

Mr. Speaker, it is no wonder that this House only brings legislation to the floor that benefits the wealthiest few in our Nation, because these are the people who are in TOM DELAY's black book. The House Republican leadership has heard that the American people are struggling to afford skyrocketing gas prices, so what do they do? House Republicans pass an energy law this summer that even the Bush administration admits will do nothing to lower gas prices for the American consumer. Instead, the energy law provided billions of dollars in tax breaks for oil and gas companies, and these are companies that are already experiencing record profits.

What about the American people? Well, as Alter explains in the Time Magazine article, they are not in the Republican leadership's black book and so their concerns really don't matter to the Republican leadership.

Mr. Speaker, whether you are in New Jersey or wherever you happen to be, the American people do not like what is happening here in Washington. They see examples of cronyism in every Republican corridor and they want it to stop. The American people want us to get back to addressing their needs and their concerns. It is time for the House Republican leaders to throw away their special interest black books like the one that TOM DELAY has so they can finally listen to the real needs and concerns of ordinary Americans.

IRAQI ELECTIONS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. GOHMERT. Saturday was a great day in American history. It was a great day in international history. And for those of us that do not read Time Magazine, it was a great day for democracy.

The Iraqi elections came off Saturday. The results are still coming in. We do not know all that occurred. But there are great things that already can be gleaned from what happened. The Iraqis showed an extraordinary amount of courage. Whereas in America on election day we have people who say, I don't know if I can brave going down and standing in line for 5 or 10 minutes. That may be more than I can handle.

Or, gee, the traffic is kind of heavy today. I don't know if I am going to go vote. I don't know, it looks like it might rain. I may catch the next election.

Not in Iraq. The Iraqis had the opportunity to vote on a constitution. They had an opportunity to vote for governing themselves for the first time in the history of mankind in what many acknowledge to be the cradle of humanity, where mankind began, and they came out and voted.

When I was in Iraq earlier this year, it was after the January elections, and

they talked in terms of 8 by 11 flyers that were posted all over the countryside, around the voting areas, that simply said, If You Vote, You Die. Those people that voted knew they were going to have to dip their fingers into permanent blue ink that would be on their fingers for probably a couple or 3 weeks. They knew they could be targets by what they had marked on their fingers. Yet they had the courage to step forward.

Some of the things people do not hear and do not read because not all magazines give you all the facts, but there were many places where Iraqi policemen stepped up to protect the voters. These were not American soldiers. These were not American police. They were Iraqis protecting Iraqis who had developed national pride in what they were trying to accomplish. I did not hear it on any of the media, I certainly did not read it in Time Magazine, but there were a couple of policemen who gave their lives in stepping forward and trying to protect voters. I was told by the Iraqis when I was over there, the voters never got out of line because they realized if they got out of line from voting and ran for cover, those guys that died protecting them while they tried to vote would have died for nothing, much like if we cut and ran from Iraq before this process is finished, then those valiant, brave people whose names we have just heard more of would have died for nothing. Thank God we have a President who is seeing this through to the end.

There was an additional policeman, I was told by Iraqis, who found a suicide bomber in the voting place. He grabbed him, rushed him outside, threw him to the ground, threw himself on top of him and they were both killed in the ensuing explosion. Nobody got out of line, they told me, because they knew that would have meant that the policeman died for nothing. They stayed, they voted, and thank God they have some great days ahead. It is not easy days. It is difficult days. We have got to stay the course.

Some of the headlines I did read, not in magazines necessarily but some of the periodicals said it turned out to be the most peaceful day in months, this preceding Saturday when it was voting day. Only one of Baghdad's 1,200 polling stations came under attack, another article read. The relatively small number of insurgent attacks compared with the last poll may be a sign of how Sunni involvement in politics can complicate matters for insurgent leaders whose aim is to destroy the political process.

Just as evil unimpeded and unobstructed by good people will spread in an insidious way, so will good and democracy spread just like sunlight during the dawn of a new day as it touches more and more land and spreads. That process is in its infancy in the Middle East, but it is a beautiful thing to see occurring and we can thank God and thank those people who have served their country and given their lives.

Here are other comments. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said the Sunnis are now invested in this process. There is no political base any longer for this insurgency.

I was told by a former general under Saddam Hussein this past spring in Iraq that if you will just stand behind us in America until we get our constitution voted in, until we have an election under the constitution, you will see violence subside.

We are very grateful for all those who have contributed.

THE GROWING NATIONAL DEBT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. COOPER) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. COOPER. Mr. Speaker, any day now, the United States of America will have borrowed over \$8 trillion. That is not an occasion to celebrate. That is an occasion to be very worried about the future of our country. \$8 trillion is a fantastic sum of money. To see how long it is, all those numbers stretched out, just look outside the office of any Blue Dog Member of this Congress and you will see a chart like this, because it will show you that as of today, the debt is \$7.989 trillion. That means we are only \$11 billion away from passing the \$8 trillion threshold.

How quickly are we approaching that threshold? We are borrowing almost \$1 billion a day. That means within the next week or two, we will pass the \$8 trillion threshold. Of course, much of the money we are borrowing, we are borrowing from foreigners, and increasingly from the Chinese. So all Americans need to be on alert, because this is something that has never happened before in all of American history. We have had ups and downs, we have had the Depression, we have had the Civil War, but we have never been borrowing money at this rate.

Let me put it in historical perspective. It took the first 204 years of our Nation's history to accumulate \$1 trillion in debt. And now we are doing that every 2 or 3 years. Our Nation's top accountant, David Walker, of the GAO has said that arguably the year 2004 was the worst year in America's entire fiscal history. Why would our top accountant say something like that? First of all, because he believes it is true, and it is also because this Congress promised \$13 trillion worth of new spending in one year, none of which is paid for. Imagine promising \$13 trillion and not even beginning to pay for it.

Later this week under a newly resolved Republican majority, they are planning on increasing the amount of reconciliation that we will undertake by some \$15 billion. That sounds mighty good on the surface, but that is about 2 weeks' worth of this borrowing. I do not think 2 weeks' worth is going

to be good enough for our kids and grandkids who want to know that we are leaving our Nation stronger than the way we found it. Instead what this Congress is doing and this administration is leaving us weaker than we used to be. There should be more leadership in this body, but with 435 people all contending to represent their districts back home, it is hard to characterize Congress as much more than an organized appetite. That is why our wise Founding Fathers gave us what they thought would be presidential leadership. That is why they gave the President the veto, for example, so that he could take a congressional bill and veto it.

Right now under President George W. Bush, we have the first President since James Garfield in 1881 never to have vetoed a single bill. 1881 was a long time ago. Poor President Garfield was only in office for 6 months. President Bush has been in office for 5 years, without a single veto. So you really have to go back even further than President Garfield to find a President who has accepted every bill that Congress sent him as if it were perfect. For that, to find a President who served two full terms, you have to go back to President John Quincy Adams. You can see his portrait right outside this Chamber. That is not a record to be proud of. Because this Congress needs to be tamed, it needs to be disciplined and the veto is the constitutional power the President has to do that.

But that is not the only power the President has. He also has the power of rescission. Every President since Richard Nixon has had that power. Every President since Richard Nixon has used that power except for President George W. Bush. He has never used the power. Let me give you an example. President Clinton used it 163 times. President Bush, Sr. used it, I think, 400 times. President Reagan used it 600 times, saving billions and billions of dollars of unnecessary spending as they use it. President Bush has never used that power.

IRAQI ELECTIONS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, this year in January, I had the honor to go to Iraq for their first elections in history for a democracy. Iraq is where the world began, between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. Myself and Congressman CHRIS SHAYS of Connecticut were the two Members of Congress that were in Iraq on election day.

You remember, Mr. Speaker, those were the times when the skeptics and the terrorists said, Oh, there won't be an election. The Iraqis won't do it. They won't go and vote. Yet they did. Sixty-one percent of those people went and voted.

While there, I learned a lot from the Iraqis. I learned, first of all, they are a very proud people, that they are somewhat underestimated about their ability to have and believe in a democracy. I also learned that those people are just like us and all people in the world, because, Mr. Speaker, down in our soul, where we are made, every person has the yearning to be free. The Iraqis are no different than Americans or other peoples in the world.

I also learned, Mr. Speaker, that they will not be intimidated by the terrorists. The terrorists in January told the Iraqis that if they go and vote, they will be killed. They were told that if they were seen with that purple finger, they would be killed. Yet the Iraqis voted. They willingly stuck their finger in that inkwell and stained their finger for several days. I remember here on the House floor where many of us stood when the President of the United States in his State of the Union message talked about those Iraqi people and how we stood defiant as well as those people with our finger in the air, showing that freedom will prevail and rule the day.

Mr. Speaker, this has been an interesting year for the Iraqi people. They started a country in January with their Parliament. They then elected a Prime Minister, a President. They wrote a constitution, they voted on it, and they have all done it in less than 10 months. Remarkable. We sometimes forget history. We forget our own history that it took us 13 years after 1776 to get our Constitution. In fact, only nine States ratified it at first, and the two big ones, New York and Virginia, were late comers to the table. In fact, North Carolina did not ratify it until the next year and Rhode Island took 2 more years to ratify the U.S. Constitution. Not all Americans supported the Constitution. One of my favorite Revolutionary War people, Patrick Henry, did not believe that the new Constitution should be ratified. He believed in a stronger State instead of a Federal Government.

We sometimes forget our own history and we sometimes sell the Iraqi people short as many people have done this year. Those people, the Northeast elites and the west coast Hollywood leftists, said it would not happen, that the Iraqis would not have a government this year. But they did. Maybe those folks seem to be somewhat disappointed that the Sunnis, the Kurds and the Shiites all came to the table and voted for this Constitution. Those Northeast elites and those west coast Hollywood leftists were the same ones who said that we couldn't help Germany and Japan in World War II. We fought those two countries, those two regimes of totalitarian states, but the United States went in and set up democracies in both of those countries. Now those countries are not only free but they are world powers and they are our allies.

And what if it happens? What if Iraq and Afghanistan do the same thing

that Germany and Japan did, become world powers, become democracies and, more importantly, become free and our allies?

Mr. Speaker, democracy is the enemy of terrorism and freedom is the enemy of anarchy, and the people are the enemy of dictators. The United States in its history has gone to war numerous times, but we go to war not to conquer but to liberate. We go to war not to enslave but to set free. And so our troops that I met with in January and the troops that are serving there today are serving a purpose in Iraq. I have talked to them and they are proud that they are able to represent the United States and fight the war on terror. But they are also proud of the fact that they are setting up a democracy in that land far, far away.

Mr. Speaker, history will look favorably on our role in Iraq and Afghanistan. History will record what amazing people these Americans were. It will be a good time in history for the United States and the Iraqi people.

Mr. Speaker, freedom once again has ruled the day.

WHITE HOUSE HAS NOT BEEN HONEST WITH AMERICAN PEOPLE ABOUT CIA LEAK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2005, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATSON) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, for 2 years now, the White House has not leveled with the American people about its involvement in the leaking of a covert CIA operative's name to the press. As a former Ambassador, you have covert agents operating within your authority. To let those names become public could destroy the whole mission.

On October 1, 2003, White House press secretary Scott McClellan was asked about both Karl Rove and Scooter Libby's possible involvement in the leaking of Valerie Plame's identity. Mr. McClellan told reporters that they assured him they were not involved. One month earlier, McClellan told reporters, "If anyone in this administration was involved in it, they would no longer be in this administration."

Well, Mr. Speaker, it is clear that both Rove and Libby were involved and yet they both remain in the administration. Does the President forget how serious this issue is? Remember, it was his own father, a former CIA director, who said in 1999 that he had "nothing but contempt and anger for those who betray the trust by exposing the name of our sources. They are, in my view, the most insidious of traitors."

Mr. Speaker, it is time the President addresses these negative matters that are infecting all areas of the Republican Party here in Washington.