

PEACEFUL CREATION OF
DEMOCRACY IS POSSIBLE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, last week Victor Yushchenko, the new president of Ukraine, spoke to a joint session of Congress. We were lucky to have received such a distinguished speaker, one who has done so much to encourage democracy over the last year, even overcoming a vicious poison attack by those who opposed his calls for democratic reform in the Ukraine.

Mr. Yushchenko led the people of Ukraine through what is called the Orange Revolution. Ukrainian protestors bravely rejected an illegal and predetermined presidential election and demanded a new one.

Since he took office after winning the second election, Ukrainians have been getting serious about fighting corruption, promoting fair competition and demanding transparent government business relations. Peaceful creation of democracy is possible.

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As I listened to President Yushchenko, I could not help but note the irony that a man who has encouraged democracy through such peaceful and nonviolent means had been invited to speak to a joint session of the U.S. Congress, which is still working with the White House to create a democracy in Iraq through the barrel of a gun. The irony is that Ukraine, an Eastern European holdover from the Soviet Union's Communist bloc, understands the inner workings of democracy better than the President and Congress of the United States.

I believe that the war in Iraq flies in the very face of democratic governance. Instead of upholding the tenets of democracy, the war in Iraq has violated democracy's core principles to a degree unimaginable when the U.S. declared war in March 2003. In January 2005, the Iraqi people held their first election in over 50 years, and I congratulate them for their bravery in accomplishing this feat. But the ends do not justify the means. From the very beginning, the President's case for invading Iraq was based on false premises and manipulations of the truth, hardly the stuff democracies are made of.

We know now, and many of us knew back in 2003, that Saddam Hussein did not pose a threat to the United States. He never possessed ties to al Qaeda's terrorist network, and no weapons of mass destruction have ever turned up in Iraq. In fact, earlier this year, President Bush officially called off the search for the missing weapons of mass destruction. These are shameful and truthless grounds for fighting a war that has, so far, cost the lives of more than 1,500 American troops and tens of thousands of innocent Iraqi civilians, not to mention more than 12,000 American soldiers who have been severely and permanently wounded in the war.

The cost to our Nation's treasury has been just as staggering. After Congress puts the finishing touches on the latest supplemental appropriations bill, this war's total cost will amount to more than \$200 billion in just over 2 years. Mr. Speaker, \$200 billion in 2 years. Just think about that amount. Adjusted to inflation, the combined costs of the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and the first Gulf War are easily eclipsed by the war in Iraq.

Sadly, a vicious insurgency still plagues the Iraqi people and America's brave soldiers on a daily basis. Yet President Bush seems to think that everything in the Middle East is going just fine. Yesterday, the President stated, and I quote him, "More than 150,000 Iraqi security forces have been trained and equipped and, for the first time, the Iraqi Army, police, and security forces now outnumber U.S. forces in Iraq." Well, then, here is the question: Why do our young men and women continue to remain in Iraq if the Iraqi people are prepared to handle their own security? Why do our young men and women continue to die in staggering numbers if the Iraqi Army, police, and security forces are trained and equipped?

The flip side of the President's boasts is that the American military presence is not helping matters. That is why, with the support of 30 of my House colleagues, I have introduced H. Con. Res. 35, legislation that calls for the U.S. to withdraw its military forces from Iraq. Let me be clear: the U.S. should not abandon the country it voluntarily invaded; but instead of maintaining a military presence in Iraq, we must invest in humanitarian and developmental aid that is so crucial in the peaceful advancement of a young democracy.

Mr. Speaker, it is time to change direction in Iraq. We must begin to bring our troops home. It is time to give Iraq back to the Iraqis. If we need some guidance, I recommend taking a page out of the Ukrainian playbook on building a democracy. Because when it comes to advancing democracy, Ukraine seems to understand what many Members of the U.S. House of Representatives do not.

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER
AS COSPONSOR OF H.R. 513

Mr. BISHOP of New York. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to have my name removed as a cosponsor of H.R. 513.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DENT). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

THE PHARMACEUTICAL MARKET
ACCESS ACT OF 2005

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. GUTKNECHT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Mr. Speaker, I rise again tonight to talk about the high cost of prescription drugs here in the United States relative to what the rest of the people in the industrialized world pay for the same drugs.

Recently there was an article in The Wall Street Journal which talked about how much name-brand prescription drugs have gone up just in the last year; and I think in that article they said over the last 5 years prescription drugs have gone up more than twice the rate of inflation. In fact, I think it is more like three times the rate of inflation. These are drugs that have been on the market for a long period of time, and the research costs were paid for a long time ago.

Recently, I got some research together from some pharmacies in three cities of five of the most commonly prescribed drugs in the United States. First, Lipitor, which is a drug which is made in Ireland. Every single tablet is made in Ireland, and it is exported around the world. The price of a 30-day supply of Lipitor in London, England, was \$40.88. That same drug in Athens, Greece, was \$55.65; and in the United States, \$76.41.

The next drug here is Nexium, the new purple pill: 30 tablets, twenty milligrams, London, \$42.23; Athens, \$57.09; the United States, \$138.06.

We compared the prices of Previcet, Zolof, and Zyrtec. If you add them up, the price of those five drugs in London, \$195.95; in Athens, those same five drugs, \$231.04; but here in the United States, \$507.96.

Why is this important? Well, this year, according to the head of pharmacology at the University of Minnesota, Dr. Steve Schondelmeyer, according to him, this year, Americans will spend \$200 billion on prescription drugs. And if you compare what Americans pay for the same name-brand drugs compared to the industrialized countries around the rest of the world, we are paying at least 30 percent more. In fact, I think it may be more like 50 to 75 percent more, but let us take 30 percent. Thirty percent of \$200 billion is \$60 billion.

I believe if we treated prescription drugs the way we treat every other product and allowed Americans to have access to those drugs and those products as we do with other products, you would see prices in the United States drop dramatically.

That is why I have reintroduced a bill that has passed several times; in fact, we have improved it this year, made it even safer, the Pharmaceutical Market Access Act of 2005. I hope Members will go to my Web site at gil.house.gov, get the facts, take a look at these charts, get a copy of the bill, and decide to become a cosponsor. It is important, because we need to send a message that Americans deserve to have world-class access to world-class drugs at world-market prices, and when we do, we will see the prices here in the United States reflect more what is the average among the industrialized world.

So I hope my colleagues will join me. Go to my Web site at gil.house.gov; there is a lot of information there. We have about 70 sponsors right now; we would like to get that to 220. Please join me in the Pharmaceutical Market Access Act of 2005.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BROWN of Ohio addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take my Special Order at this time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

PRIORITIES: VETERANS, BANKRUPTCY, AND THE ESTATE TAX

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Ms. CORRINE BROWN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to comment on the Republicans' priorities. Many of them talk about protecting veterans and making sure that veterans have the support they need when they return from protecting this country's freedom in Iraq.

Today the House passed H.R. 8 to make permanent the repeal of the estate tax. This bill will cost the American taxpayers \$295 billion over the next 10 years. The cost on the first 2 years could go as high as \$1 trillion.

This bill gives a tax break to the wealthiest three-tenths of 1 percent of estates, while imposing a new capital gains tax on most of us, including small business owners and farmers. At the same time, the Republicans passed a budget that calls for \$800 million in cuts to the VA over the next 5 years.

Clearly, the Republicans are attempting to balance the budget on the backs of the veterans.

Tomorrow, this same House will vote on bankruptcy legislation that does not protect our veterans. Many of our servicemembers, especially the citizen soldiers of the Guard and the Reserve forces, face terrible financial problems because they do not qualify for a narrow protection of debt incurred while on duty if S. 256 becomes law.

Since 9/11, approximately half a million Reservists and Guardsmen have been called to active duty, some more than once. Hundreds of thousands of Reservists and National Guardsmen are currently activated in support of the ongoing military operations. According to the National Guard, four out of 10 members of the National Guard and Reservist forces lose income when they

leave their civilian jobs for active duty.

The people of this country need to see what policies the Republicans actually vote for. They talk the talk very well, but they do not walk the walk or roll the roll for our veterans who have sacrificed their bodies for this Nation.

Today, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EVANS), our ranking member, filed a bill for mental health for our veterans. It is clear that they are slipping through the cracks, and we need to focus our attention on how to assist veterans returning from the war, whether it is economic, whether it is health care, or whether it is to make sure that they have their jobs and have a seamless transition.

We need to do more than talk the talk. We need to make sure that our money follows all of this rhetoric we have on the floor constantly about how we support the veterans. It should not be just talk, but it should be our actions.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. BOUSTANY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to give my Special Order at this time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Louisiana?

There was no objection.

TOUGH ISSUES FACING LOUISIANA FARMERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. BOUSTANY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BOUSTANY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of the farming community of southwest Louisiana. During the March district work period, I held community meetings in all eight parishes of my district to discuss issues facing my constituents. At each meeting, farmers and their families filled the rooms to ask for help.

Farming in Louisiana is not just a job for these men and women, Mr. Speaker. They love the land that they work, and they want to ensure that their livelihood is preserved for generations to come, but they are struggling to survive. Unless Congress can come to their aid, these farmers may not be in business by the end of the year.

Let me give some examples. Steve Broussard is a banker in my district and Steve works with farm loans for local growers, and he told me four rice farmers in our district have been forced to quit already this year. By the end of

this season, eight more could be out of business. For a rural community, farms are the foundation of a local economy. The closure of a single farm means the loss of a customer for many local businesses and a reduction of revenue for schools, public utilities, and hospitals in these communities.

Cindy Lahaye works in a hospital in Mamou, Louisiana; and Cindy told me that in this town of 3,500, they are feeling the ripple effect at their rural hospital because the surrounding farming community cannot afford health care at this time. This is a problem that begins with our farmers and affects every one of us.

In my recent conversations, I asked my constituents for input and suggestions on what could be done to provide relief for our farming community. First and foremost, Mr. Speaker, we must reopen important markets that have been closed for various political reasons. I had a farmer in Ville Platte, Louisiana, who told me, I have bins full of rice, but I am broke. Bumper crops in the past few years have caused prices to drop, and with a new crop going into the field, there is no place to move the surpluses from the past 2 years. Iraq, Iran, and Cuba were all some of the largest importers of U.S. rice, and all three of these export markets remain restricted.

Cuba, for example, had resumed importing agricultural commodities from U.S. farmers because of the provisions in the Trade Sanctions Reform and Export Enhancement Act of 2000. A recent ruling by the Office of Foreign Assets Control threatens to derail this re-emerging market. My colleague from Missouri has introduced a bill that could provide immediate relief for the rice farmers of my district. H.R. 1339 amends the Trade Sanctions Reform and Export Enhancement Act of 2000 to clarify allowable payment terms for sales of agricultural commodities and products to Cuba.

□ 1800

I am proud to cosponsor this bill, and I pledge my support for this legislation.

Secondly, taxpayer dollars dedicated to the United States Agency for International Development and the PL 480 program should be used to purchase U.S. commodities and not foreign food. The program serves two purposes. One, it provides emergency and non-emergency food aid to countries in need; and, secondly, the program helps American farmers since the money is used to purchase American agricultural products.

Wynn Watkins of Jefferson Davis Parish, Mr. Speaker, told me this. Congressman BOUSTANY, he said, all we have here is rice. It is the busiest time of the year for us, and we all came out of our fields to hear you speak today. We are being asked to send our boys to Iraq and Iraq cannot take our rice. Where is the justice in that? I agree with Wynn Watkins, Mr. Speaker.