

the damage done to their children and loved ones. So we need to make it more user friendly.

There is about \$3 billion in that fund. It was created to protect the pharmaceutical industry from class action lawsuits while at the same time providing a mechanism for people who have been damaged by vaccines to get compensation. It needs to be changed. It needs to be improved so that it is more user friendly. If we need to put more money into the fund, the pharmaceutical industry can add a nickel to the cost of each vaccination. That should cover ever any shortfall. That is very important.

The final thing is to make sure that we do not leave anybody behind. There are thousands and thousands and thousands of children and families that have been damaged by the mercury that was in vaccines. We must not forget them. We must make sure that they get compensated for the liability they have incurred, how they have been damaged. It is extremely important.

Right now, we have demonstrations all the time when people come out and say, "My child has been damaged and we do not know what to do about it." The only thing we can do as a government, in my opinion, is to make sure they get compensation from the Vaccine Injury Compensation Fund and get mercury out of all vaccines. If we do that, I will sponsor the legislation to protect them against all class action lawsuits.

I have talked to leaders of the major pharmaceutical companies about this. I said, in exchange for giving you protection against class action lawsuits, make sure people who are damaged by vaccines can get compensation from the Vaccine Injury Compensation Fund and take away one of the leading causes of neurological damage and damage that has been caused by vaccines, neurological problems like autism and Alzheimer's. Get mercury out of all vaccines.

So, Mr. President, if I were talking to you tonight, I would say it is extremely important that we do what you suggested today to protect the American public against a flu outbreak that could kill millions of people, but, at the same time, let us not forget those who have already been damaged by vaccines that were tainted with things like mercury.

ERRONEOUS PREDICTIONS ON THE WAR IN IRAQ

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

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, last week, America reached a tragic milestone in Iraq, the 2,000th American died. As of today, nearly 2,030 Americans have been killed in Iraq and a little over 200 in Afghanistan. In fact, October was the deadliest month in Iraq

since January. I say this not to exploit the grief felt by those families who have lost loved ones. Rather, I raise this grim milestone because it should give us, all of us, pause.

Two-and-one-half years after President Bush stood on the deck of the USS *Abraham Lincoln* and declared "mission accomplished," the brave men and women of our Armed Forces are still fighting and dying in Iraq, worse today than during the actual hostilities, and there is no end in sight.

There is not a time to debate how we got into Iraq. There is a place for that. What is more important now is resolving the issues and the sense of how we have gotten into this quagmire and bring our men and women home to their families.

It is time the administration finally leveled with the American people and presented us with a viable strategy towards success and victory. It is time that the President finally surrounded himself with competent leaders who can get the job done, rather than cronies and political operatives interested in advancing a political agenda.

Before the war, General Shinseki said it would take several hundred thousand troops to secure Iraq. Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz said his estimate was widely off the mark and General Shinseki was let go.

Lawrence Lindsey predicted the war would cost hundreds of billions of dollars. In fact, many ridiculed his estimate and said again he was widely off the mark, that oil revenues would pay for the reconstruction.

□ 1945

His predictions were ignored; and \$400 billion later, the tab keeps rising. Some say it will finally cost nearly \$1 trillion, this war.

DICK CHENEY famously predicted that we would be greeted as liberators. Let me say, if Iraq treats liberators like this, they have a funny way of greeting liberators.

Weeks after the invasion of Iraq, Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld fought against increasing the troop levels in Iraq. In fact, months before the war, he was still debating whether we needed less than 100,000 troops, when those in the Armed Forces were saying we needed 200,000-plus to win that war.

When the looting broke out in Iraq right after the invasion, Secretary of Defense Don Rumsfeld replied "stuff happens." Later he said during the looting, "freedom is untidy, and free people are free to make mistakes and commit crimes and do bad things." That was the Secretary of Defense. That sense of freedom has led to the situation we have today because we did not create order in that society in Iraq and a sense of who was in control.

In fact, the Defense Secretary has been flat wrong on countless occasions, both before hostilities and after the hostilities. I have lost track of the number of times he has told us that the insurgency was in its "last throes." On

March 30, 2003, regarding the fabled weapons of mass destruction, Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld again: "We know where they are. They are in the area around Tikrit and Baghdad."

He has misled us on the number of Iraqis trained to conduct police and military operations. In September of 2003 he said 55,000 Iraqis have been trained. Earlier this year, he told us three battalions were operational. About a month ago, in front of the Senate, we were told that there was only one operational Iraqi battalion. Imagine that: Mr. Speaker, \$450 billion, a little over 2,000 American lives, over 10,000 Americans wounded, and one operational Iraqi battalion to show for that, and two elections.

The truth is that the administration's plan for their invasion was brilliantly planned, but they have failed to plan for the occupation, costing American lives, our treasury, and our reputation, and all because of the incompetence of this administration.

Today we are left with a quagmire that has created terrorists and threats to destabilize the region.

Let me read you what some of the experts in the Republican national security apparatus have said. Retired Army Lieutenant General Odom, former head of the National Security Agency, said the invasion of Iraq "will turn out to be the greatest strategic disaster in U.S. history."

Brent Scowcroft, National Security Adviser to the first President Bush said: "You have to know when to stop using force. You encourage democracy over time, with assistance, and aid, the traditional way. Not how the neocons in this administration do it."

Lieutenant Colonel Lawrence Wilkerson, Colin Powell's former chief of staff in the State Department, called President Bush's foreign policy "ruinous" and said that "we have courted disaster in Iraq, in North Korea, in Iran."

The people I just quoted are not exactly the board of moveon.org or the Democratic Party. These are the pillars and the heads of the national security apparatus of the Republican Party. These experts are saying that it is time for a new direction with new priorities when it comes to Iraq.

We have to get it right in Iraq, but the current path the President has us on is not the path to success; and it is not simply, as he says, the choice between doing more of the same and getting the same results or merely pulling out. Mr. Speaker, \$400 billion and one Iraqi battalion. Some are estimating, as I said, the cost of this war will get closer to \$1 trillion.

It is time for the President to level with the American people and show us a path to success. We need a performance-based Iraqi strategy. How many police will we be reduced to this quarter? How many police will be reduced next quarter? How many Army members will be produced this quarter, the next quarter, and for the next 2 years,

every quarter this administration has to have a performance-based policy on police training, on Army training, on civil society development, on reconstruction, and on the political front so we can finally, in the President's words, stand down. But having given them free rein for nearly 2½ years and we have one battalion operationally ready to show for it, they have abused the trust of the American people.

We need to internationalize our operations in Iraq. We need to convince the world that a stable Iraq is in everyone's interests, and we need to refocus on stopping terrorism. Mr. Speaker after 2½ years and more than 2,000 American lives, it is time we adopted a different strategy, a strategy for victory that will reunite American families and provide Iraq a stable society. It is time the President stopped campaigning and began to lead on the issue of Iraq.

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

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

SEEKING OUT THE TRUTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, before I begin my focused remarks, I would like to join my colleague from Ohio, Congresswoman KAPTUR, and ask the same questions of FEMA and the Department of Homeland Security. Having just toured the region in Texas and having been in part of Louisiana in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, and now Hurricane Rita, we now are fully aware of the Department of Defense leaving behind people who are in essence homeless.

In the city of Houston, we expect that some 44,000 to 50,000 individuals now housed in hotel rooms will be subsequently evicted because of the time running out. All of these individuals have been hard-working, tax-paying Americans who are now looking not for a hand out, but a hand up. We cannot seem to get FEMA and all of the good works that many of the individual FEMA staff persons have done to recognize that we have a crisis and that we need to engage in some of the catastrophic solutions. That means finding trailers across America wherever they might be. Do not wait and tell us that you cannot find them because they are not manufactured when there are places across America housing or holding various facilities that could be moved. You cannot tell us that you cannot use some of the military bases that have been designated for closing. So I join my colleague, and we will

hopefully join in a sense of Congress that will ask FEMA and Homeland Security to move expeditiously to house the thousands of individuals who are not yet housed.

Let me now suggest that as we look to the tragedy in America that some of our citizens have fallen on hard times, might I lift again our praises and respect for the men and women on the front lines in Iraq and, of course, Afghanistan. We have always said when we have come to the floor to raise a question about the Iraq war that this is completely separate from our respect for the men and women who have offered their lives and certainly offered their service on behalf of this country. But it is important, as we have passed this enormous milestone, to be able to again remind America, and of course our colleagues, on the negative impact and negative results of this war.

For each number, a face and family. The front page of our local newspaper, we are reading the names of Jonathan David Rozier, Adolfo C. Carballo, Pedro Contreras, Andrew Houghton, Dexter Kimble, and William M. Amundson. Those are just a few names and pictures on the front page. As well, might I again cite the young man who is buried in my congressional district, Sergeant Michael Robinson.

It is important now, as the American public begins to look for some answers, both to the President and the United States Congress, that we fulfill our duty and our obligation to give them the answers. I think the action of the Senate today, led by the minority leader, Senator REID, was, in fact, a very positive step. It was a step toward telling the truth: what and how was the intelligence used, and how was it represented to the United States Congress for a decision to be made statutorily, by a vote on this floor, not a constitutional vote, to move toward Iraq.

Now, it is obviously true that the American public wants to find solutions; but as we find solutions, we must be keenly aware of finding out the truth. It is important as well to be able to go back and understand how this Congress was able to do its job effectively or not effectively because of the representations and misrepresentations that were made by the administration and others.

So I am calling upon this Congress to do the right thing. Whether we establish a bipartisan select committee to investigate the cooked intelligence to be able to find out the truth or whether or not we instruct a number of our jurisdictional committees to hold hearings, we should begin our work. Doing this work on the past, on how the representations were made and how the ultimate decisions were made does not in any way take away the responsibility that we have for a successful exit strategy for our men and women to be able to come home.

We understand that the American people are serious people. They understand as well that we have responsibil-

ities, and I know that many are concerned about any precipitous action; but we do need a deliberative approach to be able to find a way to bring our young men and women home.

My deepest sympathy to the families who have lost loved ones on the front lines of Iraq and Afghanistan. This country will be forever indebted to you. And that is why in these names we promise you that we will find out the truth so that America, as she moves forward to defend herself in years to come, will have the respect and as well the success that is deserving of the military and the people of the United States of America.

QUESTIONS NEEDING ANSWERS

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

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, today is All Saints Day. It is a rather remarkable day. In the 18 years, 17 years I have been in the Congress, I have never seen the other body go into secret session to try and find out the truth of anything. The fact that they had a session over there where they closed the doors to try and get at the truth tells you how bad this situation is.

This morning's New York Times has an article, an editorial by Nicholas Kristof. Now, he is a neocon, certainly from the right, no question about it; but he says, his title is, "What Did Cheney Know and When Did He Know It?" He asks several questions which, I think, although many people do not have the opportunity to read the New York Times, they ought to know about it.

"Did you ask Scooter Libby to undertake his inquiries about Ambassador Joseph Wilson? Why did you independently ask the CIA for information about the Wilsons? Did you know that Mrs. Wilson was a covert officer? Did you advise Mr. Libby to leak information about Mrs. Wilson's work in the CIA to journalists? When Mr. Libby made his statements in the inquiry, allegedly committing perjury, were you aware of what he was saying?" Finally, and I think this is the question that really needs to be dealt with: "Was Mr. Libby fearful of disclosing something about your behavior in the summer of 2003?"

This goes on to suggest that if he did so, "was it a misguided attempt to try and protect you? The alleged lies shielded you," meaning Mr. CHENEY, "by indicating that the information you gave him about Mrs. Wilson instead came from reporters and not from him."

Now, this is a question that the American people deserve an answer to.

Several years ago we sat in this body and listened to a State of the Union address, and the Vice President of the United States sat right up here on the