

has had numerous cases of BSE in recent years. Our current testing system would detect one BSE-positive cow out of 10 million healthy cows with a 99 percent probability. So the odds of a BSE cow getting through our present system is practically nil. So it is a very reliable system.

Contrast this with the scenario currently going on with the European Union. In 2004, last year, there were 756 cases of BSE in the European Union, 756, whereas in all of North America there have been no more than four or five cases in the last 3 years. There have been 189,102 cases of BSE in Europe since BSE was first found several years ago. So it has been a huge amount of trouble that they have had. Yet the United States has experienced practically no exports of our beef to Europe. One would think with that scenario that we would have had a tremendous export opportunity.

The European Union has blocked U.S. beef in violation of WTO rules, also has blocked our pork, our poultry, and genetically modified crops. So the European Union, certainly, has not been a good trading partner; and they have, as I mentioned, violated WTO rules in doing so.

The net agriculture trade deficit between the United States and the European Union was a minus \$5 billion last year; so we have taken a big hit in this area.

Current trade talks with the European Union are very important, and we have an excellent trade ambassador, Rob Portman, who is doing a great job and we have great confidence in him, but currently we have an offer on the table which is one by which we would reduce our amber box, our farm subsidies, by 60 percent, from \$19 billion to roughly \$7.5 billion.

We have asked the European Union to reduce their trade subsidies by 83 percent, from \$80 billion down to \$15 billion. The EU has countered with an offer to reduce their export subsidies and also their farm subsidies to 39 percent, which is certainly not a very satisfactory counteroffer. As a result, we are somewhat concerned about their response to this whole situation.

It seems that tariffs certainly need to be equalized between the U.S. and the European Union. Currently, our tariffs on goods going into the European Union are roughly 30 percent. Their goods coming into the United States are roughly 12 percent. So here these two large trading partners, with economies of somewhere in the \$9 trillion to \$11 trillion range, still have a great dichotomy in terms of the actual tariffs that are being charged against the U.S. versus the EU.

The important thing to realize is if these trade agreements are formalized and if they do come into being, this will certainly change the nature and structure of our current farm bill.

A note of caution here, Mr. Speaker. Brazil is waiting there and seeing what is going to happen. Their land is rough-

ly 10 percent of our land value. Their labor costs are about 5 percent of our value. So if we reduce our farm programs, they are going to be a formidable competitor. We certainly think our farmers can compete with anyone in the world; but when the playing field is that unequal, it can be a problem. So it is really important that we realize that trade agreements are tremendous if they are honored and if the playing field is equal, but they can be huge liabilities if one side honors the agreements and the other does not.

So far with the European Union that has been pretty much the situation. So in Congress we need to look at the next WTO round very carefully.

THE CONTINUING WAR IN IRAQ

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. Mr. Speaker, every time you look, the rationale for the Iraq war has shifted. It went from being about weapons of mass destruction to removing Saddam Hussein to trying to build a democratic Iraq.

We were told this war would be over in a matter of weeks, and that the Iraqis would be able to finance it with oil sales. We were promised it was not a mission of nation building.

But the reality is we're two years in and we've spent more than \$200 billion dollars on this venture. And who is paying for all of this? The American taxpayer.

The outstanding public debt as of October 3 is almost \$8,000,000,000,000 (eight trillion). With a population approaching 300 million, each U.S. citizen's share of this debt is about \$27,000.

Big government conservatives are spending trillions and wasting billions. Republicans are no longer the party of fiscal conservancy, but the party of runaway spending and corruption.

The majority's oversight of the spending in Iraq has been simply disgraceful. The time for accountability is long overdue. It is time to stop handing the president blank checks.

Each week in Iraq, the deadly attacks continue, and more of our troops are lost. Our death toll now is past 2,000 Americans.

These attacks remind us again of the urgent need to develop a more effective strategy in Iraq—one I and my colleagues on this side of the aisle suggested before we went to war, and one that was disregarded.

The reality in Iraq is that we are creating new terrorists and severely damaging the public impression of the United States in the Muslim world.

We should not be advocating an immediate withdrawal. But we need an exit strategy addressing our goals in Iraq and proposing the announcement of a timetable to draw down the majority of U.S. forces during 2006.

Yet the president still refuses to level with Congress and the American people about when such withdrawals may actually come to pass.

Our military leaders have repeatedly told us that there is no purely military solution in Iraq, and that a political settlement is a necessary element for success.

Meanwhile, the Administration continues urging the American people to "stay the

course." That's a bumper sticker slogan, not a strategy.

The dishonesty needs to stop. The American people deserve better.

Our troops have done everything we've asked of them in Iraq. They have acted heroically. They have done their job.

We must have a timetable for withdrawal of U.S. forces—or at the very least a plan for it—something the administration has incredibly failed to do for over two years.

This means conveying that our troops will not be there forever. It means the Iraqis must come together. Only Iraqi unity can stop the insurgency, not a permanent U.S. military presence.

The administration has been sending the wrong message with repeated statements that we will stay in Iraq as long as we are needed.

We should not mislead the Iraqis into thinking they have unlimited time to reach a settlement. The longer they think that, the less likely they will be to act.

The administration needs to speak honestly with the American people. Exaggerating our progress in defeating the insurgency or in creating an Iraqi army paints a dangerous picture. Repeated tours in Iraq and Afghanistan have strained our forces and have hurt recruitment.

The American people are losing patience with the mounting casualties and costs.

Democrats are asking the administration to do its job and to develop a strategy for successful completion of the mission.

It's past time for a plan to ensure that our mission in Iraq is a success and that our brave men and women in uniform can begin to come home soon.

We must support initiatives that provide clear, concrete measures and milestones that our troops need for defeating the insurgency, building up Iraqi security forces, and handing over Iraq to the Iraqi people.

From increased gas prices to corruption in Ohio and Washington; from record spending and record debt to jobs shipped overseas; and from failing to supply body armor to our troops in Iraq to skyrocketing healthcare costs, the Republican agenda has proved a failure.

And they've done nothing to remedy it.

The Republicans are running wild with our tax dollars and it's been a mistake to let this administration continue a policy of incompetence when it comes to Iraq.

It is past time for Republican leadership to answer for record deficits and reckless spending, both in Iraq and in the U.S. It's time for a plan to bring our troops home.

It's a message the American people understand, but Republicans aren't willing to accept.

IRAQ AND AMERICA'S LEADERS

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, last year when it became clear that the United States was unprepared to fight an increasingly hostile and aggressive Iraqi insurgency, Secretary Rumsfeld told our troops: "You have to go to war with the Army you have, not the Army you want."

Well, I am here tonight to tell Secretary Rumsfeld and the other members of the Bush administration that

the war in Iraq was started by the government leaders we have, but not the government leaders we want.

Let us take a look at the folks who are running things at the White House. Who is weighing in on this war every single day? First, we have got Scooter Libby, the Vice President's chief of staff. Scooter Libby was in charge of coordinating the intelligence and communications strategy for the war in Iraq until last week. Last week, Libby was indicted by a Federal prosecutor for his role in outing undercover CIA operative Valerie Plame.

Libby's precise role in this scandal is not yet clear, but it is suspected that he shopped Ms. Plame's identity to multiple reporters in an effort to discredit her husband, Ambassador Joe Wilson, who opposed the invasion of Iraq and cited proof that the administration's claims of yellow cake in Niger were actually false.

This political assassination reveals the cold, calculated tactics used by the Bush administration in the buildup to the war. Obviously, the administration was so righteous in their cause that they would do anything to stop those who opposed them, including identifying an undercover CIA agent. Now a Federal investigation is getting to the heart of those callous prewar tactics. Unfortunately, if Scooter Libby is the sole administration official to be punished for the governmental failures that led to the war in Iraq, then he will become a scapegoat of historic proportions.

Libby's boss, Vice President CHENEY, was no less involved in the planning that led to the war. According to reports, Mr. CHENEY badgered and bullied low-level CIA analysts into misinterpreting evidence regarding Saddam's supposed nuclear weapons program. Also, we cannot overlook that Vice President CHENEY was the CEO of Halliburton, the company that has benefited from billions and billions of dollars of contracts in Iraq. How many bids did Halliburton have to place to get these massive construction contracts? Surprisingly, not a single one.

That brings us to former CIA Director George Tenet. As the CIA chief in the months leading up to the war in Iraq, George Tenet personally vetted much of the intelligence that was cited as evidence of Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction "program." Today, we are certain that evidence was completely false. Saddam Hussein did not possess weapons of mass destruction, nor did he have a program that could create weapons of mass destruction.

So what did George Tenet receive for presiding over one of the monumental intelligence failures in modern history? Why, the Presidential Medal of Honor, of course.

Mr. Speaker, it seems that many of the administration have benefited personally and professionally from the war in Iraq, while the rank and file, our soldiers, have suffered a disproportional

share of the burden. You go to war with the Army you have? Well, I have been to Iraq and I have got news for the American people: the Army we have is pretty darn impressive. We ought to be proud of their commitment to America's security, and we ought to be appalled that their civilian superiors have not demonstrated an equal commitment to them. It is our country's highest leaders that we ought to be worried about.

The indictment of those involved in the prewar intelligence would be a start. After more than 2 years of war, over \$200 billion spent, continued death and continued suffering, it is time to end this awful game of lies. It is time to end this corruption. Let us support our troops. Let us bring them home to their families where they belong.

BIG LIES AND LITTLE LIES

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FITZPATRICK of Pennsylvania). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. PAUL) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, Scooter Libby has been indicted for lying. Many suspect Libby, and perhaps others, deliberately outed Joe Wilson's wife as a covert agent. This was done to punish and discredit Wilson for bringing attention to the false information regarding Iraq's supposed efforts to build a nuclear weapon, information made public in President Bush's State of the Union message in January, 2003. Special prosecutor Patrick Fitzgerald was chosen to determine if this revelation regarding Valerie Plame, Wilson's wife, violated the Intelligence Identification Protection Act. The actual indictment of Libby did not claim such a violation occurred. Instead, he has been charged with lying and participating in a cover-up during the 2-year investigation. I believe this is a serious matter that should not be ignored.

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But it is not an Earth-shattering event. This case, like almost everything in Washington, has been driven by politics, not truth, justice or the Constitution. It is about seeking political power, pure and simple, not unlike the impeachment process during the last administration.

There are much more serious charges of lying and cover-ups that deserve congressional attention. The country now knows the decision to go to war was based on information that was not factual. Congress and the people of this country were misled. Because of this, more than 2,000 U.S. troops and many innocent people have died. Tens of thousands have been severely wounded, their lives forever changed, if not totally ruined.

The lies Scooter Libby may or may not have told deserve a thorough investigation, but in the scheme of things, the indictment about questions regard-

ing the release of Valerie Plame's name, a political dirty trick, is minor compared to the disinformation about weapons of mass destruction and other events that propelled us into an unnecessary war. It costs, in life, suffering and money, have proven to be prohibitive. The Libby indictment, unless it opens the door to more profound questions concerning why we went to war, may serve only as a distraction from much more serious events and lies.

The decision to go to war is profound. It behooves Congress to ask more questions and investigate exactly how the President, Congress and the people were misled into believing that invading Iraq was necessary for our national security.

Why do we still not know who forged the documents claiming Saddam Hussein was about to buy uranium from Niger? Was this information concocted by those who were overly eager to go to war? Why was CIA reluctance regarding this assessment ignored, allowing it to be presented by the President as a clincher for our need to go to war? Other reasons used to justify the war deserve equal attention since the results have been so painful for our country.

If lies were told to justify the invasion of Iraq, the American people deserve to know the truth. Congress has a responsibility to seek this truth and change our policies accordingly. The sooner this is done, the better.

THE MYRIAD OBSTACLES OF DEALING WITH FEMA

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

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, at the end of this month, most Americans will celebrate Thanksgiving, and we always look forward to being with our families. On our minds this year, however, are the thousands and thousands of Americans who have been uprooted as a result of the hurricanes in the Gulf region who really need a Thanksgiving; and, as we celebrate, we ought to remember them. We ought to ask ourselves how we can really have a Plymouth Rock weekend and find a way to extend a helping hand to our fellow citizens in the South.

Today, the newspaper USA Today had a lead story talking about the lack of help that these Americans are receiving from the Federal Emergency Management Agency and thousands and thousands scattered across over 18,700 zip codes in all 50 States, people whose footing will not be firm come Thanksgiving this November.

It talks about how the lack of FEMA support has hindered the local groups, the church groups, the not-for-profits, that are trying to help these Americans, our fellow citizens, reposition. They talk about how relief groups have been stymied by the Federal Emergency Management Agency's failure to