

The Iraqis have made progress, and I do not know what more we can ask of our troops. But overall this visit solidified my belief that it is time for the Iraqi people to step forward and take control of the situation in their country.

Our troops are caught in the middle of religious and ethnic disputes. Secular violence is rampant in many areas. Iraqis must step up to the plate and resolve these disputes themselves.

As President Kennedy said of South Vietnam in the summer of 1961, "In the end, it is their country, and they are going to have to fight for it."

Therefore, we need a change of course in our foreign policy. Staying the course is no longer acceptable. We need to take two actions: One is announce a phased redeployment of our troops outside of Iraq. This redeployment should be complete by the end of this year, by 2006. Number two, we need to put the Iraqis on notice that they must assume responsibility. Of course, as we phase this redeployment, we need to assist them and train them and do everything we can during that period to make sure they have the best chance of success.

But this is their fight at this point.

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. BUTTERWORTH) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

#### YUCCA MOUNTAIN

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

Ms. BERKLEY. Mr. Speaker, earlier this morning, I came to the floor of the House and stood in the well to tell the American people about a cartoon character by the name of Yucca Mountain Johnny that the Department of Energy has created which has been funded by the taxpayers of the United States of America.

The purpose of creating this cartoon character is to help convince the children of the State of Nevada that storing radioactive toxic nuclear waste at Yucca Mountain, Nevada, is okay for them. It is bad enough that the Department of Energy has been trying to convince the people of the State of Nevada and the United States of America that shipping 77,000 tons of toxic nuclear waste across 43 States to be buried in a hole in the middle of the Nevada desert

where we have got groundwater problems, seismic activity, volcanic activity, is good for the health and well being of this Nation.

It is not. And Yucca Mountain Johnny has got to be dumped before there is a nuclear dump at Yucca Mountain. But the latest thing that has just occurred that I want to share with the American people, through you, Mr. Speaker, is it makes Yucca Mountain Johnny pale in comparison.

□ 1530

Let me read to you what came over the wire today that I read: "The U.S. military plans to detonate a 700-ton explosive charge that will send a mushroom cloud over Las Vegas. 'I don't want to sound glib,' says the head of the Defense Threat Reduction Agency, 'but it is the first time in Nevada that you will see a mushroom cloud over Las Vegas since we stopped testing nuclear weapons.'"

Well, it isn't glib to me, Mr. Speaker. It is a very serious thing when I have an administration official, the head of an agency, stating that he is going to detonate a 700-ton bomb that is going to send a mushroom cloud over the community that I represent, where my parents live, my children live, and 700,000 Nevadans live as well. So I called this gentleman, and I asked him to please explain this quote.

Glib? He is going to send a mushroom cloud, detonate a mushroom cloud over Las Vegas, Nevada. Well, he said, it was a poor choice of words, but that is what we are going to do. So I asked him, When is it going to take place? It is going to take place in June. I said, Is it really going to be a mushroom cloud over the State of Nevada. Isn't that a tad insensitive given the fact that we had nuclear experiments and weapons detonated at the Nevada test sites in the fifties and the sixties? He said, Well, it might have been a little insensitive, but that's what we are doing.

So I said, Well, is it going to be over Las Vegas? Well, not really Las Vegas. I misspoke. It is going to be at the Nevada test site. I said, Well, will we be able to see it from Las Vegas? Yes, you're going to be able to see it from Las Vegas. Well, how big is it going to be? Well, we don't know yet how big it is going to be. I said, Well, where at the Nevada test site is it going to be detonated? He said, Well, we are doing studies, and it is going to be detonated in a place that is safe.

I said, Well, how can it be safe when there were over 900 nuclear detonations in the fifties and sixties and that land is very toxic and very radioactive? He said, Well, we are going to do it in a place that isn't radioactive, although he couldn't tell me where, he couldn't tell me how.

If I can continue reading this, he says: "We also have," are you ready for this, this man doesn't realize how serious what he is proposing is, "we also have," are you ready for this, "a 700-ton explosively formed charge that

we're going to be putting in a tunnel in Nevada."

So I said to him, Well, if it's in a tunnel, how come we are going to get a mushroom cloud? Oh, well, I wasn't quite right about that either. It's not really in a tunnel. It's going to be above ground. I said, Well, how can it be above ground at the Nevada test site and not disturb the dirt that is radioactive? He said, Well, we're taking care of that too. I said, What happens if there's wind? Is the wind going to be blowing this mushroom cloud to Las Vegas? Is it going to Utah? He couldn't tell me that either.

This is a serious issue for the people of the State of Nevada. It's bad enough that we didn't get prior notice, and obviously the congressional delegation wasn't briefed; but the people of the State of Nevada haven't been briefed either. But if you look further at this press release that has been sent out, it says the Russians, the Russians have been notified of this test. So we have notified the Russians. We just neglected to notify the Americans?

I think this is a bad idea. We need more information. And before you start detonating 700-ton explosive devices at Nevada test site, we'd better do a thorough study of the environmental impact. Because if you are going to be disturbing that dirt that is radioactive and having a mushroom cloud out of Las Vegas, the people of Las Vegas, the people of the State of Nevada better know about it, and we better stop this madness if that is what is going to happen.

So I call upon this Defense Threat Reduction Agency to work with my office, work with the congressional delegation from Nevada, and let's figure out if we can maybe put this explosive detonation some place else where there aren't 1.6 million southern Nevadans and hundreds of thousands of tourists in the Las Vegas area at the time.

#### REFORM LIBERAL LUNACY

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

Mr. MCHENRY. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to speak about 527s. 527s are groups, shadowy groups, that work outside of campaign finance disclosure laws. They work outside of our campaign finance reforms that we passed just a few years ago. They are groups that do not disclose their donors in the way that other traditional campaign groups do. They are groups that have unlimited contributions. They are groups that come in and perhaps target members in different races or candidates in different races, yet they do not actually say who they are.

So today I want to say that as a conservative and as a Member of this House what I am fighting for is openness and full disclosure and allowing sunshine on this political process that we as Americans grow to trust.

Look, in 527s last year, in the 2004 campaign cycle, there is \$370 million. \$370 million, Mr. Speaker, that flowed through these groups outside of campaign disclosure. These groups can come in and do all sorts of campaigning, but yet they do not have to disclose like a campaign would. So the voters do not know who is working, who is out there putting this information out. \$370 million, Mr. Speaker, flowed through 527s. That is more than both the Kerry and Bush campaigns combined spent on the Presidential election. This was done outside of campaign disclosure.

Over one-fifth of the \$370 million funded through 527s came from four individuals; one-fifth of the \$370 million, four individuals. So much for taking big money out of politics, which is what my colleagues on the left wanted to do through campaign finance reform and many active in politics wanted to do. So much for taking big money out.

We created a loophole that 527s are allowed to use, or have taken advantage of, I should say. Over 80 percent of 527 donors gave at least a quarter of a million dollars. Think about that. That is truly big money in politics, Mr. Speaker. Forty-six individuals gave at least a million dollars to 527 groups. That is even bigger money. So we have created a two-tier system in campaign finance: one where people have to disclose; another where they shadow a group's act.

Look, the biggest big daddy of them all for 527s was a billionaire, what I like to call the Daddy Warbucks of the Democrat Party, George Soros, the Daddy Warbucks of the Democrat Party. He is pumping wads of cash into 527s to influence elections for his left wing agenda. Soros is one of the richest men in the world. He spent \$18 million on campaign finance reform to root out big money in politics. How hypocritical is that? He spent all that money for campaign finance reform, yet once campaign finance reform is passed, what does he do? He pumps wads of cash, millions, tens of millions of dollars to those shadowy 527 groups.

Fortune Magazine called him the world's angriest billionaire. He is without a doubt the most powerful Democrat in the country right now. He has a far left agenda and you cannot move any farther left to him until you go down south to Havana, to be honest with you.

Soros is an example of liberal lunacy, and it goes to the heart of what my colleagues on the left have been articulating, which is a culture of hypocrisy. A culture of hypocrisy, Mr. Speaker, that we need to take on as the majority in the House. As a Republican and as a conservative, I am going to point out the culture of hypocrisy that the 527 groups that the left wing in this body are taking advantage of.

That is why I think we need to come forward with true campaign finance reform, make the 527 groups accountable and disclose to the American people

who their donors are and abide by the same rules and regulations that all campaign groups must abide by.

The original intent from the Democrats was to root out big money in politics. They said not just a few years ago, not but just a few years ago, "... money that threatens to drown out the voice of the average voter of average means, money that creates the appearance that a wealthy few have a disproportionate say over public policy." Yet today, Mr. Speaker, the Democrats and the left in this body are more beholden than ever to big money politics and 527 groups and we will reform this liberal lunacy.

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

(Mr. BILIRAKIS 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 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 Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. CUMMINGS 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 (Ms. FOXX) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. FOXX 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 California (Mr. SCHIFF) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. SCHIFF 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 Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. VAN HOLLEN 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 New Jersey (Mr. HOLT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

### 30-SOMETHING WORKING GROUP

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of Jan-

uary 4, 2005, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MEEK) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it is once again an honor to come before the House. As you know, those of us that are in the 30-something Working Group, we come to the floor to share not only with the Members but the American people about what is happening under the Capitol dome here, or what is not happening.

We want to thank the Democratic leadership for allowing us to come to the floor again: Leader PELOSI and Mr. STENY HOYER, our whip, and also the chairman, Mr. JIM CLYBURN, and our vice chairman in assisting us in moving towards a stronger message to the American people.

I am so glad to be here with my good friend and colleague in the struggle for the truth and to make sure that we move America forward in many areas, even though we are serving in the minority here in the Congress. I think our constituents and also the American people, Mr. Speaker, look for us to use every avenue possible to be able to make their lives more secure, to be able to make sure we stand up on behalf of their health care, that we make sure that future generations have a better environment than what they have right now.

So with that, Mr. RYAN, it is so good to come back to the floor with you again, sir. We usually come to the floor and it is dark outside. It happens the sun is out; and as you know, the Congress is recessed for the week, but we are still here working, sir.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Thank you, my friend. One quick piece of business that has been mentioned several times here today is the countdown to the Bush prescription drug tax.

Now, for those Members who do not remember, the Republican Congress voted this boondoggle a few months back, told us it was \$400 billion before we cast a vote on it, and it ended up being \$700 billion. The real number was actually hidden from Members of the United States Congress before they voted.

What happens is through this bill seniors have until May 15 to sign up for the prescription drug plan, and if they do not sign up by May 15, they are going to be penalized with the Bush prescription drug tax, which means that there will be an increase in monthly premiums by 1 percent for every month they do not sign up. So if they do not sign up by May 15, they will not be eligible to sign up, I think, until January of 2007 to begin again. That means there will be a 7 percent increase if seniors do not sign up by May 15.

This is a complex plan, a complicated plan; and we are rushing and forcing our seniors to make a decision. So we just want to put a little X here on Thursday, March 30, a couple days before the Final Four begins, so our seniors know that the countdown is on and