

race and gender off the table. Please contact Eleni Constantine with Rep. Maloney at 5-7944 by 6 p.m. today if you would like to sign the letter.

Sincerely,

CAROLYN B. MALONEY,
Member of Congress.
FRANK PALLONE, JR.,
Member of Congress.

JANUARY 26, 2005.

Hon. GEORGE W. BUSH,
President,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: We were appalled to hear Ways & Means Chairman Bill Thomas propose Sunday on "Meet the Press" that Social Security benefits should be based on race and gender. Chairman Thomas said that Congress "needs to consider how many years of retirement you get based on your race" and that women should receive fewer benefits each year because they tend to live longer than men. Asked if Congress would accept such an idea, Chairman Thomas didn't seem to know the answer.

The answer is "No," Mr. President. We, the undersigned members of Congress, will not accept a Social Security formula that is based on race or gender. This idea is unfair, it is unjust, it is profoundly anti-American. We call on you to repudiate it. We request a meeting with you to give you our views in person and receive your response.

Cutting benefits to those who need them most is counter to the core principles on which Social Security was founded. That great program is the financial safety net for all working Americans in their old age—and all workers are entitled to its benefits regardless of gender or race. Social Security's formulas are race and gender neutral and must remain so. To propose that women should receive fewer benefits because they tend to live longer denies benefits to retired women workers who depend on them to survive and is fundamentally wrong. To advocate that minorities should receive different benefits on the basis of their race is repugnant in a society that has renounced racial discrimination and where all men are equal before the law.

Chairman Thomas' proposal attacks the most vulnerable among us. Retired women workers are twice as likely than men to live below the poverty line and to depend on Social Security as their sole means of support. For African-Americans, Social Security cuts the poverty rate from 59 percent to 21 percent.

Yesterday was not the first time Chairman Thomas has proposed basing Social Security on race and gender, but it was the first time he made clear on national TV that he will advance this outrageous agenda in the Congress. It is time to make clear that Congress will not accept it. Nor should you or your Administration, Chairman Thomas' proposal goes against everything this great nation stands for. It is counter to our deepest moral values. We call on you to renounce clearly and unambiguously any change to Social Security benefits premised on race or gender.

Sincerely,

CAROLYN MALONEY,
Member of Congress.
FRANK PALLONE, JR.,
Member of Congress.

THE NATIONAL DEFICIT

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

Mr. BARROW. Mr. Speaker, I think it is appropriate that my first address

to this body should be on a large subject, and there are few subjects larger than our national deficit.

The latest reports are forecasting a record \$427 billion deficit, the largest budget deficit in our Nation's history. \$427 billion is an amount so enormous that it is practically impossible for many to put it in context.

The simple fact is that we are spending more money than we are bringing in, and this is digging a hole that we are going to have a hard time getting out of.

This financial irresponsibility is punishing the prosperity for our future generations. When we are unable to pay our bills, we pass that burden on to our children and grandchildren, strapping them with a deficit that grows higher each day.

Mr. Speaker, continuing to run record deficits is dangerous, it is irresponsible, it is reckless; and we have a solemn responsibility to do better than this.

Every time we spend more money than we have or every time we borrow some record amount, we are trading short-term gains for long-term pain.

Before I was elected to Congress, I served 14 years on the Athens-Clarke County Commission. During that time I never once voted to increase taxes, and that is a record I am proud of. Not only that, I put together a perfect record of voting for balanced budgets, year after year; and that is also a record I am proud of.

On the commission, we kept taxes low, we kept the budget balanced, and we made the most out of the people's money. We treated the people's money the same way that working families and small businesses manage their money, we lived within our means.

We always kept one eye on the bottom line and one eye on the road ahead. When we made investments, we invested in the long-term future. When we borrowed money, we borrowed for long-term interests, not simply to pay that month's light bill.

Mr. Speaker, if working families can live within their means, or if a small city council of just 10 members can find a way not to spend more than they have, then the United States Congress ought to be able to do the same thing. It is not rocket science. It is just fiscal common sense and good government public service.

We have many commitments: we must continue to support our troops in the war on terror; we must keep the promise of Social Security; we must find ways to lower the tax burden for all of our working families. But we have to start keeping those commitments by using only the money that we have, without raising taxes and without forcing our children and grandchildren to pay our bills.

As we settle into the 109th Congress, we must commit ourselves to a sound policy of deficit reduction. I hope that my colleagues in the House will join me in working together to bring a new

era of fiscal responsibility to this legislative body.

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.)

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

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

AMERICA'S FOREIGN POLICY OF INTERVENTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. PAUL) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, what if it was all a big mistake? America's foreign policy of intervention, while still debated in the early 20th century, is today accepted as conventional wisdom by both political parties.

But what if the overall policy is a colossal mistake, a major error in judgment? Not just a bad judgment regarding when and where to impose ourselves, but the entire premise that we have a moral right to meddle in the affairs of others?

Think of the untold harm done by years of fighting, hundreds of thousands of American casualties, hundreds of thousands of foreign civilian casualties and unbelievable human and economic costs. What if it was all needlessly borne by the American people?

If we do conclude that grave foreign policy errors have been made, a very serious question must be asked: What would it take to change our policy to one more compatible with a true republic's goal of peace, commerce and friendship with all nations? Is it not possible that George Washington's admonition to avoid entangling alliances is sound advice even today?

As a physician, I would like to draw an analogy. In medicine, mistakes are made. Man is fallible. Misdiagnoses are made, incorrect treatments are given, and experimental trials of medicine are advocated. A good physician understands the imperfections in medical care, advises close follow-ups and double-checks the diagnoses, treatment and medication. Adjustments are made to assure the best results.

But what if a doctor never checks the success or failure of a treatment or ignores bad results and assumes his omnipotence, refusing to concede that the initial course of treatment was a mistake? Let me assure my colleagues the results would not be good. Litigation

and the loss of reputation in the medical community place restraints on this type of bull-headed behavior.

Sadly, though, when governments, politicians and bureaucrats make mistakes and refuse to examine them, there is little that victims can do to correct things. Since the bully pulpit and the media propaganda machine are instrumental in government cover-ups and deception, the final truth emerges slowly and only after much suffering. The arrogance of some politicians, regulators, and diplomats actually causes them to become even more aggressive and more determined to prove themselves right, to prove their power is not to be messed with by never admitting a mistake. Truly, power corrupts.

The unwillingness to ever reconsider our policy of foreign intervention, despite obvious failures and shortcomings over the last 50 years, has brought great harm to our country and our liberty. Historically, financial realities are the ultimate check on nations bent on empire-building.

Economic laws ultimately prevail over bad judgment, but tragically, the greater the wealth of the country, the longer the flawed policy lasts. We will probably not be any different.

We are still a wealthy Nation and our currency is still trusted by the world. Yet we are vulnerable to some harsh realities about our true wealth and the burden of our future commitments. Overwhelming debt and the precarious nature of the dollar should serve to restrain our determined leaders. Yet they show little concern for our deficits. Rest assured, though, the limitations of our endless foreign adventurism and spending will become apparent to everyone at some point in time.

Since 9/11, a lot of energy and money have gone into efforts ostensibly designed to make us safer. Many laws have been passed. Many dollars have been spent. Whether or not we are better off is another question.

Today, we occupy two countries in the Middle East. We have suffered over 20,000 casualties and caused possibly 100,000 civilian casualties in Iraq.

□ 1415

We have spent over \$200 billion in these occupations, as well as hundreds of billions of dollars here at home hoping to be safer. We have created the Department of Homeland Security, passed the PATRIOT Act, and created a new super CIA agency. Our government is now permitted to monitor the Internet, read our mail, search us without proper search warrants, to develop a national ID card, and to investigate what people are reading in libraries. Ironically, illegal aliens flow into our country and qualify for driver's licenses and welfare benefits with little restraint.

These issues are discussed, but nothing has been as highly visible to us as the authoritarianism we accept at the airports. The creation of the Transportation Security Administration has intruded on the privacy of all airline

travelers, and there is little evidence that we are safer for it. Driven by fear, we have succumbed to the age-old temptation to sacrifice liberty on the pretense of obtaining security.

Love of security, unfortunately, all too often vanquishes love of liberty. Unchecked fear of another 9/11-type attack constantly preoccupies our leaders and most of our citizens and drives the legislative attack on our civil liberties. It is frightening to see us doing to ourselves what even bin Laden never dreamed he could accomplish with his suicide bombers.

We do not understand the difference between a vague threat of terrorism and the danger of a guerilla war. One prompts us to expand and nationalize domestic law enforcement while limiting the freedoms of all Americans. The other deals with understanding terrorists like bin Laden who declared war against us in 1998. Not understanding the difference makes it virtually impossible to deal with the real threats.

We are obsessed with passing new laws to make our country safe from a terrorist attack. This confusion about the cause of the 9/11 attacks, the fear they engendered, and the willingness to sacrifice liberty prompts many to declare their satisfaction with the inconveniences and even humiliation at our Nation's airports.

There are always those in government who are anxious to increase its power and authority over the people. Strict adherence to personal privacy annoys those who promote a centralized state. It is no surprise to learn that many of the new laws passed in the aftermath of 9/11 had been proposed long before that date. The attacks merely provided an excuse to do many things previously proposed by dedicated statist.

All too often government acts perversely, promising to advance liberty while actually doing the opposite. Dozens of new bills passed since 9/11 promise to protect our freedoms and our securities. In time we will realize there is little chance our security will be enhanced or our liberties protected. The powerful and intrusive TSA certainly will not solve our problems. Without a full discussion, greater understanding, and ultimately a change in our foreign policy that incites those who declare war against us, no amount of pat-downs at airports will suffice.

Imagine the harm done, the staggering costs and the loss of liberty if in the next 20 years airplanes are never again employed by terrorists. Even if there is a possibility that airplanes will be used to terrorize us, TSA's bullying will do little to prevent it. Patting down old women and little kids in airports cannot possibly make us safer. TSA cannot protect us from another attack, and it is not the solution. It serves only to make us more obedient and complacent toward government intrusion in our lives.

The airplane mess has been compounded by other problems which we

fail to recognize. Most assume that government has the greatest responsibility for making private aircraft travel safe. But this assumption only ignores mistakes made before 9/11, when the government taught us to not resist, taught us that airline personnel could not carry guns, and that the government would be in charge of security. Airline owners became complacent and dependent on the government.

After 9/11, we moved in the wrong direction by allowing total government control and political takeover of the TSA, which was completely contrary to the proposition that private owners have the ultimate responsibility to protect their customers.

Discrimination laws passed during the last 40 years ostensibly fueled the Transportation Secretary's near obsession with avoiding the appearance of discriminating against young Muslim males. Instead, TSA seemingly targeted white children and old women. We have failed to recognize that a safety policy by a private airline is quite a different thing from government agents blindly obeying antidiscrimination laws.

Governments do not have a right to use blanket discrimination such as that which led to the incarceration of Japanese Americans in World War II. However, local law enforcement agencies should be able to target their searches if the description of a suspect is narrowed by sex, race or religion. But we are dealing with an entirely different matter when it comes to safety on airplanes. The Federal Government should not be involved in local law enforcement and has no right to discriminate.

Airlines, on the other hand, should be permitted to do whatever is necessary to provide safety. Private firms, long denied this right, should have a right to discriminate. Fine restaurants, for example, can require that shoes and shirts be worn for service in their establishments. The logic of this remaining property right should permit more sensible security checks at airports. The airlines should be responsible for the safety of their property and liable for it as well. This is not only the responsibility of the airlines, but it is a civil right that has long been denied them and other private companies.

The present situation requires the government to punish some by targeting those individuals who clearly offer no threat. Any airline that tries to make travel safer and happens to question a larger number of young Muslim males than the government deems appropriate can be assessed huge fines. To add insult to injury, the fines collected from the airlines are used to force sensitivity training on pilots, who do their very best under the circumstances to make flying safer by restricting the travel of some individuals.

We have embarked on a process that serves no logical purpose. While airline safety suffers, personal liberty is diminished, and costs skyrocket.

Mr. Speaker, if we are willing to consider a different foreign policy, we should ask ourselves a few questions:

What if the policies of foreign intervention, entangling alliances, policing the world, nation-building, and spreading our values through force are deeply flawed?

What if it is true that Saddam Hussein never had weapons of mass destruction?

What if it is true that Saddam Hussein and Osama bin Laden were never allies?

What if it is true that the overthrow of Saddam Hussein did nothing to enhance our national security?

What if our current policy in the Middle East leads to the overthrow of our client oil states in that region?

What if the American people really knew that more than 20,000 American troops have suffered serious casualties or died in the Iraq war, and 9 percent of our forces already have been made incapable of returning to battle?

What if it turns out there are many more guerilla fighters in Iraq than our government admits?

What if there really have been 100,000 civilian Iraqi casualties, as some claim; and what is an acceptable price for doing good?

What if Secretary Rumsfeld is replaced for the wrong reasons, and things become worse under a defense secretary who demands more troops and an expansion of the war?

What if we discover that when they do vote, the overwhelming majority of Iraqis support Islamic law over Western secular law and want our troops removed?

What if those who correctly warned of the disaster awaiting us in Iraq are never asked for their opinion of what should be done now?

What if the only solution for Iraq is to divide the country into three separate regions, recognizing the principle of self-determination while rejecting the artificial boundaries created in 1918 by non-Iraqis?

What if it turns out radical Muslims do not hate us for our freedoms, but rather for our policies in the Middle East that directly affected Arabs and Muslims?

What if the invasion and occupation of Iraq actually distracted from pursuing and capturing Osama bin Laden?

What if we discover that democracy cannot be spread with force of arms?

What if democracy is deeply flawed and, instead, we should be talking about liberty, property rights, free markets, the rule of law, localized government, weak centralized government, and self-determination promoted through persuasion, not force?

What if Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda actually welcomed our invasion and occupation of an Arab-Muslim Iraq as proof of their accusations against us, and it served as a magnificent recruiting tool for them?

What if our policy greatly increased and prolonged our vulnerability to ter-

rorists and guerilla attacks both at home and abroad?

What if the Pentagon, as reported by its Defense Science Board, actually recognized the dangers of our policy before the invasion, and their warnings were ignored or denied?

What if the argument that by fighting over there we will not have to fight here is wrong, and the opposite is true?

What if we can never be safer by giving up some of our freedoms?

What if the principle of preemptive war is adopted by Russia, China, Israel, India, Pakistan, and others, and justified by current U.S. policy?

What if preemptive war and preemptive guilt stem from the same flawed policy of authoritarianism, though we fail to recognize it?

What if Pakistan is not a trustworthy ally and turns on us when conditions deteriorate?

What if plans are being laid to provoke Syria and/or Iran into actions that would be used to justify a military response and preemptive war against them?

What if our policy of democratization of the Middle East fails and ends up fueling a Russian-Chinese alliance that we regret; an alliance not achieved even at the height of the Cold War?

What if the policy forbidding profiling at our borders and airports is deeply flawed?

What if presuming the guilt of a suspected terrorist without a trial leads to the total undermining of constitutional protections for American citizens when arrested?

What if we discover the Army is too small to continue policies of preemptive and nation-building?

What if a military draft is the only way to mobilize enough troops?

What if the stop-loss program is actually an egregious violation of trust and a breach of contract between the government and soldiers; what if this is actually a back-door draft, leading to unbridled cynicism and rebellion against a voluntary army and generating support for a draft of both men and women? Will lying to troops lead to rebellion and anger toward the political leaderships running this war?

What if the Pentagon's legal task force opinion that the President is not bound by international or Federal law regarding torture stands unchallenged and sets a precedent which ultimately harms Americans while totally disregarding the moral, practical, and legal arguments against such a policy?

What if the intelligence reform legislation which gives us a bigger, more expensive bureaucracy does not bolster our security, distracts us from the real problem of revamping our interventionist foreign policy?

□ 1430

What if we suddenly discover we are the aggressors and we are losing an unwinnable guerilla war? What if we discover too late that we cannot afford this war, and that our policies have led

to a dollar collapse, rampant inflation, high interest rates, and a severe economic downturn?

Mr. Speaker, why do I believe these are such important questions? Because the number one function of the Federal Government is to provide for national security. And national security has been severely undermined.

On 9/11 we had a grand total of 14 aircraft to protect the entire U.S. mainland, all of which proved useless that day. We have an annual DOD budget of over \$400 billion, most of which is spent overseas in over 100 different countries.

Tragically, on 9/11 our Air Force was better positioned to protect Seoul, Tokyo, Berlin and London than it was to protect Washington, D.C. and New York City. Moreover, our ill advised presence in the Middle East and our decade-long bombing of Iraq served only to incite the suicidal attacks of 9/11.

Before 9/11 our CIA ineptly pursued bin Laden, whom the Taliban was protecting. At the same time, the Taliban was receiving significant support from Pakistan, our trusted ally that received millions of dollars from the United States. We allied ourselves both with bin Laden and Hussein in the 1980s, only to regret it in the 1990s. And it is safe to say we have used billions of U.S. dollars in the last 50 years pursuing this contradictory, irrational, foolish, costly and very dangerous foreign policy.

Policing the world, spreading democracy by force, nation-building and frequent bombing of countries that pose no threat to us, while leaving the homeland and our borders unprotected, result from a foreign policy that is contradictory and not in our self-interest.

I can hardly expect anyone in Washington to pay much attention to my concerns. But if I am completely wrong in my criticism, nothing is lost except my time and energy expended in efforts to get others to reconsider our foreign policy.

But the bigger question is, what if I am right, or even partially right, and we urgently need to change course in our foreign policy for the sake of our national and economic security, yet no one pays attention?

For that, a price will be paid. Is it not worth talking about?

RESIGNATION AS A MEMBER OF HOUSE COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

The Speaker pro tempore laid before the House the following resignation as a member of the House Committee on International Relations.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, January 26, 2005.

Hon. J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Office of the Speaker, U.S. Capitol, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Please consider this letter as my resignation, as of this date, as a member of the House Committee on International Relations. I have appreciated the opportunity to serve as a member of this