gas prices across the country, the average cost of a gallon of gasoline is now \$2.10, the highest average on record in dollar terms. Skyrocketing gas prices are a tax on middle-class families that are taking money out of their pockets each time they fill up at the pump.

According to *Fortune* magazine, gas price increases since the beginning of the year have cost American consumers \$55 billion, much more than the \$15 billion to \$20 billion middle-class consumers got from the Bush tax cuts this April. Already families are feeling the pinch, the middle-class squeeze.

The summer driving season began a few weeks ago, but has not gotten to its highest pitch; that will be the next week or so over the July 4th weekend. A recent National Retail Federation survey found that nearly 20 percent of

families with annual incomes below \$50,000 reported that they had to cut back on grocery spending due to higher gas prices. Among families earning over \$50,000 a year, more than one-quarter reported that they had to cut back on travel, and 15 percent spent less on clothing for their families.

This is real. Gas prices go up, you do not buy as many groceries, you do not buy as many clothes, certainly you do not travel as much or go on vacation.

Rising gas prices translated into the higher prices on consumer goods and services across the board, further squeezing family budgets by ratcheting up the costs of grocery, travel, and countless manufactured goods.

When he was running for office, President Bush, then when he was running as a candidate, promised in 2000 to jawbone OPEC if elected President to keep oil prices down. But there is no evidence he has fought for lower oil prices, and it is clear he has no plan for lower gas prices. The Bush Republican energy bill, which is stalled in Congress, would only increase gas prices, according to the administration's estimates.

The last thing I want to mention before I conclude, Mr. Speaker, is about the debt burden, because I think that ultimately this is the biggest problem that the middle-class faces and the biggest example of the squeeze.

The debt burden is not only the debt that they incur themselves for their household, but also the debt that Republican policies here in Congress are incurring for the Nation, which ultimately have to be paid, primarily by the middle class, because they pay most of the taxes.

Again, America is awash in debt. Typical household debt in 2003 equaled more than 105 percent of disposable income for the average family. That is incredible. I am going to repeat it. Typical household debt last year equaled more than 105 percent of disposable income for the average family.

The government, as I said, has a debt problem too. President Bush's fiscal policies have racked up the largest budget deficit ever, putting an added debt tax on middle-class families. Keep in mind, that debt has to be paid back; and the average worker is paying it back, not the wealthy guy. With interest rates likely to rise, the debt will put an added squeeze on the middle class.

Let me just talk about the various types of debt that we are facing. Housing debt, first of all. The ratio of debt to home equity is at a record high of 45.4 percent. According to the Center For Economic and Policy Research, it has typically been close to 30 percent.

The ratio of debt payments and other financial obligations, like car lease payments and rent, to disposable income is at a record high of nearly one-third for renters. Ten years ago it was just under one quarter, according to the Center For Economic and Policy Research.

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Education debt, talked about that already, parents and students are also taking on an increasing level of debt to pay exploding costs since 2001.

Then credit card debt, this is the biggest problem. Every month tens of thousands of unemployed workers are exhausting their unemployment benefits nationwide. Millions more work in jobs that do not pay enough to make ends meet or have not seen their earnings keep pace with inflation. Without a decent paycheck or unemployment assistance, many of these workers take on debt like credit cards to meet their basic needs.

Today the average credit card debt among American households is \$8,000. Credit cards help families cover the gap in earnings when a family person is out of work, but the slow wage growth and long term unemployment makes it difficult to payoff that debt. Essentially that credit card debt that the average person is taking on is the same thing that the Federal Government is doing when they go into debt.

Republican policies are sending the Federal Government's own budget deficit into the stratosphere. The deficit is now estimated at \$5.6 trillion over 10 years, which works out to \$4,392 debt tax per family of four this year. That is how much they are paying, the average family of four is paying to the Federal Government in income taxes. It ends up being used just to pay off the Federal debt.

In a particularly vicious circle the deficit will put pressure on interest rates making it even harder for American families to meet many of their debt obligations and, worse yet, future generations must pay for today's irresponsible fiscal policies. I know that a lot of people do not pay attention to it. But ultimately that is what is going to happen.

Right now short term interest rates are low. Over the long term, because of the Federal deficit and the increase in the deficit that has been incurred by Republican policies, interest rates, long-term interest rates will go up. The majority of this is going to be paid back by middle-class households. So over the long term, the burden on the middle-class, the middle class squeeze from the Federal deficit becomes greater and greater with Republican fiscal policies.

I am not going to get into it all, but obviously, the Democrats have been very critical of this. A few years ago, I remember coming down to the floor when I was first elected back in 1988 and most of the people that were getting up and talking about the problems of the Federal deficit were Republicans.

I specifically remember that there were a group of Republicans that would come down every night in the late 1980s and early 1990s with a clock. The pages would bring out this clock on the floor of the House of Representatives. It practically ran the whole width of the

platform here. It would show how the Federal deficit was going up.

We finally put an end to that on a bipartisan basis frankly in the mid 1990s when we passed the Balanced Budget Act. But ever since President Bush came into office and the Republicans had the majority here, in the House and in the other body, collectively with the President, their fiscal policies have simply run up the debt again.

I wish I could get some of those Republicans now to come down and talk about the Federal deficit. And maybe I will bring out that clock myself one night just to show how the Federal debt continues to rise. But, again, it is not the debt, per se, that bothers me, but the impact on the middle-class.

The average American is going to have to pay back that debt. They are already being squeezed enough with the higher gas prices health care costs, education costs, without having to worry about the increased costs of the debt they are going to have to pay in the future generations.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

9/11 REPRESENTED A DRAMATIC FAILURE OF POLICY AND PEOPLE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GERLACH). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from California (Mr. ROHRABACHER) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Mr. Speaker, the American people need to know that the 9/11 terrorist attack on New York and Washington D.C. was not predestined nor was it unavoidable. Unfortunately, the commission investigating 9/11 seems uncomfortable with fixing responsibility, branding such attempts at accountability as the blame game or pointing fingers, or so some of them said, early on in their hearings.

So instead of looking for policies that were dead wrong or people who were incompetent, we have heard about all glitches in the system, about a lack of communication, a lack of a shared database. So expect recommendations from this commission and this task force to be consistent with this thinking. Changes will be suggested in flow charts, organizational restructuring, and, of course, you can expect them to recommend the creation of a new central authority and intelligence czar.

Sorry. 9/11 represented a dramatic failure of policy and people. A number of insane policies led to the creation of the hostile radical Islamic movement we face today. Policies that enabled weird, feudalistic religious zealots to become a major threat to the Western world, and especially to the people of the United States.

Yes, the origins of this frightening reality go back a ways. In the 1980s, for example, the CIA permitted Pakistan to channel America's support to those Afghans who were fighting against the Soviet troops who were occupying their