

priorities such as affordable health care, energy costs, the economy, the rising cost of staying in Iraq and the deficit.

This week, the Senate spent 3 days debating a gay marriage amendment that everyone knew was going nowhere. In order to pass out of the Senate, the amendment needed 67 votes, and they couldn't even get a majority. The issue should be dead for the year, but now we hear the House leadership plans to bring it up later this summer.

Mr. Speaker, let us give ourselves credit for what we have done in Iraq and let us focus on these issues and let us start withdrawing our troops.

AN IMPORTANT DAY IN THE GLOBAL WAR ON TERROR

(Mr. PITTS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, today is an important day in the global war on terror. One of al Qaeda's most evil and ruthless terrorists, al-Zarqawi, has been eliminated, along with seven of his top aides. Justice has prevailed.

As the leader of al Qaeda in Iraq, Zarqawi was the mastermind behind the brutal murder of countless innocent Iraqis, car bombings, assassinations, kidnappings and attacks on our troops. It was Zarqawi who appeared on Internet videos personally beheading innocent civilians for the whole world to see.

News like this shows that we are making steady progress in Iraq. The death of al-Zarqawi strengthens the new Iraqi government and Prime Minister al-Maliki and sends a clear message to the terrorists of the world. The courage and dedication of the U.S. and Iraqi and coalition security forces remind the world that the forces of freedom and liberty will ultimately prevail over the forces of murder and terror.

□ 1015

DEATH OF AL-ZARQAWI

(Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, thanks to the precise and swift action of the United States military forces, al-Zarqawi's reign of terror has ended.

Osama bin Laden and terrorists worldwide should note that there is no safe place for them to hide. Terrorists in Iraq should also note that the events of the last 24 hours are further proof that the Iraqi people want to live free from fear.

Last year we saw the Iraqi people send a strong message to the terrorists at the ballot box. Last month we witnessed the formation of a new unity government, and today Prime Minister Maliki announced the completion of his cabinet.

The American people understand the road to a democratic way of life is not an easy one. Just as our Nation struggled in the beginning, Iraq has difficult and challenging days ahead. But I am confident that with continued support of the coalition forces, Iraq will figure out the best way to govern themselves in freedom.

The Iraqi people, as well as our enemies, should know we will stay the course because the security of our Nation depends on the willingness to take action to protect and preserve freedom.

JUSTICE IN IRAQ

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, last night the brave men and women of the United States Armed Forces, with Iraqi security forces, delivered a major victory in the global war on terrorism.

Because of their tremendous patience, courage and skill, the most wanted terrorist in Iraq is now dead. And as President Bush has said, there is justice in Iraq.

As the operational commander of the terrorist movement in Iraq, al-Zarqawi delighted in the devastation of Iraq and the destruction of life. As the mastermind behind countless car bombings, mass murders and assassinations, he was responsible for the brutal deaths of many Americans and thousands of innocent Iraqis.

Today's victory in Iraq is a testament to the tremendous talent of the United States military. By risking their lives to kill terrorists in Iraq, these brave men and women are protecting the lives of American families and making our country safer.

As we celebrate this incredible milestone, I rise to express my sincere gratitude to our brave troops and our Iraqi allies.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September 11.

VA DATA SECURITY

(Mr. SALAZAR asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. SALAZAR. Mr. Speaker, last week the VA revealed that private information for over 26 million veterans was stolen from an employee's home weeks ago, putting their identities and credit at risk.

Mr. Speaker, my father used to have a saying that the more that you poke at a cow pie, the more that it stinks. Well, for nearly 2 weeks the administration insisted that the stolen data only contained the veterans' names, birth dates and Social Security numbers.

On Tuesday, though, the administration revised their story again. So what is the real story? We know that the stolen data contained personal infor-

mation of more than 2.2 million active duty personnel. Yesterday over 145 Members joined me in a letter to President Bush urging him to take action and help those affected to recover from this security breach.

We have introduced legislation, H.R. 5455, that would be the first step in giving veterans access to 1 year of free credit monitoring. I urge my colleagues to cosponsor this bill.

Mr. Speaker, this last month has been an embarrassing display of the VA consistently failing to provide timely information about the severity and scope of the data. The delays and misinformation have hurt veterans and military personnel. It has hurt them at a time when we should be taking aggressive steps to protect their identities and financial standing.

Our veterans and our troops deserve answers and action right now.

AL-ZARQAWI DOWN, FREEDOM UP

(Mr. MCHENRY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. MCHENRY. Mr. Speaker, sometimes a person's mere existence causes death and destruction in this world. Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, al Qaeda's leader in Iraq who has led a bloody, bloody campaign of suicide bombings and kidnappings, was killed yesterday by our U.S. forces in an air raid north of Baghdad.

The death of this terrorist breathes new life into our efforts to implement democracy in a region desperate for freedom and hungry for peace.

Mr. Speaker, the Iraqi Parliament, as well, made a major breakthrough today by appointing officials to lead the country's top security ministries, giving Iraq a complete government for the first time since their elections in December of 2005.

Victory in Iraq is not only possible, Mr. Speaker, it is approaching. I want to tell my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, our troops are putting their lives on the line every day and making the sacrifices necessary to ensure safety, security, and a democratic Iraq, which will provide a model for a free and representative government in the Middle East.

Mr. Speaker, peace is a product of strength and democracy. We are showing strength by eliminating the terrorists and implementing democracy which will help root out Islamic extremists in the Middle East.

DEMOCRATS ARE FOCUSED ON THE AMERICAN PEOPLE'S PRIORITIES

(Mr. NADLER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, while House Republicans plan to use the next couple of months trying to distract the attention of the American people away

from their failures, House Democrats are focused on the American people's priorities.

While Washington Republicans have allowed our dependence on foreign oil to increase over the last 5 years, House Democrats are committed to achieving energy independence in the next 10 years. We would do this by doubling the percentage of renewable fuels sold in America in 6 years, increasing the percentage of flex-fuel vehicles that run on ethanol or gasoline, and investing in biofuel research.

While Republicans attempt to run from their fiscal record of turning a \$5.6 trillion surplus into a \$4 trillion deficit, Democrats continue to propose fiscally sound budgets that incorporate the pay-as-you-go policies that led to the record surpluses of the 1990s.

The Democratic budget for the upcoming year would have balanced the budget by 2012, something the Republicans neglect to do in theirs. Democrats have solutions to the problems Republicans ignore.

If House Republicans were really interested in solving our Nation's problems, they would stop the attempts to distract and would instead offer some new ideas.

VA DATA SECURITY BREACH

(Mr. STEARNS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, I am deeply concerned that nearly 27 million veterans could be affected by a data security breach of record proportions that could compromise sensitive personal information, and every day we learn more.

Tuesday we learned that names, dates of birth and Social Security numbers for as many as 1.1 million active duty U.S. military personnel, 430,000 National Guard members, 645,000 Reserve members, may also have been included.

This elevates the concern for personal financial security of some veterans to national security for all. This data could be used to identify where servicemembers live, demographics that a lot of our enemies would like to know.

Unfortunately, data breaches like this highlight the need for legislation I have authored, H.R. 4127, the Data Accountability and Trust Act. This bill, which the Energy and Commerce Committee has passed by a huge bipartisan vote, goes to the heart of this problem of the critical need to protect consumers' personal information.

Mr. Speaker, let's pass H.R. 4127 as soon as possible.

GOOD WORK OF OUR TROOPS IN IRAQ

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, having just returned from Iraq, I can appreciate the great celebration for the outstanding work of the special forces in the bringing down of an enormous terrorist, Zarqawi. That is an important step.

Most Americans will celebrate. And meeting personally the special forces both in Iraq and Afghanistan, it is a day for commendation and respect. It is important, however, that we begin as well a detailed outlook and plan for having our soldiers be able to claim the victory that they should claim and begin, as soon as practicable, their return home.

It is also important for the sovereign nation of Iraq to build up the Iraqi National Army, which our forces are training in an outstanding manner, and their police. It will only be when the Iraqi people believe that their own police and army can secure them that we will have the opportunity for that sovereign government to stand, and we must move as quickly and expeditiously as possible for them to understand that is their first priority.

The real war is the war between Sunnis and Shiites. That is a civil war, and the Government of Iraq must solve that problem.

□ 1030

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 5522, FOREIGN OPERATIONS, EXPORT FINANCING, AND RELATED PROGRAMS APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2007

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 851 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 851

Resolved, That at any time after the adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 5522) making appropriations for foreign operations, export financing, and related programs for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2007, and for other purposes. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Appropriations. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. Points of order against provisions in the bill for failure to comply with clause 2 of rule XXI are waived except as follows: the number "5" on page 60, line 4; section 526; beginning with "Of" on page 86, line 1 through "That" on line 16; section 538; beginning with the semicolon in section 565(a)(2) through "501" in section 565(a)(3); and sections 570 and 579. Where points of order are waived against part of a paragraph or section, points of order against a provision in another part of such paragraph or section may be made only against such pro-

vision and not against the entire paragraph or section. During consideration of the bill for amendment, the Chairman of the Committee of the Whole may accord priority in recognition on the basis of whether the Member offering an amendment has caused it to be printed in the portion of the Congressional Record designated for that purpose in clause 8 of rule XVIII. Amendments so printed shall be considered as read. When the committee rises and reports the bill back to the House with a recommendation that the bill do pass, the previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Florida (Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART) is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

(Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, the rule provides 1 hour of general debate evenly divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking member of the Committee on Appropriations. The rule also provides one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate that we bring this legislation to the floor under an open rule. Historically, appropriations legislation has come to the House governed by an open rule, and we continue to do so, in order to allow each Member of this House the opportunity to submit amendments for consideration as long as they comply with the rules of the House.

Mr. Speaker, the legislation before us today appropriates over \$21 billion, an increase of \$600 million over last year, for operations across the globe. The bill is fiscally sound while at the same time compassionate and globally responsive to needs of those plagued by disease, famine, and disaster.

H.R. 5522, the legislation that we bring to the floor today, bolsters the President's Millennium Challenge Corporation to \$2 billion, nearly a quarter of a billion dollars more than in fiscal year 2006. This expansion of assistance is meant to encourage transparency in government and to fight corruption in some of the world's poorest nations.

The Millennium Challenge, which President Bush called a new compact for global development, provides assistance through a competitive selection process to developing nations that are pursuing political and economic reforms in three areas: Ruling justly, investing in people, and fostering economic freedom. Contributions from the Millennium Challenge Corporation are linked to greater responsibility from developing nations.