

have to borrow across the water to pay for your military? What kind of Social Security can we afford with a \$10 trillion debt? What kind of domestic policy?

The administration is charting a course that will be the end of us if we do not have a regime change on the second of November.

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

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. WICKER. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall vote Nos. 457–465, I was unavoidably absent. Had I been present, I would have voted as follows:

On Nos. 457–461, “no”; on Nos. 462–463, “yea”; on No. 464, “no”; on No. 465, “yea.”

EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time of the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER).

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

There was no objection.

WORLDWIDE TERRORISM

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

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, just a few hours ago in this House, we were addressed by the Prime Minister of the country of Iraq, Dr. Allawi. Dr. Allawi came to this body to speak to us here. He wanted to deliver a message. He wanted to deliver a message of success that we are indeed succeeding in the country of Iraq. He came here to enumerate three principles.

He wanted to tell America thank you, thank you for giving us our country back. He wanted us to know that Iraqis knew that the world indeed is better off with the regime change that occurred in Iraq and that America did the right thing.

He also wanted us to know that they were working and would continue to work to make certain that they, the government of Iraq, got it right on the ground in Iraq. It has not been easy. It has not been without a price; and Dr. Allawi allowed that as America has mourned its losses, they have mourned their losses in Iraq as well. But this is the cost of freedom.

As Harry Truman once said, If you want peace, you better be ready to fight for it.

Mr. Speaker, Dr. Allawi also talked about elements of defeatism that creep into conversation and how pernicious that defeatism is. He pointed out that within the past year's time, within the country of Iraq a Constitution has been adopted, a Constitution that provides

for majority rule but respects the rights of the minority. He pointed out how the handover occurred at the end of June as it was scheduled to. It, in fact, occurred 2 days early and sovereignty was returned to the country of Iraq.

He also pointed out that the Iraqi assembly met in that country and over 25 percent of the participants of that assembly were women, an event that was unprecedented prior. He pointed out that the elections will be held in January of next year, and with that, the completion, the turnover to sovereignty will be complete.

Mr. Speaker, he also pointed out that indeed, Iraq currently is the battlegrounds for those who are opposed to freedom. But, of course, Iraq is not the only battleground as we know all too well in this country.

Mr. Speaker, this past weekend I had the opportunity to travel to Moscow. The purpose of that visit with some other Members of Congress to visit with the children in the Federal Pediatric Hospital in Moscow. Children who had been present in the Beslan School Number One on the first day of school of this year.

This is Alan standing here with me. Alan is 11 years old and attended school that day only to find that there were people in the world who were capable of such an astonishing degree of hatred and cruelty that it left the rest of the world speechless. In fact, it is not known how many died in the gymnasium that day in Beslan, Russia, 300, perhaps more, over half of them children. And that has not been the only story in the country of Russia during this past month.

They have lost two planes and they had the bombing of a metro station in downtown Moscow. All in all, 500 deaths or more in the last 4 weeks in the country of Russia.

But, Mr. Speaker, what really moved me, what really tore at me was, again, the astonishing cruelty of these people who would direct their hatred towards an innocent individual like young Alan.

Mr. Speaker, Alan's mother called me back into his hospital's room after we took this picture and said, I want you to see what they pulled out of my son's chest. And here, Mr. Speaker, is a piece of metal that Alan had surgically removed after he came to the hospital in Moscow. It is of junk. It is a piece of metal that came from a landfill or a junkyard, but it is a small piece of metal as you can see. And these mines were packed full of metal this size so they would get maximum dispersion and cause maximum injury, inflict maximum pain on the most innocent members of society.

Mr. Speaker, let us not forget what we are up against. Let us not forget what the cost is in this global war that we are engaged in at this time. Let us not forget what we are fighting for. We are fighting for the innocents. The innocent in Iraq. The innocents in this

country and, indeed, the innocents in Russia.

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

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

MEDICARE PREMIUMS INCREASE FINANCES TO HMOS AND DRUG COMPANIES

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

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, the Bush administration recently announced that America's seniors will pay 17.4 percent more for Medicare coverage next year. It is no accident that they announced this piece of information late in the afternoon on Friday of Labor Day weekend. They simply hoped nobody would notice. But the largest premium hike in Medicare's history, the largest premium hike in the 38 years of Medicare is the sort of news you just cannot suppress. One senior advocate called it a hidden tax on seniors.

That hidden tax on seniors is a multi-billion dollar tax at that. That is big news and it is bad news for President Bush. But when faced with bad news, the Republican spin machine does what it always does. It tries to shift the blame. It is the Democrats, they said, President Bush rolled out his ad plan knowing this would happen, it is the Democrats that are responsible for the premium hike, even though the Republicans control the House, the Senate and the White House. But because that did not jibe with the facts, no one bought it then and no one buys it now.

Before the Bush Medicare bill became law, the nonpartisan Medicare trustees estimated that Medicare monthly premium would increase \$2 in 2005. After the Bush Medicare bill became law, the premium jumped to \$11.60.

□ 2030

Hence, the 17.4 percent increase. Those are the facts. No amount of sweet talk, misdirection, or spin from the Bush team can change those facts; but rather than take responsibility, the Bush team just changed its spin again. This time they said the premium, the record-setting 17.4 percent increase, the Bush administration says was a good deal for America's seniors because it financed new preventive benefits. Again, there are a few things the Bush administration did not tell us.

They forgot to say that the preventive benefits account for less than one-fourth of 1 percent of the premium increase. In other words, virtually nothing in the premium increase really

went into prevention benefits. Here is where the money went.

They neglected to mention that the Bush Medicare law creates a \$23 billion slush fund for the HMOs. These are bonus payments for an industry, the HMO industry, which already saw their profits go up 50 percent last year. They can use these bonuses to lure seniors out of Medicare's reliable, equitable, traditional program.

Interestingly, the benefits do not take effect until 2006. Seniors actually cannot get the Medicare benefit until 2006, but the payout to the insurance industry to pay back for the contributions the insurance industry frankly made to my colleagues on this side of the aisle and to the White House began in March of 2004. In other words, the insurance industry as a whole got checks from the Federal Government totaling \$290 million in March, \$290 million in April, \$290 million in May, \$290 million in June, all the way through this year, all the way through next year, \$290 million a month. The benefit is not available to seniors until the following year.

They also forgot to tell us, in addition to this slush fund the insurance industry paid for out of seniors' premium increases, they forgot to tell us that the Bush Medicare law actually goes out of its way to prohibit the Federal Government from negotiating with the drug industry for fair prices to bring the cost of prescription drugs down, which go up at double-digit increases every year.

They did not tell us that the Bush Medicare law will increase drug industry profits, already the highest industry profits of any industry in America, they will increase industry profits, not gross income but industry profits, by \$180 billion, that is with a B, \$180 billion over the next 10 years.

So that insurance industry got huge subsidies, the drug industry got record profits, the Bush administration got huge campaign contributions, tens of millions of dollars from the drug and insurance industries, and seniors were stuck with a 17.4 percent premium increase. It is wrong. The increase was five times larger than it should have been. That is an outrage.

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

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

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I ask to speak out of order and to address the House for 5 minutes.

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

There was no objection.

FOLLOW-UP TO REMARKS GIVEN TO CONGRESS BY IRAQI INTERIM PRIME MINISTER AYAD ALLAWI: QUESTION TO THE ADMINISTRATION—WHERE IS THE PLAN?

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

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise to acknowledge the remarks and the message of Interim Prime Minister Allawi, and in fact, as someone who opposed this war as being misdirected and procedurally and constitutionally unsound, inasmuch as the Congress did not follow the Constitution and declare war, this resolution simply authorized the President to look at the option of militaries as one option.

But even in spite of my opposition to the initial beginnings of this war, I welcomed the remarks of Prime Minister Allawi and certainly welcomed his optimism and his desire to tell the American people that there is an end, there is a future in Iraq.

The whole idea of beginning to work with this process of rebuilding Iraq is clearly a circumstance that requires telling the American people the truth, and even though I think that the Prime Minister was eager to engage us in the optimism of Iraq, the one thing that he could not answer for us is simply where is the plan. Where is the plan of this administration, and what do we say to the men and women who are now on the frontlines of Iraq who wear the American uniform?

I just mention and show this gentleman who happens to be a face that has been utilized by one of my colleagues, and I am sharing that with my colleagues tonight, but it reminds us of the Americans who are on the front-line, reminds us of the families who are longing for them to return, reminds us of those troops that I visited in Afghanistan and Iraq who are committed to their duty. But they want to know when they can return home, what is the ultimate plan and agenda for the survival of Iraq.

Prime Minister Allawi told us that things were getting better, that schools were opening, clinics were opening; but, frankly, I believe that in the backdrop of all of that, the violence is raging.

Let me cite for my colleagues words from Jessica Mathews who just returned from Iraq. She made this statement in an op-ed in the Thursday Washington Post: "To visit Iraq today is to be forcibly reminded of the obvious: there is no military solution to politically inspired violence by locals against foreigners. What was true for the French in Algeria, the British in Northern Ireland, the Russians in Chechnya and the Israelis in the West Bank is proving true for the Coalition Provisional Authority in Iraq. Notwithstanding a huge and impressive military effort, the security situation, at least for now, is worsening."

She said this over a year ago, and it is now true today. Since that time, some 700 Americans and probably at least 10 times as many Iraqis have died, and every single day they are dying. So although I rise to thank the Prime Minister for his carefully stated words, might I say to my colleagues that we still are languishing without direction.

So I ask the President to stand before the American people, present to us a plan of survival and existence and progress. Present to us a step-by-step methodical progress of being able to return our troops and honor the increasing utilization of Iraqi law enforcement and military and begin to answer the questions of some of those who we will hear in just a moment.

Maybe it should be Senator LUGAR, who, when asked the question over the weekend, why has a great part of Iraq not been rebuilt, he simply said without any qualms, and I guess he said it before he heard it, because the administration is incompetent. So we can see that statements are being made by a number of those on the other side of the aisle that are now coming together as Americans, pleading for some direction by the administration.

My words simply tonight as I close, Mr. Speaker, are this. We can hear from the leadership, the interim leadership, that elections may be coming, that we may be making this work; but the violence says something different. We are failing the Iraqi people, and we are failing the United States military because we do not have a plan.

We in Congress are grateful to His Excellency the Interim Prime Minister Allawi for his inspiring remarks on the floor. He very articulately laid out the important issues that are now attendant and that lie ahead for Iraq—they include "Military Strategy," "Iraqi Elections," "International Help," and "Freedom."

He spoke of the positive aspects of these issues; however, we in the United States must realize that there are very pressing issues to be addressed by this administration within our own borders as well as on the battlefield for our troops. To that end, I ask the question: "Where is the plan Mr. President?"

I was privileged to visit some of our troops when I traveled to CENTCOM in April. I learned of their experiences in Iraq and I heard the challenges that they faced. I continue to be impressed by how well those young men and women in uniform represent the United States. They perform their duties and meet the demands of their positions every day despite the tough conditions and sometimes inadequate supplies.

The troops are fulfilling their duties, now it is time that the administration fulfills its duty by creating a real plan to create and keep the peace in Iraq. The administration must also jumpstart the process of rebuilding in Iraq. Clearly, the situation cannot continue. We are losing soldiers daily and families are being left heartbroken because peace has not prevailed in Iraq, not even in Baghdad where the administration said the United States military had a stronghold.

Worse yet, our allies are backing away from their commitments to join the effort to secure