

When the history of Saddam Hussein and the liberation of Iraq is written, Mr. Speaker, there will be many lessons to learn. We will wonder why our intelligence was not better. We will question some of the decisions we made during the occupation. We will be ashamed of a few of our fellow Americans who lost their moral compass in the awful crucible of war and occupation. We will ask why so many Europeans were so slow to learn the lessons of their own sad history and so unwilling to extend to others the freedom they now enjoy. And we will be amazed at so many humane and decent people willing to allow Saddam to reign from a palace rather than rot in a prison.

But, Mr. Speaker, history will show we were right to remove Saddam Hussein. It will demonstrate that the demise of his regime made the world better, America safer and gave the Iraqi people a chance for a decent future. It will vindicate the leaders, especially our President, who saw the danger, rallied the forces of decency and stayed the course.

Finally, and most appropriately, history will honor those Americans in uniform who once again answered the call of their country and liberated an oppressed people.

Mr. Speaker, the recent Senate Intelligence Committee Report on the status of Weapons of Mass Destruction in pre-war Iraq and the early release of material from the 9/11 Commission's Report that will appear later this week have done much to identify the mistakes, shortcomings and gaps in U.S. intelligence about Iraq. There is no doubt that the information we had about the weapons programs of Saddam Hussein was incomplete and, to some degree, inaccurate. It's worth noting that almost every other intelligence estimate in the world was similarly flawed.

The Senate Report and the 9/11 Commission Report, however, also demonstrate that in a number of respects, U.S. intelligence did get it right. Saddam Hussein did possess weapons—particularly missiles—which were forbidden under U.N. resolutions. Saddam and his cronies did, indeed, have contact and discussions at some level with al Qaeda and various terrorist groups. Terrorists did, in fact, use Iraq as a sanctuary, for training, and as a source of supply. Finally, if British reports are to be believed, President Bush was correct when he warned that Saddam was seeking nuclear material in Africa.

The real question, Mr. Speaker, is not whether U.S. intelligence was right in every particular. By its very nature intelligence is incomplete, imprecise, and imperfect. What America must resolve for itself is whether or not we were right to remove Saddam from power in Iraq. Is the world better off, America safer, and the situation in Iraq more hopeful without Saddam?

Not so long ago, Mr. Speaker, before the amnesia induced by the current political season, few serious Americans professed doubts about these issues. It was, after all, President Clinton who made regime change in Iraq the goal of U.S. policy. He received bipartisan congressional support when he did so. And, again, when President Bush made the case for war against Saddam in 2002 he received

bipartisan support in Congress. That support included the votes and the vocal support of those from the minority party who now seek to unseat the President and the Vice President in the current electoral campaign.

Lest we forget who and what Saddam Hussein was we should remind ourselves of his actions over the course of his political career. Saddam is a man who launched two regional wars in the Middle East. One cost nearly a million lives. The other required an international military coalition led by the United States to free the victim. Saddam Hussein has actively pursued and employed weapons of mass destruction since the 1980's. He has trained, armed, and patronized terrorists of various sorts. He kidnapped and killed foreign nationals from Kuwait. He attempted to assassinate a former U.S. President. And his forces routinely tried to down aircraft from the U.S. and other countries which were responsible for enforcing the U.N. sanctioned no-fly zones in Iraq.

Saddam's crimes and atrocities were not just directed against his neighbors and the international community. He was at least a brutal toward his own people. The 20 year plus reign of terror he directed against his fellow Iraqis almost defies belief. The countless murders, torture sessions, and rapes made him one of the 20th century's most feared and ferocious dictators. He gassed thousands of his own Kurdish subjects, poisoned the environment of those Arab marsh tribes who opposed his rule, and looted his country of its wealth. When Saddam's own people rose up against him in 1991 at our urging, he butchered them by the tens of thousands. The failure of the United States and its allies to support an uprising which we helped to encourage is, in my view, a sad chapter in our own history.

When American and Coalition forces finally came to Iraq twelve years later, what did they find? Not (at least yet) stockpiles of WMD's, to be sure. They found something far worse—dozens of mass graves containing an estimated 400,000 men, women and children murdered by the minions of Saddam Hussein. I invite my colleagues who so quickly and correctly condemn every shortcoming in the Coalition occupation of Iraq to spend equal time cataloging and criticizing the atrocities of the Hussein regime. If they need any help finding the information—for it is seldom chronicled in the elite media of our country—they should read the voluminous documents and numerous eyewitness accounts, talk to the lucky survivors, and visit with the thousands of grieving family members who can acquaint them with the scope and scale of Saddam's crimes against humanity.

Once they do, I suspect they will echo the sentiments of one young American soldier I met while in Iraq. He said, "the real question is not why did we come to Iraq, but why the whole world wasn't here years ago."

Given Saddam's record of international villainy, brutality and mass murder how can anyone argue that it would have been better to leave him in power? In power to do what? To resume his unending efforts to acquire and develop WMD's? To expand, develop, and formalize his evolving relationship with al Qaeda and other terrorist groups? To continue murdering his domestic opponents by the thousands while the world turned a blind eye?

It is revealing, Mr. Speaker, that the current critics of the war in Iraq never question wheth-

er or not that tortured country is better off without Saddam in power. In fact, the critics usually ignore the Iraqi people altogether when they discuss the conflict. It is as if the critics believe that the suffering of the Iraqi people under Saddam does not matter and that their future does not count. How convenient! How self-serving! And how morally bankrupt.

When the history of Saddam Hussein and the liberation of Iraq is written, Mr. Speaker, there will be many lessons to learn. We will wonder why our intelligence was not better. We will question some of the decisions we made with respect to the occupation. We will be ashamed of a few of our fellow Americans who lost their moral compass in the awful crucible of war and occupation. We will ask why so many Europeans were so slow to learn the lessons of their own sad history and so unwilling to extend to others the freedom they now enjoy. We will be amazed that so many humane and decent people were willing to allow Saddam to reign from a palace rather than rot in a prison. We will even question, as we now do with respect to World War II, why the United States took so long to confront evil and act to end the atrocities of a dangerous and evil dictator.

But, Mr. Speaker, History will show we were right to remove Saddam Hussein. It will demonstrate that the demise of his regime made the world better, America more secure, and gave the Iraqi people a chance for a decent future. It will vindicate the leaders—especially our President—who saw the danger, rallied the forces of decency, and stayed the course. Finally, and most appropriately, History will honor those men and women in uniform who once again answered the call of their country, liberated an oppressed people, and left America and the world safer and freer than they found it.

□ 2000

FINANCIAL FREEDOM NEEDED

Mr. TANNER. Mr. Speaker, I want to adopt as part of my remarks the comments that the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. HILL) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM) made before me.

The Blue Dogs have tried repeatedly to do something about this abuse of our country and what is going on here with regard to the Nation's balance sheet. I do not think that people of this country realize fully how bad it is and how quickly it is deteriorating. And I am talking about our Nation's financial picture.

We cannot be a strong and free country if we are in hock to every other country on Earth. We cannot be strong and free if we are broke. We cannot fix the problems our society faces as long as we are engaged in this financial madness that has been going on around here for the last 3½ years.

Let me just tell you something that is going to scare you. It is not fun to talk about and nobody talks about it because it is not much of a comfort to us as Americans when we beat on our chests and say how great we are. Let me tell you what we are doing. The privately held debt, that is the debt not

held by government agencies, the debt that we write checks on every year as interest, in January of 2001 was \$2.96 trillion. Of that amount, foreign interest, foreign governments owned \$1.01 trillion; 34 percent, in other words, of our debt in 2001 was held by foreigners.

Today, that privately held debt is \$4.22 trillion. Foreign interests own \$1.75 trillion. It is now 42 percent of our Nation's debt, outstanding debt held by foreign interests. That is a 73 percent increase since we had a one-party government here the last 3 years. Can you imagine what we are doing in the name of cutting taxes for American citizens and without the PAYGO rules to discipline ourselves on spending, which the majority party will not allow the Blue Dogs to bring up? They have increased what we are in debt to the rest of the world by 73 percent in the last 3 years. Last year alone the deficit was \$374 billion.

Do you know how much foreigners lent us so that we could keep on spending? \$260 billion. Seventy percent of the deficit last year that we spent right here on this floor was lent to us by foreigners who we are now writing interest checks to.

This is the most irresponsible financial game plan for this country in my lifetime, maybe in the country's lifetime.

What is happening here ought to enrage the American people. They will not let us bring up PAYGO so we can stop the spending. They keep on spending, keep on reducing revenue, and borrowing it from foreign interests.

You talk about patriotism. We are in hock. Let me read you a few, if you would like. Do you know how much Japan owns of our paper? \$668 billion. China and Hong Kong together, \$216 billion. Almost a trillion dollars by two countries. Caribbean banking centers, we owe them \$72 billion. Korea, \$58 billion. Germany, \$49 billion. Switzerland, \$49 billion. OPEC, \$48 billion. Mexico, \$41 billion. Canada, 33. It goes on. We owe Brazil almost \$13 billion. The Netherlands, \$13 billion. Belgium, \$13 billion. Turkey, 15. India, 15. And just the other day we had a foreign aid bill.

What is happening for the last 3½ years here financially is an outrage. It is not only what we are doing to ourselves now. I contend that this Congress has raised taxes more than any other Congress in history. Why? Because they borrowed so much money that we have got to pay interest on, not just once, but every year, every year.

So far this year we have spent \$130 billion just to write interest checks to people. I tell you what, unless the American people get on to this scheme that is going on around here about borrowing and spending so that we can hold down taxes or so we say in which we are doing the reverse, we are raising taxes because we will have interest payments on all of this borrowing every year, not to mention the sad fact that we are in hock to every nation that lends us money.

I will tell one thing to the American people that was said in the Wall Street Journal, "Whose bread I eat, whose song I sing."

We are in hock all over the world, and we had better stop right now.

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

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

WHERE IS THE VISION

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

Mr. BERRY. Mr. Speaker, I come here night after night, and I see these Howdy Doody neo-cons come to the well and present this ridiculous idea that everything is all right, everything is wonderful. All we need to do is just keep cutting taxes and borrowing money and acting like we have not got good sense, and everything is just going to be wonderful.

I heard a speech this evening about how great the economy is in Tennessee, and I just ask you one question, Mr. Speaker, if things are so doggone good, how come we are broke?

I met with the manufacturer of Army boots last week. He was not complaining. I just happened to run into him, and we had a conversation. He was not asking me to do anything. He said, We do not have money to warehouse Army boots for our troops. We have to ship them directly to the field because we do not have the money to buy any more Army boots for the troops until the year comes in, until October. He said, We are making boots and warehousing them at our own expense so that they will be ready when the time comes because we do not want our men and women in the battlefields to not have boots.

I was just astounded because I hear these folks come down here and talk about how wonderful it is. This is insane what is going on here. We cut taxes and brag about what happens that is good about it. We borrow money that our children, our grandchildren will not even be able to pay back, and act like we do not know what the consequences of all this is going to be. And it is the Republicans that are doing it.

All we get to do is come down here and have a 5-minute discussion about why it is the wrong idea. You have heard tonight, 70 percent of our debt is being bought by foreigners; we have borrowed \$2.5 trillion, and we owe another \$2 trillion in current account deficits. You cannot be broke and free. Everybody knows that.

Health care costs are in runaway conditions because the Republicans and

the Republican administration are so determined to pass public law and public policy that gives the pharmaceutical companies the exclusive right to rob the American people.

You cannot fund veterans, you vote to send men and women on the battlefields and then you do not have enough money to pay for the veterans benefits that they are entitled to, and you keep coming back with budgets that cut that and then come back here and talk about how wonderful things are.

I do not know what in the world they are thinking about. Where I come from it is just as bad to be lying as it is to be stealing.

I just wonder, where is the vision?

There was an article in The Washington Post yesterday about where are the patriotic businessmen; where are the people in this country, the leaders in the business community that used to stand up and say, This is a bad idea, do not do this. It will hurt everybody. It will hurt our children and grandchildren. We want this country to continue to be good and strong and wonderful like we have had it. And yet these people come down here and try to blow smoke at everybody and tell them everything is going to be all right and it is going to be wonderful; and then they put everybody's children and grandchildren at risk.

I just wonder where is the vision. What were you people thinking about?

We met with Mr. CHENEY, the Blue Dogs, we met with Vice President CHENEY back in the Spring of 2001. He said, we think you are nice people, but we can cram this down your throat and that is what we are going to do. And they did. We voted against it.

Then they send that little fellow over there from OMB, I cannot remember his name. He is running for Governor of Indiana today. And he said, Do not worry. We are going to have so much money, we will not even have any bonds to sell. Now look at this mess we have got.

It is time for us to do something about it. And the good news is it is up to the American people, and we still get to vote in November, and we are going to make the decision.

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

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

SEARCHING FOR A BALANCED BUDGET

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

Mr. BOYD. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to be here today to join my Blue Dog colleagues who have preceded me, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM), the gentleman from Indiana