

make this country, in fact, more secure?

And the reality is that our unjustified invasion and occupation of Iraq has, in fact, destabilized that country and has weakened our military and caused our country to be far less safe from terrorism.

FREEDOM IS NOT FREE

(Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, we heeded the call to action during World War II as the greatest generation battled oppression and led the effort to help Europe rebuild. Today, we are faced with a similar mission in Iraq, one that will help focus momentum in the region toward the causes of freedom and democracy.

Our men and women serving in Iraq are part of another great generation of patriots committed to a mission that became clear on September 11, 2001, another day that will live in infamy in our Nation's history.

Freedom is not free, but it is always worth fighting for. As John F. Kennedy once stated, the cost of freedom is always high, but Americans have always paid it. And one path we shall never choose is the path of surrender or submission.

We have the mission for victory in Iraq. Let us honor that pledge.

GENOCIDE IN DARFUR

(Mr. BLUMENAUER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the words of our Speaker, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HASTERT) this morning when he talked about a day that would live in infamy, referencing December 7.

I appreciate that we have an opportunity now to do something to make sure that this is not a day that lives in infamy, because today another tragic chapter is being written in Darfur in the horrifying history of genocide, which people on both sides of the aisle have condemned.

Indeed, the violence appears to be getting worse and 500 people a day are dying. Somehow, the money for the United States for the peacekeepers for the African Union has disappeared from the Foreign Operation Conference Committee. This would be a tragedy, if we did not meet our obligation to provide at least 7,700 peacekeepers for an area the size of Texas.

Every man and woman on the Hill today should do something to make sure that the Defense appropriation bill is not finally approved without meeting America's obligation to stop this genocide.

RECOGNIZING REAGAN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

(Mr. CONAWAY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CONAWAY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in order to recognize El Magnet at Reagan Elementary School in Odessa, Texas, for their commitment to excellence in education.

On September 13, the Intel Corporation and Scholastic named El Magnet at Reagan a 2005 School of Distinction for demonstrating exceptional commitment to achieving innovation in education. They were selected from over 3,300 other participating schools from across this Nation for programs such as Crossing Borders which partners their Spanish classes with technology integration, and also allows students to serve as teachers.

El Magnet was also held up as an exemplary model for success here in Washington, D.C. in October 2005 at a gala for distinguished recipients, and was awarded \$10,000 in cash in a grant to continue their scholastic progress.

Not only do all of Reagan students pass the rigorous Texas Assessment for Knowledge and Skills Test, but the number of students scoring in the 90th percentile ranks Reagan in the top five schools in Texas every year.

The reputation of El Magnet Reagan extends beyond the Permian Basis in the State of Texas, and again on September 19, 2005, Reagan was named a 2005 No Child Left Behind Blue Ribbon School by the Department of Education.

I congratulate the students and teachers, administrators and families of El Magnet at Reagan Elementary School. I wish them the best in the future, thank them for their hard work, and their dedication that have made these prestigious awards possible.

9/11 COMMISSION REPORT CARD

(Mr. ISRAEL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ISRAEL. Mr. Speaker, on Monday, the distinguished members of the 9/11 Commission released a scathing report card on the lack of progress the administration has made in implementing their 41 recommendations for improving the security of our Nation.

The grades handed down would disturb any parent. On nearly half of the recommendations, our government received a D, an F, or an incomplete grade for failing to take the steps necessary to ensure that we never face another tragedy like September 11.

It is unacceptable that while people across the world can talk with each other effortlessly, now over 4 years after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, our Nation's first responders are still, still without the interoperable radios they need to communicate in crisis.

It is unacceptable that after we carefully screened passengers who fly on aircraft in this Nation, we seat them on planes loaded with cargo that is rarely ever screened.

Mr. Speaker, these and other loopholes must be closed immediately. The administration has failed the American people on these loopholes. We must work together to bring up these dangerous grades.

WAR IN IRAQ

(Mrs. BLACKBURN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, we are saluting our veterans from World War II today. Last week, I had the opportunity to spend time with members of the 278th Regimental Combat Team of the Tennessee National Guard, and the 115th Field Artillery Regiment from the Tennessee Army National Guard.

Tennessee was welcoming them home after a year of service in Iraq and around the world. They have done great work. We are proud of them. And I believe their sacrifice is what does keep this Nation free.

Mr. Speaker, it was with sadness and a little bit of disbelief that I heard yesterday of Democratic Party leader Howard Dean's comments that we cannot win in Iraq, and that we are in the same situation as Vietnam.

The pessimism and historical ignorance contained in those statements is simply staggering, Mr. Speaker. I do not know if this is simply wishful thinking by a Democratic leader looking for an angle to slam the White House, or whether Mr. Dean actually believes it. Both options are frightening. I have been in Iraq. I have seen the progress. It is undeniable. It is good for America. It is good for the freedom-loving people in this world. Thank you to the men and women in uniform for their sacrifice.

CORRUPTION IN CONGRESS

(Ms. DELAURO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, it is astonishing how badly this administration and the Republican Congress has veered off course. Bribery. Perjury. Allegations of insider trading and money laundering. The majority leaders in both Chambers of the Congress, one under indictment, the other being investigated by the SEC.

The American people understand full well the consequences of this culture of corruption. They saw it in New Orleans. The administration's incompetence was more devastating than the storm itself. They see a President all too willing to cover up waste and profiteering here and abroad where, again, incompetence has contributed to the loss of American lives, more than 2,000 and climbing.

More than 15,000 wounded, many of whom would go back and fight again for their country if only they could. We have defense contractors bribing Members of this institution. No wonder we are so ill-prepared for another terrorist attack.

This week, the chairman of the September 11 Commission gave this government's response, since that terrible day, five Fs and 12 Ds. The facts more than speak for themselves. Democrats believe that the time has come to restore the values of responsibility and integrity to our way that our government does business.

Mr. Speaker, it starts with putting the needs of families before special interests of the lobbyists. It starts here in this building, and it starts with new leadership.

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LISTEN TO THE GOOD NEWS

(Mr. HEFLEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HEFLEY. Mr. Speaker, a reporter from a major news organization in the United States who is now stationed in Iraq made the statement the other day that if he wrote a single story that was positive about what was going on in Iraq, he would have to fight with his editor to get it published.

Is it any wonder that we have such a negative attitude in America about the war and the way it is going?

I think it is time for a little reality. During the last week of November, 526 insurgents were detained or killed and 104 weapons caches were discovered during 355 combined operations. And in those operations, 30 percent of them were conducted independently by Iraqi security forces. As of November 16, 2005, a total of 211,700 Iraqi security forces have been trained and equipped. The number includes 99,500 Ministry of Defense forces and 112,200 Ministry of Interior forces. Thirty Iraqi Army battalions have assumed primary control of their own areas; and on and on it goes, Mr. Speaker.

There is a lot of good news out of Iraq, and we ought to begin to listen to it.

YACHTS FOR THE RICH, DEBT FOR THE POOR

(Mr. DEFAZIO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, despite a flood, a sea of red ink, tomorrow Republicans propose to cut taxes. Cut taxes for whom? The wealthy. They want to float the yachts of the wealthy on a sea of red ink.

One of the cuts is for people who get a chip dividend on their stocks and is paid for by dramatically increasing the costs of student loans.

I have met with students at Oregon State and the University of Oregon during the break. These kids are working hard trying to realize the American Dream. Some of them are holding down three jobs and borrowing as much as they can, and the Republicans say they have to pay more for those loans so that rich people can pay a rate of taxes on dividends less than someone who works for \$25,000 a year.

That is an outrageous position for the majority party.

AMERICAN-MADE UNIFORMS NEEDED

(Mr. DUNCAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, last week The Washington Post reported that our U.S. Border Patrol agents are wearing uniforms manufactured in Mexico. One agent said, "It is embarrassing to be protecting the U.S.-Mexico border and be wearing a uniform made in Mexico."

There are plenty of companies all over this country that could make these uniforms, yet some brilliant bureaucrat has decided to give jobs to Mexicans rather than to Americans. I have nothing whatsoever against Mexico, but the first obligation of the U.S. Congress should be to our own people.

Not only is this a jobs issue, but there are security implications as well. Having these uniforms made in another country makes it more likely that these uniforms could end up on a black market and be sold to drug traffickers, illegals wanting to cross the border, or even worse, terrorists trying to come here.

I hope all Federal officials will start trying to give as much business as possible to American companies and workers instead of giving even more jobs to those in other countries.

REPUBLICAN BILLS DO NOT HELP AVERAGE AMERICANS

(Mr. PALLONE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I listened to my Republican colleague who just spoke, and he talked about how the first job of this Congress is to protect the jobs of the American people. I do not see that happening here.

We are back now for a 2-week period here in the House and what do I hear is on the agenda? First of all, tomorrow is the Tax Reconciliation Act. This is the tax cut, if you will, for special interests, for wealthy people paid for with the budget cuts that we adopted, the Republican leadership adopted 2 weeks ago, cuts in student loans, cuts in Medicaid, cuts in housing, cuts in programs that help the average American. And they are doing that in order to pay for a tax cut they are going to vote on this week by the Republican

leadership that would essentially help only the very wealthy and the special interests, the corporations.

What else is on the agenda today? The Bahrain Free Trade Agreement Implementation Act, another free trade agreement that is going to mean loss of American jobs, outsourcing of American jobs to other countries.

How many more of these are we going to have? How many more times am I going to come down to the floor and have the Republican leadership post bills that do not help the average American?

WORKING WITH INDIA FOR OUR FUTURE

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, Congress will soon consider implementing legislation to support civil nuclear cooperation between India and the United States. I strongly support this initiative, which is a critical component of the U.S.-India Joint Statement of July 18 reached during the historic visit of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to Washington this past summer.

The civil nuclear agreement is a major step forward for the United States and global nonproliferation policies. In the U.S.-India Statement of July 18: "President Bush conveyed his appreciation to the Prime Minister of India's strong commitment to preventing WMD proliferation and stated that as a responsible state with advanced nuclear technology, India should acquire the same benefits and advantages of other such states."

After my meetings in New Delhi last week, I am convinced that our strategic partnership with India will help ensure our own future security and prosperity working together for victory in the war on terrorism.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September 11, our generation's December 7.

FIX MEDICARE PRESCRIPTION DRUG PLAN

(Mr. BISHOP of New York asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BISHOP of New York. Mr. Speaker, over the past 2 weeks, I hosted five town hall meetings in my district. They were attended by hundreds of seniors who wanted to learn more about the Medicare drug benefit. I found that for as much interest as seniors demonstrated, it is readily apparent there is an equal amount of confusion, frustration, cynicism, and in some cases even anger.

Seniors do not understand why there is such little time to sign up for the benefit or why they will be locked into a plan when the plan does not have to