

U.S. redeployment from Iraq and the growing nuclear capabilities of Iran. Puts Iraq's reconstruction back on track with targeted international funds. Counters extremist Islamic ideology around the globe through longterm efforts to support the creation of democratic institutions and press freedoms.

As the Center for American Progress documents in its last quarterly report (October 24, 2006), the benefits of strategic redeployment are significant:

Restore the strength of U.S. ground troops. Exercise a strategic shift to meet global threats from Islamic extremists. Prevent U.S. troops from being caught in the middle of a civil war in Iraq. Avert mass sectarian and ethnic cleansing in Iraq. Provide time for Iraq's elected leaders to strike a power-sharing agreement. Empower Iraq's security forces to take control. Get Iraqis fighting to end the occupation to lay down their arms. Motivate the U.N., global, and regional powers to become more involved in Iraq. Give the U.S. the moral, political, and military power to deal with Iran's attempt to develop nuclear weapons. Prevent an outbreak of isolationism in the United States.

Mr. Speaker, rather than surging militarily for the third time in a year, the president should surge diplomatically. A further military escalation would simply mean repeating a failed strategy. A diplomatic surge would involve appointing an individual with the stature of a former secretary of state, such as Colin Powell or Madeleine Albright, as a special envoy. This person would be charged with getting all six of Iraq's neighbors—Iran, Turkey, Syria, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait—involved more constructively in stabilizing Iraq. These countries are already involved in a bilateral, self-interested and disorganized way.

While their interests and ours are not identical, none of these countries wants to live with an Iraq that, after our redeployment, becomes a failed state or a humanitarian catastrophe that could become a haven for terrorists or a hemorrhage of millions more refugees streaming into their countries.

The high-profile envoy would also address the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the role of Hezbollah and Syria in Lebanon, and Iran's rising influence in the region. The aim would not be necessarily to solve these problems, but to prevent them from getting worse and to show the Arab and Muslim world that we share their concerns about the problems in this region.

Mr. Speaker, the President's plan has not worked. Doing the same thing over and over and expecting a different result is, as we all know, a definition of insanity. It is time to try something new. It is time for change. It is time for a new direction.

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

(Mr. WELCH of Vermont 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 California (Ms.

MILLENDER-MCDONALD) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

TIMES ARE CHANGING

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

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, ladies and gentlemen that were watching or here in the gallery, I am a freshman Congressperson. I am from Tennessee. And last March I came up and I stood in that gallery and I looked down at this body and I wondered if I wanted to be a part of it. The decision was made partially by me by filing for office and waging a campaign. But the decision was eventually made by my voters in the 9th District in Tennessee who elected me. They elected 49 new Congresspeople, 41 of which are Democrats; and we have just completed our first week in office.

I felt like it was appropriate at the finish of this week, Mr. Speaker, to give some type of report to the people of what we have experienced as freshman Congresspeople. I don't come here like Alexander Haig might have and assume control. We have that freshman president, and I am not that freshman president, nor did I seek to be one. It is PAUL HODES from New Hampshire who is a very fine freshman legislator.

But a lot has happened in this week. We all came up here with a lot of interest in seeing America be better. And America is better. In just the one week we have been here, we have been privileged to be a part of this body. We have seen the first lady ever elected Speaker of a legislative body of this nature in the United States elected, NANCY PELOSI. It was a historic moment.

And earlier today one of our freshmen, Congressman BILBRAY, talked about the fact that some years ago on this date the resolution was introduced to give women the right to vote. That resolution passed in my home State of Tennessee in 1920, when Tennessee was the perfect 36, and gave women the right to vote.

It has been a long time, and a change was coming, and a change has happened. And it is great to have a woman, an opportunity seen with the election of NANCY PELOSI.

This week, we have seen changes in the way lobbyists and legislators relate, and that is one of the reasons why I think Congress has one of the worst reputations of any collective group of professionals or government officials in this country and why some of us were elected, to see a change in that culture. And ties were cut between lobbyists and legislators which never should have existed. I was proud to vote for that and see that as part of the 100 hours of change that the Democratic leadership is bringing about.

The PAYGO policy brings some fiscal sanity to what has otherwise been a kind of runaway process where this country is in great economic distress. We have had three different bipartisan groups that we have had orientation sessions with. In each one of those classes we have been told that our economic situation is dire. The same about our foreign policy and the same about our environment and our health care system.

There are difficult times in America. It seems good, but it really isn't. The underpinnings are not there.

This week PAYGO is important. Cutting the ties between legislators and lobbyists was important. And it was also extremely important what we did today. We passed the minimum wage.

And I can't go without quoting President Franklin Roosevelt, one of my heroes, who said, "The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have too much; it is whether we provide enough for those who have too little." Today we provided for those that have too little and we did right.

And I want to quote Hubert Humphrey, a great American whose bust I looked at outside of the Senate, looked at with reverence. "The moral test of government is how it treats those who are in the dawn of life, the children; those who are in the twilight of life, the aged; and those who are in the shadows of life, the sick, the needy and the handicapped."

I think in the tradition of some great Americans we have acted today on the minimum wage. We will act on stem cell research and other issues. And we've acted on the 9/11 Commission reports. Most of this was done in a bipartisan manner. Not all of it.

And it has given me the opportunity, which I want to take today, to quote a line which I have read for years and thought about when I thought about these halls, not thinking of myself being a Member of this body, which is a great honor coming to me at a late time in life, after spending 24 years in the Tennessee State Senate.

"Come Senators, Congressmen, please heed the call. Don't stand in the doorway, don't block up the hall."

□ 1815

For he who gets hurt will be he who has stalled. There's a battle outside and it's raging. It'll soon shake your windows and rattle your walls. For the times they are a changin'. Bob Dylan, Robert Zimmerman, was right. The times they are a changin'.

There is a Democratic majority. I am proud to be of it, as are 41 other freshmen. I can testify today that America is in better shape than it was a week ago.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SIRES). The gentleman is reminded to

refrain from referring to persons in the gallery.

CONGRATULATIONS ANNIE LEE BOGGS LATIMER ON HER 100TH BIRTHDAY

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

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, Annie Lee Boggs Latimer was born in Milton County, now a portion of Fulton County in north Georgia on January 10, 1907, to Elizabeth and Ben Boggs 100 years ago today. She grew up on a farm on Boggs Road with eight siblings, Glenn, Mary, Frank, Frances, Walter A., Nettie, Ruth and Dorothy, off what is now I-85 in Gwinnett County, Georgia.

She attended Duluth High School, Young Harris College and the University of Georgia and went on to become a beloved teacher in Gwinnett and Cobb counties for over 30 years. On June 12, 1937, she married William B. Latimer, and for over 50 years, they lived in what all knew as the “Rock House” in Duluth, Georgia. Anne and Bill were married for a wonderful 61 years until his passing in 1998.

She is the proud mother of Ben W. Latimer and the mother-in-law of Rachel H. Latimer. She is an inspiration for her two grandsons and their wives, Bill and Lynn and Mike and Laura, and adored by her five great grandchildren Brian, Sara, Claire, Gabrielle and Andrew. She is known affectionately by her family as “Mama Anne” and by her friends at church as “Miss Anne.”

She has imparted wisdom and positive values to all the many students who were in her classes and benefitted from her teaching. Mama Anne is a guiding light for all her family and always brings love, direction, caring and support.

Mr. Speaker, I know the U.S. House of Representatives joins me in sending our very best on the occasion of her 100th birthday to Anne B. Latimer and recognizing her life as a role model to all for achieving independence, longevity and success, by living the American dream of spirituality, community, hard work, and accomplishment.

I am very privileged, Mr. Speaker, to have had the opportunity to recognize one of America’s greatest citizens.

THE OFFICIAL TRUTH SQUAD

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Georgia (Mr. PRICE) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I am going to shift gears a little bit right now and just recount a bit of this past week. This has been a remarkable week, first week of a new majority.

For the record, the first 100 hours of this new majority, and for the record, Mr. Speaker, you ought to know that the Speaker’s Office officially states that we have been in session dealing with the issues of importance to the

American people for 12 hours and 28 minutes. That is over 4 days. That turns out to be about 3 hours and 7 minutes a day.

Now, if you count the actual time that we have been in session, which I think is important, because if you are going to promise that you are going to do things in 100 hours, then you doggone well better do it, and actually, we have been in session now at 6:18 p.m., 38 hours and 21 minutes, 38 hours and 21 minutes.

We are keeping track of the right clock. So for all those folks out there, we want you to know that The Official Truth Squad is keeping an eye on the majority party and making certain that they live up to their promises.

We have dealt with some remarkable issues during the first 38 hours that we have been in session. We have dealt with the minimum wage today in a way that left a lot to be desired in terms of bringing about that wonderful bipartisan spirit that has been promised but not seen yet by the majority party. We have dealt with the 9/11 recommendations. As you recall, Mr. Speaker, before the election, the new majority party, the leaders of that party, promised that they would enact every single recommendation of the 9/11 Commission.

Well, that bill has come and gone without any input from the minority party. As you know, you know very, very well what happened was not the enactment of every single 9/11 recommendation, because promises made on the campaign trail don’t appear to be promises that will be kept in the majority.

These are important issues. We have got two more issues to go this week. They are extremely important issues to the American people.

The issue of stem cell research, embryonic stem cell research, which is an incredibly important issue, a complex issue, a scientific issue and one, again, that I am very distressed and concerned is not being dealt with in an open and honest way that has been promised, nor is it being dealt with, certainly, in a bipartisan way.

We also have this week the issue of Medicare part D prescription drug program that is in place for Medicare recipients, and that, too, is being dealt with in a way that doesn’t allow for any input from the minority party, doesn’t allow for any amendments, isn’t being heard in committee.

The gentleman before me mentioned that there were a number of freshmen Members of this body, and there are, there are 54 Members of this body who are now here for the very first time, freshmen Members. They haven’t dealt with any of these issues.

Mr. Speaker, a majority of this House is not being allowed to deal with the issues that are coming to the floor right now, because they are being done in secret. These bills are being written in secret without input from anybody on the minority side and certainly

without any input from any of the new Members of Congress.

So the Official Truth Squad is here to make certain that we hold accountable for the majority party, for the promises that they made and make certain that the American people understand and appreciate what is occurring in Washington under this new martial law rule that we have for bringing issues to the floor.

The Official Truth Squad has one of our favorite quotes, we have a lot of favorite quotes. One of them is from the late Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, who had one of the most wonderful and appropriate quotes for this building that I know of, and that is that everyone is entitled to their own opinion but not their own facts.

So what we would like to do this evening, Mr. Speaker, is to talk a little bit about some facts, some facts as they relate to the two issues, Medicare part D prescription drug program and stem cell research, embryonic stem cell research.

Now decisions made regarding Medicare part D and the discussion that we are having, many people will think, well, it is just about a narrow prescription drug program for Medicare. In fact, Mr. Speaker, it is about a whole lot more than that.

If you back up from the specific debate about prescription drugs and you look at what is really being done, what is happening is that we have a difference of opinion, a philosophical difference of opinion about who ought to be making very personal health care decisions for the American people.

On the other side of the aisle, on the majority side of the aisle, we apparently have a majority of those individuals who believe that the government ought to be making those decisions, personal health care decisions. On the minority, on the Republican side of the aisle, we are proud to say that we support health care decisions, medical decisions being made between physicians and patients. That is where those decisions ought to be made.

In fact, when you look at this whole issue right now, it is important to ask exactly what it is that the Democratic majority is attempting to solve.

When you look at this program that has been in place now just a few short years, the costs are down. In fact, the costs are down for the last year, \$13 billion, \$13 billion. Actual costs of benefits in 2006 are 30 percent or \$13 billion less than was projected.

The projected costs over 10 years are down 21.3 percent, which is \$197 billion. That is a fact. That is a fact. Premiums are down 40 percent over projections, again a fact. If we would listen to the Democrats on this issue, when the bill was enacted, they attempted to put into law that premiums ought to be for every Medicare recipient, \$35 a month. They wanted to make certain that they were \$35 a month.

So what are the premiums now? They are about \$22, \$23 a month on average.