

but the timing is uncertain. Most of the authorities believe that it will be within the next decade: Oil peaking presents a unique challenge. And then I emphasize here, The world, he says, has never faced a problem like this. And the first chart, it said, unprecedented challenges. Never have there been challenges like this. Without massive mitigation, more than a decade before the fact, the problem will be pervasive and will not be temporary.

Previous energy transitions, wood to coal and coal to oil, as we just looked at, were gradual and evolutionary. Oil peaking will be abrupt and revolutionary, he says.

In our closing moments, I would like to just show some of the things that they were doing. What they have done is to simplify this bell curve to make it a little triangle because they want to use that to depict the solutions that they are suggesting are possible. On the bottom here is an interesting one, and what it shows is that oil price spike hikes have not made any difference in the amount of oil that is available.

This is the production of oil, and this is price spike hike. If making more profit because it sells for more would stimulate production, then one would have thought we would see a big production peak follow this. Notice we do not really see any big production peak following that.

Now, they have simplified this bell curve, and the next chart shows the reason why. This is just a little schematic, and they have a number of alternatives that they could use to fill the gap. The gap is going up like this, and then it is going to fall off, and we would like it to keep on going up so we could keep using more and more, and these are things we would fill the gap with.

The next chart shows what happens if we wait until it happens. Then we have a major, major economic problem because it takes quite a while to get these things going. If we anticipate it by 10 years, we have less of a problem but still a problem. To not have a meaningful problem, we must anticipate it by 20 years. Clearly, we have probably passed that point. By most people's reckoning, we have passed that point.

The next chart is a little schematic that I think shows it very well. This, again, is a 2-percent curve. This is a schematic curve, and what it shows is a 2-percent increase in the rate at which we are using it, which has been the rate at which we are producing it. That will slow as we reach peak oil. And notice that the gap starts to occur before we reach peak oil.

I would submit, Mr. Speaker, that what we do not want to do is to try to meet the challenge of filling that gap because, if we do, we only have a really sharp decline on the other side. What we really need to do is to depress our use with conservation efficiency so that we have something to invest in

the alternatives that we must invest in. With oil at \$60 a barrel, obviously there is not as much as we would like to have or it would be cheaper.

I would like to close by putting up again this chart which I think is so significant. This is kind of a global long-term look at the problem. This is where we are, about halfway through the age of oil. Now, we have been as a world and as a country, as a society, rather grossly irresponsible up to this time.

Mr. Speaker, whether we like it or not, oil will peak. We will start down the other side. We will shift to the alternatives. That will be a much less traumatic transition if we plan for it. And my urging tonight is that we need in our country to address this problem with the kind of an overall commitment we had when we fought World War II, and I lived through that, with the kind of a technical commitment we had to putting a man on the moon and the kind of urgency we had in the Manhattan Project. Mr. Speaker, I think that if we have a national, an international program that has those elements in it, that we probably can have a relatively smooth landing. Minus that, it could be a very rough landing not just for us but for all of the world.

Mr. Speaker, the great ingenuity of the American people cannot be harnessed, and I hope that we can challenge them so that we will meet this challenge and have a relatively smooth transition.

#### THE 30-SOMETHING WORKING GROUP

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. POE). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MEEK) is recognized for half the remaining time until midnight, approximately 48 minutes.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to address the House once again. I would like to thank not only the Democratic leader but the Democratic leadership for allowing the 30-Something Working Group to come to the floor again not only to address the Members but also interested parties in how our country conducts its business and how we operate this government that the American taxpayers have allowed us to oversee.

There is a lot going on, Mr. Speaker. I must add a lot of it is quite discouraging when we start looking at how we are conducting business here in Washington, D.C. But I think it is very important and very appropriate for not only Mr. DELAHUNT but Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ and also Mr. RYAN of Ohio to come to the floor to share with the American people things that the Democratic side of the aisle are working on to improve their lives.

I can tell the Members try, day in and day out, not only in the committees but here on the floor working on behalf of Americans, protecting Ameri-

cans here at home, dealing with issues as it relates to implementing the recommendations of the 9/11 reports. As Members know, the 9/11 Commission has given this government failing grades across the board of implementing some of the projects that they would like to see implemented to protect Americans. Also, we have been standing up for Americans that have served in harm's way, veterans, making sure that they are able to get improved health care benefits. But in this particular budget that the Republican majority passed, we know the lines are going to get longer and services are going to be cut back or veterans are going to have to pay more.

We released a report today dealing with Hurricane Katrina. In the same week that the Republican majority, Mr. Speaker, is going to pass a budget on the backs of working Americans to give millionaires tax breaks, we still have families living in tents. Tents. While we are kicking others out of hotel rooms, we are giving tax breaks to millionaires and billionaires. And I think it is important that we understand what is happening right now in the moment.

I do not want to wait for the book to come out, Mr. Speaker. I want to do something about it before one can write the book. And if they are going to write a book, it is going to talk about Americans and Congress came together. Hopefully, we can get some of our Republican colleagues in a bipartisan way to save the American taxpayer and to save the Americans that are in need right now.

There is a lot of concern and focus on what is going on hundreds and thousands of miles away as it relates to a group of individuals that we have done quite a bit for recently in Iraq. Americans simply ask for, not just Democrats in the House but also the Senate has asked the President for a clear plan as it relates to dealing with the issue of Iraq and our troops and making sure that we can bring families together in the very near future.

I think it is important that we continue to hit on these issues. I do not know what the American children and families have done to the Republican majority, but I can say that if they passed this budget, what the majority would like to do on the backs of Americans and in the same week give the wealthiest Americans an unprecedented tax break in the history of this Republic, I think it is something that the American people are going to have to evaluate. The Democrats, on this side, we are trying very much to protect access to health care for Americans. Not a mumbling word, not a mumbling word, from this Congress on this issue of the health care crisis here in Congress. But I am glad that the 30-Something Working Group does not find it robbery to come to the floor to bring light to these issues and make sure that not only Independents, Republicans and Democrats know what is

happening here under the Capitol Dome but also know what is not happening.

And with that, I yield to the gentleman from the great State of Florida (Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ).

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to join my good friend from Ohio and Massachusetts and Florida here each week.

Just to pick up what the gentleman was talking about, it is, sadly, not only on the gulf coast that we have had the issue of housing difficulties following Wilma. They had the same issue in Katrina on the gulf coast. We have got the same issue going on in Wilma, which was much smaller in scope but affected a significant number of people. We had more people affected by Wilma in terms of electric utility outages than all of Katrina, and we still to this day have Wilma victims in South Florida who have not been given temporary housing assistance, still people who are struggling to find that. Yet we are passing budget reconciliation, budget cut bills. We are passing tax cut bills in the name of offsetting the cost of the relief that we need to provide for Katrina victims and victims of natural disasters when the reality is that what we are doing with budget cuts is a direct result of needing to pay for the tax cuts that were passed just a week later.

And I want to echo what our good friend from Pennsylvania said when he introduced his Iraq War resolution, and he has repeated this a number of times, that just because you say it does not make it true. And our good friends on the other side of the aisle can continue to repeat over and over if they want to that they are offsetting the cost of Katrina relief with budget cuts, but we all know that the reality is, and I mean, we have only to do the math, that when they pass \$50 billion in budget cuts one week and then the very next week they pass \$70 billion in tax cuts, that is not a Deficit Reduction Act, as they called it and titled that bill, when we are adding \$20 billion to the deficit.

I do not know. I go back to my kindergarten and first grade mathematics and can pretty easily sit down with my 6-year-olds, and they can figure out that the math does not work. But, unfortunately, what we have going on here, I guess, the politics of what is going on here is about message. And the Republican leadership's politics is repetition, repetition, repetition. They figure if they repeat the same message over and over again, whether it is true or not, that they figure if it has a kernel of truth, that people will believe it.

□ 2230

But Mr. MURTHA is absolutely right on tax-cut policy, on budget-cut policy, whether it is how we got into the Iraq war and even down to the description of his own resolution. If you say it, just because you say it does not make it true. That is really what we need to get across to the American people.

I would like to yield to my good friend, the gentleman from Ohio.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I just totally agree. I think we are talking about some basic principles here of which the government that currently rules is not reflective of what is going on in Ohio, in Florida, in the Gulf States, in Massachusetts. We are clearly not addressing the main issues.

I know my friend from Massachusetts has some comments to make, so I am going to kick it over to him. But I think as we make our presentation tonight, this is not personal with the Republicans, because I think we have all agreed, we have got some good friends on the other side of the aisle. We are just disagreeing with their philosophy of governing.

When you see here tonight, with some great charts that Tom Manatos from our staff has put together for us, the kind of spending that our country is doing in Iraq and the kind of cuts that we have here in the United States, when you see the tax cuts, the amount and who they are going to and the cuts in the budget in specific programs that are geared towards the middle class, Medicare, Medicaid, and the level of sacrifice that average people are being asked to make here, it is unbelievable.

When you talk about Delphi going bankrupt; Ford came out last week, they are going to cut 30,000 jobs and close 10 plants. The economy may be growing, but average middle Americans are not seeing it in their paychecks, and they are seeing tremendous increases in their energy costs and gas and heating oil and the like. I know you have been very instrumental in a variety of ways in Massachusetts to help with that.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, I think the point that our colleague Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ was making about arithmetic and the fact that, despite the rhetoric, the reality is that the deficit will increase as a result of the action that this Republican majority will take during the course of this week in concert with the Republican Senate in terms of spending cuts and tax cuts, these so-called reconciliation bills.

I think it is important to note a very disturbing statistic that was referred to in a Wall Street Journal article, and that is that the Federal Government's budget deficit in December, in December 2005, the month just concluded, was in excess of \$83 billion. That is for a single month. That is an increase of some 43 percent from a year earlier, that is from November of 2004, and a record high for any November in American history.

So the direction that this country is headed with the economic policies that are debated and voted on, again recognizing that there is a Republican majority, I would submit are heading our Nation into a potential economic tsunami. Distinguished economists from all places on the spectrum have expressed concern. I am sure during the course of our conversation, knowing how well prepared you all are, you 30-

some things, you will be able to provide a quote for our colleagues and for those that are watching our conversation this evening. But stop for one minute and simply think of that figure, \$83 billion.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Just to clarify that, we are running an \$83 billion deficit just for one month, just for the month of November, which means we do not have the money; we are not taking in the money to pay out the bills, and we have got to go and borrow the money. And this \$83 billion that the gentleman from Massachusetts was talking about, we are borrowing it from China. We are borrowing it from Saudi Arabia. We are borrowing it from Japan, and we have to pay interest on it.

So we are running up a tab here for the next generation that is not fair. And we are doing things to the next generation, our generation, our generation, that we are going to eventually have to pay the bill.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, there was a time and a place that we could say future generations, but we are talking about right now. We are talking about taking and cutting out of the budget child enforcement, Mr. Speaker, enforcement that State attorneys have to go after deadbeat dads, that mothers will lose money out of, deadbeat parents. Let me say that children will go without.

We are talking in this budget about cutting free and reduced lunches for children. We are talking about cutting money out of the veteran affairs. The Republican majority in this budget is instructing through legislation the Veteran Affairs Committee to cut over \$650 million out of veteran affairs.

I do not understand. We can talk about future generations as it relates to the budget and the \$27,000-plus that they already owe at birth, but let us talk about what is happening right now. The lines are going to get longer for veterans. Under Medicaid, children will not get eye examinations because of this cut.

I could see it if we were to say, Mr. Speaker, we did not have the money for this. But we are giving the money to millionaires. We are giving the money to billionaires.

Mr. DELAHUNT. We are also giving money to the Iraqi people and denying it to the American people.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Well, Mr. DELAHUNT, I must add to just say this, that we are compassionate to the oil companies. We are giving them money when they are making record-breaking profits. So when folks say, well, Congressman, when we get an e-mail or so to Members of Congress, well, what are you so alarmed about? We are in the majority. What are you concerned about? You gain the majority on the Democratic side, and you can do something different.

We have reams of plans where we want to put American people first. We want to put our troops first, our

troops' families first. We want to put our veterans first. We want to put a child that did nothing but was born as an American child first. That is what we want to do. We want to do away with the culture of corruption and cronyism and incompetence. What is wrong with that?

So, Mr. DELAHUNT and Mr. RYAN and Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, when we talk about future generations, we have to talk about now in the present. We are not talking about Republican families will not suffer under this. They will suffer just as bad as independents and Democratic families.

So I think it is important that we should be alarmed, that Americans should be alarmed. These are the very same individuals, I am sorry, I have to pull my chart out; Mr. DELAHUNT, you can't say this enough, these are the folks that are saying, Trust us, we know how to operate the government.

Then you have a President that could not do it by himself with a Republican majority who made this country more dependent on foreign countries like China, Saudi Arabia, Japan, borrowing \$1.05 trillion. I cannot say that enough. In 4 years, that has trumped 42 presidents before him, \$1.01 trillion. In 224 years of presidencies, of all the crises we have had, this President seems to have done it in 4 years.

You would think that cities would be a shining example of the Federal commitment after all of this money has been borrowed from foreign nations. No, cities are putting levies and millage and going out to the taxpayers asking for more money, a penny here, a penny there. Meanwhile, back at the ranch, people are getting tax cuts, millionaires are getting tax cuts on the backs of the very people that we are trying to provide a government for.

So, Mr. DELAHUNT and Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ and Mr. RYAN, if we could talk about the present, because we talk about future generations and some folks will say we will have time, we will recover. But this is unprecedented. The deficit has never been this high.

Mr. DELAHUNT. If I could talk about the immediate future for one moment to follow up, because I think you make a prescient point.

While we are standing here today, there was a report that I listened to that indicated that the chairman of the Defense Appropriations Committee, a highly respected and regarded Member of this House, Chairman BILL YOUNG from Florida, and the senior Democrat, the ranking member whom you alluded to earlier, JOHN MURTHA, again, highly regarded, well-respected, served his country in Vietnam, a senior Democrat, on the Defense Appropriations bill that their staffs are preparing, already an additional \$100 billion in that supplemental budget to be put to this House, to this Congress, for approval in the not-too-distant future. That is an additional \$100 billion that will be utilized in Iraq, not here in America.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will yield further, we talk about the culture of corruption and cronyism and the total lack of competence on a regular basis in our 30-Something Working Group, and we are really zeroing in on the incompetence tonight, the incompetence and the indifference, because really the two are hand-in-glove.

Mr. DELAHUNT, you talked about the economic tsunami, and I want to follow up on that, but let us build up to the economic tsunami that you have been describing.

First, Mr. MEEK talks about the debt, the debt under this President being more than the combined total of the previous 42 presidents prior to this one.

Now, we have a chart over here that talks about the Defense budget deficits. Let us just look at the two years when we transitioned from President Clinton to President Bush. If you look in fiscal year 2001 and fiscal year 2002, fiscal year 2001, we had a surplus of \$128.2 billion. You move into fiscal year 2002, and we have a deficit of \$157.8 billion.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Incompetence.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. If that is not evidence of incompetence, how do you have that big a swing from one year to the next, with the only difference being the person in the White House?

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Can I just make a point there, because I think it just fits right into there? \$100 billion more in Iraq, \$200 billion we have already spent, \$100 million here for media campaigns. We have Republican media consultants slopping at the trough of the Defense Department so that they can put on a PR campaign in Afghanistan when the Afghanistan people do not even want it. The same in Iraq.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. It keeps going: \$157.8 billion; a \$377.6 billion deficit the next year; \$412.1 billion deficit the year after that. We are getting a little better; we go back to \$319 billion. Now we are at \$323 billion. So the track record here is that there was one dip in the whole time that this President has been in office, and now we are climbing back again.

Yet, supposedly, we just passed the Deficit Reduction Act. If you are going to zero in on the incompetence, talk about the fact that the 9/11 Commission just came out with a report grading this administration and this Congress an F on the necessary follow-up to their recommendations. There is still no unified list of terror suspects for use by air travel screeners. There has been a misallocation of funds in terms of Homeland Security money. You have big city police and firefighters who still lack the ability to talk to each other. They lack the communications systems that were one of the key recommendations.

Remember, after 9/11, if you know nothing about what happened after 9/11, the thing that sticks in everyone's mind was it was so shocking that these

police and firefighters, between agencies, city to county and station to station, could not talk to each other because their communications systems do not line up. They could not talk to the FBI. That has not been fixed. It is just unbelievable.

They are still cutting. They are still cutting. They are still cutting the budget, and they are cutting taxes. They are giving more money to wealthy people, not just your run-of-the-mill average wealthy person, but the top two-tenths of 1 percent of the wealthiest people in America, people who make more than \$1 million annually.

So, Mr. DELAHUNT, you talk about an economic tsunami. The policies that have been going on in this administration and in this Congress, it is not just an economic tsunami. What the American people have been hit with is Hurricane Republican. You really cannot describe it any other way, because they have been hit by Katrina, they have been hit by Rita, they have been hit by Wilma. And instead of fixing it, instead of addressing the problems that the American people need addressed, they have now been hit by Hurricane Republican.

□ 2245

Or they are about to. We can stave it off. We could stave it off because there is a conference report. A bill is passed out of the House. A bill is passed out of the Senate. The cuts Mr. DELAHUNT described do not have to happen. There is still time to rethink this and come together and truly work together, which in my 11 months here just has not happened enough. There are isolated pockets of instances when we do work together, and I know compromise is possible.

I am praying that that happens because the aftermath of the Hurricane Republican could be worse than Katrina, but it does not have to be that way. I yield to the gentleman from Florida.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Can I amend that chart and say Hurricane Republican Majority, because we represent Republicans that believe in what we are talking about here tonight. Goodness gracious, the average Republican's stomach would turn if they even knew half of what is happening in this House. You can have a convention or you can have a pep talk or you can go on a radio show and give one side, but these are facts, not fiction. There are third-party validators behind all of these numbers. They can go on the U.S. Treasury Web site and find that we are borrowing more in the history than any of the other 42 Presidents before this President from foreign countries. The deficit is higher than it has ever been before.

The Republican majority is saying we are not going to leave until we pass this budget on the backs of the American people. I added "backs of the American people." We are not going to

leave until we pass this tax cut for millionaires and billionaires and special interests. We are not going to leave until they get what they want or what we want them to have.

Instead of them saying, We are not going to leave until we make sure that Americans do not have to pay three times as much for heating and oil. We are not going to leave until we put forth a bipartisan health care plan. We are not going to leave until veterans get their fair share out of the Federal Government and we do what we are supposed to do. And we are not going to leave until we pressure this administration to come up with a strategy for Iraq because as we were talking earlier, the bottom line is it for everything that has happened in Iraq, and maybe Mr. RYAN will want to elaborate on this little more, there has been a time line. But when we start talking about our troops, our men and women that are in harm's way, oh, we cannot talk about time lines now.

Talk about the Iraqi elections, the President just gave a speech saying, well, the elections, this is happening and a permanent parliament will be in place. They will be seated sometime in March, and it is going just as planned. Well, guess what, the insurgency knew about the elections, the insurgency knew of every other benchmark that we put forth; but when it comes down to our men and women, four marines died today. When it comes down to our men and women we cannot ask any questions?

Excuse me, we all salute one flag I think. I think just as the President has the prerogative to say that this Member is wrong or Congress is wrong or that Senator is incorrect, we can say the same thing under this democracy, Mr. Speaker. I think the American people have risen up. It is not a question if they have arrived yet to this conclusion, that we need a plan. We need a plan so our troops know clearly what we are asking of them, so the Defense Department can stop acting like the State Department and replace them with diplomats. Just like Mr. MURTHA has said, we need a diplomatic solution to Iraq.

Yes, we can do things on the horizon. Yes, we can come in and carry out operations here and there, but to have our troops carrying out convoys on the grounds of Iraq so that the insurgency can continue to pick off 10 and five and eight, these are American families. I think we all in this House should be passionate as if we had children in harm's way. Period. Dot.

If my son or daughter were there, I would want a plan, a plan to where it just does not move based on what the President says about stay the course. Stay the course for what? Stay the course for what? For the elections? We have a plan there. We know when the elections are going to happen. The insurgents know when their government is going to be placed. But to say if we reveal that then it will hurt our operations there. Rhetoric.

So I think it is important if we are going to stay here, and I am prepared to stay, I am prepared to stay until we deal with the real energy crisis that we have here at home, until we deal with health care, until we make sure that jobs are secure here in America, until we make sure that we get a real budget that is going to decrease the budget and we are record breaking.

I want to say this in closing out the comments here, an editorial from the Lafayette Daily Advertiser. I talked this out with the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ) because we went through Wilma. We were here fighting on behalf of Hurricane Katrina victims and survivors. Meanwhile, while we are fighting, a hurricane hits our district. Now we are having to talk about not only Katrina, but Rita, Wilma, and a number of other storms. This could be in a paper in a Member's district soon: "Tax Cuts to the Rich Shouldn't Come At Gulf Coast Expense."

Let me take one paragraph from here:

"We can't afford a levee protection system for south Louisiana, but we can afford to give away \$56 billion over the next 5 years to people who don't need it."

Now this is what the paper is saying. It is not what I am saying.

There is not enough money to help the people pay their mortgage on uninhabitable homes that insurance companies will not pay for, but we will give millions to millionaires, \$32,000 extra each year in tax breaks.

Like I said, if it was a perfect world at this point, I would assume that it would be okay, but it is not. We have Americans living in tents. We have Americans thinking about, I heard some Members coming to the floor talking about Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanza, you name it, the high religious season that we are getting into now. Meanwhile, we are giving notices to Americans that you are going to be evicted, a judge had to step in and say not so. A judge had to step in.

We have Members here that are throwing rocks at the judiciary. I say thank God for the judiciary in this case. Someone needs to stop this culture of corruption and cronyism and incompetence. And I would add incompetence as it relates to evicting Americans. Meanwhile, we are record breaking spending money over in Iraq right now with no plan, no plan to say we need to take the training wheels off the Iraqi Government and let them know. Just like we can have elections on time, we can have a redeployment plan on time and we are offering that option.

I ask some of my Republican colleagues on the other time, and some of them are, a very small group, but I asked them to be able to rise up because when historians in the very near future, and I do say the very near future, when they start looking at what we were doing and, guess what, what

the Republican majority was not doing under the circumstances, I think that there is going to be a price to pay politically for the inaction that they have not taken.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Sometimes incompetence is benign. We all interact with people who make mistakes, who maybe are not up to the par that we would like them to be. But not when the stakes are this high, not when you are talking about the people who are running the Government of the United States of America. I mean, not when incompetence results in debts.

The thousands of people that are harmed or died as a result of Katrina, incompetence hurt them or killed them. Governor Blanco today, thank God for technology, we talked about that last week a little bit. E-mail technology allows us to know now as opposed to what goes in a paper shredder, that the White House, Homeland Security, and FEMA all knew what was going on down in New Orleans immediately following Katrina and as she was approaching; and they either did nothing or did not know what to do.

That kind of incompetence is dangerous. When it is benign you can look the other way and you can sort of throw up your hands and say, well, those are just things you have to deal with when you encounter incompetence. We cannot allow incompetence to reach the heights that we have in this country.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that that incompetence has characterized this administration for the past 5 years. And I say that with no glee. I say that purely from a concern about the quality of life that our people are experiencing here in this country as a result of miscalculations, incompetence, and a blind belief and denial of reality.

Do you remember prior to the war when we were told by the Secretary of Defense, and now I am going to quote Mr. Rumsfeld, "When it comes to reconstruction, before we turn to the American taxpayer, we will turn first to the resources of the Iraqi Government and the international community."

His deputy Paul Wolfowitz, he made the following statement: There is a lot of money to pay for this that does not have to be U.S. taxpayer money and it starts with the assets of the Iraqi people. We are dealing with a country that can really finance its own reconstruction.

If you remember the name of President Bush's chief economic adviser, Larry Lindsey, when he predicted that the cost of the war with Iraq would range somewhere between 100 and \$200 billion, he was dismissed, he was fired.

I do not want tonight to talk about intelligence and the issue of weapons of mass destruction and links to al Qaeda, et cetera, et cetera; but there has consistently been mistakes and miscalculations because there is such a conviction of righteousness, if you will.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, can I make a comment?

We have the poster here from Newsweek that has our esteemed leader in a bubble and it is called the "Isolated President." And I think this goes to exactly what the gentleman was just saying and what Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ was just saying and what Mr. MEEK of Florida was just saying.

The comments that Secretary Wolfowitz made and Secretary Rumsfeld just were not true. The comments about the tax cuts and what they would do for average people just did not turn out to be true. And about the war and how we would progress just did not come to be true. And the bubble here symbolizes all these people like Mr. Lindsey who are saying, no, it is going to cost us \$200 billion and they fire him. And the general who said we are going to need a couple hundred thousand troops in order to do this properly, and they dismissed him too. It turns out that we needed all these troops there.

It just seems that this administration does not want to hear from other outside viewpoints in order for us to fix this problem.

Now, Mr. MEEK was talking about what I found very interesting. I have the President's speech here that he was talking about earlier, and the President talks about the first milestone we had was the transfer of sovereignty at the end of June. And the second milestone was the Iraqi election, and the third milestone, if we had these milestones as Mr. MEEK said, these benchmarks, when we were going to transfer, when the election was going to be, when the interim government was going to take place, then December 15, which is coming up in just a day or two, we had benchmarks.

□ 2300

So why would we not have benchmarks for when we are going to get out? That is all we are arguing here.

No Child Left Behind, in which we all agreed on, the Republican majority has not funded it, which was a key element, but we agreed that schools need to be accountable, and if you do not hit certain levels, you are not helping kids.

Accountability, the President talks a lot about accountability. We need to just say, Mr. President, this administration, Mr. Secretary, you need to be accountable, need to be accountable in Iraq, accountable for the budget deficit, accountable for cutting food stamps and giving tax cuts to the top 1 percent. You need to take responsibility for that.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. You are absolutely right. The President is trying to get away with saying generically, amorphously, we are not going to withdraw traps and withdraw from Iraq until we have results on the ground, results-oriented withdrawal.

I want to know, my constituents want to know, the American people

want to know, what does that mean? Does it mean when the Iraqi troops are 50 percent independent and cannot operate on their own and protect their own country, 75, 23? Which is it? You cannot pick and choose. He cannot be allowed to pick and choose which elements of the process in Iraq he is going to put a number on and which element he is not going to.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, can I make another comment in addition to what you just said, why are not the people who are in his administration being held accountable? You tell the American people and you talk them into something by saying it is not going to cost you any money, we are going to use the oil revenue, we are only going to be there a little while, we will not need as many troops as we actually do really need; why were not any of those people held accountable for their mistakes, all the mistakes that were being made? We went to Iraq, and we are on the Armed Services Committee, and we support the Defense appropriations and body armor and up-armor. We were on all the letters, all the pressure that was applied to make sure these troops had what they needed. We were there to support them every step of the way. No one's going to tell me that I am not supporting the troops, but someone needs to be held accountable.

All the mistakes that were made, are you telling me that no one should get fired? Who is the guy who hired the contractor who committed fraud in the 1990s and then stole \$200,000 in the last year or two? Who hired him? What is this Mike Brown all about? I mean, you hire cronies, they do an incompetent job, and no one gets fired.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, let me just insert one more thing because the Newsweek cover just says it all. In Bush's world, in the President's world, you do not have to have accountability. You do not have to put numbers on anything you do. You do not have to say what percentage prepared the troops have to be, and you are never wrong.

I have had to teach my kids, and they love to insist that they do not make mistakes. That is the orientation of a juvenile. My young children do not understand that sometimes they are wrong and this is okay and that you should learn how to change course. But in Bush's world, in the President's world, that does not happen. Because he is the President, he apparently has surrounded himself with people who either cannot convince him that he is wrong or he has surrounded himself with people that insist on agreeing with him all the time.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. So when they say after 5 years of all of the misrepresentation and all of the lack of accountability and the incompetence and the cronyism and the corruption, the culture of corruption that we have here, when you come to us 5 or 6 years later, in the midst of a war and huge budget

deficits, and you say to the American people just trust us, it becomes very difficult for us to just trust.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, I am going to refer in a moment to this chart to my left, but I think in fairness we have to note that just this past week, for the first time, President Bush has acknowledged that mistakes were made. I want to commend him for that, and I know we all share that.

He acknowledged last week "that the multibillion dollar reconstruction of Iraq," and I am using his words now, "has 'been uneven' and hobbled by corruption, misplaced priorities and insurgent attacks." This report is from the Washington Post. It is dated December 8. It goes on to state: "In an unusually stark assessment of the situation in Iraq," the President "described several strategic errors in managing a rebuilding effort that he said proceeded in 'fits and starts.' By learning from its mistakes," the President said "the administration has reshaped its approach."

I think it is important that we note that. We welcome that. But it is long, long overdue, and as I said earlier, we are anticipating receiving in the next several months a request, a supplemental request, for an additional \$100 billion. Let us talk about what our priorities are in terms of the American people and our involvement in Iraq.

I was here when a supplemental budget came before us. I, and others, advocated that rather than just simply giving this money for reconstruction to the so-called interim government that we put it in the form of a loan. Every other major donor country insisted, clearly providing favorable terms and conditions and years to repay, but that they would be reimbursed so that their children and grandchildren would not have to confront the order of magnitude that we see in terms of our deficits.

Look at this chart for a minute. We are cutting \$505 million on student loans, and the interest rates, therefore, will be higher. That is a cut to a generation of students that we need to be engaged at the highest level to compete in this global economy. Yet, at the same time, we are providing \$508 million of transportation and communication, including construction of 28 railroad stations in Iraq's southern provinces, and we will never see a dime of that. That is a giveaway. That is a grant. Despite the words of Secretary Rumsfeld and Under Secretary Wolfowitz, that said that we would not have to pay a dime of American taxpayer dollars, what we are doing is we are funding that project and cutting necessary programs for Americans, and we are giving it away overseas.

The tragedy of it all is that there is pervasive corruption going on in Iraq today with those dollars, and the President has acknowledged that. He has acknowledged the fact that there is corruption today in Iraq and American taxpayers dollars are being misused and wasted and stolen. Meanwhile, our own people are suffering.

That is wrong, Mr. Speaker. That ought not to be happening, and there is a responsibility on the part of this Congress, because we have not had a single oversight hearing, despite the requests of many Members, including myself, to take a good and hard look at this massive corruption that is ongoing today as we speak in Iraq.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Just before we close down in our last couple of minutes, we have been talking about the culture of corruption and cronyism and incompetence, zeroing in on incompetence today, and we are about third party validators. It is not just that we say it.

We got an e-mail on our 30-Something Web site that responded to some of the things we have been talking about. It was actually a Mr. Miller from Connecticut who said, "You folks are a great breath of fresh air. I like the theme of 'a culture of corruption, cronyism, and incompetence.' Well put, but incomplete. The massive rampant incompetence of this administration," he said, "is a huge problem, no doubt. But for me, a bigger problem is their fundamental disbelief in democratic processes of checks and balances combined with overwhelming ideological arrogance that allows belief to trump evidence."

I could not have said it better myself.

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Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I want to say, and I know Mr. MILLER was being complimentary of us when he said he liked the culture of corruption, but I do not like it. I do not like it.

I do not like coming down here and trying to inform the American people what third-party validators are saying about what is going on down here in a negative way. Because I would hope we could come down here with solutions and work on it and talk about how we are making this better, how we are having oversight hearings and everything else. Do not think for one second we like it. But this is going on here and the American people need to hear about it.

30somethingdems@mail.house.gov.  
That is 30, the number,  
somethingdems@mail.house.gov.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, we would like to thank the Democratic leader for the time tonight.

#### ENERGY CONCERNS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. POE). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING) is recognized for the remaining time until midnight, approximately 48 minutes.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, thank you for the privilege to speak on the floor of the United States House of Representatives. As I listened to the discussion here this evening, some of my material was created by my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, and I wish to begin by responding to some of the remarks that were made.

Again, I hear a consistent message of pessimism and really no message of solution or a plan. In fact, I heard a lament that they are night after night not coming up with the real answers for the American people, and I lament the same thing, and I agree with those statements, Mr. Speaker.

First, some of the notes I wrote down as I picked up on some of the discussion that went on here on the other side of the aisle were concerns about energy and the price of gas and home heating. In fact, there is a government report out some few weeks ago that it is going to cost perhaps 50 to 51 percent more for the average American to heat their home this winter as opposed to last winter. And that is all true.

We tried to move energy policy through this Chamber. In fact, we did move some through this Chamber, but we did not move near enough. I called for drilling on the Outer Continental Shelf and drilling in ANWR. It looks now like we are going to see the new year without a vote on either one of those things. I hope we do and that we get it passed, because it is the right thing to do. But into that bargain there are people that oppose energy development, and here sits this country on 406 trillion cubic feet of natural gas on our Outer Continental Shelf.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. KING of Iowa. Yes, I would be happy to yield.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. One of the proposals that we had was to take out the \$16 billion in corporate subsidies in the energy bill. Would you be willing to support us on that?

Mr. KING of Iowa. Reclaiming my time, Mr. Speaker, I am talking about expanding the energy here in this country. And whether or not you address any kind of subsidies, whether they exist or not, does not affect our overall energy supply except to discourage the development of that energy, Mr. RYAN.

What I am talking about is that we have 406 trillion cubic feet of natural gas on the Outer Continental Shelf. A lot of it is around Florida, and it is really much of the Florida delegation, and that is not a partisan issue down in that part of the panhandle; but we need to open up that gas, and we need to open it up all the way across for all of America, particularly in the Corn Belt where 90 percent of the cost of our nitrogen fertilizer is the cost of natural gas. It has gone up 400 to 500 percent in the last 5 to 6 years. It used to be \$2, and the other day it went to \$15. That is my point.

So that is a piece of it. But what I am hearing, and my issue really from what I have heard out of your discussion tonight that I do take issue with is that adding \$1 billion to LIHEAP and talking about corporate welfare does not increase the supply of energy in this country. What I am about is increasing the supply of energy, because there is a law of supply and demand. The more energy we have, the lower the cost.

We cannot sit here and turn up the heat in our homes and turn down the development of energy and expect that we are going to have a viable economy. In fact, it is economic suicide for a country with an energy component of our economy like we have to not develop our energy in this country. It puts a price on everything that we do.

ANWR is part of the aspect of that, too. We are sitting on this massive supply of hydrocarbon up on the Arctic shore. I have been up there and walked on that sod. There is not an environmental reason not to drill up there. There are no caribou that live there. There are no trees. It is a frozen Arctic tundra. We do all the work on ice roads. We have proven we can do it next door on the north slope. There has not been a report of an environmental damage or an oil spill or an effect on that environment.

There has been, because I did see some locations where they have gone in and reestablished tundra and it will grow back, it takes 5 to 6 years to do that, I have seen the examples and flown over by air and am confident it can be done. Although the tundra will be disturbed, it is not something that is a permanent scar on the landscape.

But this energy is one piece of it. We need to open up the energy supplies in the United States. It does not do to stand here on the floor and talk about tax breaks for corporations. Some of those are incentives so that they will develop energy. What we have is a statutory and a Presidential executive order that lingers from a previous Presidency that prevents us from drilling offshore. And with this massive supply of natural gas offshore and with this increase in gas prices, it puts us at a disadvantage with the rest of the world.

It happens to be this same natural gas that is \$15 here in the United States that peaked out here the other day has a natural gas price of 95 cents in Russia and \$1.60 in Venezuela. And those are the countries that are producing fertilizer and shipping it over to us. We have our fertilizer companies in this country that are put on hold. They have had to slow their operations down and practically freeze the development or stop the production of fertilizer. That means the farmers that were going to take delivery of fertilizer late in the year, and some of them to try to beat their year end for tax purposes as well, are not going to have that fertilizer.

It means there will be a rush in the spring and prices are likely to be very high in the spring. But we are not far away from losing our entire fertilizer industry in this country because we refuse to develop the natural gas that is right under our very noses.

I did some calculations. I thought, well, if we are going to bring in liquefied natural gas from the Middle East, or if we are going to be bringing it in from just across the Caribbean, from a place like Venezuela, which is a place