

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. I appreciate so much your comments and your perspective on this because you bring light to some important information.

One is visiting the men and women at Walter Reed, and how moving is that experience every time we take part in that, and thank those young men and women for the work they have done in defense of our liberty and of our freedom.

If anyone wants moving accounts, all they have to do is read or listen to conversations or e-mails sent back from our men and women who are in harm's way right now. I get chills every time somebody forwards to me an account by one of our brave military men and women as they describe what is going on on the ground, and the enthusiasm and the passion that they have for the wonderful work that they are doing to bring freedom and liberty to that land.

You bring light to who our enemy is. I think it is important that we appreciate exactly the magnitude of this. This is a battle, a war against an enemy who is more ferocious than any we have ever faced.

When I try to put that in perspective, I am reminded of the airline debacle that was stopped last August or so in Britain by good intelligence on the part of our British allies and Pakistanis and our own intelligence agents. What they did is identify a group of individuals whose whole goal was to bring down or destroy as many jumbo jet airlines flying from England or Europe to the United States at one time so they could kill more innocent civilians than were killed on 9/11. That is chilling enough. That is enough to get your attention.

But when you appreciate that two of the people who were involved in the planning of that and involved in what would have been the execution of that tragedy were two parents who were using their 8-month-old child and the baby food for that child as the vessel for the explosive that would bring down a plane, and they were going to be on that plane with their 8-month-old child, they were going to kill themselves and their 8-month-old child in order to kill innocent civilians, Madam Speaker, that is an enemy that carries with them the ferocity that we cannot even comprehend. It is an enemy that Musab al-Zarqawi crystallizes in his quote of January 2005 when he says, "We have declared a fierce war on this evil principle of democracy and those who follow this wrong ideology."

Madam Speaker, it is extremely important for us as a nation to appreciate the fundamental objection and the fundamental fight that we have is against people who oppose our own freedom and our own liberty and our own democracy.

Madam Speaker, it is imperative that this Congress appreciate the magnitude of the challenge that we face as a nation. It is imperative that in so appreciating that magnitude, that we recognize that facts and truth are im-

portant when we talk about this and we make certain that we as a Congress do not institute a policy that would result in tying the hands of the men, the brave men and women in our military who are defending our liberty and our freedom and our democracy.

It is a privilege for each and every one of us to be able to represent our districts in the United States House of Representatives. We should do nothing to thwart the activity of those who are defending our liberty and our freedom and our democracy.

BLUE DOG COALITION

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. TAUSCHER). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. SCOTT) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Again, it is a great privilege to address this House in the Special Order for the Blue Dog Democratic Coalition, and we are delighted to do so.

This is a very critical time in the juncture of our Nation. We are faced with a ballooning debt. We have an overextended military. We are in the midst of a very controversial war. It is paramount that Congress not just weigh in, but weigh in heavily as due our constitutional obligations.

As we all know, the Constitution speaks very clearly on this matter. In Article I, Section 8, it speaks very clearly that it is exclusively Congress' responsibility when it comes to military action and foreign policy.

□ 1615

And that is this: it says that only Congress has the exclusive right to determine the purse strings. In other words, the exact verbiage in the Constitution is "to raise and support the military." And then, secondly, to legislate. And quite naturally, it gave the executive branch comparative duties in a time of war.

You know, Madam Speaker, in preparation for this time on the floor, I went back into the Constitution because I wanted to examine how this came about. And if you go back in the Constitution around 1787, if I am not mistaken, there was a great debate on how to handle the question of war and foreign policy facing our Nation. And it was handled by two of our greatest Founding Fathers, one was Alexander Hamilton and the other was James Madison.

But you know, Madam Speaker, it was a peculiar circumstance that neither Hamilton nor Madison used their names. That struck me as very strange. Hamilton wrote under the name of Pacificus, and Madison wrote under the name of Helvidius. And I wondered about that. Why? But it was only on this profound question. Because it was so heavily debated, it was so heavily controversial that neither

party wanted the public to know exactly who was saying what. But it was very important that they agree on the substance to leave this issue very flexible.

But the one important point that they made was it would be the Congress, and expressly the House of Representatives of the Congress, that would have the final say so on the money end and on the legislative end, and that is what we are here to do today. For the American people are looking to this Congress to indeed weigh in. And Hamilton and Madison will smile kindly on us today.

Leading off our discussion, Madam Speaker, is one of our distinguished Members, one of our cochairs for communications, one of my dear friends from the great State of Arkansas, Representative MIKE ROSS.

Mr. ROSS. I thank the gentleman from Georgia for leading this hour-long Special Order, this discussion on the debt, the deficit, but more importantly on accountability, in restoring common sense, accountability, fiscal discipline to our Nation's government.

Madam Speaker, I don't have to tell you that we have got the largest debt ever in our Nation's history; \$8,835,629,777,913 and increasing some \$40 million every hour. Our Nation is spending a half a billion dollars a day simply paying interest on a debt we've already got, and that is before we increase it by \$1 billion a day. Half a billion dollars a day going to pay interest on the national debt. That is a half a billion dollars a day we do not have to properly equip our troops, to support our troops, to support our veterans, those returning from Iraq and Afghanistan, to educate our children, to build roads. The list of what should be America's priorities is endless, and yet our Nation is spending half a billion dollars a day simply paying interest on a debt we've already got.

It is time to restore fiscal discipline and common sense to our government, and one of the ways we do that is by requiring accountability in Iraq. That is why the Blue Dogs have written what has become known as H.R. 47, providing for Operation Iraqi Freedom Cost Accountability.

Let me just say this, that 9/11, September 11, 2001, is a day that I will never forget. From my office window in the Cannon House Office Building I could see the smoke rise from the Pentagon. A few hours later, after being evacuated, I would learn that a young Navy petty officer, Nehamon Lyons, IV, from Pine Bluff, Arkansas, was among those killed at the Pentagon on that dreadful day.

In the months that followed, I voted to give the President the authority to go to Afghanistan to hunt down Osama bin Laden. Remember him? To bring him to justice and to put an end to the Taliban, to put an end to terrorism. And then on September 26, 2002, I was called to the White House. I sat in the Cabinet Room, took notes, I still have

them, where the President and Andy Card and Condoleezza Rice and about 20 Members of Congress present proceeded to tell us that Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction, that Saddam Hussein trains terrorists on weapons of mass destruction, and that if military force is used, in the President's word, it will be, quoting now, "swift." September 26, 2002.

Fast forward to March 13, 2007. More than 3,000 brave men and women in uniform have died, have sacrificed with their lives in Iraq. Thousands more injured in ways that will forever change their lives. As long as we have men and women in uniform in harm's way, I am going to support them; members of the Blue Dog Coalition are going to support them.

This war has affected all of us. My brother-in-law is presently stationed in the United States Air Force in the Middle East. My first cousin was in Iraq when his wife gave birth to their first child. People that I grew up with and taught in Sunday school and duck hunt with have already served one tour through the Arkansas National Guard duty in Iraq and will likely be returning next year if the President gets his way with this so-called surge.

Madam Speaker, I believe that the American people spoke on November 7, and they told us they do not want more of the same. And simply adding 20,000 more troops to Iraq is, in my opinion, more of the same. The American people want a new direction in Iraq, not more of the same. In line with that, the American people want accountability for how their tax money is spent, not only in Iraq, but also here at home. And that is what we are trying to do with House Resolution 97.

Government investigations and media reports have detailed waste, fraud, and possible war profiteering by some of the very contractors that are being paid billions of dollars by the United States for their services in Iraq. Most recently, a report issued January 30 by the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction counts unsanitary conditions, potential health hazards, poor construction methods, and significant cost overruns among the examples of waste, fraud and abuse rampant in the government's funding of the Iraq war.

House Resolution 97, which has been written and endorsed by the 43-member strong fiscally conservative Democratic Blue Dog Coalition, puts forth tangible commonsense proposals that ensure future transparency and accountability in the funding of Operation Iraqi Freedom. House Resolution 97 is an important first step toward making sure that more resources get to our troops in the field.

House Resolution 97 focuses on four crucial points for demanding fiscal responsibility in Iraq: a call for transparency on how Iraq war funds are spent; the creation of a Truman Commission to investigate the awarding of contracts; a need to fund the Iraq war

through the normal appropriations process and not through these so-called emergency supplementals; and, finally, using America's resources to approve Iraqi assumption of internal policing operations.

Funding requests for the Iraq war should come through the normal appropriations process so that Congress and the people have a clear understanding about what is being spent on the war in Iraq. With House Resolution 97, the fiscally conservative Democratic Blue Dog Coalition is calling for the Iraqi Government and its people to progress toward full responsibility for internally policing their country. Without such progress, it is wasteful to continue our investment in the lives, limbs, and taxpayer dollars in Iraq.

We must honor those who have sacrificed in Iraq, our brave men and women in uniform, and the thousands more that have come home injured in ways that will forever change their lives. It is very important that we honor them, we support them and their sacrifices through demanding accountability from the Iraqi people. It is time to tell the Iraqi people it is time to step up and accept more responsibility for your own country. If you are going to continue to shoot at one another and to shoot at us, if public opinion poll after public opinion poll coming out of Iraq says that 70 percent of them don't want us there and 60 percent of them think it is okay to kill a U.S. soldier there, then we should send a clear message to the Iraqi people that it is time for them to step up and assume responsibility. If they want us to continue to sacrifice our brave men and women in uniform and return many more thousands home injured, if they want us to continue to spend \$12 million an hour of our tax money in Iraq, some \$2.5 billion a week, then it is time for the Iraqi people to accept more responsibility and more accountability for their actions.

At the same time, Madam Speaker, it is very important that this administration understand that if we are going to support \$12 million an hour, \$2.5 billion a week of hard-earned taxpayer money going to Iraq, we want to know how it is being spent, we want it accounted for, and we want to know without a shadow of a doubt that it is going to support our brave men and women in uniform.

I yield to the gentleman from Georgia.

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. You hit upon a point here that the American people need to be aware of as to exactly why we need to pass our bill. I have before me what I would like to share with you, this report from today's Washington Post. It is a story by Ms. Ann Scott Tyson. It is a disheartening story, but it points right to the core of why we need to be doing something very urgent to bring accountability and the total lack of accountability that this administration has had. And this is about our veterans, those who are right off the battlefield.

And, Mr. ROSS, just like you, we both just came from Germany where we went into Landstuhl and we went into the military hospital near the Ramstein Air Base. And our hearts were broken as we saw 19- and 18- and 20-year-old kids, these are young kids, folks, who are out there at the point of the spear, sacrificing their lives in the middle of a civil war. And when they come back to get treated, here is the report. She says: "Thousands of soldiers wounded in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have overwhelmed the Army system for evaluating their eligibility for disability benefits, leading to a near total failure to complete such reviews in a timely manner."

And this is what the services Inspector General concluded in a report released yesterday. The report found this, Mr. ROSS, it found that medical hold facilities lack critical staff, formalized training for personnel caring for wounded soldiers, with more than half of unit commanders reporting inadequate, our commanders on the ground are reporting inadequate for our soldiers. This is no way to treat our warriors.

It also cited inadequate and unreliable databases for tracking the wounded, not even able to keep track of them. This is why we need our accountability act. This is why we need to have oversight and strong oversight on this administration. We are not talking about something here that doesn't exist. This is a serious problem that goes at the core and the soul of America, and that is our young men and women. Their lives are too precious, their blood is too precious to be sacrificed. Then when they do the sacrifice, they are not taken care of.

Just listen to this: some facilities lack wheelchair access, which is directly in violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act, is going on right now under this administration.

□ 1630

That meant that wounded soldiers even had difficulty reaching the restroom. This is the same administration, my friends, this is no wonder why we have this. If you recall, they were sent into war without body armor. Our soldiers, 2 years ago, were going through dung heaps and land mines out in the desert trying to find metal to protect themselves.

I said to you, and you and I both agreed when we were over there in Germany, we were going to do everything we could when we got back here to make sure we passed this bill and give the proper attention to our wounded and our veterans.

You know, the Lord moves in strange and mysterious ways, and I am convinced that is why the exposure of that terrible situation at Walter Reed was made real at this very time to show the Congress and the American people we need this accountability law.

Mr. ROSS. Let me just say there are those in this Congress that do not support sending \$12 million an hour to

Iraq, then you are unpatriotic. I differ with that. I strongly differ with it. No one needs to question my patriotism, no one needs to question my support for our men and women in uniform.

If you ask me, giving them more of the same is not showing support for our men and women in uniform. They need a new direction. They need a new direction in Iraq, one that will allow them to do their job and come back home to their families. The President proposing a surge of some 21,000 troops is not a new direction, it is more of the same.

At the same time, Madam Speaker, let me tell you that the other thing that the American people want is they want responsibility. They want responsibility by the Iraqi government. They want them to buy into this.

The other thing the American people want is accountability within our own government, which is clearly why we are advocating the passage of the Iraqi War Accountability Act, H.R. 97. Why is it needed? Because auditors in one region found that contract managers could not account for \$97 million disbursed from the development fund for Iraq. Under its no-bid contract to rebuild Iraq's oil infrastructure contract, Halliburton overcharged by over 600 percent for the delivery of fuel from Kuwait.

An audit of programs designed to train guards designed to protect Iraq's oil and electrical infrastructure concluded that U.S. agencies could not provide reasonable assurance that \$147 million expended under these programs was used for its intended purpose.

In one case, the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction found that a company which was awarded a security management contract worth hundreds of millions of dollars could provide no assurance that it was providing the best possible safety for government and reconstruction personnel as required by the contract, and could not even show that its employees authorized to carry weapons were trained to use those weapons.

Finally, Halliburton tripled the cost of hand towels at taxpayer expense by insisting on having its own embroidered logo on each towel. You can't make this stuff up. Halliburton employees dumped 50,000 pounds of nails in the desert because they ordered the wrong size all at taxpayers' expense. This is not supporting our troops.

We want to fund our troops. We want to support our troops, and the way to do that is by requiring more accountability by this administration and the Pentagon. Quite frankly, for the last 6 years, Congress has not fulfilled its constitutionally given duty of providing oversight. It has been a rubber stamp for whatever this administration wants.

Those days are over, the new Congress has arrived, and we are going to begin to provide that oversight and accountability and demand responsibility, not only from this administration, but from the Iraqis through the passage of H.R. 97.

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. You mentioned Halliburton, and there is no greater poster child for the abuse, for the very need for this legislation. Hundreds of millions of dollars have been wasted. The reports have been there, in the news. They have covered it left and right, and, meanwhile, our soldiers don't even have wheelchair access.

This administration has a day of atonement on this, and history is not going to smile kindly on the abuse that was heaped upon our military and the strain and the drain that it is causing. You mentioned earlier, Mr. ROSS, about Halliburton, and in just yesterday's news Halliburton's reward to us for all of the billions of dollars that they have gotten in taxpayers' money was to move their headquarters from the United States over into Dubai in the Middle East so that they could get out from under paying certain levels of taxes in this country.

No wonder the American people are crying out. No wonder the American people went to the polls in November and declared in a loud voice, enough of this, we want change, and they put Democrats in charge of this Congress. They, indeed, as I said earlier in my remarks, wanted Alexander Hamilton and James Madison to smile kindly, because finally we are standing up and performing the constitutional duties of oversight, of legislation and controlling the purse that they fought hard to put into the Constitution over two centuries ago.

Now I would like to yield time to my distinguished friend from Ohio, from Steubenville, Ohio, the home of one of my most favorite singers, Dean Martin, and I would like to present Representative CHARLIE WILSON.

Mr. WILSON of Ohio. I thank the gentleman from Georgia. I appreciate this opportunity.

Madam Speaker, when we sent cash over to Iraq on a pallet with no accountability, no understanding, and those hundreds of millions of dollars just disappeared into the desert air, we know that we need accountability. We need accountability in this war for the financial money that we have sent there. We also need accountability for the body armor and the proper rest for our soldiers, the proper training for our soldiers. We need to be able to show that we are showing accountability.

I am so proud to be a new Member of this Congress that is willing to stand up for our soldiers and for the right things to do for America. When more than \$400 billion have been poured into Iraq with little oversight on how that money is spent, we have to ask ourselves, we can't wait any longer for the accountability that needs to be done.

I am proud to be a member of the Blue Dog Coalition to be able to stand up and say what the national debt is. If we could see the money that we spend every month, and month after month and year after year on the interest debt of our Nation, almost \$9 trillion now, it is just hard to believe that we can con-

tinue down this lane of not making the proper decisions and not having accountability.

House Resolution 97 goes straight to the heart of the matter. It sets up the issue and the framework of how we are going to consider having the proper accountability so that we can know where we are going, where the money is going. These are hard-earned tax dollars, and many of these dollars are being spent that are not being spent on education and are not being spent on health care for our seniors.

These dollars are being funneled into foreign countries that were borrowing money to help pay this debt. It is not the right direction.

House Resolution 97 does call for regular reports to the Congress that outline how military and reconstruction funds are spent from now on. It also says the accounts for the terms and contracts that are awarded by our government, how long are the contracts? What is the accountability of them? Are they all no-bid contracts, and, if so, how long are they in place for?

We need to have that kind of accountability, and House Resolution 97 does that. It details how future taxpayer money will be spent. That is the kind of accountability that we need. The costs just keep climbing in Iraq, and we must get a true handle to know where these costs are.

The American taxpayer deserves to know the truth. They deserve to know what is going on, and this is what House Resolution 97 does. It shines the light of day on the process that is going on in Iraq. I am hopeful, if we can lean forward and move forward on this legislation, we will be able to have accountability that people will feel that we are doing the right things.

Our soldiers will know that they are having the right kind of support, and we, as Members of Congress, are providing the service and the change in direction to get America back on the right track.

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. Will the gentleman yield for one moment, and don't you agree, there is such a thirst on the part of the American people for their confidence to be restored in this process, that was what was evident in last fall's election, that nobody is saying cut and run, nobody is saying that you will be unpatriotic if you speak to this. They want us to speak to this. They want us to do our job, and I think that is what you were pointing out in your remarks.

One of the two points I wanted to mention too that you alluded to in our House Resolution 97, that I would like for you to be able to expand upon, and that is that the American people need to know that in this bill we will require the inspector generals of the Defense Department, of the Pentagon, to come before this Congress quarterly, not once a year, every 90 days, quarterly, to make reports on how the money is being spent.

Never again, never again, will our veterans be suffering in the condition

that our veterans are suffering now. The American people are appalled at that. They want some transparency. They want some accountability.

You talked about earlier, we talked about Halliburton. We talked about the abuse, the contracting. In this bill, we have made sure that the Inspector General for the Iraqi Reconstruction Program comes before this Congress and gives quarterly reports on how that money is being spent, no more waste, no more fraud, no more war profiteering. The shame of the neglect of oversight is going to be rectified with this bill.

I yield back to the gentleman.

Mr. WILSON of Ohio. Thank you to the gentleman from Georgia. You could not be more right, and it is evident in what we have seen in the Walter Reed Hospital situation we have just seen recently. The conditions are deplorable, to think that our men and women and our soldiers go and put their life on the line, and just thousands and thousands have been injured and they have returned to substandard medical care, poor conditions and sometimes horror stories of people waiting 18 hours to be seen by a doctor.

This type of lack of accountability just cannot continue, and I am proud to be a Member of this Congress and this Democratic Caucus that are going to move forward toward doing the right thing for our soldiers, supporting them with the money that they need and moving forward to bring common sense to this entire situation.

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. Thank you very much, Congressman WILSON. Your comments and your participation is so meaningful in helping us bring some light to this issue, especially in extrapolating and explaining to the American people the legislation that we are putting forward. I look forward to you staying with us as we perhaps get into a few more conversations on this issue.

But we are also joined with another Member, a distinguished member of our Blue Dog Coalition and a very good friend and who is a very, very significant voice in this Congress in bringing some truth and some transparency so that we can improve the position of our military and make sure that we are responsive to the American people, and that is Mr. John Salazar from Colorado, a very distinguished Member and a hard-working member of the Blue Dog Coalition and a great friend.

Madam Chairman, I yield to the gentleman from Colorado as much time as he may need.

Mr. SALAZAR. I thank the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. SCOTT).

Madam Speaker, I am proud to join my colleagues of the Blue Dog Coalition to demand more fiscal accountability in Iraq. You know, the Blue Dogs have a plan for fiscal accountability in Iraq. Our plan calls for four things, it calls for transparency on how the war funds are being spent.

Two, it creates an commission to investigate the awarding of contracts.

Three, it stops the use of supplemental supplementals to fund this war. Do you know that this is the first administration that has continually been using supplementals to fund a war? That is strange.

Number four, it uses American resources to improve Iraq's ability to police themselves.

Mr. SCOTT, I have been calling, on and on again, that it is important for us to turn the responsibilities over to the Iraqi people, let them be responsible for their own futures. Why should we be putting our soldiers lives on the line when over 60 percent of the Iraqis now claim that it is okay to shoot an American soldier?

But this is about accountability. This is about spending the American taxpayers' funds wisely. This is about the board of directors that America has selected and appointed to the U.S. Congress to do oversight on the taxpayers' funds that are being utilized to fund this war.

While the Blue Dog coalition legislation addresses the glaring lack of oversight and accountability in Iraq, we make sure that taxpayer dollars are accounted for. Government reports have documented waste, fraud and abuse in Iraq, time and time again.

□ 1645

I believe, Madam Speaker, that it is time now to stop that waste. Congressional oversight is desperately needed. The administration must be held accountable for how these reconstruction funds are being used.

And speaking about reconstruction funds, Mr. SCOTT, you mentioned just briefly about Halliburton. Well, I find it kind of strange that, you know, when they are needed most to help pay taxes so that we can actually fund this war, all of a sudden they decide to pull up stakes and move because they say their tax rates are too high. Well, to me, Mr. SCOTT, that is not being patriotic.

This Blue Dog bill is tangible. It is a commonsense proposal that ensures transparency and accountability. We have already spent \$437 billion in Iraq, according to the Congressional Research Service. We will spend another \$100 billion in Iraq in 2007 alone. I think that we must start showing improvement in Iraq, and accountability leads directly to success.

You brought up a real point. It is almost as if someone reaches into your chest and jerks out your heart. I make regularly scheduled visits out to Walter Reed to visit our returning troops, and I meet with them and talk to them.

Their message is quite simple. They are there to do their job. They are proud to be Americans. They are proud patriotic citizens and proud to have served their country. And they tell me, do not let our efforts go in vain.

Well, I can assure you, Mr. SCOTT, that the Blue Dogs are committed to making sure that we stand by them

and make sure that they have the equipment they need by holding this administration accountable.

It is amazing when you see our soldiers returning without arms and without legs and yet so strong and patriotic and talking about how proud they are to be Americans.

Well, Mr. SCOTT, it is time for the U.S. Congress to also say that they are patriotic and that they are proud Americans, and that they will stand by their soldiers. I think that Iraq must be progressing toward full responsibility for policing their own country. I think without progress it is a waste to continue U.S. investment in troops and financial resources. We all support our troops. We will do everything in our power to get them the equipment they need.

I have been in Iraq twice. The first time I was there, soldiers were complaining because they were out in the scrap piles looking for metal to build shields under the Humvees. And in many cases, those became the very instruments that cost their lives.

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. Would the gentleman yield just for one point because I think it is very important. You bring up this important point that we need to remind the people of America that when that came to our attention, it was Democrats, Democrats who provided the leadership with the amendment to put into the spending bill money for the body armor; that we could have known about the shortage if there was oversight, if that Congress, the Republican Congress, would not just automatically just bend over and rubber stamp. That is why this bill is so important, that we don't have that bypassing with this special emergency supplemental way of funding a war.

And I go back to the Constitution, the Founding Fathers, and that is why they gave it to us because the House of Representatives is the House that is closest to the people. We were more sensitive, just as you and I are now, to do everything we can to correct this matter. And we also put in there money to reimburse their parents. So many of our soldiers were writing home to mama and to daddy asking them for money for body armor. The shame of this country. Never again will that happen. And that is why we need this bill.

I yield back to the gentleman.

Mr. SALAZAR. I want to thank the gentleman. And he made some very important points. It is our responsibility here in Congress to look out for our troops and our soldiers. But we cannot continue writing these blank checks, Madam Speaker. We have been writing blank checks for the last several years because over the last 6 years there hasn't been any oversight. There has not been any accountability.

And I can assure you that since January, over the last 2 months, there has been oversight hearings on several issues in regard to the military readiness, in regard to where some of this funding is going.

And so I am very proud to be a Member of the Blue Dog Coalition that brings forward this important bill. I think that until our last troop has returned home that the American people deserve to know how their money is being spent. Accountability is not only patriotic, but it often determines success from failure.

The Blue Dog bill gives an opportunity to regain oversight and responsibility. This is the responsibility we have, to all our men and women in uniform, to their parents, to the American taxpayer who is footing the bill.

Madam Speaker, today I want to thank you. I want to thank Mr. SCOTT for his leadership, and I want to thank you for giving me the time to be able to speak out on behalf of the American taxpayer, the American people and our soldiers in uniform.

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. Well, thank you, Mr. SALAZAR. You have done extraordinarily well in presenting the very crucible of our bill, which is bringing the accountability, bringing the needed transparency. No more, no place is it needed more so than in the care of our wounded soldiers.

And so much has fallen through the cracks. I read this report. I just want to, I will go back to it for a moment, Mr. SALAZAR, because it says this. It says that more than 25,000 service members have been wounded in the two wars, and nearly half seriously enough that they can not return to duty within 72 hours. The delays in the Army's rating of disability have been a source of deep frustration for many, with wounded soldiers waiting hours to be moved on, days, and sometimes months to be moved on with their lives outside the military. Many in the National Guard themselves have lost their jobs. We have yet to even come to the depths of the pain that our soldiers are faced with as a result of this.

So when the President says send 21,000 more in, send these in, he never again, this President will never again have to go before the voters. But you do and I do. And when we go back before them, they will know that we have done everything in our power to bring a right look on a wrong situation, and to correct this terrible, terrible imbalance for our veterans.

And so I thank you for your participation, and I thank you for highlighting that great need. I appreciate your passion for this. We are very, very, pleased for your presentation.

Madam Speaker, before I bring in another person, I want to make a point, because I think it is very important that we take a moment to address what the leadership of the Democratic Party in this House of Representatives is really talking about in our legislation. We had, prior to this, a truth squad, and you have people who are trying to make it this or make it that.

We realize, as Democrats, that we have an obligation to fulfill the desires and the wishes of the American people for a change in direction in Iraq,

among other places, but definitely in Iraq. And it is not an easy thing to do. But it is, as I pointed out earlier, in our exclusive power to legislate and to appropriate and to provide the oversight. That is critical. And this is what we are proposing in our troop readiness, veterans, health, and Iraq accountability act. This is what the talk is about.

Let me just, point by point, go through the points so we understand. As the war in Iraq enters its fifth year, with no end in sight, that is fundamentally the most worrisome thing on the minds of the American people. This has gone on longer than World War II. There has never been the clear mission, beyond go and find if they have got weapons of mass destruction. When the soldiers went and they determined that they didn't, that should have ended it. There was no authorization to go in and remove a regime. There were no Iraqis that marched on the Capitol in Washington and said bring us a democracy. Democracy is hard. It requires people to want it in their gut. We are dealing with a society and a region in the Middle East where these civil wars have been going on, in some shape or form, since Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Abraham and Sarah and Hagar, Ishmael, Esau, the prophet Mohammed and his son-in-law, which brought about the split of the Sunnis and the Shias. Thousands of years, that is what this is.

Our children have no business losing their lives in this war. The President has asked that money continue to be provided with no strings attached. The American people want some strings attached. The reason is because as we just got through doing, with what is happening at Walter Reed, with what is happening to our veterans, with the fact of no body armor. We are not going without being rested and properly equipped, well after the American people have called for a new direction. That set the stage for what we are going to offer in this bill.

And I want to come back to that, and I want to pause for a moment because we do have another one of our distinguished Members with us, and he has been working very hard as a member of the Blue Dogs and has also been working very hard in this area of bringing transparency and accountability to the situation in Iraq and responding to the needs of the American people. And I want to recognize for as much time as he may need, Congressman MAHONEY of Florida.

Mr. MAHONEY of Florida. I thank my friend, the distinguished gentleman, for yielding time to me this afternoon.

Madam Speaker, I rise today on behalf of Florida's 16th Congressional District in support of House Resolution 97, providing cost accountability for the Iraq war.

If we take a look at what has happened over these past 5 years, America has rid Iraq of a brutal dictator. Amer-

ica has given the Iraqi people a chance to create their own democracy, and we have invested over \$400 billion and more than 3,000 American lives in securing their country.

Madam Speaker, it is time for the Iraqis to step up and to take control of their destiny and their own security. And it is imperative that any future American financial expenditures in the Iraq war be subject to accountability and transparency.

An estimated \$9 billion of Iraqi reconstruction funds are missing. According to a January 2005 report by the Office of the Special Inspector General of Iraq Reconstruction, these \$9 billion have gone missing because of inefficiencies and bad management.

□ 1700

For the past 4 years, Congress has not exercised the oversight and accountability necessary to ensure that our money is being used effectively to support our troops to achieve our objectives in Iraq. We have paid billions of dollars to private contractors for work in Iraq; at the same time, the reports have uncovered waste, fraud, abuse, and even possible war profiteering by some of these contractors.

In a war already lacking manpower, resources, and international support needed to maximize our chance of success, it is criminal that billions of dollars are unaccounted for. Congressional oversight is needed to make sure that our money is used to support our troops, not lost to profiteering and fraud.

House Resolution 97 would require that future Iraq spending is marked by transparency and accountability, instead of systemic waste, fraud, and abuse. The resolution calls for the creation of a Truman Commission to investigate how contracts are awarded, increases transparency so we know how Iraq war funds are spent, demands that fiscal requests for fiscal year 2008 and later go through the normal appropriations process instead of emergency supplementals, and calls for resources to be used to improve Iraqi assumption of policing operations.

Madam Speaker, these criteria are long overdue. I encourage my colleagues to support House Resolution 97 to ensure that transparency and accountability are the hallmarks of any future funding of the Iraq war.

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. I thank Congressman MAHONEY. You brought some excellent points up about the need for us to make sure that this funding goes through the normal appropriations process. It might be useful for us to just share with our American people, when we say the normal, the regular appropriations process, is that this President has up to this point funded this war, which has lasted now longer than World War II, on emergency supplementals. And what that does is it foregoes oversight, it doesn't allow Congress to do the job that it has done. And this is why I believe in strong

measure this Congress has changed hands. The American people want to see us do our job and bring about the transparency. And that is what is involved in both House Resolution 97 as well as in our leadership bill on the supplemental, the full supplemental bill that we are working on as well. And I certainly thank the gentleman.

Mr. MAHONEY of Florida. I appreciate the gentleman yielding time. I couldn't agree more. And one of the things that the American people are starting to see is that this Democratic led Congress is about doing the people's business. November 7 was a mandate on fiscal responsibility reform. As a freshman Congressman, I ran on fiscal reform and responsibility, and I can tell you that this is a good step, another step, a necessary step to getting accountability back into this government. Thank you very much.

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. We are very pleased to have you, and we certainly thank you for bringing those points and for adding to the discussion.

As I stated before, I wanted to just share as we go through this, as we talk about House Resolution 97 and our bill on the supplemental, it is important to understand so that we are not caught up in all of this rhetoric and misinformation about what the Democrats are doing, it is very important to understand our shared principles in this legislation and fully funding our national defense. This bill fully funds and supports our troops in both Iraq and Afghanistan, and we are upholding these points, requiring the President to simply honor the standards the Department of Defense has set for troop readiness, for training, for equipment. We have just seen that many of our troops have gone into harm's way without the body equipment that they need. What is wrong with making sure that our troops are protected, that they have the body armor? That is what the Democratic plan does. What is wrong with making sure that they are rested and that they are ready? That is what the Democratic plan does. We want to send our young men into harm's way? Make sure they are protected, make sure they are ready and that they are rested, and to make sure that they have been trained. And on each one of those counts, Madam Speaker, this administration has fallen short, and the American people know it, and that is the central core of the bill.

Secondly, we have got to hold the Iraqi government to the same standards for progress that the President outlined in announcing the escalation. The President made certain standards. All we are doing is reaffirming these in the legislation so that we have those standards. And then, providing urgently needed support to address the military medical care crisis for our veterans at Walter Reed and other hospitals. And that is why the American people are out in front of us and support wholeheartedly what the Democratic proposal is.

Let me continue, if I may, on what it is that we are doing so the American people can be clear.

On those three points, just simply requiring the President to honor the standards that the Defense Department sets for their military to be ready, that they have rest, that they have equipment. What can be more plain and commonsense than that? And then holding the Iraqis to the same standards that he put forward in support of the escalation he asked for. And then, thirdly, to provide the urgently needed support to address the military medical care and crisis at Walter Reed and other hospitals that I just got through alluding to and the excellent report in the Washington Post today.

The need for accountability on Iraq is clear. Holding the President to his own military readiness policies and performance standards is certainly a good way to start. The alternative is only the President's open-ended commitment in this war, and that is one thing we cannot continue. Our children's lives are too precious, our tax dollars are too precious to continue to be pouring in an open-ended policy. We have got to find a way to bring this matter to conclusion, not in any kind of way of, as the opponents would say, my friends on the other side of the aisle, cut and run. That is all they can say. We want to be there until victory.

Well, what is victory? What is victory if it is not what we set out what we were to do in the very beginning, finds weapons of mass destruction, which we did, and they are no longer there? Iraq did not attack this country. This country was attacked by al Qaeda. And al Qaeda is in Afghanistan on the Afghanistan-Pakistan border. Osama bin Ladin is there on the Pakistan side. I was there. I went over to Pakistan, I went over to Afghanistan. I talked with President Karzai. They know where they are. What are we doing in Iraq, and why did we go?

The Congress is working hard to achieve consensus around these shared principles. And let me just say, politics is no easy business. Making laws is sort of making sausage: It is not the prettiest thing in the world. But it is our system. It is give and it is take. It is trying to get 218 votes. It is pulling coalitions together. And that is why you see legislation with the variety of different components in it. But there are some standards here, and we hope that the President will join us in the effort to protect our troops in the field, require accountability from the Iraqi government, and fix the care crisis for our wounded soldiers and our veterans. And, finally, understand that he isn't the only one on the ball field. We all have a role to play. The Founding Fathers made our position clear, and that clarity is speaking on this floor today.

And now I want to recognize another one of the distinguished Members from New Hampshire (Ms. PORTER) who is doing just a wonderful job, and we thank you for coming on the floor and

being a part of our debate and discussion.

I yield as much time as she may need to Ms. PORTER from New Hampshire.

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. I thank the gentleman, and Madam Speaker.

I just came out of an Armed Services hearing where we were discussing, once again, readiness, and we had the Army there telling us the great strains on their budget, the strains on their equipment, and, most importantly, the strains on their soldiers. And so I am standing here today in support of our soldiers, in support of our military, in support of our ability to respond to any crisis in the world. And Iraq is not the place that we need to put our soldiers and all of our resources.

Last weekend, I went to Iraq to look for myself what was going on. I saw a lot of contractors taking quite a bit of money, serving soldiers in jobs that soldiers could have done themselves. I saw the strains on the soldiers. I saw National Guard troops that were in for a third deployment. And I saw the difficulty that the Iraqis were experiencing. In flying over Baghdad, I saw a very sad city.

Now, what I would like to see happen is for us to take the money that we are pouring into Iraq and put it into Afghanistan where the original trouble started, where we actually had the terrorist training camps, where we still need to finish the business that we started in 2001. But we need money to do that, we need resources to do that. They have been diverted and put into Iraq.

There were no Iraqis on the planes that day on 9/11. We went into Iraq because we picked the wrong war, the wrong people, and we should have stayed in Afghanistan and supported the effort there. So I urge my colleagues and I urge the House to do the right thing by our soldiers and by the Iraqis as well, and to make sure that we tend to where the real problems are in Pakistan and also in Afghanistan.

I also would like to see some money in homeland security. The first thing we need to do is support our own borders. We need to protect our borders. And when you look at the money that we have put in homeland security, it is miniscule. We are still not checking all of the cargo that comes into the belly of a plane, we are not checking the cargo that comes from overseas. They say that we don't have the equipment. We certainly could have the equipment. Hong Kong checks every single container that comes from abroad. And that is the great worry, that a dirty bomb could come from abroad in a container. We need to use the money wisely. Of course we need defense. We have to invest in our country. But we need to take those dollars and make sure that we are protecting our borders first and foremost, and then also working in Afghanistan; and, making sure that we have enough money and enough resources and enough troops to respond to anywhere else in the world that trouble could brew. Thank you.

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. Well stated. Eloquent and very well stated. And you touched on so many important issues. The strain on our military; and the young lady was so poignant in that. And American people need to understand that, how much more can our military take? Every person, even when the issue was put forward when General Casey and General Abizaid came over here, our Armed Services Committee, I think you may have been on that committee, asked them: Do you need more troops? No, we don't need any more troops. That was just in November. And something changed just in about 30 or 50 days, for all of a sudden now it came.

And I want to thank the young lady for your statement. It was very well stated and hit all of the points right on the head in terms of the direction we need to go. And the American people are definitely in step with us.

Madam Speaker, I thank you for the time. Please remember this is our Blue Dog hour, and we appreciate the opportunity to talk.

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H. RES. 106

Mr. MOORE of Kansas. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to have my name removed as a cosponsor of House Resolution 106.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Kansas?

There was no objection.

EMBRYONIC STEM CELL RESEARCH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. BARTLETT) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland. Madam Speaker, I come to the floor this evening to talk about embryonic stem cells. With all of the pressing issues of global importance that our country and the Congress is dealing with, you might ask, why are you going the talk about embryonic stem cells this evening; why are you not talking about the potential for global warming and what that might hold in store for our world.

□ 1715

We might be talking about the pending energy crisis and the concept of peak oil, and certainly we might be talking about the war in Iraq and the funding resolution that will shortly come before the House. Or we could be talking about a very interesting subject: the debt limit ceiling and why we have to increase the debt limit ceiling and what is that and how does it relate to the debt and the deficit and so forth?

We come to the floor this evening to talk about stem cells because a stem cell bill will very shortly come up in

the Senate, perhaps even this week. Very probably if not this week, next week. But to put this in context, we have got to go back to last year when there were two embryonic stem cell bills that came before the House and the Senate. One of those started in the House and was known as the Castle-DeGette bill. This was a bill that would permit Federal funding for cells taken from embryos that were surplus in the fertility clinics across the country, and I understand there may be as many as 400,000 surplus embryos that are now frozen in these fertility clinics. This would result in the death of the embryo, and a meaningful percentage of our population does not believe that it is appropriate to destroy one life in the hopes that you might help another. So although this bill got a positive vote in the House last year, it was nowhere near enough to override a presidential veto.

There was a second bill that was introduced. I introduced that second bill along with my friend Dr. GINGREY, and that bill garnered 273 votes in the House. You might say that is enough to win, but it was brought up under suspension, which means we need two-thirds majority, and that day that would have been 286 votes; so we failed by 13 votes to get the necessary majority, the two-thirds majority, to pass it.

Both of those bills were our bills, the Senate 2754 and the House bill 5526. And along with the Castle-DeGette bill and the alternative bill, which would not result in the destruction of embryos, our bill got 100 percent of the Senators. That is, 100 Senators voting for the bill. It is interesting that there were 63 Senators that voted for both of these bills. They included Senator ARLEN SPECTER, who introduced both of these bills in the Senate; and it also included Senators REID, HARKIN, KENNEDY, CLINTON, OBAMA, and SCHUMER. Those Senators voted for all of these bills.

We have now passed, essentially, the Castle-DeGette bill again in the House with 253 ayes and 174 noes, and that is nowhere near close to the number that it would take to override a presidential veto. And in the last Congress, the President vetoed the Castle-DeGette bill, and he has promised to and certainly will veto it this time should it get to his desk. This is the bill that the Senate will be voting on next week. So that is why we are on the floor today talking about this bill. By the way, our bill is 322, and it has been cosponsored so far by 34, truly bipartisan support for which I am very pleased.

I thought to begin this discussion of embryonic stem cells we might go back to the basic physiology of what we are talking about here. And the first chart I have here shows half of the reproductive tract in a woman. There is another half to this on the other side, a mirror image of this. Most things in our body are mirror images. Things like the liver are not and the stomach. We have two arms and two eyes, and the lady has two oviducts and two ovaries and

so forth. And this shows the stages of development of the embryo. And, of course, what we will be talking about is not what happens in the body but what happens in a petri dish in the laboratory. But the embryo goes through the same stages of development in the petri dish in the laboratory as it does in the oviduct of the prospective mother.

Here we have the ovary, and it contains a very large number of primary cells, which when they develop will become ova. And once a month typically, every 4 weeks, typically, one of the ova matures and the little follicle then ruptures and the ovum comes out. And it is interesting that the ovary is not connected to the rest of the reproductive tract of the female. But there is a funnel-like thing, and we see only a part of the funnel here. This part and this part goes clearly around it. And it is called the infundibulum, and this process is called ovulation. The egg now is released from the mature follicle, and it is usually picked up by the infundibulum and directed into the oviduct. On occasion it may not be and it may escape out into the body cavity or the celium, which simply means the cavity. And these sperm, millions of which were released in the uterus and they make their way into the fallopian tubes, and some of those sperm actually get out into the body cavity. And this egg that is not picked up by the infundibulum may be out of the body cavity and it may be fertilized by the sperm that gets there, and this is called an ectopic pregnancy. And it is very bad news for the mother and the embryo, and it has to be terminated with surgery. But usually, most of the time, the ovum is picked up by the fallopian tube and it begins its way down the fallopian tube.

Notice that fertilization takes place, and that is when the clock starts running, called DZero. Fertilization takes place well up into the oviduct. And there is a several-day journey. You see them here, one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, on down. And the fertilized egg now is called a zygote, and it begins to divide. And here you see it is at a two-cell stage, and a little later we will have some charts that show what can happen at this two-cell stage and even later. But frequently these two cells will simply separate until you have two cells that look like the original one you started with here, and that is what we called identical twins. Then they will make their way down the fallopian tube together and implant in an interesting way in the uterus as we will see later. And then the two cells divide and develop into four cells and then the four cells into eight cells. And we will come back and talk about this eight-cell stage because that is the time at which some procedures are done in the petri dish which promise that we can get true embryonic stem cells from embryos without harming the embryo.

Well, the cell then goes on to divide beyond the eight-cell stage. And you