

when he wrote the '91 memo. He declined to be interviewed.

The memo was sent to Dr. Gordon Douglas, then head of Merck's vaccine division and now a consultant for the Vaccine Research Center at the National Institutes of Health. Douglas also declined to comment.

The memo stated that regulators in several countries had raised concerns about thimerosal, including in Sweden, where the chemical was being removed from vaccines.

"The public awareness has been raised by the sequential wave of experiences in Sweden including mercury exposure from additives, fish, contaminated air, bird deaths from eating mercury-treated seed grains, dental amalgam leakage, mercury allergy, etc.," the memo said.

It noted that Sweden had set a daily maximum allowance of mercury from fish of 30 micrograms for a 160-pound adult, roughly the same guideline used by the FDA. Adjusting for the body weight of infants, Hilleman calculated that babies who received their shots on schedule could get 87 times the mercury allowance.

The Swedish and FDA guidelines work out to about four-tenths of a microgram of mercury per kilogram of body weight. A stricter standard of one-tenth of a microgram per kilogram has been adopted by the Environmental Protection Agency and endorsed by the National Research Council.

These standards are based on methyl mercury, the type found in fish and airborne emissions from power plants. Though toxic, the ethyl mercury in thimerosal may be less hazardous than methyl mercury, some scientists say, because it is more quickly purged from the body.

"It appears essentially impossible, based on current information, to ascertain whether thimerosal in vaccines constitutes or does not constitute a significant addition to the normal daily input of mercury from diverse sources," the memo said.

"It is reasonable to conclude" that it should be eliminated where possible, he said, "especially where use in infants and young children is anticipated."

In the U.S., however, thimerosal continued to be added throughout the '90s to a number of widely used pediatric vaccines for hepatitis B, bacterial meningitis, diphtheria, whooping cough and tetanus.

It was added to multi-dose vials of vaccine to prevent contamination from repeated insertion of needles to extract the medicine. It was not needed in single-dose vials, but most doctors and clinic preferred to order vaccine in multi-dose containers because of the lower cost and easier storage.

The Hilleman memo said that unlike regulators in Sweden and some other countries, "the U.S. Food and Drug Administration . . . does not have this concern for thimerosal."

A turning point came in 1997 when Congress passed a bill ordering an FDA review of mercury ingredients in food and drugs.

Completed in 1999, the review revealed the high level of mercury exposure from pediatric vaccines and raised a furor. In e-mails later released at a congressional hearing, an FDA official said health authorities could be criticized for "being 'asleep at the switch' for decades by allowing a potentially hazardous compound to remain in many childhood vaccines, and not forcing manufacturers to exclude it from new products."

It would not have taken a rocket science" to add up the amount of exposure as the prescribed number of shots was increasing, one of the e-mails said.

While asserting that there was no proof of harm, the U.S. Public Health Service in July 1999 called on manufacturers to go mercury-free by switching to single-dose vials. Soon after, Merck introduced a mercury-free

version of its hepatitis B vaccine, replacing the only thimerosal-containing vaccine it was still marketing at the time, a company spokesman said.

By 2002, thimerosal had been eliminated or reduced to trace levels in nearly all childhood vaccines. One exception is the pediatric flu vaccine made by Aventis and still sold mainly in multidose vials.

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.)

SMART SECURITY AND THE CASE FOR LEAVING IRAQ, PART 5

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

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, people around the world were greatly moved by the courage of millions of Iraqis who braved death to cast a ballot on January 30, Iraq's first democratic elections in over 50 years. The Iraqi elections, however, did not justify this destructive war, neither the lies used to sell it nor the incompetence with which it has been managed.

The elections will not bring back the 1,500 American soldiers who have been killed or heal the over-10,000 American troops who have been wounded, and they certainly cannot bring back the untold thousands of Iraqis who have lost their lives. These elections will not reimburse the American taxpayers nearly \$200 billion spent over the last 3 years, and the elections will not stop the vicious insurgency that is terrorizing Iraqi communities.

But the elections do demonstrate that Iraqis are prepared to manage their own affairs. That is why I believe that now is the time to develop and implement a plan to bring our soldiers home and end the U.S. military presence in Iraq absolutely as soon as possible.

Together with 27 cosponsors, I have introduced H. Con. Res. 35, calling for a plan to end this military mishap. Earlier today I wrote to the gentleman from Illinois (Chairman HYDE) and the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS), the chairman and ranking member of the Committee on International Relations, asking them to hold hearings on this matter.

The Bush administration spared no superlative in talking about the significance of the Iraqi elections. Such a momentous watershed event, however, would seem to demand a shift in our thinking about Iraq. But not for President Bush. He actually has become more emboldened by the election. He sees this as a mandate to keep our soldiers in Iraq as long as he wants. He and his surrogates are even engaging in provocative saber-rattling in the direction of Iran.

The Iraq elections did not vindicate the doctrine of preemptive war, and they do not undo all the death and destruction that has occurred as a result. They demonstrated that the Iraqis can and should take control of their own destinies. Leaving will not be sufficient to defeat the insurgency, but staying absolutely will intensify it.

What is fueling the insurgency and what gave rise to it in the first place is our continued military presence in Iraq. Our troops, whom the administration assured us would be embraced as liberators, are the focal point of anti-American extremism, making them sitting ducks.

Let me be clear: I am not advocating a cut-and-run strategy. It would be irresponsible for the United States to abandon the Iraqi people. What we must do is play a role in facilitating their transition to stable democracy. We ought to work with Iraq's elected officials, the United Nations and the Arab League to create an international peacekeeping force that will keep Iraq secure. Much of the money we are spending on this military campaign should be diverted to infrastructure projects that will improve Iraqis' lives, such as road construction, new schools, water processing plants and more.

Up to this point, Iraq's economic development has been scandalously mismanaged by the Bush administration, as billions of dollars appropriated by Congress have not actually been put to work on the ground. All future investments must be made with the needs of Iraqis being paramount, not the United States Government contractors and not other war profiteers.

Mr. Speaker, I believe a focus on developmental and humanitarian aid in Iraq would be a model for a radically new approach to national security. We need what I call SMART security, which is a Sensible, Multilateral, American Response to Terrorism.

Instead of resorting to the military option and spending needlessly on weapons systems, the SMART security plan that I propose calls for building multilateral partnerships, partnerships that enable us to foil terrorists and stop weapons of mass destruction proliferation.

A SMART security plan would address the conditions that led to terrorism in the first place: poverty, hopelessness, despair. Instead of troops, we should send scientists, educators, urban planners and constitutional experts to the troubled regions of the world.

It is time, Mr. Speaker, for the United States to play the role of Iraq's ally and partner, not its occupier. It is time to give Iraq back to its own people. It is time to truly support our troops by beginning to bring them home. The first step is for the chairman and ranking member of the Committee on International Relations to hold hearings on this matter now.

The Iraqi elections, however, will never justify the destructive war, and

it will never stand up to the lies that we heard to sell it.

SETTING BACK AMERICA'S DEFENSE

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

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, in Washington, officials commonly use studies and reports to legitimize various policies, and often the guidelines by which these studies are established can force a researcher into predetermined results. Traditionally, the Quadrennial Defense Review, or QDR, has been above this type of sincere process, as it is a serious exercise intended to produce a Pentagon strategic blueprint for defending our Nation from future threats. This year, however, I fear that the new QDR guidelines will overtly deemphasize conventional threats, which would result in long-term setbacks for our national defense.

I recognize the need to focus greater attention on the current asymmetric threat of terrorism and the need to drastically rein in Federal spending this year to decrease the budget deficit. However, it should not come at the expense of our ability to defeat well-established threats in the future.

Released on Monday, the Pentagon's 2006 budget would cut off the procurement of the F/A-22 Raptor after 2008. With these cuts, several high-tech sectors within our Nation's defense industrial base would be crippled, costing America good-paying jobs, future innovation and, most important, critical military capabilities.

Mr. Speaker, under the proposed budget, the Pentagon would buy just 179 F/A-22 Raptors, well short of the original 381 proposed by the Air Force. In exchange for nominal short-term savings, the move would significantly increase the cost of each aircraft at a time when production would otherwise be affordable through economy of scale. Investing nearly \$30 billion in research and development in the world's best fighter jet and then buying less than what the Air Force needs to guarantee future air dominance just does not make sense.

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It is as if we discovered the cure for cancer and then we skimmed on the lifesaving drugs.

Remarkably, the proposed cuts appear to have been made against the advice of the war planners, because Pentagon bureaucrats are ignoring the Air Force wartime requirement of the 381 F/A-22s, a number that the Secretary accepted in the last QDR. The Pentagon arrived at these pre-9/11 force levels because the F/A-22 offers unique capabilities against growing threats in the western Pacific and elsewhere. Also, a recent military exercise between the United States and Air Force fighter pilots from India, called COPE

India, proved beyond a doubt that the new foreign-made fighters now outmatch our F-15s, F-16s, and F-18s.

Furthermore, these bureaucrats are ignoring the impact that the proposed F/A-22 cuts will have on future domestic high technology production and design capacity. The American aerospace industry stands to lose more than 40,000 jobs nationwide, with some 160 suppliers in 43 States. This dismantling of our home-grown technology base would come just when subsidized foreign competitors are jockeying to displace United States manufacturing. Once lost, these hard-acquired skills will not easily return to our workforce; and, in some cases, they will never return.

In the end, at stake are vital national interests: American technology know-how, our global positions in the aerospace industry, and, most importantly, the safety of our men and women serving overseas. We must focus our armed services on more than just the asymmetries of a global war on terrorism. We cannot ignore, Mr. Speaker, a rising China, nuclear Iran, increasingly unstable North Korea, and other unconventional military threats that may need to be faced by the capabilities found in the F/A-22.

It is the job of any administration to produce an annual budget that satisfies the Nation's immediate needs like the war in Iraq. But we in Congress also have a leadership responsibility to prevent rash and unwise decisions destined to actually increase spending and cripple our ability to effectively defend against future threats.

EQUAL TAXATION FOR ALL AMERICANS WILL ENSURE SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, I had the first of a number of town hall meetings in my district last weekend on the issue of Social Security. I had an overflow crowd and had to turn people away, because people are confused and anxious and they want some facts. So I will try and explain a bit tonight what I explained to them there.

There are two issues. One is the ideological or public policy issue of privatization. The other is the financial and fiscal stability of Social Security. They are totally separate, as the President admitted last week during his round of staged town hall meetings around the country.

For the future stability of Social Security, here is what the concern is: conservative projections by the actuaries of Social Security say that 40 years from now, we might only have enough income coming into Social Security to pay 75 percent of promised benefits. The Congressional Budget Office says 50 years from today, 80 per-

cent of promised benefits. So there is a problem that is out there. We should resolve that.

I have proposed in the past three Congresses legislation to do that; it is done simply, to say that all Americans who work for wages and salary should pay the same amount of tax on all of their earnings. Millionaires today pay a tiny fraction of their income to Social Security because after \$90,000, no one pays. Someone who earns \$30,000 a year pays 6 percent of their income. If you lift the cap, you create so much income for Social Security, that you could exempt the first \$4,000 of earnings.

So under my proposal, everybody who earns less than \$90,000 a year gets a tax break. The less you earn, the bigger the tax break. So that is one way of resolving that.

The President has a different proposal. He says we should cut benefits. He is not sure which way he would choose, but his commission chose a method that would reduce benefits 40 years from today by 40 percent. So the President takes a possible potential reduction in benefits 40 years in the future of 25 percent, and he guarantees a reduction in benefits today of 40 percent. That is a heck of a way to solve a potential possible future problem, by guaranteeing people they will get less.

Then he says he wants to create private accounts. Let me tell my colleagues what the President's proposal is for privatizing accounts. People would be able to divert some of their FICA tax into an account controlled by the government with a limited range of investments; the President said they would be very conservative and very limited, because he does not trust people to invest conservatively; controlled by the government, chosen by the government; and one would not be able to borrow against it, unlike Federal employees with their TSP. You could not withdraw it early, unlike Federal employees and other people with 401(K)s and pay a penalty and withdraw it. And at the end of your working life, the government would say to you, this is the President of the United States' plan; well, that money you diverted over there, we assume if Social Security had kept your money, it would have earned inflation plus 3 percent, so we are going to subtract that from what you earned with your investments. And if you did not earn more than inflation plus 3 percent, the government will actually reduce your already-reduced Social Security benefit; and if you manage to beat the market and beat that, they will let you have that money only after they force you into this so-called plan, let me have my money; the President's idea of privatization, the government controls it, the government lends it to you, the government borrows the money to lend it to you, and then if you beat the market, the government forces you to buy an annuity from an insurance company. That is the President's so-called privatization plan.