

express my appreciation to Mr. CARTER, to Mr. MURPHY, and Mr. BURGESS for joining us during this hour.

Mr. MURPHY. Actually, I think we are out of time, so I yield back the floor here and thank the gentleman for leading this.

Mr. GINGREY. I thank my colleagues. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I yield back whatever remaining time we have and look forward to the next session.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. INGLES of South Carolina). The Chair would remind all members to direct their remarks to the Chair and not to the television audience.

30-SOMETHING WORKING GROUP

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN) is recognized for half of the remaining time until midnight.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We appreciate the opportunity to be here again representing the 30-Something Working Group. I want to thank Leader PELOSI for the opportunity, our favorite uncle, BILL DELAHUNT, who is here from Massachusetts, also KENDRICK MEEK from Florida, DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ from Florida, who are also members of the working group and will be here in just a few minutes.

We want to welcome, Mr. Speaker, everyone to the first-ever 30-Something Live, in which we will be interacting not only with other Members of Congress here, not only with the audience, C-SPAN audience, but also with our friends in the blogosphere. And we will be interacting with them, reading e-mails that they will be sending to us, as we have been receiving e-mails from our constituents in our offices for years on Capitol Hill.

But this is the first time ever that there will be interaction between Members of Congress on the House floor and at the same time constituents and citizens of the United States of America having direct access to this Chamber. So we are very, very excited about introducing 30-Something Live. Being the 30-Something Group, we are trying to take our communications to the next level, trying to reach out to the American people, because we have said for quite some time that if we are going to solve problems in this country, that we have to engage the best and brightest talent that is out in the country in order to do this.

So we are not only going to answer your questions, Mr. Speaker. We are going to take suggestions as to issues that need to be addressed, ideas that folks may have at home. And this is a pretty exciting time for all of us.

We have been joined here with our friend from Florida, Ms. WASSERMAN

SCHULTZ. And this is going to be the first ever. So this is pretty exciting stuff.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. This is really amazing, and I guess, you know, it would not be a surprise. It was an excellent suggestion on your part, Mr. RYAN; and we, I think, are trying to make our generational working group here innovative. I mean, I think we all, as individual Members of Congress basically make our highest priority the ability and desire for us to interact directly with our constituents. And the one place that we are generally not able to do that is on the floor when we are here debating the very issues that impact everyone in this country.

We can interact fairly well with constituents in committee because they can obviously testify in front of us in committee meetings. We obviously interact with constituents in our offices. But once we are here, this is a very insular environment. This opportunity tonight for us to kick this off, 30-something Live, and interact with people who will be submitting questions to us online will be historic and exciting.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Now, you and I, we are ready to rock and roll on this. And when Mr. MEEK gets here, he is going to be ready to rock and roll. But we may have to break it down for our favorite uncle.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Maybe we need a glossary for Mr. DELAHUNT.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. We can break it down.

Mr. DELAHUNT. If I can just interrupt, I heard that in my absence the other night that there were some comments that were made about my lack of, well, made about my absence. Could you explain that to me?

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I cannot remember exactly which one of us said something, but it was to the effect that we had to tuck you in bed and make sure that you were getting your proper amount of rest.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Well, I am part of the 30-Something Working Group. I might be a two-fer, though. You know, I mean, I would suggest that in my case you get two for one.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. The only difference in your definition of 30-something is maybe it is 30-something by decade.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Something.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. And we are 30-something by year.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Exactly. It is a very loose term.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. It is very loose. Adaptable. But it is good to see that you got your nap in this afternoon.

Mr. DELAHUNT. I did. I am rested up and looking forward to participating tonight.

□ 2230

I do concur with everything you said and, again, I want to acknowledge your commitment, your creativity, and the fact that this is an effort to allow peo-

ple to participate in our conversation, because we want to know what they are interested in, and my understanding is there has been a number of questions posed. Maybe the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN) or the gentleman from Florida (Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ) could tell me what the number is.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I believe over 400 e-mails.

Mr. DELAHUNT. That is going to take some time.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Well, we are not going to be able to get through them all, so we will lay down some basic ground rules here. We will not be able to get through them all, obviously, Mr. Speaker. We are going to have to take a few and maybe expound on them, but we are going to continue, Mr. Speaker, to make our arguments. We are going to lay out the case for what we believe needs to happen in the country, what direction we need to go in, and as we receive information from the public, use that to supplement our arguments that we have been making here.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. This is not the last time we are going to do this. We are kicking this effort off. So even if we do not get to all the questions tonight, which with over 400 we obviously will not be able to in the 60 minutes, we will be doing this again.

Mr. DELAHUNT. This is simply an inaugural effort. It will be interesting.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I think it is important for us to recognize that we want to make cohesive, coherent arguments, and we are asking, Mr. Speaker, other Members in this chamber and the citizens around the country to help us with that, make points that we feel that maybe they feel need to be made.

Before we get into today, before we get rocking and rolling here, the big issue now is the pre-war intelligence. The President has dusted off this same old speech that he has given hundreds of times already in a hundred different viewing areas regarding the pre-war intelligence. The President has said that anybody accusing the administration of having "manipulated the intelligence and misled the American people was giving aid and comfort to the enemy." So if you question the pre-war intelligence, you are giving aid to the enemy. So it seems like the President is asking us as Members of the United States Congress not to even question any of the intelligence or any of the drum beat leading up to the war.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, if I can, if the gentleman would yield, what I would like to do is try to emphasize that these questions have been posed by Republicans as well as Democrats regarding intelligence, whether it was manipulated, or whether it was used in a selective fashion.

Now, I am going to begin by quoting the former Secretary of State, Colin Powell, who back in June of 2004 in an interview had this to say about the issue of intelligence: In recent weeks, Powell has apologized for at least 2

lapses regarding information about Iraq and terrorism. In a recent Meet the Press appearance, Powell said that he had relied on faulty intelligence when he told the United Nations in 2003 that Iraq had biological weapons. It turned out that the sourcing was inaccurate and wrong and, in some cases, deliberately misleading.

I want to repeat that this evening, because I believe it is important that the American people pay attention to the former Secretary of State's use of words here: In some cases, deliberately misleading.

Now, he does not go on to explain who did the misleading, whose responsibility it was to review the intelligence, to ensure that the sources were reliable, whether there was manipulation. But what I find interesting, Mr. Speaker, is that we are here on this floor asking these questions years, years after Democrats have asked for full and exhaustive investigations, inquiries, and oversight hearings. We have not had a single oversight hearing. Maybe this is simply the by-product of a situation, when you have a single party controlling both branches of Congress and the White House. But if that is the case, it is damning, because it puts before the responsibilities, the constitutional responsibilities of this Congress party loyalty, and I dare say the American people will not accept that.

If I can further proceed, Mr. Speaker, a statement that the intelligence that was available to him was available to Members of Congress, both Members of the House and Members of the Senate. Well, I find that very interesting. First of all, that is inaccurate and wrong. And to support my premise or the statement I just made, I would refer my colleagues and those overhearing this conversation to read a book called *The Price of Loyalty* written by a journalist of some renowned, which is basically a memoir of the experiences of the former Secretary of the Treasury, Paul O'Neill whom, by the way, is a conservative Republican, a captain of industry. He ran Alcoa and was selected by this President to serve as his first Secretary of Treasury.

He relates that in the first National Security Council meeting about a week or 10 days after this President was inaugurated, prior, prior to September 11 of 2001, that he was taken aback at that meeting because he participated in those meetings by virtue of his being Secretary of the Treasury, that the focus of the Bush administration was to shift from resolving the Israeli-Palestinian issue to how this administration would deal with Iraq. He was truly taken aback by that.

About a week later, he is at another meeting where there is a map that is put forward about how the oil fields in Iraq would be divided up; what countries and what companies would be allocated the development of those oil fields.

□ 2240

Go to page 96 of that book. But what was particularly interesting was on page 334. This is Secretary O'Neill, a member of the administration, a good Republican with solid conservative credentials.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. He was in the room.

Mr. DELAHUNT. In the room.

"In the 23 months I was there, I never saw anything that I would characterize as evidence of weapons of mass destruction," O'Neill told Time, referring to Time Magazine. "There were allegations and assertions by people, but I have been around a hell of a long time and I know the difference between evidence and assertions and allusions or conclusions that one could draw from a set of assumptions. To me there is a difference between real evidence and everything else and I never saw anything in the intelligence that I would characterize as real evidence."

"In response, a top administration official tried to dismiss O'Neill as out of the loop on weapons of mass destruction intelligence. 'That information was on a need-to-know basis. He wouldn't have been in a position to see it.'"

Just imagine this. We have the President saying that the intelligence was available to everybody. Yet a top administration official in response to the assertion by Secretary O'Neill that he never saw any evidence had this to say: "Oh, it wouldn't have been available to him."

That to me is just inexplicable. I think we deserve an answer from the President. We deserve an answer from the administration as to what actually happened. And I would like to hear from Secretary O'Neill sometime. I think it is important.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Then one of the questions we have here, Mr. Speaker, from Hayward, California asked, What is our mission in Iraq other than being targets for anyone with a weapon? That is really what we are saying. If you try to ask the administration why are we there, what is going on, when are they coming home, we get called unpatriotic. If we ask these questions that a man like Robert Velloza asks, Mr. Speaker, we get called unpatriotic. These are the questions. We have got a lot of questions that people ask, what are we still doing there? What is the plan for getting out? A lot of these. We have got 400 or 500 of these now. A lot of people are asking us, Mr. Speaker, what are we doing? If we try to say to the President, Mr. President, what are we doing, we are unpatriotic now?

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Both of my colleagues are absolutely right. The President has some nerve questioning our patriotism. That is what America is all about. I happen to be in the middle of reading Washington's biography. The Founding Fathers created this country so that there could be an opportunity for a vocal minority to express dissent. The farthest thing

from their mind when they created this country was that opposition would be unpatriotic. Of course it is certainly understandable given the climate that the Republican leadership has created here where they do not allow or expect either members of their own party to disagree with them and certainly have structured the rules so that it is virtually impossible for us to voice disagreement or make a significant impact on the process once the process reaches here. Mr. Speaker, the people that have communicated with us have caused me to ask this question. Not only has the President called into question the patriotism of those of us who have questioned why we are still there and when are we going to have a plan to withdraw, but he has also implied that Democrats who have objected to the way we got into this war and the misrepresentation or misallocation of the facts that led us into this war, he has also suggested that those same Democrats saw the same intelligence that the President did. No, they did not. That is factually inaccurate.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Neither did Paul O'Neill, the former Secretary of Treasury who served on the National Security Council.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. The bottom line is that every morning the President gets an intelligence document that we are not privy to. He gets massive amounts of intelligence that they do not widely distribute, even though we have security clearance, widely distribute to Members of Congress. So they were able to be, one would think, Mr. Speaker, selective in what they released to the Members of Congress when we were in the throes of making the decision about whether or not to support, and I was not here at that time, but when those of you that were here were in the throes of deciding whether to support the war.

I just want to read this question that brought this all to mind. You have Mr. Lehman from Goshen, Indiana, who said to us, Since the Iraq war and tax breaks for the wealthy have devastated our Federal budget, why can't the Democrats invoke procedures to semi-close down Congress as this is an emergency situation which is affecting our national economy when the money could be better spent on domestic social programs including hurricane relief. Cut and strut.

That is a really good point. If the American people are asking what are we doing in Iraq when we have so many needs here, when we have literally hundreds of thousands of people in our gulf coast twisting in the wind literally because we cannot get them the assistance they need, yet we are sending millions of dollars, billions of dollars as the gentleman from Ohio has detailed in the charts we have here in the last few weeks that we have been talking about this, the administration has literally chosen sending assistance, infrastructure rebuilding assistance, to the Iraqi people and we are not able to provide that for our own people. All the

while, today, they may still be in the committee meeting now, our own Ways and Means Committee is marking up the tax reconciliation bill, \$70 billion in tax reconciliation to supposedly balance out the budget deficit, the budget deficit reduction act which is a total misnomer that they could not pass last week. The reason that they could not pass it and the reason that it makes no sense is because if you are passing \$70 billion in tax cuts and \$50 billion in spending cuts, that still leaves \$20 billion. That is the kind of thing that the people who are communicating with us are asking, just like Mr. Lehman from Indiana.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. That is absolutely right. Let's get this straight out. I want to kind of lay some things out here because all the rhetoric that we are now hearing and the administration is really good at getting in the huddle and then breaking the huddle and everyone goes onto the TV shows on Sunday and everyone starts singing from the same hymn book and trying to convince the American people that the world is really not what everyone thinks it is. They find a way to try to spin it. I just want to go back just for a couple of minutes for all of us to recognize who we are dealing with here and what their track record is.

The CIA leak where Scooter Libby, the chief of staff of the Vice President of the United States, was indicted on five counts for lying basically, obstruction of justice, false statements, everything else. This is right from the indictment. On July 10 or 11, Libby spoke to Karl Rove who advised Libby of a conversation that he had. Rove talked to Novak, Bob Novak, the columnist, and Novak said that he was going to basically use Joe Wilson, the ambassador who went to Africa to find out what was really going on with uranium and everything else. So Rove tells Libby that Novak is going to write about Joe Wilson's wife. That was in July. Okay?

Then we find out, here it is, 2 months later, in September, Karl Rove denies even knowing anything about a CIA leak or outing Valerie Plame. So he told Libby that Joe Wilson's wife was going to be outed in July and then in September ABC News asks him what is up with this and he says, "I don't know." He lied to the American people. Scooter Libby lied to the American people. The Vice President of the United States in the same indictment told Scooter Libby about Joe Wilson's wife and then 2 months later he did not give all the facts on Meet the Press.

□ 2250

We have to be very careful with the Rules of the House when we deal with high-ranking administrative officials. Okay. So this is the outfit we are dealing with here. This is the group that has failed to be honest.

Now we go through the war. Remember what we heard prior to the war? We are going to use the oil for reconstruc-

tion. We are going to be greeted as liberators. They had weapons of mass destruction. All not true.

We even got a little piece of information, it will be interesting to see how this comes out with the use of phosphorus in Falujah. We were told months ago there was no phosphorus being used. Phosphorus they use in the military. We are not using any of that stuff. If we are using it, we are just using it to light the sky.

Then we find out on November 10, this is quoting from the BBC. This is not the Meek report, the Wasserman Schultz report, the Delahunt report. This is the BBC. "We have learned that some of the information we were provided is incorrect. White phosphorus shells which produce smoke were used in Falujah, not for illumination but for screening purposes." That was in the March and April, 2005, issue of Field Artillery Magazine; and it was used as a potent psychological weapon against the insurgents in trench lines and spider holes.

Now this is the use of a chemical weapon. Now I do not know if it is true or not, but what I do know is that they said they were not using it, and now they are saying they used it.

Mr. DELAHUNT. We do not know. But you know what is sad is that this Republican majority in Congress will not allow us an oversight hearing to determine whether this report is true or not. There has not been a single hearing in the House of Representatives in terms of the Iraq war and all of the issues that we have raised here, not a single hearing; and I would submit that that is just a total abdication of our responsibility.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. In that vein, we actually have an e-mail from one of the folks out there in blogger land who wants us to talk about and ask the question, Mr. Speaker, are the rules that have been enacted for the operation of our U.S. House of Representatives constitutional? And if not, what is the remedy for that? There is a person from Vermont. Can a lawsuit be brought about legal or unconstitutional House rules?

In other words, all Americans must have representation in their government, Mr. Speaker; and if Democrats are ignored because of House rules, not allowed hearings like the ones you are talking about, not allowed to offer an amendment on the House floor to legislation when we are duly elected in the same way, putting our pant legs on one at a time just like they do, or a skirt, like I do on occasion, because of House rules that give full power to a majority political party, half the country does not have representation in the day-to-day business of our own government.

That is the bottom line. We are shut down. And this is not about whining. This is not about, gee, we cannot get in our say. This is about that we were duly elected just like every one of the other 434 Members of this body, and it is not like that in the U.S. Senate. In

the U.S. Senate, the minority is treated with respect. It does not always go their way, but they can at least make an impact. It is truly enough.

What is more unfortunate is how the Republican leadership in this Chamber misrepresents how the process works here, as if we are allowed to call hearings whenever we want to or have subpoena power in the Katrina committee that was created a few weeks ago. They really, consistently, at least since I have been here from the beginning of this year, if you recall during the Schiavo case, facts were not relevant. They just made it up if it suited their argument.

Mr. DELAHUNT. And they will not have a hearing. They are afraid of transparency and accountability.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. And they protect themselves with the rules. They hide behind the rules.

Mr. DELAHUNT. They are eroding the confidence of the American people in this institution; and I would hope that they would reflect, stop, and change course. Because if it continues, it is demeaning to this institution, and it is eroding our democracy.

If I can, just for one moment, let me hold up this chart. The gentlewoman earlier talked about the monies that have been expended by American taxpayers in Iraq. There are an abundance of reports from a variety of sources about Iraq reconstruction. The biggest corruption scandal in history.

I serve as the senior Democrat, the so-called ranking member on a subcommittee of International Relations that ought to be looking into these assertions and allegations. I do not know if they are true.

We have had colleagues that have corresponded seeking to have hearings. This is just some of the quotes.

"It is possibly one of the largest thefts in history." This is the Iraqi finance minister speaking about more than \$1 billion missing from the Iraqi Defense Ministry.

"This country is filled with projects that were never completed or were completed and have never been used." This is a U.S. civil affairs officer who asked not to be identified.

"We were told to stimulate the economy any way we can, and a lot of money was wasted in the process." That is Captain Kelly Mims, part of the Army liaison team in Falujah.

"We were squandering the money we were entrusted to handle. We were a blind mouse with money." That is Bill Keller, former deputy advisor to the Iraqi Communications Ministry, referring to reconstruction projects.

"I presume that some of them are ghost employees, but we paid them." That is Frank Willis, former Coalition Provisional Authority, regarding the payments of salaries to 2,400 people who did not exist.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Would the gentleman read that one again about the ghost employees?

Mr. DELAHUNT. "I presume that some of them are ghost employees, but we paid them."

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. We are paying ghost employees in Iraq, and we are not allowed to question the validity of what is going on over there?

How about ghosts paying some of my Adelphi workers who are going to get their salaries cut by 60 percent? Does this administration want to ghost pay some of them?

Do we have enough money to pay people for not doing work in Iraq?

Mr. DELAHUNT. We have wasted billions of dollars of taxpayers' money in Iraq, and yet not a single hearing. And I do not want a hearing where some administration official comes up and presents a 5-minute overview and we have 5 minutes to question. I am talking about a thorough, exhaustive investigation done by staff on both sides of the aisle and by serious Republicans and Democrats who find this kind of waste and scandal abhorrent.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. We are joined by our good friend, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MEEK), who was getting an award tonight. I congratulate the gentleman. Welcome to the inaugural 30-something Live.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. I thank the gentleman very much. It is always an honor to be here on the floor, not only addressing the Members of the House but also sharing with the American people what is not happening.

I came here and I actually picked up an e-mail here. Has there ever been a President who has presided in a bigger increase of the country's national debt and has not vetoed a single spending bill during his term in office?

I can tell you that from what I know, just from my knowledge of what I have been reading recently, I can't remember a President outside of the President that we have right now. And I am pretty sure as we start talking about national debt, we can also talk about the fact that this administration, along with this majority, has led us in just 4 years, \$1.05 trillion in money we borrowed from foreign nations.

Now that is not my number. That came from the Department of the U.S. Treasury.

□ 2300

That is more than 42 Presidents combined. Mr. Speaker, 42 Presidents only were able to get to the point of \$1.01 trillion, and that is over a period of 224 years.

A lot of folks say, well, why are you alarmed? Well, you should be very alarmed, and if the Republican majority allows that kind of borrowing to take place, especially from foreign countries, I guarantee you that the President could not do it on his own.

I guess one of the things that is quite disturbing, I could not help but on Veterans Day turn on the television and watch our President of the United States attack other Americans for being American. I could not help but think that it must have been some sort of coordinated plan in operation, look over there from over here, from what is actually happening.

I can tell you, when you are dealing with the issue of outing CIA agents and indictments and then you say, well, I am going to start attacking Members of Congress that question my policy, maybe we can make that the discussion for the week, I think the American people and also the Members of this House are far more intelligent than that, to think that just because this is your message for this week, it does not necessarily mean that the American people are going to follow you in that message.

You see the majority following suit because it seems to be a message machine. The President spoke of sending the troops mixed signals. Well, I could not help but reflect on that, being a Member of Congress and seeing what is happening right now.

We have a budget amendment that is supposed to come to the floor pretty soon. I guess they did not have the stomach to pass a budget amendment that would have cut VA benefits to veterans, that would have instructed the Veterans Affairs Committee to cut over \$767 million in services to veterans and march in the Veterans Day parade. I guess that was just a little too much for some of the many Members on the majority side, and I want to thank some of those Members who said they were not going to vote for it. I hope they still stand by their convictions this week because that budget resolution has not changed a bit. What they felt last week, they should feel this week.

Also, I should say the President is saying we are sending mixed signals. Well, I guess it is mixed signals when we have over 50 million Americans without health care. What kind of signals are we sending them?

I guess it is mixed signals when we have our men and women who are fighting in harm's way right now, but better yet, when they become veterans, we do not have the same passion for their health care and for their needs.

I guess it is mixed signals when you have to look at our generation and parents that are trying to pay for their child's education and you cut \$40 billion and change out of student loans and student aid. That is mixed signals.

I hope that the President can get just as passionate when it comes down to cutting free and reduced lunches in this country, get passionate about that.

We talk about winning the hearts and minds of the Iraqi people and people abroad. How about winning the hearts and minds of Americans that pay taxes every day?

One other point I just want to make, another mixed signal, as we speak now the Budget Committee is meeting. I guarantee that they are ready and meeting, and on the majority side, the Republican side, to protect people who make over \$500,000 to be able to receive their \$80,000 tax cut. That is sending mixed signals to the American taxpayer. So, if anyone that raised their

hand and said they uphold the Constitution of the United States, you need to be passionate about those Americans that know what it means to punch in and punch out every day.

Last week, one of the Members on the majority side came to the floor and said, well, we are giving tax cuts to the productive Americans. I am assuming that I guess if anyone makes under \$500,000 they are not productive in America.

The bottom line is, is that I am not disappointed in what the President said. I am just a little taken aback because my constituents work every day. Your constituents work every day. There are Americans out there trying to make ends meet.

Better yet, we want to scream at Members of Congress talking about rewriting history. Let us talk about putting this country in a debt that it will be very difficult for us to get out of. Let us talk about record-breaking in 4 years of an administration and this majority allowed this President to do \$1.05 trillion in borrowing from foreign countries, like China I must add, more than Democrat, Republican and Whig party Presidents was not able to achieve. I have to go all the way back to the Whig party, 1776.

Folks say, oh, well, hard times. Well, World War II happened on this side of the chart. World War I happened on this side of the chart. The Great Depression happened on this side of the chart.

Challenges are not new to leadership in Washington, D.C. If people want to borrow and spend, then that is okay if they do it with their money, but when they do it with the American people's money, it is another thing.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, one of the words that our President used was irresponsible; it is irresponsible to question what is going on. Is that responsible, that kind of fiscal undiscipline, reckless disregard for a budget in the United States? That is irresponsible?

And what else is irresponsible? Cutting money for student loans, that is irresponsible.

How about Karl Rove telling Scooter Libby about Joe Wilson's wife and then going on TV a couple of months later and saying he did not know anything about it. I think that is kind of irresponsible to say that to the American public. I did not hear the President say Scooter Libby was irresponsible.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. I know the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. DELAHUNT) is standing by there, but I want to just share this with you.

I have one message for the majority and for the President: Get passionate about the right issues. We are all passionate about the war. We are all concerned about our men and women in uniform, but I tell you one thing. We have American cities that are trying to make ends meet. We have children that are trying to do the best they can under the circumstances. The Leave No

Child Left Behind Act is known by the States, and States are suing the Federal Government for a lack of funding. Meanwhile, as we speak here on this floor, the Ways and Means Committee is meeting to make sure that the tax cuts are permanent for millionaires.

So I am glad that some members of the Senate last week said I cannot vote, at the same time that I am cutting Medicaid for poor Americans free and reduced lunch for children, veterans benefits and then within the same time period, within a couple of days I am going to vote to give millionaires a permanent tax cut?

What I am saying is that there are things that we should get passionate about, and there are some things that we really need to be passionate about. I can tell you right now, there are a number of issues not being addressed, and like you said, the outing of a CIA agent is just like someone running over and telling the enemy about the Marines are going to be on this beach at this time and this day; I just wanted you to know that because I know it. That is what it is like.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. That is irresponsible.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. And it is setting us back. My message for the majority and also for the President is get passionate about the right issues. You want to get passionate about some of the actions in the White House, it is happening right there under your nose. Passion stops at we will just give an ethics course on not sharing national secrets with the press. You have to go far beyond that. Too many people have died. Too many veterans right now need assistance to just go use the restroom right now to give that speech.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, if I can for a moment, I want to take issue with the President's statement relative to support the troops and that asking questions somehow undermines that support. That is false. That is inaccurate.

There is not a Member in this House on either side of the aisle, I cannot believe there is an American anywhere in this country, that does not fervently pray that these young men and women come home, come home without wounds, but I will talk about support for the troops because I believe that if there is a grade to be given for supporting the troops by this White House, it is a failure. It is a failure.

How many letters have we, and again, not just Democrats, but Republicans, sent to this White House complaining about the lack of vests, complaining about the unarmored humvees that so many of our young troops have been killed, permanently maimed, and yet we still have problems? It is an issue that has been lingering for years, not just for months.

I am not suggesting that that was intended, but it is a demonstration of the incompetence of this administration, and underscores, if we are talking about supporting the troops, the lack of that support.

You referenced earlier about veterans. It is easy for the President to wish the troops well as they march into war, and yet it was this White House, this administration, that submitted a budget for the Veterans Administration that was \$2.5 billion less than hopefully the budget that this Congress will pass.

Let me suggest to the White House that that demonstrates callousness and turning your back on those young men and women in Iraq, and it is absolutely a stain on our national honor.

INTELLIGENCE ISSUES AND THE WAR IN IRAQ

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. INGLES of South Carolina). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING) is recognized for the remaining time until midnight.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate being recognized and the opportunity to address the House tonight and until tomorrow begins I understand.

First, I would speak to this issue that we have heard as the conclusion of my friends and colleagues from the other side of the aisle, however optimistic they may not be in their presentation to the American people on a regular basis.

As I go through some of the things that are in front of me and I listened to the allegations that have been made that somehow the President has manipulated the intelligence and led this Nation into war because there never were any weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, I will point out that I flat out reject that statement. It is not possible to prove a negative in the first place, and a rational person would understand that from the beginning.

Additionally, we know that Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction. We know that he used them 1 time.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield.

Mr. KING of Iowa. I yield to the gentleman from Massachusetts.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that we know that he did have weapons of mass destruction because we provided, during the 1980s, the means for the development of those weapons to Saddam Hussein.

Members of this administration, former Secretary of State Colin Powell, the Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld, they clearly knew because they were involved in assuring that the means to develop weapons of mass destruction were provided to the Saddam Hussein regime.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, I would point out that I will not concede the accuracy of that, and I do not because I do not have that evidence and I have not seen that. I acknowledge the gentleman's statement for the honorable individual he is, and I would point out that we can

concur then that Saddam had weapons of mass destruction.

In fact, President Clinton made that statement in 1998 very clearly and unequivocally, and my point is that either Saddam Hussein used his last canister of mustard gas on the Kurds and simply ran out of inventory or else those weapons of mass destruction still have to be someplace, and he constructed then an elaborate ruse to dupe the world and dupe seven or eight or nine different countries on the intelligence.

I point out President Clinton's statement: Other countries possess weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles. This is December 1998. With Saddam there is one big difference; he has used them. The international community has little doubt then, and I have no doubt today, says President Clinton, that left unchecked Saddam Hussein will use these terrible weapons.

Again, 1998, Mr. Speaker, and allegations here on this floor and around this country are that somehow President Bush has manipulated intelligence and apparently misrepresented this to the American people, and the implication is also that he has duped these people that have made these statements, including former President Bill Clinton and a number of other high-profile people within his administration.

The allegation would then have to hold true that somehow the governor of Texas, now President Bush, found a way to dupe the national leaders to somehow manipulate and maneuver hundreds of billions of dollars worth of national intelligence to produce these kinds of results.

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It is simply a ludicrous position to take. It will not hold water, it is not logical, it is not rational, and the more the American people hear about this, the more they begin to think about it, the more they begin to understand it, the less they are going to believe these allegations.

I would also point out that the individual who has had his 15 minutes of fame and then some, the erstwhile ambassador who was sent by the CIA to go to Niger to investigate the question as to whether Saddam Hussein was seeking yellowcake uranium from Niger, that individual, of course, we know as the husband of now publicly discussed Valerie Plame, at her recommendation. As we understand, he was sent by the CIA.

He had not been in Niger in 20 years. He was not a weapons expert like his wife may have been. But he went there, and he came back and gave one story to the New Republic Magazine. He gave another story under oath to the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence which thoroughly eviscerated his viability and his credibility.

So the statements that were made for publication for the fame did not hold up under oath, did not hold up under scrutiny. One thing we are confident of is that erstwhile ambassador