

way, there was an answer to it. The answer is actually better than you anticipate in the beginning, and the picture got better and better and better.

I do not think it is an overstatement to say that if you have a tax policy that can solve problems, this tax policy solves virtually every one that a tax policy can solve.

Mr. LINDER. Mr. Speaker, I thank both my colleagues for their help. This has been an illuminating discussion and we need to do it again.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Mr. Monahan, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate agrees to the report of the committee of conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendments of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 1308) entitled "An Act to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide tax relief for working families, and for other purposes".

ELECTIONS: THE U.S. AND IRAQ

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. McCOTTER). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MEEK) is recognized for half the time until midnight, which is approximately 42½ minutes.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, once again it is an honor to come before the U.S. House of Representatives to be able to share a few things with the American people.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is important that we reflect on this period as we stand as a country. A lot has happened today and a lot will happen in the future, and I think it is important that we reflect on what happened today and the direction our country needs to go in and should go in.

We all know that there are 40 days and some hours, just about to be 39 days before the national election on November 2. I think it is also important for us to reflect on the responsibility that every American has to participate in that process. I would like to share with the American people that for a couple of weeks, we have not had an opportunity to have a 30-something hour, but I think it is important for us to address some of those issues that are affecting young people in this country.

I want to commend those organizations that are out there supplying information to voters between the ages of 18 and 30 to make sure that they participate in this election. What has been happening for the last 4 years, and what is going to happen in the next 4 years is very, very important for the future of our country and also for the future of our families.

I want to thank Rock the Vote and also the WWE Association, and many other individuals that are out there, like Mr. Russell Simmons, what the NAACP is doing, what the people for the American Way are doing, and also

thank what Puff Daddy and other folks out there are doing in making sure that people have good information. Voter suppression is very real, Mr. Speaker, and I think it is important for parents or grandparents or even Members of Congress listening tonight that we share with them that their loved ones who might be in school do have the opportunity to register to vote.

In the beginning of October, that clock is going to run out throughout the country, so we need to make sure they know they can register. We did have some supervisors of elections or those election officials in those local communities that were telling them they could not. Now we are getting that information out. I believe there is a 1975 Supreme Court decision that said that if one is in school and registered in school, they can be from another State, but they can register to vote there, because nine times out of ten during the early voting periods and the election period in early November, they will be there at that location.

Mr. Speaker, I have my friend and colleague, the gentlewoman from Cleveland, Ohio (Mrs. JONES), joining me here tonight, but I first just want to take a moment, since we are talking about democracy, to reflect on a country that we are saying that we want to institute democracy in. I think we should be very careful in being the promoters and also the hood ornament for democracy in the world. We are promoting elections in Iraq at a time when we know that it is very unsafe, not only for U.N. workers but for our U.S. troops and the very limited coalition that we have in Iraq right now.

On the floor here today, Mr. Speaker, we had the interim prime minister of Iraq addressing the U.S. Congress. He also went over to the White House and was with the President in a Rose Garden ceremony. It is one thing to be able to say that we have to be there for the long haul. As a member of the Committee on Armed Services, I support the effort of making sure that we achieve our goals in Iraq. I may not support how we got there, which I do not, that being the preemptive strike, which is something this country has never engaged in before. There is no "may" about it, I do not. But I think it is important we reflect on where we are right now.

We have had the arguments, hours of arguments on this floor, of how we got there. I think the American people are fully aware of who made the decision and who decided that we should take a preemptive strike in Iraq, without a real plan that provided for a good measured outcome. The people who made the decision to go with the willing I think is something that we are going to remember in the future as it relates to the art of war and in taking a move like we did several months ago.

I could not help but reflect on the prime minister's comments today, and I also could not help but reflect on what was said at the Rose Garden

about the fact that we are ready for elections in January. Now, this is not the Kendrick Meek report, this is the report of many news articles I am holding here in my hand from the events of today. This is not only the reports of these news organizations but also of anyone turning on the television and looking at cable or at network television. Guess what, things in Iraq are not going as well as we are being told here around the beltway and in Washington, D.C.

Mr. Speaker, I think it goes beyond my obligation and the obligation of all the Members here in the House, be they Republican or Democrat, to level with the American people about the realities of Iraq, the realities of taking on an effort in the Middle East where we have had terrorism for years and years and years.

Fact: Saddam Hussein. Yes, he was a bad guy and he needed to go. But at what cost? Fact: Al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups were not running the streets of Iraq prior to the preemptive strike. That is a fact. That is not fiction. That is not the Kendrick Meek report, that is reality.

The President today said, well, we have to continue to fight the war in Iraq, because if we leave, then the terrorists will have a hub to be able to carry out terror on other democracies on the face of the earth. Well, Mr. Speaker, I cannot help but to reflect and to comment on that remark. Who set that stage for that mecca or hub of terrorism?

Now, I am not here to point fingers, I am just here to say that the world community knows the reason why we have all the terror in Iraq right now, that could and would be and is a part of global terrorism at this particular time. And I think it is important if we are going to build a broader coalition now, and I want to make sure, because Secretary Rumsfeld today, I must add, was over in the Senate and he said, well, what is wrong with the elections? We can have elections in January, but what is wrong with having elections in some places and in other places where we cannot have them, it is not a perfect world, so let us just move on with the elections.

Mr. Speaker, I am sorry, but I beg to differ with the Secretary, in all due respect. That is not the way a democracy operates. Next thing you know, here in the United States, and thank God for the U.S. Constitution and some people of goodwill who would stand up against such an action, if it were said that, well, we can have an election in Georgia, Alabama, or Mississippi, but in other places we cannot have it, so whatever the results are from those States, then so be it. Those are the elected officials that will represent that legislative body or those cities in those areas or this country.

Mr. Speaker, we need to watch what we say. Just because we can say it, does not mean that it is right. It is very, very unfortunate that the Secretary of Defense feels that he can

make those comments. And I wanted to make sure that I came to this floor tonight to share not only with Members of Congress but also with the American people that we should disabuse ourselves of such statements made off the cuff when we are trying to create a democracy.

The coalition in Iraq is not expanding with individuals or countries that are there to be able to help us in our mission and our goals. The coalition is getting smaller. I think it is important if we are going to build a true coalition, then we have to make sure that we have strong leadership. Mr. Speaker, 1,041 American lives have been taken. We honor and respect them. As a Member of this Congress and as an American, I respect their contributions to our country.

I think it is important that Americans not only reflect on their contributions and their sacrifices, but we need to also make sure that when we hear something here in Washington, D.C. by individuals that are being driven around in cars with tinted windows, who have prepared comments to be able to draw an audience and who believe what they say should be law, we beg to differ. It is our responsibility and our resolve and our commitment to this country and to the lives of those troops and their families goes beyond that.

So whether it be an independent, a Republican, or a Democrat, we have the responsibility to stand up and say that is not so, Mr. President, the administration, or whoever it may be; these individuals who would sit here and give the American people the Potomac two-step that everything is okay. It is not okay. We have 7,032 troops injured, and we are at 96 percent of the cost in Iraq. We do not have a coalition, as the administration will share with you that they are running the costs and they are taking on the casualties.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, we are trying to train the Iraqi army, but this argument goes beyond partisan politics. This goes to the very fiber of every veteran that has served this country, every veteran that allowed us to be able to breathe and celebrate the very democracy that we live in today. Their memory, their honor, their sacrifice is on the line right now in the world community.

□ 2245

The boldness of some folks here in Washington, D.C., to be able to say that something is going on in Iraq that the American people cannot see. I want to share a few facts here. Security failures in Iraq, we need to get down to what it is worth. I mentioned the casualties, and I mentioned the injured. Our forces are coming under attack 90 times a day. That is a twofold increase since winter.

Also, when we look at the new al Qaeda terrorism generated throughout the world, we are at a cost of \$145 bil-

lion, and 41 percent of our debt is handled by foreign countries right now. That is 96 percent of the bill.

I think it is unacceptable for people to talk about things are going so well. We need to tell the truth. The truth is no weapons of mass destruction, no link between Saddam Hussein and al Qaeda. This is not the report of the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MEEK); this is what the President said in the Roosevelt Room when questioned about it. The facts show there was no link. The mission is not accomplished. The transition is not a peaceful and stable one that is happening right now. The attacks on the troops are increasing, not decreasing. Terrorist opportunities are growing in that region. The fact that the failures of this administration to come to grips with the reality with what is happening in Iraq right now is detrimental to our mission.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Ohio (Mrs. JONES).

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time. It is a privilege and a pleasure to be a Member of the House of Representatives. I represent the great State of Ohio, 11th Congressional District, city of Cleveland.

The first constituent whose family I stood with after his death was Brandon Sloan. Brandon was 19 years old. When I had an opportunity to talk with his dad, Reverend Tandy Sloan, he was miffed by the fact that his young son, 19 years old, over in Iraq as a part of the 507th Maintenance Group was there without equipment at the end of a long line of some 600 vehicles, without an artillery group around him and was required to try and hold onto a truck that he was driving. Young Brandon was killed at 19, at the height of his life, having graduated from Bedford High School. The list goes on.

There was a Sergeant Robert Toudy, part of the 507th Maintenance Group over there, trying to speak on behalf of the people of America, fighting for his country, over there trying to work for the freedom of the Iraqi people. The reality is, here we stand in September 2004 with so many young men and women. Disproportionately represented among this group are minorities and low-income folks who went into the National Guard, who went into the service hoping to get a college education, being required to give full-time service to our country in an Army, in a war that really they cannot figure out why they are over there.

As we stand here this evening as Members of Congress saying to the American people, why are we there? What is it that put all of us in harm's way? What is it that put 1,000 young American men and women in a war that we still cannot figure out; no weapons of mass destruction, no real reason to be over there. The whole couching of the terms of a war on terrorism is not what should have been said, but that we are there. What do we

do now? How do we protect the young men and women in the Armed Services?

They are fighting, and they will say, we are fighting for America. We are there fighting for freedom, but behind all of that, and we know they are standing up and I am so proud of the young men and women I have met over there doing what they believe our country wants, but the reality is, it is time for a wake-up call. It is time for the people of America to say, is this the best thing we can do? Do we have an exit strategy?

Even more interesting is the people who are working over there for private companies who are being kidnapped, beheaded. Why does this President not have a way for us to get out and for us to get out without feeling like we have deserted the people of Iraq? The people of America need to ask the right questions, make this administration tell us what is the resolve for us to get out of Iraq.

Earlier today, on another note, we voted on another tax cut. I admit I voted for the tax cut, but I was concerned about the people of Ohio, some 60,000 who have lost their jobs since President Bush took office in the city of Cleveland alone. In East Cleveland, there is a 14.3 percent unemployment rate while the national rate is 5.7 percent. Jobs are going overseas. What are we doing in the tax relief bill to help the working poor making less than \$10,000 who are working for a minimum wage of \$5.25 that keeps them in the poverty range?

What are Members of Congress doing? What is Congress doing to help those who work every day with no health care and with children in poverty? My own city was recently named as the number one city of poverty in the United States of America. It is time for a wake-up call for the people of America to say, in this election, what are we going to do?

I know people are saying, I cannot make the connection. My vote does not count. There are many who want to suppress our votes and say, like our Secretary of State, Kenneth Blackwell, who issued a ruling this past week saying to the people of Ohio, I am going to have a more restrictive ruling on how voters can use a provisional ballot than I had in the primary. It is voter suppression.

I am pleased to join my colleague, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MEEK) to say to the people of America, join the family plan. What family plan? Not a health care plan. Not a dental benefit plan. But a plan to get all of your family out to vote on election day. Make sure everyone is registered. Make sure everyone has an absentee ballot who cannot be in town. Make sure everyone gets out on election day. This is the most important election of our lifetime.

This election is going to impact what happens with children in Head Start, in public schools and private schools. It is

going to impact Pell Grants, a diminishing number of dollars available to college students. What is going to happen to the children who decide not to go to college? Are there training opportunities for people who decide not to go to college? What about mothers on welfare who want to go to work but do not have the income and the type of job that allows them to be in a position to pay taxes?

I am asking all those who are listening to say this is the most important election and our vote is our voice. It is time to step up and speak up and say to the people of America and the people of the world that we are going to be heard. Our voices are not going to be silenced. Our voices are not going to be suppressed. We are going to voice our concern about what is happening in the world.

We have 435 elected Members. Americans have an opportunity to be heard in November. Do not sit back and say, I am not going to be heard. My voice is going to be heard. I am going to let the people of America and the people of the world understand that I wanted to be a part of this. I am America. My face is America. I am part of this whole effort that is going on in this Nation, and I want to be heard.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I want to let the gentlewoman know how excited I am, not about the prospect but about the reality of the number of individuals who will vote this election. The stakes are high. This election is beyond personalities. It is personal. It is about families and their future.

I once said on the floor that the goal of every grandparent and parent is to make sure that their children and grandchildren have better opportunities than they had. That fits everyone, Democrats, Republicans and Independents. The American people are going to have an opportunity to have a new direction. There are 45 million Americans without health care. These are working Americans without health care. We have the highest deficit in the history of the Republic. We are knocking on the bank door of China saying, please help us with our debt because we cannot manage our own money. At the same time, we are in a war with no real end.

I will repeat again, I support making sure that we reach our objectives in Iraq, but what I do not support is for us to continue to carry 96 percent of the costs and 96-plus percent of the casualties without being able to go to the world community to build a real coalition in Iraq. It is not good thinking to be able to say we are going to hang in there and go from a shooting-from-the-hip way of doing things; we cannot do that. We have the moral authority in the world so we cannot behave like others. We cannot afford to behave like others.

The rest of the world is looking at this election to see what the American people do about the future of the world. People talk about a global war on ter-

ror, yes, a number of countries are involved in the global war on terror, but the real issue is who is involved in Iraq.

Just for a moment, what happened to Osama bin Laden? We had efforts on Osama bin Laden and also in North Korea and making sure that we kept the pressure on Iraq as relates to their nuclear programs; maybe we will be securing the world more. Maybe, just maybe, we will not have the kind of terror incubator that we have in Iraq now. This is not the Meek report. The CIA report said either civil war or a lack of not being able to accomplish our goals that we set out to do in Iraq, one of the two.

When you follow Secretary Rumsfeld saying we can only have elections in three-quarters of the country, the rest of the country, we will get around them, it is not a perfect world; you want to talk about a prescription for civil war, that is one. That is why it is important that the American people understand their responsibility in this upcoming election season.

I am encouraged by the 18- to 30-year-olds who are registering to vote. I am encouraged by the grandparents and the veterans who are saying, young person, make sure you carry out your vote. To those individuals and seniors who are cutting pills in half because they do not have a prescription drug benefit, they have an opportunity to voice their opinion.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, the Louis Stoke's Veteran Facility is right around the corner from my house in my congressional district. I was over there the other day talking with the administrator about the new programs that are going to go into this veterans' facility.

□ 2300

But the reality is we have not treated our veterans like they ought to be treated. We have not given them the benefits that they deserve. We have not given them the health care that they deserve. We have not given them the opportunity to engage in a new business when they come out. We have not given their families the kind of support that they deserve.

And I am thinking back, my dad, Andrew Tubbs, 84 years old, served back in World War II. And my son Mervyn had an opportunity to interview my father about his service. And my dad told him things that he had never even discussed with me. And I said, Dad, why did you not tell me about this? He said, Because it hurt. Every time I talked about it, it hurt me. I did not want to talk about it. I did not want to tell you about it, but there came a time in life when I was much more comfortable.

Today, my dad has got dementia, is suffering from Parkinson's, and I think about what are we going to do for veterans who have come after him. Are we going to give the benefit to the Vietnam veterans who have posttraumatic stress syndrome, who suffer from

Agent Orange? And we are talking about young people across this country about how we want them to join up with the service. What I am worried about is what is going to happen to the young people right now. Are we going to have a draft that is not an official draft? Are they going to be forced to go into war in Iraq, as the President, as has said, that after the November elections, should he be successful, he is going to call them up? He is going to call more troops to go into Iraq and to possibly lose their lives.

The people of America need to understand that. They need to know the possibility of that fact. They need to know that the National Guard, who are overtaxed, overworked, are working very hard, doing double duty on behalf of America, when they really never anticipated that they would be any more than a part-time armed services.

And what about the people that are in full-time service? I have a cousin who told me, Stephanie, we are working 48 hours, not 24 hours in a day; 48 hours.

So I am just saying to the American people it is time to wake up. Remember that old song, "Wake up, everybody, no more sleepin' in bed, no time for backward thinkin', time for thinkin' ahead"? The world has changed so very much from what it used to be. There is much more hate and war and poverty. So we need to understand the dynamics that are coming to play in these next 40 days and be ready to step up to the plate and voice our opinion about what is happening.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, this election is going to be about who votes and who does not vote. This election is going to be about the future of every American family. We know that every election is supposed to be about that, but this one is for real.

The President of the United States said today to the interim prime minister of Iraq, do not worry, the American people will be with him all the way to help him accomplish the goals that the Iraqi people want to accomplish. Well, I am not one to hang my hat on polls, but I will tell the gentlewoman this: the Iraqi people see us as occupiers instead of liberators. And that is not a reflection on the job that the troops are doing on the ground.

I want to make sure that Members of Congress understand that there are a lot of proud men and women who are laying it down right now. I pray for them every day. I make sure that their families understand that we appreciate their service to our country. But at the same time, it is our obligation as leaders here in Washington, D.C. We are citizens elected to this Congress to make sure that we run this country in a way that it should be operated and that we make sure that our troops have what they need and when they need it and we make sure that we make sound decisions based on what the situation is today and what the situation will be

in the future; and that is the reason why I am sharing tonight with all of the people that can hear my voice that it is important that they look at it for what it is.

There is a term out there that a lot of young people use: it is what it is. And right now, if I were, hypothetically speaking, the President of the United States and I am looking at what is going on and I am getting the CIA reports and I am hearing things that the American people are not hearing right now and I am turning on the news and I see what is going on and I am picking up the paper and I am reading the articles and I am getting all this good information but, better yet, I am still going to hold on to the fact that we are going to have elections in January, that lets the world's community know that we are putting, I believe, politics over principle and over sound thinking.

And the great thing about our democracy is we have the opportunity to come here and voice our opinion and to be able to share it with the people who live in our democracy for them to act appropriately, and acting appropriately would be to think about the facts. A commercial over here and a commercial over there. That is fine. Some of it is true, and some of it is fiction. But the bottom line is when we speak from the White House and when we speak here on this floor, we have to speak the truth. There is not a lot of time for us to play around and start talking about, well, I am going to just sway over here and I am going to embellish a little bit.

The American people deserve better. Congresses before our Congress, the 108th Congress, knew and hoped that this democracy would move as it relates to truth, honesty, and dignity. And it is important that we do not even reflect that. With all due respect, we do not even want to brush up against that. I am not saying that that is not the case now. But I am saying we do not brush against that honor that has been laid out. When I talk about veterans that have served this country, those that are in Arlington Cemetery right now, resting in peace, we appreciate their contributions. Every time I go to the airport, I see Arlington; and I swell up about their contribution. We would not be in Congress if it were not for them. So when we look at that, it goes deeper than the politics that we are hearing right now.

So the American people have an opportunity, Mr. Speaker, those who are voting for the first time and those who have voted 100 times, to be able to make the right decision based on the facts. If their voter registration card says Green Party, Reform Party, Republican, Democrat, Libertarian, Independent, whatever their party may be, they have an obligation on behalf of their family. Family, that is personal. So we have to make sure we reflect on that.

I am excited. I am just going to let the gentlewoman know I am in no way

feeling that woe is this country because I have faith in the American people. I know they will make the right decision. We have got to give them the facts about what is happening, what is really going on, and let them make their decision.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will continue to yield, the interesting thing is this whole discussion about security right here in the United States and what has this administration done to secure us. I would ask the people of the United States of America to contemplate this: the COPS program, we were supposed to give money to cities to increase the number of police officers available in cities, first responders. That amount of money has been reduced. I think about the first responders, the law enforcement, the firefighters, the EMS. The money that was supposed to go to cities across this country is locked up in State capitals across this country, not going into the neighborhoods where they deserve it.

We are still trying to figure out about what do we do about the tankers or the freighters coming over into our country that are not being perused. We are still thinking about the number of things that are on the planes. The other day I was flying from Cleveland into D.C. I mean, the woman frisked me, totally frisked me. The TSA person. They were trying to be in place because of what happened with the Russians. But what about all the things we are not doing? And this President talks about securing America, and people are talking about how this President has done all these things to make sure we are safer.

I bring to the American people the reality that those things are not happening right here in the United States of America. There are so many things that have not been funded by this administration that would make us more secure. So we should not get fooled by believing that this President has done enough to see that we are secure at home.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, I will just say, since our time is drawing near to the end, that the American people have an opportunity to vote and they will. There are record numbers of new registrants out there in this country, and they are registering to do something. And they have an opportunity once again to vote for a new direction as it relates to health care; education; environment; energy; security for our country, making sure that we have more containers that are being checked, coming into this country, which has been found to be one of our greatest terrorist threats.

□ 2310

They have an opportunity to make sure that there are sound decisions, and a real opportunity for the world community to feel that they can come to the United States and we can build

a real coalition in Iraq; to be able to make sure that we put on a real hunt for bin Laden; to make sure that individuals that were responsible for 9/11, that they are not only brought to justice, but shut down.

So they have that opportunity, and I believe very strongly they are going to take that opportunity and they are going to swell that vote, and they are going to vote early, and they are going to make sure that every member of their family votes, because this election, I believe, this election, I say it again, is the greatest opportunity that Americans have had who are able to cast their vote in a very, very, very long time.

So, I am glad that the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI) has led us in the direction of the New Partnership with the American people, and that we are going to do the things that are going to be able to help not only working Americans, but those Americans that have contributed to our country.

If you are on Social Security, you have a place in our partnership. If you are looking for a job, you have a place in our partnership. If you are a mother that is trying to make ends meet, you have a place in our partnership. If you are a veteran that wants to go to the VA and get assistance within 6 months, you are in our partnership beyond 6 months. That is the situation right now, if you want to see the eye doctor or whatever the case may be.

If you want to make sure that we build a sound America with sound education funding and policy and making sure that students that are crushed by student loans right now, that they get the opportunity to attain a graduate education so they can compete with the rest of the world, you are in our partnership.

If you do not want to have to train someone to perform your job overseas, you are in our Partnership with America to bring about change.

So I am excited about our leadership here under the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI) and the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER) and so many others that are out there, along with our Democratic Caucus, but I think it is important that we make sure that American people understand the opportunity they have.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will yield further, I want to say this, that I am so excited and privileged to serve in the House of Representatives with this fine young man, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MEEK). He comes from great stock, my former colleague, Carrie Meek, serving on the Committee on Armed Services, serving on the Committee on Homeland Security, and he is talking about what he knows. He is not just speculating. He has the opportunity to be on the committees that know about all of these issues about Iraq, about all these issues about National Guard, the Armed Services.

I am just so pleased and proud to be able to stand with the 30-Something

Group here on the floor of the House, having celebrated my double nickel birthday just last Friday of 55. I am pleased and privileged to stand here, to be a part of the House, to have an opportunity to be heard.

I just want to salute the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MEEK) for all the great work that you are doing. I am just pleased to be in your aura.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I will try to live up to that as we move on. It is a great pleasure to serve with the gentlewoman from Ohio, with all of the trials and tribulations that her constituents and the people of Ohio with the loss of jobs.

As we know, in Florida when we talk about health care, 240,000 people in Florida lost their health care that are working under this administration. We have an opportunity to turn that around. I am very proud of the opportunity that we have.

Once again, it is an honor to serve in this House. It is also a greater honor to be here, to be about the solution.

I will tell you, it is not just Democrats. There are people of good will in this House that want to do the right thing. It all comes down to the leadership. It is like our troops in the field. Who does not support the troops? That is what I want to know. We all support the troops. We speak in our vote, we speak in our support on the floor, we speak in our prayers for the troops.

But it is important that we are not blinded by bipartisanship and about the fact that, oh, well, I have to do this because the leader of my party or the leader in the White House says that I have to do it, and we have to stand in solidarity with him or her or whoever it may be.

We stand in solidarity with the American people, and the American people have an opportunity through the partnership that we have built here in this House with our leader, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI), about what we should do and what we have to do, given the opportunity.

I must say, it has been 10 years since this House has been controlled by Democrats, and I think it is important with Democrats and some goodwill Republicans that we put this country on the right track.

With that, I want to thank the gentlewoman for joining us here tonight.

SUPPORT OUR COMMANDER IN CHIEF AND TROOPS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MCCOTTER). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING) is recognized for the remaining time until midnight.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to come to the floor of the United States House of Representatives and have the opportunity to speak my peace to the American people.

I think as I have listened to this discussion over the last 2 or 3 hours here,

and particularly over the last 40 minutes or so, I would start backwards and work my way through there.

The question was posed just before the gentleman from Florida yielded the floor, who does not support the troops? I recall a resolution on the floor of this Congress within a week or two of the time the liberation troops entered Iraq. The resolution was to honor our troops. It included, of course, honoring our commander-in-chief.

There was a long, contentious debate on the floor of this House that lasted until 2:15 in the morning, and Member after Member went down to the well and spoke, and spoke against honoring our President because he was in the resolution to honor the troops. This went on until 2:15 in the morning.

Some of them said, "Bring them home, Mr. President. This is a failed mission." We were only 2 weeks into this operation. By the way, this operation is likely and it certainly will go down in history among the most successful military operations in all of history.

Our troops entered Iraq and crossed the desert with armor faster than any column had ever done so before; they invaded and occupied the largest city ever in the history of the world to be invaded and occupied, invaded and liberated subsequently. That all happened in about 22 days. The population of Baghdad is twice as large as now the second largest city ever to be invaded, which was Berlin. It was a tremendous, magnificent military performance. And that mission to liberate Iraq was accomplished, and it was celebrated. And, by the way, it was not at the President's request that that banner was hung on the Abraham Lincoln, that was the people on the Abraham Lincoln that made that selection.

Who does not support the troops? The people that voted against the resolution, 14 of them, and many others who spoke against it. Some of those people that said "bring them home, Mr. President," that went out and did press conferences and talked about it and declared it to be a quagmire, another Vietnam, a failed mission, ran down the efforts of our United States military, some of those same people that spoke against the resolution honoring our troops and supporting our troops, those people spoke against the mission.

They went down and stood in front of the television cameras when we honored our troops in Statuary Hall here in the United States Capitol building, and they stood there holding an American flag right in front of the podium and cameras demonstrating their patriotism after they voted against the resolution honoring our troops.

I think if you pray for the troops, you also pray for our Commander-in-Chief. If you honor our troops, you also honor our Commander-in-Chief. We are all in this together, from the Commander-in-Chief down to every soldier and the people that support them and their families and neighbors and

friends and employers and the people that pray for them to come back home, those that keep their jobs open. Those are the support group and the support team. That is how you honor our troops.

You go over there and visit them. If you do that and look those soldiers in the eye and talk to them and if you listen, you will find out that they will not accept the idea that you can support the troops and oppose the war, or you can honor the troops and oppose the mission.

As a Marine major told me on one of my trips to Iraq, he said a soldier is trained to do that which is unnatural, and that is to kill. You send them in on a mission to do that, to kill or be killed. You cannot tell them that their cause is unjust. They must believe that they are fighting for a just cause. When their lives are on the line and when it is kill or be killed, it has got to be for a just cause.

The debate in this country can go on and rage, but when our troops go into harm's way, we need to come together. When we have a presidential election in a Nation at war, those disagreements need to stop at the water's edge.

I believe this is the first time in history we have had this kind of contentious presidential election that carried this argument overseas and where the debate and the discourse has encouraged our enemies.

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I made these statements months ago, and they are true again today. When the people who are viewed as quasi foreign policy leaders, those voices from the other body, those voices from this body that speak out publicly and claim that it is a failed mission, it cannot be won, those people are undermining our mission.

So, when there is an insurgent sitting in their concrete hut over in Baghdad or Fallujah or wherever it might be, and they are building improvised explosive devices or planning their next attack on coalition forces, and they are watching their new satellite dish TV, of which at least two-thirds of the people over there now have access to satellite TV; it was illegal just a year-and-a-half ago, now I counted them from the air, two-thirds of them at least in the city of Mosul, last fall. When they are watching their satellite TV and they are making bombs to blow up coalition forces, and most time American forces, and they see the face of the presidential candidate declaring it to be a failed mission, declaring that he wants to bring the troops home, and when that is going on and they see the Arabic subtitle and they hear the English voice of that person whom they view to be quasi foreign policy, and in fact they are, you tell me, America, do they build more bombs or less? Are they encouraged by that discussion? Does it give them hope? Is it the same impact on the people fighting us that it was with the antiwar protesters in the Vietnam era that finally