

TWO UNFORTUNATE NATIONAL RECORDS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I want this evening to talk about two national records. Unfortunately, they are records we wish had not happened. Mr. Speaker, at this point I will place in the RECORD a story from the New York Times today.

[From the New York Times, Sept. 7, 2004]

BUSH UNLIKELY TO FULFILL VOW ON DEFICIT, BUDGET OFFICE PROJECTS

(By Edmund L. Andrews)

Washington, Sept. 7—Almost regardless of what happens in Iraq and Afghanistan, President Bush is very unlikely to fulfill his promise of reducing the federal budget deficit by half within five years, the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office said today.

In the last independent assessment of Mr. Bush's fiscal legacy before the elections, the Congressional agency said that if there were no change to existing law, the federal deficit would decline only modestly from a record of \$422 billion in 2004 to about \$312 billion in 2009.

If Mr. Bush persuades Congress to make his tax cuts permanent, he will fall even farther short of his promise. The federal deficit could reach nearly \$500 billion in 2009 and the federal debt could swell by \$4.8 trillion over the next decade.

The new estimate is the first time that the Congressional agency has projected that President Bush will not be able to fulfill his promise, made last February, to cut the deficit by half.

Budget projections, by Congress as well as the administration, have been notoriously wrong in the past—failing to anticipate a flood of tax revenue during the last 1990's and then badly underestimating a plunge in revenue after the stock market collapsed in 2000.

But the new report is sobering because it arrives at similar conclusions even when analysts made extremely optimistic assumptions about war costs in Iraq and robust economic growth.

"The message is that you cannot grow your way out of this," said Douglas Holtz-Eakin, who is director of the Congressional Budget Office and a former chief economist on President Bush's Council of Economic Advisors.

If anything, Congressional analysts are more optimistic about economic growth, which usually leads to higher tax revenue, than Wall Street analysts or the White House. The Congressional report also estimated the budget outlook with three different assumptions about the course of the war in Iraq and Afghanistan, including the unlikely possibility that no more money would be needed after next year.

Stripping out all war costs for the two countries after next year, the Congressional analysts said the federal government would save \$536 billion over the next five years. But making Mr. Bush's tax cuts permanent, one of the president's top priorities, would cost \$549 billion through 2009 and \$2.2 trillion through 2014.

Averting a massive increase in the alternative minimum tax, a parallel tax that was originally designed to keep people from taking too much advantage of loopholes, would cost another \$150 billion over the next five years and more than \$400 billion over ten years.

Democrats said the new report showed Mr. Bush's tax cuts and spending policies had been reckless in transforming a record budget surplus to a record budget deficit, just a few years before the nation's retiring baby boomers start to drive up Social Security and Medicare entitlement costs by tens of billions of dollars a year.

"When the Bush administration took office in 2001, C.B.O. projected a \$397 billion surplus for 2004," said Representative John W. Spratt of South Carolina, the senior Democrat on the House Budget Committee. "Under the fiscal policies of this administration, the bottom line of the budget has worsened by \$819 billion in 2004 alone."

Republicans quickly countered by saying that the federal deficit this year will be smaller, and tax revenue will be higher, than either the administration or the Congressional Budget Office predicted in January and February.

"This report underscores that our policies are working to create a stronger economy, more jobs and a lower deficit," said Representative Jim Nussle, Republican of Iowa, the chairman of the House Budget Committee.

Mr. Speaker, the headline reads: "Bush Unlikely to Fulfill Vow on Deficit, Budget Office Projects." The non-partisan Congressional Budget Office has said regardless of what happens in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, President Bush is very unlikely to fulfill his promise of reducing our Federal deficit by half within 5 years, which is what had been promised.

In fact, the fiscal legacy of this administration is simply horrendous. By the end of this decade it is anticipated that the Federal debt could swell by nearly an additional \$5 trillion.

President Bush will not keep his promise made last February right here to cut the deficit by half. In fact, Douglas Holtz-Eakin, who is director of the Congressional Budget Office and former chief economist on the President's Council of Economic Advisors, has said the message is you cannot grow your way out of this.

The policies of this administration, the fiscal policies, are truly reckless. And I think what is of deep concern to me and to our constituents in Ohio is that when you rack up a deficit of this proportion where you are borrowing against Social Security trust funds and borrowing from foreign countries to float this debt, you leave the trust fund in jeopardy and you end up giving your independence over to those who are financing you.

And who are those holders of U.S. dollar reserves? Who are the holders of 42 percent of the bonds and securities that we have to pay off? China, Saudi Arabia, Japan, many other Middle Eastern countries.

Our tax revenues then have to go to pay interest, 42 percent of this debt now being owned by foreign interests.

This is a story which is an unfortunate development that we need to reverse this year and next year and the following year by electing people to the Presidency and to this Congress who are responsible with the taxpayers' dollars.

The second record I wish to place in the RECORD this evening is the death

toll, just announced for U.S. troops in Iraq which passed 1,000 today, a milestone marking the continuing high cost of the war 18 months after President Bush declared an end to major combat and more than 2 months since the nominal return of sovereignty to Iraq.

□ 2045

This is truly a tragedy. The total today of those killed reached 1,001, including 756 combat deaths. According to casualties.org, a Web site that tallies U.S. military casualties in Iraq, mainly from U.S. military news releases, including combat and noncombat causes, 855 U.S. troops have died since May 1 of last year, and 140 have died since the return of sovereignty on June 28.

A total of 6,916 were wounded as of the end of August, and this past August was the most cruel of all months of this war. Our soldiers were being attacked about 2,000 times in the month of August, an average of 67 times daily, which is double the rate of attack in July when forces were attacked about 1,000 times or an average of 37 times daily.

I will place this article from Knight Ridder news in the RECORD at this point.

[From Knight Ridder, Sept. 7, 2004]

U.S. DEATH TOLL IN IRAQ PASSES 1,000

(By Dogen Hannah)

BAGHDAD, IRAQ—(KRT).—The death toll for U.S. troops in Iraq passed 1,000 on Tuesday, a milestone marking the continuing high cost of the war 16 months after President Bush declared an end to major combat and more than two months since the nominal return of sovereignty to Iraq.

The total, which reached 1,001, included 756 combat deaths, according to icasualties.org, a Web site that tallies U.S. military casualties in Iraq mainly from U.S. military news releases. Including combat and noncombat causes, 855 U.S. troops have died since May 1 last year, and 140 have died since the return of sovereignty on June 28.

The daily casualty toll has been slowly rising since major combat operations ended—it now averages more than two deaths each day. April was the deadliest month of the war, with 135 U.S. soldiers losing their lives during a broad uprising in central and southern Iraq. Fifty-four U.S. troops died in July, 66 in August, and 23 so far in September.

A total of 6,916 were wounded as of the end of August, of which 3,076 returned to duty within 72 hours.

Pitched battles such as last month's three-week showdown with a militia in Najaf, during which seven Marines and two soldiers died, have grabbed headlines. But months of attacks on or by U.S. forces elsewhere have added to the toll, even as fledgling Iraqi forces shoulder more of the burden of quelling the tenacious insurgency.

On Tuesday, White House press secretary Scott McClellan said of those who died in Iraq and Afghanistan: "We remember, honor and mourn the loss of all those who made the ultimate sacrifice for freedom."

Army Lt. Col. Steven Boylan, a U.S. military spokesman in Baghdad, said the rising death toll should be kept in perspective. Each death is regrettable, he said, but the overall toll is relatively small compared with how long U.S. forces have been in Iraq and how many service members have served in the country.

"I'm not sure it is a large number when you look at it in the big scheme of things," Boylan said. "The thing that concerns me is people equating success or failure with the number. The first casualty to the last casualty, whenever that will be, is just as important and shouldn't be pegged to numbers."

The latest deaths include four soldiers killed Tuesday in Baghdad and a soldier who died Tuesday from injuries received from a roadside bomb attack Monday on a convoy in Baghdad. On Monday, the deadliest day for U.S. forces in four months, seven Marines were killed in a massive car bombing on the outskirts of Fallujah, a notorious hotspot of anti-U.S. sentiment about 40 miles west of Baghdad. Three soldiers also were killed in Baghdad and elsewhere. The approximately 140,000 U.S. service members in Iraq are deployed across a vast region stretching from Iraq's northern border with Turkey, Syria and Iran, through the country's middle and into its southern provinces. The rest of southern Iraq is the responsibility of coalition forces led by Britain and Poland.

The coalition's mission is to support the fledgling interim Iraqi government's efforts to prepare the country for nationwide parliamentary elections by Jan. 31, including establishing law and order. Boylan said U.S. military leaders have acknowledged that the insurgency is making their job difficult.

"It may not happen as fast as everybody would like," Boylan said. "It's hard work, especially when there are groups of people who don't want you in their area, for whatever reason."

Multinational soldiers were attacked about 2,000 times in August, or an average of 67 times daily, a record since the April 2003 fall of Saddam Hussein's regime, a military spokesman said this week. In July, the coalition was attacked about 1,000 times, or an average of 37 times daily.

Mortar rounds rain on military bases. Improvised explosive devices and car bombs blow apart military convoys. Gunmen armed with assault rifles, sniper rifles and rocket-propelled grenades prey on Marines and soldiers patrolling in armored vehicles or on foot. "It kind of runs the whole gamut," Boylan said of the perils facing U.S. forces. "There's still an active threat. We have to guard against that every day."

Soldiers such as Army Staff Sgt. Mathew Barker, whose 1st Cavalry company is stationed in an Iraqi National Guard building in northern Baghdad barricaded behind razor wire and earthen barriers, remain alert to the threats but try not to let the danger impede their mission.

"If you spend every waking moment worrying about what's going to happen, it isn't going to do you any good," Barker said. "Unfortunately, due to the nature of the operation—guerrilla-style tactics—you're going to have casualties. But we have a mission to accomplish." The number of organized, "full-time" insurgents is hard to quantify but is believed to be between 4,000 and 6,000, Boylan said. Also, there are an unknown number of individuals occasionally participating in insurgent activities, sometimes for money, he said.

Other reported estimates, including from U.S. military sources speaking on condition of anonymity, have put the insurgency's size as high as 20,000.

Much of the danger to U.S. forces continues to be within, and emanate from, the so-called Sunni Triangle. The region north and west of Baghdad and bounded by the predominantly Sunni Muslim cities of Tikrit, Ramadi and Baquouba is an insurgent stronghold.

So hostile are certain areas that the military has designated some cities—including

Fallujah, Ramadi and Samarra in the Sunni Triangle and the southern cities of Kufa and Latifiya—"no-go zones." Yet, Army Lt. Gen. Thomas Metz said this week that U.S. forces might seek to gain control of Fallujah before next year's parliamentary election.

Such a move could add significantly to the number of U.S. casualties.

Barker, the 1st Cavalry soldier in Baghdad, looks on the casualty count with a certain degree of stoicism. "We're Army. This is our job. This is what we signed up to do," he said.

Yet he and his fellow soldiers also are keenly aware of the mounting death toll. Reading the Army's newspaper, Stars and Stripes, they can't ignore the rising number and the names of their fallen comrades-in-arms.

"Yes, it's a low figure compared to how many people have been here," Barker said. "But one death is more than enough."

Later this month I will begin a Special Order on the anniversary of September 11 that addresses the root causes of terrorism and where the rising antagonism against the United States and the West emanates from. For until we address the root causes of the hate, we cannot possibly contain the rising insurgency that cuts across borders, Nations and cultures, and our soldiers are paying the largest price for this.

Tonight we wish to thank those men and women serving our Nation through the military, whose mission is extraordinarily difficult and whose patriotism is at the highest levels, and they deserve our highest esteem and appreciation.

ASSAULT WEAPONS BAN EXTENSION

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

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, first of all, let me rise to acknowledge and offer my personal sympathy to the many, many families in this country who since we have been on the work recess have lost their loved ones in Iraq and Afghanistan. I think it is important as we proceed in what is going to be probably a very vigorous and adversarial 6 to 8 weeks of legislative business to let all Americans know that those of us who have vigorously opposed the policies of an undefined war and lack of an exit strategy no less have the greatest amount of respect and sympathy for those who are willing to give the ultimate sacrifice.

In the last 48 hours, we lost 7 marines in the tragedy of a car bomb in Iraq. So I wanted to make clear, as I proceed and will be debating these questions of the 9/11 Commission, how important it is to reflect upon those servants who have given their lives.

I also want to mention this evening, Mr. Speaker, the importance of the next couple of weeks and days and to focus tonight on what I think is the week's outrage.

Six days from now on September 13, 2004, this Congress and this President

will allow the assault weapons ban to expire. I think that if we were to think with a deal of consciousness and be reflective, people of reason would ask the question, why.

Why, when the assault weapons ban has seen a 60 percent decrease in the use of assault weapons in crime; why, when we have seen a decrease in the number of school shootings we had just 4 or 5 years ago, when children were being shot by automatic weapons; why, in the backdrop of an automatic weapon shooting today, why would you imagine that the Republican leadership of the House and Senate refuse to do what is right? When our soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan cannot even get flak jackets to protect them against bullets, why would we want to have in the United States of America the idea of war weaponry on the street?

Is the Speaker aware that the gun companies are now taking people's credit cards over the Internet so that on the sunset of September 13 they can simply ship these guns out en masse?

Why is democracy being denied in the very place that democracy is supposed to be enhanced? Why are we refusing to allow a vigorous and fair debate on the question of whether or not the assault weapons ban should continue? Why are we being denied the very privilege of having this legislative initiative being placed on the floor of the House and Senate simply to allow those who have differing opinions, who represent millions and millions of Americans who have pleaded with their legislators to again enact the assault weapons ban, why is the leadership refusing to acknowledge this legislative initiative?

Why is the President of the United States, who has indicated his consent and approval of the assault weapons ban, not lifting a single finger? Is this what my colleagues call flip-flop? Is this what my colleagues call indecisiveness? Is this what my colleagues call saying one thing and doing another?

It seems very clear to me. It is a tragedy. Whose child will be next that will be shot by an assault weapon? Whose employee is next? Whose employer is next; what law enforcement officer, what first responder, whom we pretend to be so supportive of, when most of the law enforcement agencies in America have asked us to extend the assault weapons ban?

This is an absurdity, this is an outrage, and we will continue to be on the floor every single day to shed the light of day, to pull the covers back to let everybody know the masquerading that is going on here in Washington, the flip-flopping, the outrage of deceit by suggesting that there is some support for the assault weapons ban, and yet the leadership of this House, dominated by the Republicans, and the Senate, refuse to allow us to have a simple debate on this question.

I believe in life over death and peace over war, and I see no conflict in the