

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I am very optimistic we will be successful in blocking this reckless fire sale of our national forests and that our children and grandchildren will be able to enjoy the serenity of the great outdoors for many years to come.

THIRD ANNIVERSARY OF THE WAR IN IRAQ

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

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, last week, on March 19, our Nation marked a somber milestone. We began the fourth year of the Iraqi war. It is becoming quite clear that this falsely conceived war is proceeding disastrously, with no end in sight. The administration's repugnant use of the phrase as bombing began, "shock and awe," has deteriorated into a "knock-down and raw, last man left standing" war of attrition.

The situation in Iraq continues to deteriorate precipitously. In the last month alone, there has been an escalation of sectarian violence. Dozens of suicide bombings, insurgent attacks and the like have left almost 1,000 more people dead since a bombing destroyed the dome of Samarra's Golden Mosque, a sacred and holy site to Shiite Muslims.

Iraq is still without a functioning government, as the Iraqi parliament has convened just once and for only 30 minutes. Moreover, there was an automobile ban in place throughout Baghdad to prevent car bombings that same day. A city-wide ban on cars, Mr. Speaker, is not a safe city. A nation where journalists cannot travel to report is not a safe country.

Headlines from newspapers around the globe have the same theme, civil war in Iraq. The administration, however, does not seem to see it that way. The President was in Ohio last week and made the following comment: "Americans look at the violence that they see each night on their television screens and wonder how I can remain so optimistic about the prospects of success in Iraq. They wonder what I see that they do not."

Well, I think the President has it the other way around, Mr. Speaker. The world sees a lot this President doesn't. Three years ago, we saw the administration did not have a plan to win the peace, and he and his narrow group of advisers led us down the path to war. We also see what he cannot see today, that our presence in Iraq has led to an increase in violence and terrorist activities in the Middle East and around the world, making us less safe as a nation.

Three years ago, on the eve of the invasion, I warned, and I quote myself, "Even if we take the ground, we do not share the culture. In the end, we have to learn to exist in a world with religious states that we may not agree with, and find ways to cooperate."

So the President has traded a brutal sectarian regime for an unstable nation that looks more and more every day like a dawning theocracy.

□ 2015

Events in the last few weeks seem to show this is indeed becoming the case. By refusing to prepare for the possibility that we would be considered occupiers rather than liberators, these architects of this war never afforded an opportunity to truly win the peace. Hospitals and medical services were ignored. Iraqi organizations open to the West were never consulted. Western media was not culturally appropriate inside that region. The seeds for unrest were sown before U.S. troops even entered Iraq.

Achieving military success without winning the hearts and minds of the public is a hollow victory, and now the President tells us troops will remain in Iraq until he leaves office in 2009, who knows when.

May I remind the body this President held a theatrically staged press event on a U.S. aircraft carrier on May 1, 2003, with a "Mission Accomplished" banner flying in the background. Major combat operations in Iraq have ended, he announced.

Two weeks ago, the United States launched the largest aerial assault in Iraq since 2003. More than 1,500 of our soldiers were deployed in the Samarra region to root out insurgent strongholds and seize weapons caches and the like. That sounds like a major combat operation to me, and it sounds like we are losing ground rather than making progress.

Statements by those in the administration prior to the invasion show how wrong the Bush administration has been. Donald Rumsfeld in February 2003 said, "It is unknowable how long the conflict will last. It could be 6 days, 6 weeks, I doubt 6 months."

Vice President CHENEY in March 2003 said, "We will, in fact, be greeted as liberators. I think it will go relatively quickly . . . (in) weeks rather than months." We are into the fourth year, almost as long as it took to fight World War II.

The toll this war has taken is staggering. Since March 2003, 2,322 U.S. soldiers have died, another 18,000 troops have been injured as a result of hostilities, with numbers doubling between 2003 and 2004 and increasing again in 2005.

Mr. Speaker, this evening I wish to place in the RECORD names of Ohioans, 104 of them, brave patriots who have died in service to our country in Iraq. God bless them.

OHIOANS DEAD THROUGH OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM (AS OF MARCH 4, 2006):

Anderson, Nathan Richard; Andres, Joseph John Jr.; Barkey, Michael Christopher; Bates, Todd Michael; Bell, Timothy Michael Jr.; Benford, Jason A.; Bernholtz, Eric James; Biskie, Benjamin Walter; Boskovitch, Jeffrey A.; Bourdon, Elvis; Bowen, Samuel Robert; Brownfield, Andrew David; and Buryj, Jesse Ryan.

Christian, Brett Thomas; Cifuentes, Michael Joseph; Conover, Steven Daniel; Davids, Wesley Graham; Derga, Dustin Alan; Deyarmin, Daniel N Jr.; Dixon, Christopher Robert; Dowdy, Robert John; Dyer, Christopher Jenkins; Eckert, Gary Andrew Jr.; Eckfield, Robert Franklin Jr.; Erdy, Nicholas Brandon; and Etterling, Jonathan Edward.

Finke, Michael Wayne Jr.; Fitzgerald, Dustin Robert; Ford David, Harrison IV; Garmbach, Joseph Martin Jr.; Gilbert, Richard Alan Jr.; Godwin, Todd Justin; Grella, Devin James; Gurtner, Christian Daniel; Hardy, Richard Allen; Harper, Bradley Jared; Hawkins, Omer Thomas II; Hines, Timothy James Jr.; Hodge, Jeremy Michael; and Hoffman, Justin Fenton.

Ivy, Kendall Howard II; Johnson, Adam Robert; Keeling, Thomas O.; Kinney, Lester Ormond II; Kinslow, Anthony David; Knight, Timothy Allen; Knop, Allen James; Kreuter, David Kenneth John; Kuhns, Larry Robert Jr.; Landrus, Sean Gregory; Large, Bryan William; and Lyons, Christopher P.

Martin, Ryan Abern; McVicker, Daniel M.; Mendezruiz, David A.; Mendoza, Ramon Juan Jr.; Messmer, Nicolas Edward; Meyer, Harrison James; Miller, James Hoyt IV; Mitchell, Curtis Anthony; Montgomery, Brian P.; Morgan, Richard Lynn Jr.; Murray, Jeremy Enlow; Neighbor, Gavin Lee; Nolan, Allen Duane; and Nowacki, Andrew Walter.

Oberleitner, Branden Frederick; Odums, Charles Edward II; Ott, Kevin Charles; Pintor, Dennis Lloyd; Pratt, Daniel Joseph; Prazynski, Taylor B.; Prince, Kevin William; Pummill, Richard Thomas; Ramey, Richard Patrick; Ramsey, Joshua Adam; Reed, Aaron Howard; Reese, Aaron Todd; Rock, Nathaniel S.; and Rockhold, Marlin Tyrone.

Schamberg, Kurt Daniel; Schroeder, Edward August II; Scott, David Allen; Seesan, Aaron N.; Seymour, Devon P.; Shepherd, Adam Roger; Shepherd, Daniel Michael; Sloan, Brandon Ulysses; Smith, Kevin Scott; Smith, Michael James Jr.; Souslin, Kenneth Clarence; Spann, Jacob D.; Sparks, Jason Lee; Squires, Brad D.; Swaney, Robert Adam; and Swisher, Tyler Bobbitt.

Tipton, John Edgar; Van Dusen, Brian Keith; Vandayburg, Allen Jeffrey; Webb, Charles Joseph; Wightman, William Brett; Wilkins, Charles Langdon III; Williams, Andre L.; Wobler, Zachary Ryan; and Zimmer, Nicholas Eugene.

OHIOANS DEAD THROUGH OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM (AS OF MARCH 4, 2006):

Egnor, Jody Lynn; Foraker, Ryan Dane; Freeman, Daniel Jason; Goare, Shamus Otto; Good, Alecia Sabrina; Hickey, Julie Rochelle; Jones, Darrell Ray Jr.; McDaniel, William Louis II; O'Neill, Michael Christopher; and Owens, Bartt Derek.

HONORING SERGEANT ANTON HIETT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DAVIS of Kentucky). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, it is with a heavy heart that I rise today to express the heartfelt condolences of a grateful Nation and to honor the life of Sergeant Anton Hiett of Mount Airy, North Carolina. Sergeant Hiett passed away on March 12, 2006, while serving in Afghanistan.

Sergeant Hiett served our country as a U.S. Army Reserve combat medic. His strong patriotism and desire to do what was right led him to join the

military after graduating from North Surry High School. He began his career as an infantryman, but later decided that his calling was to care for his wounded comrades. Last year, Sergeant Hiatt volunteered to go to Afghanistan because he felt compelled to help his country at war.

Sergeant Hiatt was a loving husband, father, son and brother. His friends describe him as someone "having a big heart and always going the extra mile to help others."

He leaves behind his wife, Misty Hiatt, his 2-year-old daughter, Kyra Hiatt, his parents, George and Angela Hiatt, and three siblings. May God bless and comfort them during this very difficult time.

We owe this brave soldier and his family a tremendous debt of gratitude for his selfless service and sacrifice. Our country could not maintain its freedom and security without heroes like Sergeant Hiatt who made the ultimate sacrifice. Americans as well as Afghans owe their liberty to Sergeant Hiatt and his fallen comrades who came before him.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in honoring the life of Sergeant Anton Hiatt.

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

(Mr. EMANUEL 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 gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. MALONEY addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana 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 North Carolina (Mr. BUTTERFIELD) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BUTTERFIELD 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 Minnesota (Mr. GUTKNECHT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. GUTKNECHT 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 gen-

tleman from Texas (Mr. POE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. POE 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 Kansas (Mr. MORAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

BLUE DOG COALITION

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

Mr. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, this evening, as on each Tuesday evening, I rise on behalf of the fiscally conservative Blue Dog Coalition, a group of 37 of us that are fiscally conservative Democrats that are concerned about the state of affairs in America. We are concerned about the debt, the deficit, the budget; and we are committed to trying to restore some common sense and fiscal discipline to our Nation's government and our Nation's budgeting process.

Ever since I was a small child growing up in Prescott, Emmet and Hope, Arkansas, I always heard it was the Democrats that spent the money. And yet it was a President named Bill Clinton from Arkansas, from my hometown of Hope, Arkansas, in fact, that gave this Nation its first balanced budget in 40 years. From 1988 through 2001, America enjoyed the prosperity that came with having its fiscal house in order. America enjoyed the prosperity that came with having a balanced budget.

It is hard now to believe that from 1998 through 2001 this country had a balanced budget, because, as we all know, for the sixth year in a row this Nation, under this Republican-led Congress and under this President, this administration, has given us the largest budget deficit ever, ever in our Nation's history for a sixth year in a row.

As a matter of fact, as you walk the Halls of Congress, it is easy to spot a fiscally conservative Democrat because the 37 of us who belong to the Blue Dog Coalition have this poster outside our office in the Halls of Congress. As you can see today, the U.S. national debt is \$8,365,525,832,151 and some change. That is a big number.

Let us put it in a way that we all can understand it. For every man, woman and child, including those born this past hour, every citizen of America's share of the national debt is \$28,000 and some change.

Mr. Speaker, where I come from, very few of my constituents can afford to write a check for \$28,000 and yet it is this kind of debt, this kind of deficit that we are saddling on our children and grandchildren and expecting them

someday to pay back, and I believe it is morally wrong.

I raise these issues because, you see, my grandparents left this country better than they found it for my parents, and my parents left this country better than they found it for my generation, and I believe we have a duty and an obligation to try and leave this country just a little bit better than we found it for the next generation. But instead, for the sixth year in a row, we have the largest budget deficit ever in our Nation's history.

This administration, this Republican Congress, continues to pass tax cuts for those earning over \$400,000 a year. Just in the last few months, this Congress passed the so-called Budget Deficit Reduction Act. Here is what it did. It cut Medicaid, the only health insurance plan for the poor, disabled, and elderly. It cut student loans and a program for orphans to the tune of \$40 billion. And then they passed another tax cut to the tune of about \$90 billion.

I was not real good in math in high school or college, but you can do the math on that. Some \$90 billion in tax cuts for those earning over \$400,000 a year, \$40 billion in cuts to Medicaid, to orphan programs and to student loans. That amounts to \$50 billion in additional debt, and yet the Republican leadership in this body had the nerve to call it the Deficit Reduction Act.

Mr. Speaker, I believe it is time for those of us in the fiscally conservative Blue Dog Coalition to rise up and hold this administration, this Congress responsible for these kinds of reckless spending habits that destroy future generations.

The budget the President has submitted for fiscal year 2007, some \$2.8 trillion, you have to give it to him, he has managed to cut all of the programs that matter to people: health care, education, infrastructure, economic development, and yet give us the largest budget deficit ever in our Nation's history all at the same time. How does he do that? Because he continues to propose to borrow money from foreign lenders, foreign central banks, foreign investors to fund tax cuts for those earning over \$400,000 a year. What has it given us? It has given us a debt of \$8,365,525,832,151.

By the time we complete this hour, Mr. Speaker, the national debt will have risen more than \$41 million.

Every Tuesday night those of us in the Blue Dog Coalition, we are 37 members strong, we come here to talk about the debt and the deficit and what it means, not only to today's generation but to future generations, because you see, Mr. Speaker, these are big numbers. They are big numbers, but let me put it in perspective.

Not only is our Nation borrowing about a billion dollars a day; we are sending \$279 million every day to Iraq, but do not dare ask the President how he is spending it or if he has a plan for how it is to be spent because he will tell you that you are unpatriotic. Some