capital solution all come to pass, all in their sequence, Mr. Speaker.

When that happens, then we do have a definition for victory in Iraq. And we cannot expect miracles, and it is hard and it is bloody and it is costly. But they can become, and in fact I believe they are, the Lode Star for the Arab people. This inspiration that gets established, when people are cynics in the world think that because of what ethnicity you are, what tribe you belong to, what country you come from, what religion you might be, you cannot handle freedom, well, I agree with the President. Freedom beats and yearns in the heart of every person and all people yearn to be free.

Now we have not gone to war and fought and handed them their freedom. They fought alongside us and some of that freedom they have earned, and they needed to earn it because it is precious and it has more value if it is them earning that freedom instead of us. But I believe this has been a very noble thing that we have done, Mr. Speaker; and I look around the world and I think throughout history, when has this country ever gone to war against another free people? I will say never. Never once in the history of the world has the United States ever gone to war, a clash of arms, against another free people, because we resolve our differences in open debate here on the floor of the House of Representatives and the Senate and across this country.

And one of those things also that beats in the heart of all of us is we have a certain capacity for change in all of us.

□ 2200

That change is within us. It is natural, and it is human, and it is described pretty much in the book ''The Case for Democracy'' by Natan Sharansky. He spent a fair part of his life in the gulag up in the Soviet Union, and he watched how there they struggled for their very lives and very survival. And the effort that came from them just to stay alive every day consumed almost everything that they did, and he thought that was the world that a lot of people lived in too, but that was a narrow thing that he was in at the time.

When he was liberated from the gulag, he went to Israel, and he became a free person in a free society that had a democracy and open dialogue, and he went to the Knesset, and he watched that debate that was taking place there, and he saw that same energy go into the debate in the Knesset, sometimes arguing and debating and struggling over things that he saw as minutia because he had spent a lot of his years on survival, and the same effort on survival was being burned up and consumed on minutia in a free country.

And he concluded, and I think rightfully, that we all have within us this energy for change, this desire for change, and we will use that energy for a constructive change whether we do so in open debate and dialogue like we do in this country, like they do in Israel, or whether we use that same energy and desire, when we do not have this freedom of speech, to take it out on our neighbor, take it out on our enemy, and do so in a violent fashion and often in the form of terrorism. That is the habitat that breeds terror, the habitat that is anathema to freedom.

So some years ago, shortly after September 11, we had a guest lecturer there at Buena Vista University, Storm Lake, Iowa. Benazir Bhutto, former Prime Minister of Pakistan. She gave a wonderful lecture, and it was fascinating. And afterwards we sat down and had a little one-on-one conversation, and I asked her a couple of questions, and one of them was what percentage of the Muslim world are inclined to be supportive of al Qaeda. How great in numbers are our enemy?

She did not hesitate. In fact, her answer was so spontaneous that I concluded that she had answered that question before, and she said, Not very many, perhaps 10 percent.

Well, not very many, perhaps 10 percent of 1.2 or 1.3 billion people is a whole lot of enemies, in my opinion. That is 120 to 130 million scattered throughout the world. We cannot attack all of them, and we cannot turn our military effort on all of them. We have to find another solution.

So I asked her then how do we get to this point where we can ever define victory? What is victory going to be? How will we ever craft a victory given this global enemy we have that is committed to our death, people who believe that their path to salvation is in killing us?

She said, You have to give them freedom. You have to give them democracy. You have to give them an opportunity for their future, and they will turn their minds, their hands, their hearts from hatred and killing towards their families, their neighborhoods, their communities, their mosques.

That is the difference, and that is the climate that we need to create. That is that climate that is there in Afghanistan, and that is that climate that we are in the process of creating in Iraq. That is how Afghanistan and Iraq can link together and be the inspiration that shows the world that freedom can echo across the Arab world the same way it did across Eastern Europe when the Wall went down on November 9, 1989. And that is some insight.

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

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

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman's embrace and affection for freedom. We all aspire to that.

I think I might have misheard, but I guess what I am asking for, is the gentleman making the statement tonight that the invasion of Iraq, the reason that we invaded that country was to liberate that country, or did we have another rationale when we debated here in this Chamber about whether to invade Iraq?

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, there were a number of motives, and I will concede there were other motives; but in the 60 seconds that I have left, I am not going to be able to address all of that.

I will just say that, yes, liberation was part of that; and, in fact, I believe it is the broader vision, this vision that has been brought to this global effort by our President. I think he is a leading thinker on this in the world. Not a receptive adviser, but I think he is a leading thinker. And that is why I raise this issue. It is bigger and broader than weapons of mass destruction. It is bigger than many of the things that are discussed here on the floor of this House, and I bring this message here so that we can see the benefits of the sacrifice and the reason to carry on and the price if we fail to do so.

## 30-SOMETHING WORKING GROUP

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DENT). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, as we come back on the 30-something Special Order, I yield to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. DELAHUNT).

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, let me pick up where we left off. And where we left off, obviously, was my very brief conversation with my friend from Iowa (Mr. KING), because I can never remember a debate on the floor of this House or in any committee of this House where the rationale that was put forth by the proponents of the resolution authorizing the President to invade Iraq was to liberate the Iraqi people.

And clearly the headlines, we all remember the phrases such as mushroom cloud, links to al Qaeda, the potential for an imminent attack on the United States. The gentleman indicates that it was one of those reasons.

What I find interesting, Mr. Speaker, is why was Iraq selected. Because as I look over the map, if it was a combination of reasons, why did we not invade Iran where we had hard evidence relative to weapons of mass destruction, where we knew that they possessed the capability, where there clearly was a denial of freedom? Why did we select Iraq?

And, Mr. Speaker, if we were so concerned about democracy, if the White House had this unstated vision and goal, why did they put a coalition of the willing together that embraced some of the most tyrannical regimes on the face of the Earth? Why did we embrace Islam Karimov in Uzbekistan whose human rights record was the equal of the human rights record of Saddam Hussein? Why did Islam Karimov come to the White House and have a photo opportunity with President Bush? Why did we embrace

Turkmenbashi, another thug, Mr. Speaker, the President of Turkmenistan, who has created a cult of personality that is bizarre, who changed the names of the months of January and June? January he named after himself; and June, demonstrating his filial love for his mother, named after his mother?

Mr. Speaker, with all due respect, if democracy was the motive behind the invasion of Iraq, I fail to see the evidence, because we associated ourselves with those who deny freedom every day to their own people. They were part of the coalition of the willing. What message does that send to the world that we select despots and thugs and tyrants, some are good because they happen to serve our instant interests, our interests of the moment, but some are the worst human violators on the globe?

And with all respect to our traditional allies, Egypt and Saudi Arabia, if the President wants to bring democracy to the dark corners of the world, he does not have to go that far. He does not have to take our young men and women and put them in harm's way. When I hear that it was democracy and liberation that motivated this invasion, I cannot accept that. The evidence does not bear that out, and it was the burden of proof on the administration. They never met the test. Their rationale and their excuse were the weapons of mass destruction.

No one on this side is a pessimist, I can assure you. But it is time we leveled with the American people. It is time that we spoke the truth. It is time that we injected realism into this discourse, into this conversation that we are obliged to have with the American people.

As far as the troops are concerned, they know, Mr. Speaker, that the minority party is with them, and they know that because we have fought for their benefits when they come back from this war that we sent them to.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I yield to the gentleman from Florida.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, let me just say what Mr. DELAHUNT is saying makes so much sense, but I can tell him the reason why we have reams and reams of paper about how government is not working now is the fact that we are governing under a culture of corruption, cronyism, and incompetence. One cannot operate a business under a culture of corruption, cronyism, and incompetence. They can just not do it. They cannot do it. It is impossible to achieve. And it is wrong. So when we have historic levels of corruption, incompetence, and cronyism, it is just hard for us to govern in that way.

People are wondering why am I picking up my newspaper not only seeing indictments but seeing plea agreements by the very people that are elected to come up here to govern on behalf of the American people. So why is it even shocking, Mr. Speaker, to some Members why we have so much corruption in the Federal system? And we come in here as though let me grab a cup of coffee or a latte like it is another day at the office. It is not another day at the office. It is not another day here in Congress. We are concerned, but maybe the majority could also get a little concerned about what is going on.

Let me just mention something because Mr. DELAHUNT just hit a couple of points, and I just want to mention something because here in the 30-Something Working Group, as my colleagues know and others, and I am so glad that Mr. RYAN claimed this hour, the bottom line is this: we have a White House where members of the White House have been indicted or previous members who resigned the day before they were indicted and serious national security breaches in the White House.

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Mr. Speaker, this is not hearsay, this is fact. We have Federal investigators now, they are not talking about someone who took a trip somewhere on the Government's credit card. They are not talking about that, you know, someone went to lunch with someone and, you know, the bill was $3,000 and they had eight lobsters. They are not talking about that. They are talking about outing CIA agents. They are talking about information being leaked out that is jeopardizing national security.

They are also talking about issues as it relates to, you know, the influence of the private sector and corruption and not possible cronyism, but cronyism and incompetence. That is what is going on here now. And even here in the Congress, unprecedented investigations, inquires not by the Congress, but by other agencies that are policing us.

So when people start saying, well, why is all of this happening? It is happening because we are not, well, the Congress, the majority, is not governing the way that they should govern and policing themselves. I think it is important as we look at this culture of corruption and cronyism and incompetence that we put it in the right perspective.

We know that a lot of this is allegations. We will just say allegations. I want to make sure that we say that, but I want to also make sure that Members know exactly what is going on. This is not regular business in the Congress. The 109th Congress, historians will reflect, and in the present, will say, this has never happened before in the history of the Republic.

So when folks start talking about, well, you know, I do not know what you are talking about, I am going to tell you another thing. They are coming to the floor, the majority tomorrow, to pass tax cuts on behalf of billionaires and millionaires.

Meanwhile, just before we left here, they cut student loans. Cut Medicaid, cut child support enforcement. Somebody please tell me this is a misprint. But it is not. And going after deadbeat dads. So I wonder how the state attorneys and sheriffs are going to feel about that?

They cut many programs that we need in this country. Meanwhile back at the ranch, we are going to turn our back on what is going on in Iraq and what is going on here in Washington, D.C. as though it is not a big deal.

So I think the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. DELAHUNT) is in order when he talks about some of the decisions that are being made.

And one of any colleagues on this side said just because the Republican leadership says it is true does not mean that it is true. We were here on this floor late one night in the 108th Congress, and even in this Congress, but in the 108th Congress on the prescription drug bill. And the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN) does it so well, I want you to talk about what they said and what the reality was.

Just because they say it does not mean that it is true. The President says complete victory. What is complete victory? What is complete victory? Is it until the last insurgent says I am no longer going to be one?

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. We have a quote over here. Victory means exit strategy, said Governor George Bush during Kosovo. Exit strategy. And here we are a couple of years into the war with no exit strategy. And if you ask for an exit strategy, you are helping out the other side.

Well, wait a minute. We are spending $1.5 billion a week. We have lost well over 2,000 lives, thousands and thousands of soldiers have been injured. Do we not have a right in the Congress of the United States, the House of Representatives, to at least ask when are we leaving? Is it 4 months? Is it 6 months? Can we at least have a discussion on why we should not talk about it, or is it just my way or the highway? I mean, we have an obligation here to do that.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, you know, there has been a whole lot of twisted-up debate on time tables and whether we are insisting on a time table and withdrawal, and whether the withdrawal is immediate or 6 months.

When we talk about the drawn-down of troops, and the fact that we need to make sure that it is the Iraqi people that are ultimately responsible for running their own country, we are referring to the President's objectives that he said that he wants to see.

And the other day I heard the President talking about that we will withdraw and begin to withdraw troops from Iraq when we have objectives that are reached.

Well, what the heck does that mean? Does it mean that when 50 percent of the Iraqi battalions are fully independent? Does it mean 75 percent? Where are the benchmarks? I mean, it

is fine to say that we need to have objectives about this. We should not leave or withdraw troops until we meet objectives.

But what are those objectives? I need something concrete to be able to go home and tell my constituents. I mean, we have got 2,013 American lives that have been lost, and 50 percent of those kids have been kids under the age of 22. There is some serious accountability that needs to be brought to bear here.

And, you know, vague references to objectives that should be met by the President is not what I call accountability, not when you have $223 billion being spent on this war.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I look at this like your homework when you are in school, and your teacher gives you some homework. The homework is due next Thursday. You have got to have X, Y and Z done. And, you know what, if it is due on Thursday, most kids will do it on Wednesday. Right? That is just human nature. And I am thinking that maybe we need to tell the Iraqis, your homework needs to be done by May. Okay? And it better be done.

If you do not tell them the homework needs to be done by May, then they are not going to do it. So if it is indefinite, there is no end in sight, that is not what the American people want.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I feel a little bit funny talking about this, because I listened to the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING) who is now in the Speaker's chair. I guess he cannot respond because he is in the Speaker's chair.

So I will try not to be too critical. But when I listened to him talk about the war earlier this evening, our Republican colleague, I just think there is a lot of confusion on the Republican side about what the goal is.

And I think what the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN) said and my colleague from Massachusetts (Mr. DELAHUNT), they are getting to it.

When I listened to the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING), it was almost as if on the one hand the enemy was Saddam Hussein, but then on the other hand, the enemy seemed to be the whole of Iraq and all of the Iraqi people.

Now my understanding of this war, I mean, I did not support it, did not vote for it. But my understanding, when the President articulated it, was that we had this dictator, Saddam Hussein, who was basically keeping his people down. He was a dictator. He was not expressing their will.

And once we got in there and got rid of him, that the people were going to welcome us with open arms and feel liberated. Yet I saw a poll yesterday that was done by a British outfit, that said that something like 70 or 80 percent of the people of Iraq thought that we should not be there anymore. 40-something percent thought it was fair to physically attack American troops because they were occupying Iraq.

And so, you know, my feeling is when you get to the point where most of the Iraqi people who we were there to liberate feel that we do not belong there, or even to the point where even the majority are willing to take shots at us because they think that we should get out, then I think we have lost sight of what our purpose is.

And my big contention is that we need to get out in order to achieve victory, because if victory means an Iraq with stability, and where the insurgents do not hold sway, that is not going to happen because we are viewed as an occupying power. That is not going to happen until we leave.

So an exit strategy is important. It seems to me if you want to achieve a victory in the sense that you want to have a stable, Democratic Iraq, I do not see how you have that as long as we are there and the insurgents keep using us as the theme for them to continue to oppose our presence.

But I want to get back also to this whole culture of cronyism, and the other thing that the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MEEK) mentioned. I think that the problem that the Republican leadership has is partially ideological, but also partially corruption in the sense that, you know, if you look at what they do, a lot of it is because they are sort of captured by their own ideology.

Victory means that we have to stay indefinitely until every Iraqi likes us. You know, on the other hand, the reality is that more and more of the people do not want us there. So they got into this idea of what victory means or what success means, and they just do not want to break from it. They are not looking at what is happening practically.

I see the same thing happening here on domestic issues. In other words, you know, tomorrow we are going to vote on this tax cut, which primarily goes to the wealthy and to the corporate interests. Right? The theory behind the tax cut, the ideology is that, you know, if you give everybody a tax cut, that is going to spur the economy.

The reality is the economy is not doing that well. The people are complaining all of the time to me about the loss of jobs overseas. They do not have pension. They do not have health care, good jobs, good benefits.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. They have been saying this for 5 years about this tax policy. They have.

Mr. PALLONE. On the one hand they are stuck in their own ideology which is that the tax cuts for the wealthy and the big corporations are going to grow the economy, but on the other hand they are also stuck in this ideology in what they are trying to do legislatively, because they know that this helps their political cronies.

They are trying to help the big special interests. They are trying to help the corporations. They are trying to help wealthy people at the expense of the average guy. They make cuts in programs that help the average person like student loans, like Medicaid and housing and all of the other things that my colleague from Florida mentioned.

They do not care about the average person, not only because their ideology says that that is not what they should be doing, because they should be cutting taxes, but also because helping the average person does not put any money into their campaign coffers. They are not looking for a $5 donation from the guy next door. They are looking for the big donation in their campaign coffers from the big corporate interests.

That is what this is all about. So they mask what they do by saying that somehow it is the right thing to do. It is not practically speaking. It does not work. We are getting further into debt. The economy is not improving. The Iraq war is getting worse. We are spending more money in Iraq. We have no money for domestic programs.

They justify it by saying, well, this is the conservative or Republican way to do things. But it just does not work. It does not work for the average person. It does not work for America and our goals as a country. And at the same time, they do it because it helps them politically because they get more campaign money from the pharmaceuticals, from the defense contractors, from the Halliburtons, from the Bechtels, from all of these groups.

So the American people have to understand that this is not working. It has got to be changed. And the only answer is essentially when the election comes next year, you got to throw these guys out. You got to bring back a Democratic majority that is going to work for the average person, that is going to have an exit strategy for Iraq, that is going to be worried about the debt so we do not go further into debt.

As my colleague says, you know, we can certainly work with the Republicans. We are not saying that we cannot. But this Republican leadership is hell bent on helping the wealthy, helping the corporate interests at the expense of the little guy. And we just see it more and more every day. And tomorrow is a perfect example of it with this.

We pass this budget that cuts all of those domestic programs and help the average man. And we are using those budget cuts to fund tax cuts for corporate interests. I yield.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Your reference to what their philosophy is with pursuing this tax reconciliation, this tax cut package tomorrow as not being a conservative philosophy.

I will commend to you our colleague, the gentleman from California (Mr. CARDOZO's) comments, who is one of the leaders of the Blue Dogs. In his special order last night, with the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. ROSS), it is the politics of Scroogeonomics, because as we approach the holiday season, what they are doing and what they are engaging in, the Republican leadership is engaging in, Scroogeonomics.

We can only hope that tonight, as many of our Republican colleagues'

heads hit their pillow, we can only hope that they are visited tonight by the ghost of Christmas past, because that is how we are going to ensure, it is probably the only way that we will ensure it, through a visit of the ghost of Christmas past, that they are shown what the essential ramifications are if they actually move forward and pass this proposal, the cuts to child support, enforcement, the cuts to food stamps, the horrendous cuts in financial aid that they just handed down a couple of weeks ago in the budget reconciliation, Budget Cut Act.

Now tomorrow they want to give tax cuts to people who are in the top two-tenths of 1 percent of the wealthiest Americans.

□ 2230

We are not making this up. This is factual. That is who the vast majority of these tax cuts will go to. What is unbelievable in this Scrooge-onomics proposal of theirs is that they actually have the audacity to call the budget reconciliation act the Budget Deficit Reduction Act when you have got $50 billion in budget cuts in that and then tomorrow they are going to adopt, hopefully they won't, hopefully we will have enough of our colleagues visited by the ghost of Christmas past and they will have their consciences tweaked and they will vote ''no'' tomorrow, but then tomorrow we could potentially adopt $70 billion in tax cuts. I just helped my first graders with their math homework, but even they could figure out that that adds $20 billion to the deficit, $20 billion in which we already have $27,000 for every man, woman, child and newborn baby in this country. That is how much each of us owes.

Mr. PALLONE. The thing that is amazing, I know you were sort of hinting at the holiday analogy there, I cannot help, this is the 2 weeks between Thanksgiving and Christmas, or Hanukkah, too. I cannot help thinking of the analogy. I try not to necessarily throw religion into the debate.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. I was referring to the holidays.

Mr. PALLONE. But think about the sort of Christmas analogy. We all talk about religion, and certainly Christianity, I am a Christian, preaches about how you are supposed to help the poor and help the downtrodden, and here we are in the holiday season cutting programs to the poorest people, the victims of Katrina, their health care under Medicaid, their housing, their ability to get food stamps or food programs. Then I also think about the manger in the story of Jesus and his birth, there is the idea that the family went around and they couldn't find a place that would take them, they couldn't find housing and so they ended up staying in the manger because there was no place else to go. That is how I feel. You read about these housing cuts and I feel like this is like Mary and Joseph and Jesus walking around, they can't find a place to sleep and they have to end up on the street. What happened to this whole idea of Christian values or religious values? It is like thrown out the window at the very time when most people are thinking about it.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. When you are talking about your faith, my faith, I am a member of the Jewish faith, our faith talks about the spirit of Tikkun Olam and giving back to our community and thinking of those who are less fortunate. We are referring to the party that claims to corner the market on faith-based values. If you look at every aspect of their agenda, there is not a component of their agenda that has anything to do with what our faith traditions teach us or with values or with making sure that the least of us and the least among us are assisted. We are supposed to be their voice. If you had listened to the religious leaders who have come to this Capitol and talked about how abominable they think this proposal is, both the budget reconciliation bill and the tax cut package tomorrow is, then you would know that they do not have the moral high ground in this debate whatsoever.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. The gentlewoman is 110 percent right. I would say, and I will even give credit to some of our colleagues on the Republican side, the few within the conference, that agree with making sure that we carry ourselves in a responsible way. In the hour before, we were going to talk a little bit about responsibility and you are talking about responsibility. You are talking about a social and leadership responsibility that we have in the People's House, or what is supposed to be the People's House.

The gentleman from Massachusetts talked about decisions that have been made here in the past and now in the present. When you have a bad idea in many cases, when you start off by saying, like, for instance, a leader can say, I was wrong, or I wasn't quite on point and I'm willing to work with others to make sure that we reach the goals that we set out to do in the first place. What is happening now, Mr. Speaker, the Republican majority and the White House, it is like we don't even want to meet with you. We have conference committees where we have members on this side, ranking members that are saying, I didn't even know that the conference committee was meeting because they are not even notified. That is what is going on. This is not fiction. It is fact.

I just want to point out just a few things real quick. Third-party validator on the action that is supposed to take place tomorrow. I just want to make sure that the Members get this. Economic Policy Institute, www.epi.org. They can get in their office and pull this up. It is the report that is noted, ''The Bottom That Wasn't.'' The economy has little to show for $860 billion in tax cuts, mainly to the billionaires and millionaires.

It goes further back and I want people to pay very close attention to page 12. I just want to make sure that the Members pay attention to page 12 and I think they can read it for themselves. They can pull this up on the Web. You want to talk about responsibility? One of the most respected Members of this House, Mr. JACK MURTHA, stood up and said that things are not as they say they are in Iraq.

Our troops, and we just returned back from Iraq, are doing everything that they can do. We met with the 1st Cav. We went to Camp Victory. We went on to Mosul and a couple of other cities within Iraq. We heard time and time again, yes, we are here but we are here on our third and second deployment. Let me just put on my Armed Services hat here for one second. For us to look at a redeployment strategy, and Mr. MURTHA is right. He has the President running around here giving four and five speeches every week on trying to justify why we should be there and how we should be there. One leader in the Senate, the Democratic leader, Mr. Speaker, in the Senate said, we need to take the training wheels off the Iraqi government and let them know that our military has delivered. Our military has allowed them to be able to have elections come the 15th of December. But no one is talking about the fact which we learned sitting down not only with our military leaders in Iraq but also sitting down with the Iraqi leaders to find out that this parliament that is going to be elected, this governing council that is going to be elected in Iraq, including a prime minister, will not be seated until March of 2006. So folks talk about, oh, December 15 is going to be a wonderful day. They are not going to even get seated, have their power, until March. I guess the Potomac two-step will kick in again. First it was when we get the security forces to the point, and we have to watch the math here when you start talking about this. How many people do we have trained? You hear one number. That number was combat troops, not police combat units. Okay, you have to talk about the interior ministry that has a whole other police force. Only one brigade or two brigades and we have handed this area over. The bottom line and what Mr. MURTHA is saying, for us to be able to allow other countries to become a part of this effort that we set out on, we have to allow them to be a part of it. We are saying we have it.

Tony Blair, the number-one ally, Mr. Speaker, in this war in Iraq, has already said to his country that we're out next year. Period. Done. Not any of this, it's dependent on the training of the troops or it's dependent on how well the parliament and the new government that is in place, it's all dependent on this, that and the other. He said, We're out next year. Period. Our troops are coming home. That is the message to the Iraqi government that they have to get their act together. It

would be okay if it was an international effort in putting money into Iraq, but what the President is saying, he goes down to New Orleans and gives a speech a week after the storm that we will rebuild New Orleans. Meanwhile, Time, Newsweek, you name it, every major periodical, be it daily or weekly, special reports have said that it is not happening.

We are telling Louisiana, hey, you have got to come up with $300 billion to make it happen. They don't have any money right now. The bottom line is that just because they say it does not mean it is true. Mr. MURTHA, third-party validator, had a press conference today and eight letters that he gave to the press and to the American people. The thing that makes Mr. MURTHA so credible in this argument, ladies and gentlemen, is the fact, Mr. Speaker, that he is the ranking member and was the member of defense appropriations and he knows where the bodies are. He knows the Potomac two-step when he sees it. It is not about the fact that everyone likes him in this Congress. We all love Mr. MURTHA. But the bottom line is that he can deliver the message. The real issue instead of the administration and the majority running around here trying to discredit a decorated Marine, trying to discredit someone that has stood with the military foot and toe, someone that wrote letters, the first letter about Kevlar and making sure that our troops have what they needed when they didn't have it and discredit him, they should be trying to sit down with him and others and talk about a bipartisan plan that we can allow other countries to come in under a NATO force and that is what is going to happen after we say, okay, this is our strategy, we want to let the Iraqi people know our military is the number-one military on the face of the earth. You give them direction as it relates to what we want to do policywise, they will do it. They will train. They will make sure the people are in place. But as long as we sit there and say, We're not going to stop until complete victory and we don't know what complete victory is, you have to be precise. It is not even leadership when someone is vague and we are spending billions of dollars in Iraq. I think it is important when we start talking about folks carrying out the responsibility they have to carry out.

Whichever way you look at it, there are Republicans that are saying, Yeah, we need to figure out a redeployment plan, but no one wants to talk about redeployment as it relates to getting our troops out of harm's way. Meanwhile back at the ranch here in this country, we have mothers and we have fathers and we have those that are seeing their loved ones, especially if they are soldiers in the Army, that are being deployed for 12 to 16 months. Think about that, in your third deployment. I left for 5 days and it was like I was gone for a year from my family. Think about the person that leaves and you don't see them for 12 months, 16 months, and every day. I cannot even explain to you of some of the phone calls. I cannot even start explaining to you some of the phone calls that I receive from mothers and from daughters and from husbands saying, I cringe every time the news report comes over the television, three more U.S. troops, 10 more U.S. Marines. And we are still here saying, We're here until we carry out complete victory. You have got to talk about responsibility.

Mr. PALLONE. Just real quickly, you started off saying about how we just don't get the true facts from the Bush administration. It is so true. You listen to the President and you would think that the war was going well and everything is getting better. But we had the 10 Marines that were killed this week. The number of casualties now, we figure by the end of this year, is going to be the highest year ever. The number of casualties keeps rising. The President made a statement the other day about how the economy is getting better. We have lost more jobs in the 5 or 6 years that he has been in office than any President since, I guess, Herbert Hoover. And I don't know who he is talking to, but when you go back to New Jersey and you talk to people, the jobs keep getting lost, the factories keep closing down, the jobs that are replacing them are not as good as the previous ones. That is a big problem is that this administration simply does not present the facts and they just make up stories about what is really happening in Iraq and in America. I appreciate your comments. I just wanted to add that.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. When Mr. MURTHA, who has taken each of us, no matter what generation of Member we are, has taken each of us under his wing, I know I have had an opportunity to learn from him and be mentored by him and I am not on Armed Services or Homeland Security or any of the committees of reference but yet he is still willing to sit down. What was the response on the other side of the aisle to Mr. MURTHA's jump-starting this dialogue and doing what essentially the Nation has been begging for and that is to make sure that this body has a dialogue and has a debate and a discussion? To question Mr. MURTHA's patriotism. That was their reaction. It wasn't, Gee, how can we sit down and hash out our differences. It wasn't, Well, we don't agree with you on redeployment. No matter how you feel about to what degree or how quickly we should withdraw the troops, there is no question that Mr. MURTHA is a man with 37 years of experience in the Marines and 30 years in this body, having been the chair of the defense appropriations committee on which he is now the ranking member. That is what they do.

□ 2245

They undermine and undercut and insidiously insult the patriotism of an unbelievable American like JACK MURTHA, and it is outrageous. He deserves better and the country deserves better than where they have taken this debate.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, if I can, what we have here, the issue has been discussed in the news in many venues across the country, about whether the pre-war intelligence was hyped, distorted, and whether the American people were misled by the White House, by the Secretary of Defense, by the Vice President.

Let me put that aside for a moment and suggest that this rosy scenario, this euphoric, unrealistic picture that is now being painted about the realities that exist currently in Iraq is also distorted, is also misleading.

As the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) indicated earlier, the empirical data, the surveys that are being conducted in Iraq have a totally different conclusion and paint a picture of a reality that has to be disturbing to all of us. Just bear with me for just a moment.

This was a poll that was done by the British Ministry of Defense. It was conducted back in October of this year. It reveals the following: 45 percent of Iraqis believe attacks against British and American troops are justified, rising to 65 percent in some provinces. Eighty-two percent, Mr. Speaker, of the Iraqi people are strongly opposed to the presence of coalition troops.

Mr. Speaker, according to this poll, less than 1 percent of the population believe coalition forces are responsible for any improvement in security.

According to this British Ministry of Defense poll, 67 percent of Iraqis feel less secure because of the occupation, and 72 percent do not have confidence in the multinational force.

This is not a question or an issue of pessimism being put forth by Democratic Members of Congress. What this demonstrates, I would submit, is the reality of Iraq today, and that is why we disagree because what we are suggesting is what we hear from the White House, what we hear from some of our colleagues in the majority party, is unrealistic. It is false.

We are not suggesting that any one of our colleagues is lying, but the facts do not support their conclusions. We all wish it was true, but Mr. Speaker, it is not true and let us accept the truth. Let us insist on honesty.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, can I just break it down one more time?

Mr. DELAHUNT. Please.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. It is a culture of corruption and cronyism and incompetence. It is just that simple. It is just that simple. Mr. Speaker, we can outline this thing as much as possible. I mean, we can go into tomorrow morning if the rules would allow it, but it is just a culture. You cannot operate a business, you cannot operate an educational institution, and you definitely cannot operate a government under a

culture of corruption, cronyism and incompetence.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. You have people getting indicted left and right. You have contractors and administrators in the government stealing money. I will give you one story that is both full of corruption and cronyism.

An administrator in the U.S. Government who is in Iraq, who is in charge of $87 million in contracts, gets caught taking kickbacks of a couple hundred thousand dollars. That is corruption. In the 1990s he was convicted of fraud, and they put him in anyway because he was the friend of the proper person he needed to be friends with. That is cronyism, and the whole process of not being able to administer the public dollars in an efficient and effective fashion is incompetence.

The American taxpayers work very hard and they send the money down to us, and they trust us to spend that money in a way that will benefit the government and the safety and security of the United States. To put $87 million in the hands of a crook is not only incompetent, but it is wrong and it highlights their inability to govern.

They control the House and the Senate and the White House. They have been in charge for years of all three branches. They have had the opportunity to implement their Republican agenda on taxes, on poverty, on college tuition, on foreign policy, on everything. It has been a miserable failure across the board.

Quite frankly, I think it is an insult to the American people because we do not live under a dictatorship. We live in a democracy, a representative government. America has always been great, as Leader PELOSI was saying today to the 30 Something Group this morning, because we have these high expectations of what the government should do and what the government should be. I am tired of this body taking advantage of the busyness of the American people.

Why is it that just because they can get away with it they do it? That is not right because America cannot lead the world if it is not strong here at home, and these constant tax cuts for the wealthy and cutting billions of dollars out of college tuition, Mr. Speaker, how are we supposed to invest in the country?

Mr. DELAHUNT. When you talk about corruption, I have a question for the administration, and it will go unanswered. I dare say the fact that it will go unanswered is a demonstration that our own democracy is not functioning as it should and that we are putting our democratic institutions, particularly this institution, at risk of erosion, because we are not allowed to ask questions that the American people want answers to.

Let me give you one question. Ahmed Chalabi is the deputy prime minister of this interim government. He is an individual who was convicted in a Jordanian court for embezzlement of some $100 million. He became a darling, if you will, of the neo-conservative movement in this country. It is alleged that he provided false intelligence that served those that were advocating the invasion in Iraq.

Later, it was reported in the news that Mr. Chalabi was under investigation by the Federal Bureau of Investigation; that there was in Iraq a search of his personal residence because he was suspected of providing intelligence that put American military personnel at risk to Iran; that he was a double agent for the Iranian government. Yet several weeks ago, he is meeting with the Vice President in this country and is going around here in Washington.

Please, will someone tell us what happened? Was there any validity to those allegations?

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Well, he could not go to the Jordanian embassy when he was here in Washington because if he went to the Jordanian embassy they would have arrested him on the spot. The embassy is Jordanian ground, just like our embassy is in Jordan, because they have a warrant for his arrest. But better yet, we are doing business with, again, a culture of corruption, cronyism and incompetence, period.

One thing I also wanted to say, we are talking about a redeployment, i.e., how we are going to have an exit strategy. There are people that are running in a December 15 election that will be seated in March, and guess what is some of the platform. We want our own independence. There was actually a call for the U.S. to give their exit strategy. They are ready to go.

So we are saying that we are there on behalf of democracy. Now they have a form of democracy. They are going to have it in March, and we are still saying they are not ready. Now we are in judgment of them saying they are not ready, but we are saying we want them to have a democracy. Just imagine if someone was to come over here to help us and say, well, we are not going to leave until we think you are ready to govern your own country.

It goes against the very logic and principles even in our own Constitution saying that we want to help democratize other areas, and then when it comes down to it, U.S. cities are suffering and the money that we are spending over there. When their government is seated and one of the actions of business there was we want to govern our own country, we can take care of our own problems, better yet, we are going to tell them, no, we cannot, and once again, Mr. MURTHA is talking about redeploying our troops to Kuwait and some other area in case there is a threat as it relates to terrorism of the U.S., of the United States of America, the flag that we all salute, Mr. Speaker. Then our troops will go in and make sure.

But if there is some sort of war or conflict between different factions within Iraq, that is an Iraqi issue. When did that become our responsibility? We are not the Congress of the world, and the President is not the commander-in-chief of the world. There was not a ballot box over in Iraq outside with absentee ballots of our troops sending their votes in.

So I think it is important, as we look at how we are going to deal with the gulf States, how are we going to deal with health care, how are we going to make sure that small businesses are able to provide on behalf of their employees, how are we going make sure that U.S. companies are going to be able to stand for their pensions that folks signed up for, worked 15 years to find out when the golden 20 or 25 happens that it is not going to be there for them?

□ 2300

How are we going to continue to break our promise to veterans when we told them what we would do when they retire or they become veterans of health care? We are breaking our promises.

So to talk about the Iraqis and complete victory, I want to have complete victory as it relates to veterans; I want to have a complete victory as it relates to providing health care, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. You are absolutely right. Unless you believe that the contracting and the culture of corruption and cronyism and incompetence is reserved for contracting only in the Iraq gulf coast region.

We have a third-party validator, in the New York Times today, where in the gulf coast here we have Rosemary Barbour, the wife of the nephew of Haley Barbour, Mississippi's Governor and former Republican National Committee chairman, who now has apparently received $6.4 million in contracts by her company, and 10 separate contracts from FEMA or the General Services Administration without any bid. A no-bid contract.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Now, wait, wait, wait, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Can you please say that one more time? I am sorry, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Repeat that. That is unbelievable.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. The wife of the nephew of Haley Barbour, Mississippi Republican Governor, former RNC chairman, she has received $6.4 million in contracts for things like laundry service and showers and delivering tents. Not emergency needs 3 months after Katrina hit that would seem to require no-bid contracts, but 10 separate contracts from FEMA and the General Services Administration, no-bid contracts, of $100,000 or more.

Now, if that is not cronyism.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Culture.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. And a culture of corruption.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. And incompetence.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. That we have been talking about, then I do not know what that is.

Did that contract have to be no bid? What made the wife of the nephew of the Governor, who is a former RNC chairman, who just also happens to have been a Republican Party activist, what made her the most qualified? Coincidentally? Coincidentally? Oh, gee, she just happens to be related to the Governor of Mississippi, who is the former RNC chairman and who happened to get a no-bid contract, 10 no-bid contracts for services that I would not deem emergency, that needed to not take the time we would like to require in terms of accountability for reviewing contracts and making sure it goes to the responsible bidder, the person who is going to provide that service in the most economical way.

I know we are coming in on our last few minutes.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. We have a few minutes, but the majority treats government like it is their own personal sandbox.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Yes, like it is their piggy bank.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Exactly. And they can do whatever they want to do, take care of their friends, and do it using the taxpayers' dollars.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. And, Mr. RYAN, if we could point to some of these things and they could justifiably say these are anomalies, these are outlandish things that only happen on occasion, but, look: pages and pages. Look how thick this notebook is. I am not making this up.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, you have local contractors. You have local contractors that are saying they are not getting work. They are saying they are not getting work.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. They do not have the connections. That is why they are not getting the work.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. They are not getting the work.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. And the workers are not getting the prevailing wage.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. But, meanwhile, say it again before we close. Just read what you read about the contracts, just in case some Member went and picked up some coffee or something.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. The wife of the nephew of the Republican Governor of Mississippi, former RNC chairman, $6.4 million in contracts, 10 separate contracts from FEMA and the GSA that were no-bid, for services like providing laundry equipment, delivering tents, and maintaining showers for relief workers.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Wait a minute. I think you guys are being a little hard on the Governor here, because his press secretary says that ''the Governor had no knowledge whatsoever of Rosemary's receiving that contract.''

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. RYAN, just stop.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. No, I think you are being a little hard on him. His press secretary, KENDRICK, said he did not know anything about it. Are you saying you do not believe him?

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Just because he says it, does not mean it is true.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. You are saying you do not believe him.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. No, we are saying there is a continuation of the culture of cronyism and corruption, and it is time to give government back to the people. And that is what we want to do next year, give government back to the people; make sure government can be responsive to the people's needs and provide for the needs of the people who need the most help.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. And time and time again you have the act itself, everybody knows what is happening, and then you have the press secretary come out, just like the White House press secretary said Scooter Libby did not know anything. Karl Rove did not know anything. No one knew anything, but the facts say something completely different, Mr. MEEK.

And it is a shame that this culture of corruption, cronyism, and incompetence is so pervasive throughout the United States Congress and our government.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Before you give the Web site out, Mr. RYAN, I want to say that for every time we have pointed out a culture of corruption and cronyism and incompetence, they are still at work doing it.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. We can do better.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. That is the sad part.

Mr. DELAHUNT. We can do it together.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Together America can do better and a stronger America begins right here at home.

30somethingdems@mail.house.gov. Thirty, the number, somethingdems@mail.house.gov.

Thank you, Mr. DELAHUNT, Mr. PALLONE, Mr. MEEK, and Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ.

## LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida (at the request of Mr. BLUNT) for the week of December 6 on account of medical reasons.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington (at the request of Mr. BLUNT) for today after 3:00 p.m. and the balance of the week on account of attending a funeral.

## SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Ms. WOOLSEY) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. EMANUEL, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. DEFAZIO, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. WOOLSEY, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. WYNN, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. FILNER, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut, for 5 minutes, today.

Mrs. MALONEY, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. BLUMENAUER, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. GUTKNECHT) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. GUTKNECHT, for 5 minutes, today and December 8.

Mr. PAUL, for 5 minutes, December 14.

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania, for 5 minutes, today.

## SENATE ENROLLED BILLS SIGNED

The SPEAKER announced his signature to enrolled bills of the Senate of the following titles:

S. 52. An act to direct the Secretary of the Interior to convey a parcel of real property to Beaver County, Utah.

S. 136. An act to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to provide supplemental funding and other services that are necessary to assist certain local school districts in the State of California in providing educational services for students attending schools located within Yosemite National Park, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to adjust the boundaries of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, to adjust the boundaries of Redwood National Park, and for other purposes.

S. 212. An act to amend the Valles Caldera Preservation Act to improve the preservation of the Valles Caldera, and for other purposes.

S. 279. An act to amend the Act of June 7, 1924, to provide for the exercise of criminal jurisdiction.

S. 1886. An act to authorize the transfer of naval vessels to certain foreign recipients.

## ADJOURNMENT

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 6 minutes p.m.), the House adjourned until tomorrow, Thursday, December 8, 2005, at 10 a.m.

## OATH OF OFFICE MEMBERS, RESIDENT COMMISSIONER, AND DELEGATES

The oath of office required by the sixth article of the Constitution of the United States, and as provided by section 2 of the act of May 13, 1884 (23 Stat. 22), to be administered to Members, Resident Commissioner, and Delegates of the House of Representatives, the text of which is carried in 5 U.S.C. 3331:

> ''I, AB, do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true