

trip weeks in advance. It costs \$42, by the way, and that's without lunch.

At the DMZ, you can visit the small building where an armistice was signed, and risk stepping across a painted line on the floor separating North and South Korea, which remain technically at war. Is this the President's vision of Iraq? Hardly, but that's what he would like the American people to believe.

It sounds so simple and so safe and so utterly detached from Iraq, where every street corner in Baghdad is a war zone. The President wants an indefinite military presence in Iraq, but a majority of the Iraq parliament signed a petition demanding a timetable for the U.S. to leave, which the President ignores.

The President wants permanent military bases in Iraq despite the thoughtful and bipartisan conclusion of the Iraq Study Group. That group said, "The United States can begin to shape a positive climate for its diplomatic efforts internationally and within Iraq, through public statements by President Bush that reject the notion that the United States seeks to control Iraq's oil or seeks permanent bases within Iraq."

But the President rejected their common sense and ordered the base building to go forward. What exactly are we protecting with the Iraqi people fleeing by the millions? South Korea never looked like this.

In Iraq, students graduating from college used to dream about getting a good job and raising a family. Now they dream of getting out of Iraq alive and as quickly as possible.

Just today, the United Nations issued a new report that says 4.2 million Iraqis have been displaced, half driven out of their homes by rampant and unrelenting bloodshed, and the other fleeing the country. It's estimated by the U.N. that 30,000 Iraqis cross into Syria every month, and Syria says the actual number is much higher. Jordan, meanwhile, has already taken over 1 million Iraqis. What have we done? We have granted 701 Iraqi refugees asylum in the United States.

The President recently announced we're willing to accept up to 7,000 Iraqis. Over 2 million Iraqis have fled their homeland so far, and we're going to take in a few thousand.

When we left Vietnam, we took hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese with us. Within a few months 130,000 Vietnamese had resettled here, and within a few years the number topped 320,000. These were our Vietnamese friends, people who had risked their lives to help us in Vietnam. We didn't desert them and they didn't desert us.

In Iraq, the President says we're willing to take a few thousand in a Nation losing millions of its people. The Iraqi people are fleeing their homes and their homeland in increasing numbers, flooding into nearby countries unable to cope with the refugee crisis.

Millions of peaceful, law-abiding Iraqis from its intellectual establish-

ment, to its merchants, professionals, civil servants, and ordinary citizens are doing whatever they can to leave. And the President is doing everything he can to stay, building bases and demanding a so-called law to gain access to Iraqi's oil.

The President's stay-the-course strategy has evolved into his stay forever strategy. It hasn't worked before and it won't work now.

The President's military escalation is an absolute failure, and the sooner the President admits his mistake, the faster we can develop a national exit plan that protects our soldiers and gives Iraq back to the Iraq people, no strings or military bases attached.

Mr. Speaker, please pass the message to our President. It's time to bring the troops home. A hundred a month are dying, more and more. Last month, the third highest month in the war. It's not getting better. We've got to bring the troops home.

□ 2115

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

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

INFECTIONS AND HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. TIM MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Chairman, I am here to talk about a sad but true problem in our health care institutions in this country, and that is this. The Centers for Disease Control tells us in any given year some 2 million people will catch an infection while either in their hospital or health care center. Some 90,000 people will die, and some \$50 billion is spent on this each year in our hospitals.

Now this chart here depicts what we have as of this evening, 853,747 cases so far, over 38,000 deaths and over \$21 billion already spent as of today. These are bacteria, viruses, fungi and parasites that cause these common hospital infections. Most common are influenza, flu or colds. The thing about this is so many can be prevented, but a huge problem among the bacteria types, some 70 percent of the bacteria are resistant to at least one medication. There is a huge problem in American hospitals, which is causing so many deaths and a big part of our health care costs.

Now these microorganisms can be present when a patient comes in, and that's why it's so important to understand how the staff, the hospital staff, the doctors, the visitors, the patients themselves need to adhere to some special procedures in order to prevent this

problem from occurring and killing so many and costing us so much on our health care dollars.

For example, diseases are passed on by poor hygiene from poor hand washing; clothes that are not necessarily clean on even the doctors, nurses and visitors; unclean equipment, catheters that are left in too long that lead to urinary tract infection; respiratory infections from those with colds or flu who are around patients; bed sores. The list goes on and on.

This is not rocket science how we prevent this, and some estimates are as high as 25 or 30 percent or more of things such as methicillin or resistant Staphylococcus Aureus can be prevented by hand washing before and after contact with any patient.

Many of these diseases can be prevented by sterilizing all equipment used with patients, including making sure that hospital staffs have clean stethoscopes, otoscopes, thermometers, et cetera, making sure they clean up after every procedure, the proper use of antibiotics, pretesting patients on admission to evaluate the presence of an infection, wearing masks if someone is suspected of having some illness, using infection control boards at hospitals to monitor and manage patients, empowering staff to stop or intervene on any procedure when clean rules are violated, and using aggressive educational campaigns for staff and visitors in the hospital.

The point is it can be done. Yes, indeed, it can be done. As a matter of fact, Allegheny Hospital in Pennsylvania reduced the rate of central line-acquired infections from 19 to almost zero within 90 days through staff training and control.

A major teaching hospital in Saint Louis found that they saved costs up to \$1.5 million. Mercy Hospital in Oklahoma performed 400 surgeries without any infections. The VA Pittsburgh Healthcare system has reduced MRSA infections by 85 percent in an inpatient surgical unit because they paid attention to these things.

Now here is one of the sad truths in America. Hospitals don't have to report when they have infections. Although 13 States are considering legislation, only 6 States require reporting of health care associated infections: Florida, Illinois, Missouri, New York, Pennsylvania and Virginia. Pennsylvania is the only State that makes its information available to the public.

It is time we change this. I have introduced H.R. 1174, the Healthy Hospital Act, to encourage others to reduce and eliminate these deadly infections and to take some of the savings from this and set aside 10 percent to allow the Secretary of Health to use this for grants back to hospitals that reduce their infection rates to zero.

We have got to transform our health care system into what it needs to be: an affordable, accessible, quality health care system that focuses on patient safety, patient quality and patient choice. But in order to do that,

we need to have this information available.

Now, another sad truth. While I have been speaking, the number of cases has gone up. While I have been speaking, another person has died in the hospital. While I have been speaking, the costs have gone up \$100,000.

Something is terribly wrong with this system. We know hospitals can clean this up. We also need to know that we need to stop wasting our health care dollars on preventable infections. Let's join together as a Nation and pass H.R. 1174.

REVISIONS TO THE 302(a) ALLOCATIONS AND BUDGETARY AGGREGATES ESTABLISHED BY THE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION ON THE BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEARS 2007 AND 2008

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

Mr. SPRATT. Madam Speaker, pursuant to section 207(f) of S. Con. Res. 21, the Concurrent Resolution on the Budget for Fiscal Year 2008, I hereby submit for printing in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD revised 302(a) allocations for the House Committee on Appropriations for fiscal years 2007 and 2008. I am also providing current law mandatory allocations for informational purposes only.

REVISED ALLOCATION OF SPENDING AUTHORITY TO HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

(In millions of dollars)

	2007 ¹	2008
Discretionary action:		
BA	950,316	953,053
Outlays	1,029,465	1,028,398
Current Law Mandatory:		
BA	549,102	548,676
Outlays	533,495	536,972

¹ Includes emergencies incorporated into the Congressional Budget Office March baseline.

IRAQ AND U.S. SECURITY

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

Mr. SESTAK. Mr. Speaker, I commanded an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 ships off Afghanistan during the war from the Indian Ocean. We were told one day to take those 30 ships into the Persian Gulf, which some thought would be the running start to the Iraqi war.

Of those 30 ships, 20 of them were not United States' ships. They were Japanese. They were Australian. They were Italian. They were Greek. There were many other ships from throughout this world. But when we entered through the Strait of Hormuz into the Persian Gulf, none of those ships came with us except the British and the Australians. At that time, I knew that this war in Iraq would be a tragic misadventure.

Two months after the war in Afghanistan commenced, I was actually on the ground in Afghanistan. I saw for a very short period of time what needed to be

done in order to bring about a successful resolution of that conflict.

After the war in Iraq was over and I left my carrier battle group, I was on the ground again for a short period again in Afghanistan and saw what had not been done, because we had diverted not just our attention but our resources, our PSYOPS forces, our special forces, our civil affairs units to Iraq. To me, Afghanistan is a poster child, as it is pre-terrorist and the Taliban have shifted into the southern provinces again and what Iraq has done to U.S. security worldwide.

So, therefore, I believe that the only strategy that we can pursue for success in Iraq is to have a date that is certain by which we will redeploy out of Iraq. We have to do this for two primary reasons.

First, a date certain changes the structure of incentives within the countries that are in that region to change the behavior. Iraqis need to step up to the plate, understanding we will not be there providing political and military cover to pursue the personal fiefdoms within the ministries of Baghdad's governments.

Also, Iran and Syria are involved destructively in this war. Once they know that we will not be there, they have an incentive to work for stability. They do not want the more than 4 million refugees that are dislocated within Iraq, and some have already filled our borders, to continue to overflow it, if we are not there to contain that instability.

Second, they do not want a proxy war between these two allied nations, Syria, Sunni and Iranian Shi'a. If we are not there, they do not want to fuel a proxy war between themselves as they support different religious factions.

But there is a second reason why we must have a date certain with sufficient time to redeploy our troops.

It took us 6 months to redeploy out of Somalia, a much smaller force. In Iraq, we have 140,000 troops and over 100,000 civilians. No one should ever try to redeploy those troops, and what is the hardest military operation to do is withdrawal, when they are most vulnerable in a short period of time.

We must have a date certain as a strategy, as the only leverage remaining to change the behavior of nations within that region to work for stability and to have our troops, those who wear the cloth of this Nation, that we sent there to have a redeployment that can be safe.

I ask this Congress to think the next time, as we must work for an end to this open-ended commitment, that we do so with sufficient time, as my bill said, by the end of December 31, but on an authorization bill, not an appropriations bill, where we again would be forced to vote, as I had to, for the safety of our troops versus the need to redeploy from Iraq, under a strategy which can leave behind an unfailed state.

To bring about greater security, an authorization bill is needed. Being in the military is a dangerous business. It has the dignity of danger. It should never be unsafe because we are forced in an appropriations bill, with a short period of time, to not provide the resources for our forces.

I therefore say that it needs to be an authorization bill with a date certain to bring about a greater security for the United States.

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 California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

HONORING THE HOUSTON FOOD BANK ON THEIR 25TH ANNIVERSARY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I wonder how many of us have experienced hunger in our lives. I wonder how many recognize the number of Americans who go to bed every night hungry.

It is for this reason that I rise to salute the Houston Food Bank on its 25th anniversary and to acknowledge the 25 years that the Houston Food Bank, connected to many food banks around America, has served our community, serving nearly 500,000 hungry men, women, children and their families.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation and thanks to the staff, the board of directors, volunteers and friends of the Houston Food Bank that have generated this most important and especially deserving organization in our community.

Hunger is devastating, but, more importantly, hunger can kill. It can kill, because those who suffer can have low nutrition that leads, if you will, to their vulnerability to disease and, yes, ultimately death. Most Americans are not familiar with the extremes of hunger. But, yet, it faces our community, or we are faced with it every single day.

In southeast Texas alone, more than 900,000 people are food insecure, meaning they do not know where their food will come from or the next meal will come from. Many children go to school, and their only meal are the free lunches and breakfasts.

So it is with great honor and privilege that I pay tribute to the Houston