

This need not be viewed as an encroachment on the Speaker's or the majority party's authority.

There is a real danger that, after an attack or other national catastrophe, any action taken by the speaker without the concurrence of the minority leader could have the perception of partisan politics. This is true no matter which party controls a majority of seats in the House.

In times of crisis, any action by the House of Representatives must be bipartisan. There cannot be any perception that the majority is using any tool as part of a partisan power grab. The American public wants to be reassured that the House is acting in the best public interest; they want partisan politics to be put aside during a national crisis. They simply want to be safe, secure, and reassured that the American government will respond to their needs.

After September 11, 2001, the House came together and acted as one unified body. We put partisan politics aside. We held joint press conferences, we received joint briefings, and we conducted joint strategy meetings. Unanimity and consensus is vital during a national crisis. The unified message and unified actions—the one voice—coming from the House of Representatives after September 11, 2001 was reassuring to the American people.

Any action taken by the speaker of the House—irrespective of that speaker's party—that is not taken with the concurrence of the minority leader could be seen as inappropriate by the American people.

Requiring the concurrence of the minority leader puts the needs of the country ahead of the threat of partisan politics, and it is a necessary protection against anyone who may want to abuse our democracy during a time of national crisis.

Mr. Speaker, although I'm disappointed that it's taken this long to act on the issue of incapacitation—it's been over 3 years since the attacks of September 11—I'm pleased that the Rules Committee is finally acting on this important issue. I hope the chairman and the Rules Committee will look to the future, and realize that concurrence is an important part of this process that it is vital to show the American people that the Congress can put partisan politics aside in the time of crisis.

I want to thank the chairman for organizing this special order tonight. I look forward to working with him on this issue, and I hope he will take my views—and those of my Democratic colleagues on the committee—into account as he finalizes this proposal.

NEW PARTNERSHIP FOR AMERICA'S FUTURE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BISHOP of Utah). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, earlier today a united Democratic Caucus went to the steps of the U.S. Capitol right outside these doors and unveiled our New Partnership for America's Future. This partnership reaffirms House Democrats' commitment to six core values and serves as a road map of the priorities we would focus on if the American people voted for a Democratic majority in November.

The announcement of this new partnership was necessary today because a large majority of Americans have lost faith in Congress. Over the past decade, Republicans have controlled the people's House and have often strayed from these core American values. My Democratic colleagues and I have been fighting for these causes for many years, but this is the first time that we have unveiled a partnership with the American people, a promise, if you will, that if the American people put their trust in us and elect a Democratic majority this November, we will work with them as partners to make their lives and our government better.

Mr. Speaker, the House Democrats are united, focused, and totally committed to taking the bold steps needed to strengthen the middle class that is the heart of our democracy. It reaffirms the commitment of House Democrats to six core values: one is prosperity, two is national security, three is fairness, four is opportunity, five is community, and six is accountability.

Mr. Speaker, our New Partnership for America's Future begins with our commitment to promoting prosperity for every American, and this poster which I have which I am going to go through essentially outlines each of the six values that are part of the Democrats' New Partnership for America's Future.

The first one, prosperity, says "providing all Americans with the opportunity to succeed and to live a secure and comfortable life, including good jobs here at home, affordable health care, a growing economy with stable prices, investment in new technologies, and fiscal responsibility in government."

Mr. Speaker, in my home State of New Jersey, over 71,000 manufacturing jobs have been lost over the last 4 years, and more than 214,000 New Jerseyans are still looking for work. Yet House Republicans have missed every opportunity to jump-start our economy. Instead, House Republicans and President Bush continue to insist that our economy has turned the corner. Today, families are being squeezed by falling incomes and rising costs. The typical family's income has fallen more than \$1,500 under George Bush and congressional Republicans, and the jobs that the Bush economy is creating are paying low wages, \$9,000 less than the old jobs that they have replaced.

House Democrats would promote prosperity by creating new jobs, enacting middle-class tax relief, and rewarding companies that create jobs here at home. If Democrats control the House, we promise the American people that we will create 10 million new jobs over the next 4 years. Democrats want to reform the Tax Code to reward companies for creating secure jobs for Americans here in the United States. And Democrats want to assure access to capital for small businesses to create jobs and serve new markets. We also want to support fair wages with good benefits so no one goes to work every

day and comes home poor and dependent on public services.

And, Mr. Speaker, the second value that House Democrats promise to focus on is our Nation's national security. And again I have the poster here that I would like to put up, Mr. Speaker, on the national security issue. And as we can see, it says, "Guaranteeing military strength second to none, stopping the spread of weapons of mass destruction, building strong diplomatic alliances to protect America's national interests, and collecting timely and reliable intelligence to keep us safe at home by preventing terrorist attacks before they occur."

Mr. Speaker, all Americans are proud of the more than 138,000 brave men and women who are serving their country in either Afghanistan or Iraq. But President Bush and House Republicans sent them into a war in Iraq without providing them with the resources and equipment they need to complete their mission successfully and come home safe. Despite all the bad news out of Iraq in the last couple of months, it is clear President Bush has no strategy for success in Iraq.

Over the past week, some of the Republican Party's most experienced Senators on national security issues, and I mention Senators MCCAIN, HAGEL, and LUGAR, have come out and told the American people that things are not going well in Iraq. Yet President Bush and Republicans here in the House of Representatives continue with their same old happy talk about how the war is going according to President Bush's plans.

The fact is the war in Iraq has made us less safe. The President has ignored more pressing dangers like the nuclear threats that have increased in Iran and North Korea. International terrorist cells expand on a daily basis, and we have divided our friends and united our enemies.

Democrats strive to continue to build an American military second to none. Along with nations around the world who are committed to freedom and security, we also guarantee that all of our military forces will possess the most effective equipment available. We will also protect the homeland by making sure that every container and ship is secure before entering an American port, by inspecting all airline cargo, and by preventing the technology of weapons of mass destruction from falling into the hands of terrorists.

Unlike House Republicans, we as Democrats also plan to honor every American veteran and their family by keeping our commitments to those who have served and sacrificed for our country. It is not fair that America's veterans put their lives on the line in battle only to return to the United States and realize the same government that sent them off to war now refuses to abide by its commitments.

That brings me to my third value. I see some of my colleagues are here, though.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. PALLONE. I yield to the gentleman from Oregon.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, I want to at this point, since the gentleman is proposing a positive agenda for America, just to sort of put this discussion in context. If people are happy with the status quo, if they think the country is going in the right direction, if they believe that what has happened to our economy in terms of the job loss over the last 4 years, the outsourcing of American jobs, if they think that a pharmaceutical benefit based in subsidies to the pharmaceutical and insurance industries is the way to help seniors and other Americans afford prescription drugs, if they think that borrowing 600, \$700 billion a year, 10 percent of our accumulated national debt in 1 year, breaking the debt limit of the United States for the third time in one Presidency, if they look at those things and think that that is a good, sane direction for this country, then they might not be interested in this alternative.

But the alternative that we are offering as Democrats today is something that, instead of benefiting that one tenth of 1 percent or maybe, to be generous, one half of 1 percent of the populace who are doing so well with these policies, then we are offering a different direction.

We do not think the United States of America is on the right path with its fiscal policy, its trade policy, its tax policy, tax fairness, with its Medicare policy and health care policy, and a whole host of education policies, things that are important to Americans. So I want the gentleman to continue to describe a positive alternative because maybe a little later in the hour I will wax a little more eloquent about how bad things really are, from my perspective, the perspective of my district in Southwest Oregon, and I think many other districts around the country. But I just kind of wanted to put the context on this discussion.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. PALLONE. I yield to the gentleman from Ohio.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I just want to say, and I have tried to say this when we have come before the American public, that we are not making this up. I mean, I think it has gotten so bad and so much on the wrong track in this country that if they are just sitting at home watching a bunch of Democrats up there talking, they would think they cannot possibly be telling the truth. It cannot possibly be that bad.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Like a Dave Barry routine. Right?

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Exactly, Mr. Speaker. It is like a bad movie or a bad novel or we are demagoguing the issues. But if the American people will take the time to not only listen to what our plan is but listen to our critique, which is, I think, is okay.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Factually based.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Factually based in the American discourse today, in 2004, that they will find that these are facts. We are not making this up. The studies that come out, the two newspaper articles that come out that say the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development are cutting subsidies for poor people to live in the city of New York or in major cities or the banks have got their fingers in the student loans and they are making billions of dollars of money, we are not making this up. This is in newspapers every single day.

So the gentleman from New Jersey, as he goes on here, I just want the American people, again, to put in a little bit of context here that we are not just making this up, that it sounds terrible and it sounds terrible because it is, because we have an administration and a Congress that consistently and constantly try to appeal to the lowest common denominator. They always appeal to where they can raise the most amount of money from that industry at the expense of average people who need help. And if we all want to move forward in the 21st century, the government needs to be involved. And I think that is what the New Partnership for America's Future stands for.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. PALLONE. I yield to the gentleman from Oregon.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, because he raised a couple of provocative issues, I did a series of Medicare prescription drug forums in my district, and I will get to the point of what the gentleman mentioned, but what was most interesting is I saw well over a thousand seniors in my district.

□ 2115

A total of six had purchased the so-called prescription drug discount card. Two had not gotten them yet, even though they purchased them in June, and this was August. Two got them and said they were worthless. One said, well, it gave him about a 10 percent discount. And then one other guy said he was doing really great. But a bunch of the other people in the audience sort of shouted at him and said, no, he was a partisan guy. Whatever. Out of 1,000 people, that is it.

But the point is, at one of those Medicare town halls an older woman came, worked until she was 70 years old, but all she has got, widowed, is her Social Security, and she is living in subsidized housing. They just raised, as the gentleman referenced about housing, they raised her share to the point where she came, and it was kind of sad, she came in a cab, which was pretty unusual, this town does not have a big cab service, it is a small city, Albany, Oregon. That was a little unusual. So I saw her and greeted her. I kind of helped her in.

She said, "This is only the second time I have been out in 3 months. I am

really sick, and I am taking a lot of prescription drugs, and it is a big burden on me. Medicare does not cover them. I looked at prescription drug cards; it is not going to help." She had just gotten notice that her share, she was going to have to pay about \$70 more a month for her apartment.

She said, "You know, I cannot afford that. I do not have the money now." She said, "I am basically eating into my savings and I don't have much savings left." It was just incredibly sad to see that.

So she is getting hit on both sides. She is getting hit by a phony prescription drug benefit, which is costing more than half a trillion dollars to the taxpayers in the United States that totally subsidizes the pharmaceutical and insurance industries, but delivers scant benefits to a person like her.

Yes, there are some people who benefit from it, people who are, incredibly, even poorer than she is and have very large drug costs. But very few people will get a net benefit out of it. And then to sock her, this is where we have got to raise money so we can give trickle-down tax cuts to the wealthy, is from women like her, who worked her entire life?

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. If the gentleman will yield further, that is the issue. It is the fact that over the course of the last 2 years this Congress and this President have said we need to give trillions of dollars back to people who make more than \$1 million a year. We just cannot give it away.

The downside is, we are taking it away from somewhere. It almost is a zero-sum game. We are taking it away from that senior citizen in your district and thousands of others, probably millions of others across the country, who are going to suffer because of that.

So ask yourself, as a voter in the United States of America, do you want the governmental policy of your government to be, we are going to give tax cuts to people, \$100,000 or \$130,000, back to someone who makes \$1 million a year or more? Or are we going to have them pay their fair share of taxes, they are obviously doing well, they are making \$1 million a year, and use that money to make sure that people in your community or people in my community or people in the city of New York or any major city have affordable housing?

Unfortunately, we have an administration and a Congress here, they do not understand that \$70 a month means a lot to some people. \$100 a month means a lot to people. We are lucky. We get paid okay. We are never going to be in that position, thank God. But there are thousands and millions of people in this country that that affects their lives. They end up going to the food bank because they do not have \$70 a month or \$100 a month.

When is this Congress and this President going to begin to understand there are American people that need their help? And they turn their back,

and they come to our communities and say, hey, the economy is doing great. It is doing great. So maybe someone can get a job in this great economy and pay for their grandmother's prescription drug, or that extra \$70. They are just so out of touch, they are in fantasyland.

I just want to say, yes, there is a cost. The money comes from very, very wealthy people who have been given a break and have had a free ride over the last few years at the expense of those people. It is not for free.

Mr. DEFAZIO. If the gentleman will yield further, this is something a lot of people do not realize. It is one thing to have a debate about whether we should cut taxes, pay down the debt or maybe spend more on education for our kids and other programs when we had a surplus. But this President has taken us from record surplus to record deficit in 4 short years.

So we are borrowing the money to finance tax cuts. We are borrowing every penny of the Social Security surplus this year. \$160 billion more will be paid in out of taxes that fall only on wage- and salary-earning Americans who earn less than \$90,000 a year.

We are giving the money they paid in for their retirement, this Congress is going to borrow it and give it substantially to those people you are talking about in much greater amounts. It will flow to the people who earn over \$1 million a year. And guess what? They do not even pay the tax. If they are an investor, they do not pay a penny into Social Security. It is only people who work for wages and salary.

So we are going to borrow all that money, and we are going to borrow another \$440 billion. We are going to indebt our kids and grandkids for the next 30 years to borrow \$600 billion to run the government this year. Every program of the government except for the Defense Department, and almost half of that, is being run on borrowed money. We are borrowing from our future. So we are borrowing that money to invest in trickle-down tax cuts.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. And who are we borrowing it from? We are borrowing it from banks in Japan and banks in China.

So here we have China cleaning our clock in the manufacturing sector in the United States of America, stealing all our jobs, not paying their workers anything, no environmental regulations, no human rights, no religious freedom, all the things that this Chamber and this Capitol and this Congress hold dear, that we get a lot of speeches about now, in election time, is going to China, and we are borrowing money from them.

We are paying them interest on the money that we are borrowing from them. They take the interest and they invest it back into their state-run manufacturing businesses and steal the jobs in the United States of America. What a deal for China.

And we do not have anything. We are losing on every end, which is mort-

gaging the future of our kids and our grandkids. We are losing our manufacturing, we are losing good paying jobs. The jobs that are replacing the jobs we have now are \$7,000 or \$8,000 less than the jobs we have that we are losing. And China, which is going to be the greatest economic competitor to the United States of America, is winning.

American people, we are losing. We are making bad decisions every single day in this Chamber. This President is making bad decisions. And the kicker, the kicker, is this: that we want to deal with North Korea. This gets into the war and everything else.

We want to deal with North Korea. But we cannot deal with North Korea. And we want to deal and play tough with China with their 40 percent currency manipulation, to try to put our business at a little more of an advantage in the international marketplace.

But we cannot, because we are bogged down in a war. So instead of talking tough with China, we have to go to China and say, hey, China, can you help us with North Korea, because we just have too much political capital and money and soldiers and everything invested in the Middle East.

So instead of confronting China, we are in a position of weakness, and we have to ask China to help us with North Korea. What a bad position this administration has put us in.

Mr. DEFAZIO. If the gentleman will yield further, this is an excellent point. I do want to get back to the positive agenda, but we are talking about things that people need to think about.

The control that we are giving to the Chinese and the Japanese over our economy, basically 40 percent of the \$600 billion trade deficit we are going to run this year, we are borrowing from China and Japan. They are going to get unbelievable leverage over the future of the dollar and the future of the U.S. economy.

And not only that. Of course, they are stealing our technology, and many American companies are aiding and abetting them in that theft of technology, because they want to access the cheap labor and the lack of environmental constraints and other things to move their companies and operate in China.

The Republicans wanted to make a big deal about this satellite launch during the Clinton administration. Boy, that is like quaint history at this point, given the technology transfers and the theft going on today.

You know, the Bush administration has filed one trade complaint. They told us, oh, we will give China, the bloody butchers of Beijing, Castro, he is bad, we cannot even sell him medicine, but the bloody butchers of Beijing that ran over the kids with the tanks and the democracy demonstrators and all that, we are going to give to these people permanent most-favored-nation status.

We are going to pretend they are not a Communist country. We are going to

do away with the laws of the United States that say, you do not extend that to Communist countries, Communist dictatorships. But they did with the rationale, oh, put them in the WTO, the World Trade Organization, then they will have to follow the rules.

Well, the Bush administration, despite the document theft I have talked about time and time again, I have a couple of companies in my district that have been cloned in China, a small entrepreneur, a small business that the other side of the aisle cares so much about, except when it comes to, well, if the Chinese are stealing your stuff, tough luck.

But they have filed one trade complaint against China, and it was with the pricing of drugs for the Pfizer Corporation. That is the only trade complaint filed against China. China, who is stealing the entire product of a small company, a beautiful American dream company in my district called Videx. A furniture manufacturing company in my district that refused to sell out to the Chinese, they cloned his entire line. Both these people have gotten calls from all over the United States saying, that happened to us too.

These are the people that care about small business? They do not care about small business. They pretend to care about small business. They care about the mega-corporations that want to relocate to China and access the cheap labor, and they are playing right into the hands of the Chinese, who are an ongoing threat to the United States of America and will be the major threat in this century.

But we are getting a little off track. This is pretty depressing. When I go to my chambers of commerce and I go around my district and I talk about this, people get a little depressed. I think if we talk a little more about the positive agenda, then we will get back to some of the problems.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I think it is exciting what we have to talk about here. I think we have outlined pretty much what the problems are and the problems we face. The beautiful thing about this system is, it is self-correcting. We have elections every 2 years. So the American people will now have a choice, and the choice to elect, hopefully, in this instance, a Democratic Chamber that has an agenda. I think that is going to be great for the future of the country.

I yield back to the gentleman from New Jersey to explain what our agenda is.

Mr. PALLONE. Reclaiming my time, first let me say the next point we have on our agenda, which is fairness, actually encompasses a lot of the things you mentioned in the last 10 or 15 minutes or so. So I think it is very much on point.

The point of fairness, and we have the poster up here, basically says ensuring equal opportunity for all, including affordable health care for everyone, spending Social Security funds

only on Social Security, and eliminating tax loopholes so that all Americans pay their fair share.

I think the point is, the American people are not looking for special treatment. What they really want is fair treatment. Yet for the past decade, the House Republican majority has focused on the needs of the wealthiest Americans to the detriment of our Nation's middle class.

Over the past 4 years, household income has dropped by more than \$1,500. Instead of helping middle-class families, Republicans forced through a tax cut that provided the wealthiest 1 percent of families with a tax cut worth almost \$100,000 over 4 years.

How can congressional Republicans say that is fair? You all talked before about the Republican tax cuts and who they went to.

Democrats are saying that we would enact tax relief that is fair to the middle class, make health care affordable for every American, and provide tax incentives to assist employers in offering affordable health insurance to all employees.

The preferential treatment Republicans have shown our wealthiest Americans also unfairly affects our Nation's seniors and the millions of baby-boomers that are closing in on the golden years. Four years ago, thanks to the fiscal policies of President Clinton, both Social Security and Medicare were solvent.

When Republicans finally grabbed control of the White House and Congress 4 years ago in 2001, they promised to extend the solvency of Social Security and Medicare. But as we know, instead, the Republicans have spent the entire Social Security surplus. Much of this money has gone to tax breaks for the wealthiest Americans and also caused the large deficit that you mentioned.

If you think of it, Republican policies call for spending the entire Social Security trust fund surplus every year for the next 10 years and beyond. So that is where you get into your deficit.

Republicans also were not thinking of fairness when they passed this giant \$500 billion Medicare bill last year that provides huge payoffs to HMOs and the pharmaceutical companies, again, the special interests. At the same time, this Congress provided a miniscule prescription drug benefit to our Nation's seniors that forces seniors to go outside of Medicare to get prescription drug assistance.

Now we know what happened. We heard within the last few weeks about the Medicare premium is going up 17 percent, the largest increase we have had in the whole history of the Medicare program, and the majority of that is because of the Medicare prescription drug bill, or so-called prescription drug bill, which gives all of this money back to insurers, particularly the HMOs, and also to replenish the Medicare trust fund, which they borrowed from in order to pay for the tax cuts.

□ 2130

So Democrats are saying that we maintain an unqualified commitment to the preservation of retirement dignity through Medicare, Social Security and sound pensions. Unlike the Republican Medicare bill, Democrats guarantee a prescription drug benefit within the Medicare system. We would also allow access to lower-cost, reimported prescription drugs and permit the Secretary of Health and Human Services to negotiate on behalf of our Nation's 40 million seniors to substantially reduce the cost of prescription drugs.

I know the gentleman has already commented on some of this, and I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, let us just sort of go back to those two points, because they are very important to a large number of my constituents, Social Security and Medicare.

This year, Social Security will overtax individuals who work for wages and salary and the self-employed earning less than \$89,000 a year. They will pay more in taxes than necessary to support the system, under the theory that that \$160 billion we are going to extract only from wage- and salary-earning people who earn less than \$90,000 a year, those who are not the big beneficiaries of the tax cuts, to put into a trust fund to pay for their retirement. That would be great.

Unfortunately, this Congress is going to borrow every penny of that money, every penny, and replace it with IOUs. Some good part of it will go to pay for tax cuts, borrowing money to pay for tax cuts for people who do not pay Social Security taxes and do not ever care if they collect a cent because they are so wealthy; they may not even be eligible, because they may have never worked for salary and wages, who have been just investors their entire lives with their inheritance.

Now, remember, we voted seven times; it was before this gentleman arrived, but I believe the gentleman from New Jersey was here. Seven times we voted on a lockbox for Social Security. The Republicans were berserk about that; Lockbox, lockbox, do not spend that Social Security money. Well, I voted for it every time. Guess what? George Bush became President, the lockbox is gone, broke open the door, grabbed the money and ran. And there is no more talk of the lockbox.

So all of that money is being extracted only from people who work for wages and salary and is going to be borrowed and spent. Now, that is extraordinary. And how are we going to honor the IOUs with deficits as far as the eye can see proposed by this President and this majority? How are we going to repay those IOUs?

Mr. PALLONE. Well, I have to tell the gentleman, he talks about the past on the floor of the House. And I remember when I was first elected back in 1988, and for those first few years, through the late 1980s, early 1990s, the policy or the theme of the Republicans

here was to eliminate the deficit. They kept talking about how we needed to eliminate the deficit. There was a group that used to come on the floor, and I have said this before, but I will say it again, there was a group that used to come on the floor during Special Orders every night, just like we do, here we are, and they had a clock, a digital clock that was the whole length of this podium. And they would have the pages bring it out, and they could barely carry the thing. And every night they would say, this is how much higher the Federal deficit went. But, boy, we do not see anybody on the Republican side coming down here now talking about the deficit. It is the largest deficit we have ever had.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will yield, I was in college actually at the time of the great Contract With America, of which one of the fundamental principles was that we were going to have this balanced budget amendment. And my God, I mean, when we look at where we are today, reckless, reckless leadership, Congress spending like drunken sailors.

Mr. DEFAZIO. That is an insult, referring to drunken sailors.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I am sorry. That is true. I apologize to all of the sailors out there. But clearly, there is no concern for these budget deficits that we are running, putting our country in a position of weakness with some of our foreign competitors.

So I think it is important that the American people just at least see the duplicity of some of the comments that we are getting here today, a party that was clearly for fiscal responsibility.

I have to be honest with my colleagues. When I go back home, and I live in a pretty strong Democratic area in northeast Ohio, I am running into more and more Republicans that are very, very frustrated with the behavior of the Congress and the President running these deficits, because they have always been fiscally conservative. That has been a cornerstone of the Republican Party for many years, and now, they are looking and saying, wait a minute. And here we are as Democrats trying to put in the PAYGO provisions, that if you provide tax cuts or any kind of spending increases, you have to pay for them. And I think we have evolved as a Congress over the last 10 or 15 years, and we recognize how dangerous these deficits are. But a Republican House, a Republican Senate, a Republican President, \$600 billion deficit, unending war in Iraq, borrowing from Social Security, borrowing from the banks in China; very, very dangerous proposition.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, we will move on to the second point the gentleman made about Medicare, and I think that that is an extraordinary point the gentleman made, the largest one-year premium increase in history, far exceeding any senior's Social Security cost-of-living adjustment. A funny thing, when they calculate cost of living, they do not include health care

costs, pharmaceutical costs, it seems. They tell seniors, oh, well, your cost of living is going up 2.4, 2.6 percent. So to a senior, except perhaps wealthy seniors who own their own home; I mean there are very few people who can say, gee, my cost of living is only going up 2.4 percent a year.

The point is that with the Medicare bill that we passed, the White House hid how much it costs. I mean, there is now a former employee who has now become a very highly paid lobbyist, very common with this administration; highly paid lobbyists, go work in the administration and then become highly paid lobbyists again. This guy was head of the Health Care Financing Administration. He told a career employee who was asked by Congress, how much will this bill cost, an actuary, and he figured it out. And he was told, the career employee was told by the political appointee, who is now a million-dollar-a-year lobbyist rewarded by the pharmaceutical and insurance industry, if you tell Congress how much this will really cost, I will fire you.

Well, here is a guy who works for a living, has a family, career civil servant, and he was a little bit scared for his job, so he did not tell Congress how much it would really cost. He wrote it down, transmitted it to his boss, but he did not go to the press. He did not want to lose his job.

Well, now, the Bush appointee has moved on to his million-dollar lobbying job, a little reward that he got from the pharmaceutical industry for having lied to Congress, and we find out that it is going to cost more like half a trillion dollars, maybe six-tenths of a trillion dollars, and most seniors are going to get more cost than benefit. Some seniors will actually pay more, those who have less than \$1,000 a year in drug costs will actually pay more under this plan. And seniors in the doughnut hole, well, they get the doughnut hole; we know what that is. And then, some people who have over \$4,000, \$5,000 a year drug costs, they will get some benefit. But that is their vision. And they prohibited Americans from reimporting less expensive, FDA-approved drugs from Canada, and they outlawed Medicare bargaining for less expensive drug costs for all Medicare recipients.

We could have had a program for nothing, not one taxpayer cent, just like we do with the VA. Everybody in Medicare has a card. Medicare goes out and bargains lower prescription drug costs. Just like I get in Blue Cross Blue Shield as a Federal employee, they negotiate discounts of 60, 70 percent. We could have provided a more meaningful benefit for no money, but guess what? It would not have made the pharmaceutical and insurance industries a huge pile of money. And they were against it and the White House nixed it, and that is now the policy of the United States of America. And there is only one way we can change that, and that is to change the presidency and to

change the direction of this Congress, the House and the Senate. And then we can roll it back, and we can give a meaningful benefit at much less cost.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I would like to move to the next point, because I know it particularly relates to the 30-plus group. Our colleague, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN), has been basically out front on the issue about how we need to address the concerns of the younger generation. And this one, of course, is the value that talks about opportunity, providing Americans access to the tools to succeed as they choose, vibrant public education system accountable to the highest standards for every school and a chance for all children to reach their potential, including an affordable and accessible college education.

Now, since the Republicans have failed to provide promised funding for education reforms, millions of Americans have gone without help in reading and math and without after-school programs that boost academic achievement and keep kids safe. Republicans have underfunded education programs by \$27 billion over the past 4 years nationwide. And of course, the President, as we know, several years ago heralded the No Child Left Behind program but never funded it. And unlike Republicans, Democrats would provide opportunity through high-quality, early childhood education, vibrant and accountable public schools and an affordable college education.

I have to say that the number-one issue, when I go back to my district, that people are concerned about is health care. That is the one I hear about the most. But the second, the one I hear about second is education, particularly the inability for families to finance their kids' higher education which, whether you are in public or private school, the costs keep coming up.

I know that the gentleman from Ohio has talked about this many times in the evening when he talks about the 30-plus, so I will yield to the gentleman.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman bringing this up, because I think whether we are talking about trade with China or what we are going to do, I mean, I think everyone agrees in the country on investments in education, whether it is K through 12, actually funding No Child Left Behind, which would be a nice idea, or making sure that average citizens in the United States of America have access to our colleges and universities.

I just want to share a couple of examples. Today, in one of the New York newspapers, they did an editorial. Basically, what is happening with the college students, and this just illustrates how egregious the infiltration of the money folks in this town can be, there is a provision in the Department of Education that guarantees banks a 9.5 percent return interest for a loan that they make, 9.5 percent. Well, they are

now currently lending out student loans at 3.5 percent, but the government is reimbursing them for 9.5 percent. So if we do not fix this, for example, in the next 6 months, there will be \$3 billion wasted that will go right to the banks. I am not making this up. This is crazy. Mr. Speaker, \$3 billion that will go to the banks.

So, all we are saying on the Democratic side is that we believe that that \$3 billion should be put into the Pell grants. We believe that that should be, maybe, used to actually lower the interest rates that average students would need to be paid so they would not have to pay and invest that money to increase access and opportunity for people.

How are we going to compete with China and Japan and India and all of these countries that are stealing all of our jobs if we are not willing to actually fund the education programs in the United States of America? We need more people competing. We need more entrepreneurs. We need more scientists. We need more mathematicians. We need more engineers. We need more math and science teachers. We need more people wanting to be astronauts and move the country forward in the 21st century. But if we do not invest, we are not going to see the return on that money. But we would rather give the \$3 billion to the banks. Again, I am not making this up.

I do not have anything against banks. They own my house, and they own my car, so there is nothing personal here, but it is just as a policy decision, we need to spend that money in a different way, and it is the same thing with No Child Left Behind.

In Ohio alone, all of the new mandates that the No Child Left Behind Act instituted for local school districts, Ohio alone in one year, are underfunded by \$1.5 billion. Now, Ohio had a provision; 75 percent of the kids needed to graduate. No Child Left Behind came in and said, you need 100 percent, so we are going to have the tutorials, the after-school programs, the summer programs, everything else; never sent the money. So, good idea, right? We want the next 25 across the finish line so that they can compete and create wealth and value in our society. Great idea. But if you do not fund the program, and you put it on the backs of the locals who do not want to vote for property tax levies as it is, where is the progress?

So, again, we are saying that, if we want to move the country forward, we have to make these kinds of investments. And to the American people who are out there, President Bush promised to increase the Pell grants when he first ran. He did not do it. He promised to fund No Child Left Behind. He did not do it. This Congress made the same kind of commitments. They did not do it. Who has flip-flopped? Who has flip-flopped?

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, the point the gentleman made is little understood, and I have a whole bunch of

those guaranteed student loans to get through, and what you said just really merits revisiting.

□ 2145

The Federal Government is going to guarantee banks 9.5 percent rate of return for extending loans to students to go to college to get a higher education.

Now, it is a great thing that we can help kids get a higher education. That is good. But the point is those loans are guaranteed by the Federal Government. The bank has no risk. Zero risk. I always thought interest had something to do with risk. So if the bank has no risk, how is it that they are going to get guaranteed?

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Just to clarify, if a student defaults on a loan and takes out \$10,000 worth of loans in Columbus, Ohio, or Youngstown State University, bolts town and moves to Oregon, who picks up the tab?

The government. So the bank only benefits. If they pay the loan back they make the 9.5 half percent interest when they loan it out at 3.5 and if the guy bolts town, the Government picks up the tab. Great deal.

Mr. DEFAZIO. If we took instead and said, hey, let us go back to a program that we developed in the 1950s, National Direct Student Loans, National Defense Student Loans they were originally called, and said the Government is going to make the loans to its young people, guess what? The Government always knows where to find you.

So the Government could do it without having the banks in the middle and for the difference in what the gentleman is talking about between 9.5 percent and say if the government charged 3.5 or 4 percent, the current Treasury bond rate to the students, we can give one million more Pell grants or a couple of million more loans to students. But instead, we are going to give money to the banks, the poor suffering, long suffering banks. They need the help, the subsidies.

On the other side of the aisle we hear about free market economies and socialism and all that stuff. What is this? Why is the Government subsidizing banks? The second point is made about No Child Left Behind. I have a State that we have got some real problems funding primary and secondary education. I have not seen the number as big as Ohio's, but our number in the tens of millions of dollars that No Child Left Behind is underfunded. It is an unfunded mandate.

Again, early on when the Republicans said no more unfunded mandates, I was with them. I was sincere. I said I do not think we should send down these mandates to local governments, down to schools and other communities. The Federal Government wants to send down new rules, they should pay for them. The President's signature bill. No Child Left Behind, \$15 billion underfund, \$15 billion being extracted from the States and local school jurisdictions that cannot afford

to pay for the President's signature bill, much of which is repetitive.

National testing. We have State testing. We did not need national testing. I voted against the Clinton mandate for national testing. I thought my Republican colleagues were sincere when they joined me in that. Bush becomes President, proposes an identical national testing mandate to President Clinton's, guess what a majority of the Republicans voted for? I voted against it. I voted against a Democrat and a Republican President. It was a stupid idea. It is very expensive. They are teaching to the test. It is a new mandate, and we are not paying for it; Washington, D.C. is not paying for it.

These are the kinds of policies, the hypocrisy that we are getting out of that side of the aisle is unbelievable. The American people need to start paying a little bit of attention to what these people are really doing to them.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. The beautiful thing, I do not know if it is beautiful or not, but the craziness that we have operating now in the United States Congress. We have a thousand kids dead in Iraq. We have thousands upon thousands of kids that we have probably all visited up at Walter Reed that are injured. We have 1.5 million kids moving into poverty. We have 5 million more people that are uninsured. We have subsidies for housing getting cut, so poor people cannot afford their rent any more. We have Medicaid going up. We have no cost controls for the prescription drugs. We have a million kids that will not, or 250,000 college eligible kids that will not, go to college because they cannot afford it. We have the Pell grant that is 40 percent of what it was when it started in the 1970s; and tomorrow we are voting on the Pledge Protection Act, to protect the pledge.

Now, we know it is the end of the session. Whether you are for it or against it, we know it is not going anywhere. The Senate is not going to take it up. It is divisive. It is a reason not to vote on anything of major policy substance in this Congress.

The Democrats have a plan that is going to move the country forward. My colleagues are out campaigning too. People are tired of the politics. The divisive issues that we bring forth today, we do not want to talk about student loans, because then we cannot raise money from the banks. We do not want to talk about Medicare costs because then we cannot raise money from the insurance companies and the pharmaceutical companies. So what do we talk about? The Pledge of Allegiance.

What is going on? If you are sitting at home and you lost your job and you cannot send your kid to school and tuition is going up and there is a local property tax on for your local school district, there is a mental health tax on, there is a tax on for your police and fire because we have cut the COPS program and the Congress is talking about the Pledge Protection Act?

How disconnected are we?

Mr. PALLONE. I agree with you. It really leads into our next point.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Let me just on that, I support the pledge as it is. I learned it that way. I think it is fine. The courts have in fact ruled many times that the use of God on our currency or our coinage or, in this case, under God in the pledge is diminimus. It is not a violation, and there is in fact no current threat.

The one case that was pending against those words in the pledge was thrown out by the courts. There is no threat from the so-called activist judiciary at this point in time because the one that had been filed was thrown out. But instead of addressing real issues for which they have no answer, here is something where there is a non-existent threat, but there is a real threat to the kids who cannot go to college. There is a real threat to the seniors that are cutting their pills in half because they cannot afford them. There is a real threat to the woman I talked about who will be thrown out of her subsidized housing in Albany having worked her whole life because she cannot afford it any more.

There are incredible threats to our troops in Iraq because of a reckless foreign policy, but they have no answer for those things. So they want to distract people with things that most of us agree on. We like the Pledge the way it is. There are a lot of things we love about our country, but they want to divide us on those issues and not deal with the real problems.

Mr. PALLONE. Both of the gentlemen commented on communities and the concerns that communities have, and that is clearly the next point that we have here, so we can just go right into it.

The fifth point of the Democrats' new Partnership for America's Future is community; essentially working together for safe communities, free of crime and drugs, supporting local businesses and groups, to keep our families safe and our neighborhoods strong, and enforcing our anti-pollution laws to keep our air and water clean and healthy with polluters paying for the damage that they cause.

Republicans have tried to cut back on support for local police officers, supporting proposals that would slash funding for the COPS program which has put thousands of cops on the street nationwide. As you know, that was a major initiative that President Clinton had, and that put a lot of police on the street in communities throughout the nation 4 or 5 years ago or even longer.

But in addition to that, the Republicans have even drained the Superfund program. One of the points that was made today when we had the press conference unveiling the new partnership was that we have about 719 sites that are under the Superfund program, hazardous waste sites that currently have the potential to endanger the families or the health of the families that live

nearby. But what the Republicans have done is about 10 years ago when they first came into the majority under Speaker Gingrich, they have decided not to renew the tax on oil and chemical companies that pay for the Superfund. So there is no money left in the Superfund any more to clean up these hazardous waste sites.

Democrats would protect the safety of our communities with strong law enforcement and community policing. We would also invest in better transportation choices to fight congestion, create jobs, and improve the quality of life. And we would also restore the Superfund tax legislation that would force polluters to clean up their own mess rather than the American taxpayers.

Right now what happens is if a Superfund site needs to be cleaned up, we have to use what we call general revenue funds which are moneys that come from income taxes primarily, so the taxpayers are paying for the clean up. Whereas it used to be before the Republicans came into the majority, the oil and chemical companies would pay that tax into the Superfund and that money would be used to clean up the sites.

In addition to that, there has been every effort on the part of Bush and the Republicans to not enforce the Clean Water Act, the Safe Drinking Water Act, and the Clean Air Act. We could go on and on about their efforts to basically water down that legislation or those provisions that relate to water and air.

I do not know if the gentleman wanted to comment on any of those. I could say myself that the woman that was at our press conference today from Marlboro, New Jersey, that talked about the Superfund program is actually in my district and that was a perfect example. She did not go into the details, but the two Superfund sites she mentioned, one of them is Imperial Oil. What happens now is, because we do not have money in this trust fund from the tax and oil and chemical industries, at the end of the fiscal year which is August, September, right about now, these various States get some kind of notice from the Federal Government saying, we do not have any more money to clean up your site. We are short of money this year.

That is what happened to the Imperial Oil site. They got a notice saying they were not going to have enough money, and so we had to go back and try to get the funding and try to scrape around and see if there was money available. That never happened before when the Superfund existed because the money was there, paid for by the very companies that were creating the pollution.

Mr. DEFAZIO. I think it is a fair principle to say that the companies that are responsible for the pollution, the companies that made a profit when they created those hazardous waste and those Superfund sites should bear a

substantial portion of the burden for cleaning them up. There is a new sort of vision on the other side of the aisle here, the Republicans saying, well, if you want to clean it up, clean it up yourself.

Hey, somebody made money creating that mess. That is what this is all about. They made money. So tough luck. The same thing has happened in my State. We have a major Superfund problem. We have been told, well, sorry, there is no more money to deal with those sites. Maybe you people would like to clean up. We have got to live with it, and someone else created it.

I have not noticed exactly that the oil and gas industries are hurting. Somehow I think I saw the last quarter when they were gouging the heck out of the American consumers with \$2 and \$2.20 a gallon of gas that they made record profits. So if they made record profits, how is it that they cannot afford a minimal continuation of the Superfund tax which would lower their profits a tiny bit, but not very much.

Mr. PALLONE. I have to tell my colleagues that we only have 4 minutes left so I want to get to our last point.

Mr. DEFAZIO. We do not want to leave accountability because there is a heck of a lot of that missing around here.

Mr. PALLONE. A lot of this relates to the deficit issue talked about before.

Our last point is accountability; holding those in power accountable for their actions, acting responsibly for our children by restoring fiscal discipline and eliminating deficit spending with pay-as-you-go budgets and requiring real consequences for CEOs and corporations who break the law at the expense of those who play by the rules.

Again, all the families nationwide have seen their share of the national debt, as my colleagues talked about earlier, increase by \$52,000 and face a debt tax of \$10,000 over the next 6 years. Unlike Republicans, Democrats will also refuse to cater to the Nation's special interest at the expense of the middle class, will require real consequences for CEOs and corporations that break the law.

This is the last part of our new partnership with the American people, our promise to honor these six values and the policies that they represent.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Let me ask a very simple question on that. Since every person that consumes electricity in my State is paying about 40 percent more today for the same electrons from the same plant because of the manipulation of the markets by Ken Lay and the fact that the Bush administration with Pat Wood and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission would not do anything about it, does that mean that Ken Lay would finally go to jail?

Mr. PALLONE. I think so.

Mr. DEFAZIO. I support accountability if that is what we will get out of it.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I think when you talk about accountability and the fu-

ture of our kids, one of the issues I want to touch on briefly is the issue of security which ties into what the gentleman was talking about before with really all of these issues, accountability, community, national security.

□ 2200

Two cops in a town that I represent, the city of Warren, Ohio, will be eliminated because of the cuts that this administration and this Congress have passed through the COPS program and through HUD, two cops in a town of 48,000 people that has four cops on patrol at midnight on a Saturday night.

Who is making us more safe? Certainly not the policies of this administration, checking one container out of every 50 that comes into the ports of the United States, which I do not have to explain to the gentleman here or the gentleman here or me, Ohio, even. What are we doing?

I mean, Senator KERRY may not have phrased it properly that we want to fight a different war or a more sensitive war, but we are not fighting World War II anymore. This is an intelligence war where you can make a bomb that fits into a briefcase that can blow up millions of people.

So the American people have to look very closely at the kind of policies that are coming out of this Congress right now, and we are not offering a very bright future, I do not think. And I am not a pessimistic person; I am probably more optimistic in most instances than I probably should be. But we are not doing things right now, and there is a critical, critical, critical election coming up here that defines that the two parties are clearly in different positions: tax cuts, spending \$600 billion more than you are taking in, jeopardizing the future of the country; outsourcing jobs; and trying to say that this war in Iraq, which is the central front of the war on terrorism that we are losing is somehow making us safer; or the Democrats that are saying, let us take care of the United States of America, fund the education programs, fund cops, firefighters, port security, national security, homeland security, get these troops back home as soon as possible and make sure that we are investing in education and health care so our kids and grandkids can have a bright future to create this new economy that we do not know what it is going to be yet, but we know if we educate them everything will be okay.

That is our plan, and I want to thank the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI) and the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER) and the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) and the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) and the leadership of our caucus for providing us a message to go to the American people where they can say that Democrats get it, the Democrats have a plan.

We saw real people today in the United States Capitol that have real

issues, that need our help, and the government is here to help. Maybe sometimes we do not do everything right, but we are here to help, and I hope that we can fulfill what the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI) wrote in here, that our actions are worthy of the aspirations of our children.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman's comments, and I think the thing that you said that I really want to stress the most, because we are almost done here, is the fact that this is an optimistic vision, that we are full of hope, and we have a basic vision that says that we will work with the American people as partners to make their lives and our government better.

We are optimistic about what can be done, but we also feel that it can only be done if we change the majority and if the Democrats have the opportunity to implement this partnership with America after November 2.

So I thank both gentlemen.

IRAQ WATCH

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. McCOTTER). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, we are going to continue the conversation here and switch gears here just a little bit with the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. DELAHUNT) and continue the Iraq Watch and talk a little bit about the foreign policy issues that have been facing this Congress and facing the country for a few years now and trying to figure out a way in which we can try to correct this problem that we have gotten ourselves in.

Let me just first say that the whole Congress, Republican and Democrat Parties, Independents, House and Senate, President, we are all very much in support of the troops who are out on the front lines, their families who are making tremendous sacrifices that many of us will never ever know.

I have had the opportunity to be up to Walter Reed and visit some of these injured soldiers, and there is nothing more heartbreaking than to see a 19-, a 20-year-old kid who has lost his or her legs, an arm, and just think about all their hopes and dreams that have, in many ways, been washed away.

So we are taking this opportunity here as Democrats to talk a little bit about how we got into this position, and I want to start on an issue that I feel extremely passionate about.

When this all started after 9/11, the United States of America and an international coalition moved forward in Afghanistan, and we moved forward in Afghanistan because they were housing the Taliban and they were housing or harboring Osama bin Laden, who was the main perpetrator of 9/11 on the United States of America. So many of us are confused, myself included, why we went into Iraq in the first place.

The reason is that we have only so many resources in the United States of America, and we attacked and invaded with an international coalition into Afghanistan. We ousted the Taliban government that was harboring al Qaeda and harboring Osama bin Laden, and we sent Osama running into the Tora Bora region on the Afghan-Pakistan border. We had this international coalition, and we were going into Afghanistan and we were going to rebuild this country, and we were going to make it a thriving democracy. We were going to have a democracy in that region.

There is a great article in the Atlantic magazine this week, for those of you who are at home who want to read it and get the complete analysis and the timeline of how this happened. Then at one point, all of a sudden, all of the generals and all of the military planners in the United States of America began to shift their attention from Afghanistan to Iraq, and they took in troops. We now have 130,000 troops in Iraq. In Afghanistan, we only have 17- or 18,000.

The Special Forces were moved as well, and then even as it states in this article, the satellites that were focused on Afghanistan, that were trying to provide intelligence, were also moved, and they were shifted to Iraq. So how symbolic that we shifted our focus to Iraq and took away from what was going on in Afghanistan.

Slowly but surely, Afghanistan began to unravel. We ended up with a full-blown war in Iraq, and here we are, many, many months away from that, stuck in a quagmire in Iraq that many of us have no idea how we are going to get out of. I am glad to see that Senator KERRY has issued a plan on how we are going to get out of there.

We have to bring in an international coalition. That is the only way to do this. If we do not get troops in and support and money from the international community, the only thing left is to have a draft in the United States of America. If you ask the American people, would you rather have a draft or try to unite the international community, I think most Americans would say let us get the international community united to put troops into Iraq, but this current President cannot do that.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. DELAHUNT), who has been a real leader on this issue and more articulate than anyone else in this Congress on the problems and challenges in Iraq.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, we do not engage in hyperbole during the Iraq Watch hour, your generous words are a bit overstated, but I want to thank you for claiming the time this evening. I know my colleagues who are regulars on the Iraq Watch are coming. We are assembling.

We want to review again what the current status of events in Iraq and the Middle East are so that we can inform ourselves and hopefully inform our col-

leagues and help educate the American people.

I am sure you are aware that just recently there was what is described as a national intelligence estimate which painted a very bleak picture of the future in Iraq. The national intelligence estimate is a compilation of information drawn from the CIA and other American intelligence agencies. As I indicated, it presents a very, very bleak picture.

It is outlined that there are three different scenarios. The one that is most disturbing is the possibility that Iraq not only will be fractured, but that a full-scale civil war could break out at any time, but I guess, as a Member of Congress, what is more disturbing is that it was just, I think, yesterday when the question was posed to President Bush, what about the national intelligence estimate and the very pessimistic perspective that was presented by our own intelligence agencies, that his response was, well, they are guessing, they are guessing.

That certainly is disturbing to hear our leader, the leader of the free world, make that kind of a statement. I wonder if he reached that conclusion prior to our national tragedy of September 11 when he was presented what is called a Presidential daily briefing on August 6, 2001, that was titled "Bin Laden Determined to Strike in the United States." I wonder if he was guessing at that point in time because he had that information, and now, now we are presented again with a national intelligence estimate that presents a far different scenario than what we hear from the President, from the White House, from the Vice President.

Of course, tomorrow, the interim prime minister will be addressing this House. I think it is important to understand that this was a prime minister that was selected through a nonelective process. I am sure we are going to hear a lot of rhetoric. It will sound good, but it is not the true picture, I would suggest, of what our intelligence agencies tell us is transpiring in Iraq today.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, we had the same situation here when we had the President of Afghanistan here, told us how great everything was going in Afghanistan, how there was not a drug problem in Afghanistan, we were going to have elections, on and on and on.

I would be happy to yield back, but just the American people need to know that this is almost going to be a repeat performance of what we heard a few months ago.

□ 2215

Mr. DELAHUNT. Well, Mr. Speaker, the noted conservative columnist, a prominent Republican, William Buckley, recently made the statement that this administration has a dismaying capacity to believe its own PR.

Well, you know, this is not about public relations. This is about war and