

We have an obligation to provide the American people with a disaster response system that works. We must not allow the lessons of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita to fall on deaf ears. My amendment seeks to fund the groups and programs that target vulnerable communities, to ensure that, when the next hurricane hits, these groups may be adequately prepared.

I look forward to working with the Appropriations Committee, and Chairman OBEY and Chairman PRICE, to ensure language in the Conference Report for H.R. 2638, the Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act of 2008, which provides funds to FEMA for hurricane preparedness outreach to vulnerable communities.

MR. OBEY. Mr. Chairman, I move that the Committee do now rise.

The motion was agreed to.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Mrs. TAUSCHER) having assumed the chair, Mr. WEINER, Acting Chairman of the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2638) making appropriations for the Department of Homeland Security for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2008, and for other purposes, had come to no resolution thereon.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HARE). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

VICTIMS OF COMMUNISM MEMORIAL

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

MR. MCCOTTER. Mr. Speaker, yesterday was the unveiling of the dedication of the Victims of Communism Memorial here in Washington D.C. It is a replica statue of Lady Liberty, the Lady Liberty that inspired the Chinese students and their fellow people in Tiananmen Square.

It was this period of time in which there was great hope within the Chinese people that their desire to breathe free would finally be realized. Yet that hope, that inalienable right, which we all as human beings share, was crushed beneath the tyrant yoke of the Chinese communist party.

Yesterday, at the dedication of that memorial, to not only those students and those Chinese people, yesterday at that dedication, which commemorated all the tens of millions who have died beneath the inhuman atheistic ideology of communism, the President of the United States made his remarks.

I wish to say that I have an enormous amount of respect for the President. He has been a steadfast leader, and I believe he is a good man, but I am saddened by the fact that he missed the opportunity, not to simply and nobly and necessarily commemorate the victims of communism and the triumph of liberty in parts of the world over that invidious ideology, but he missed the opportunity to issue a clarion call for the American people and all free peoples in our world to summon the courage to call for the end of communist regimes that still exist in our midst, Communist regimes from North Korea, to Cuba and, obviously, to Communist China.

For it is easy for people to believe that we had reached the end of history, to view communism as an ideology that is no longer a threat to our freedoms, our way of life and to the way of life to all people, yet it is.

When the Cold War ended, we had won the European theater of the battle between freedom and communism, and, yet, hundreds of millions across the globe remained enslaved. It is too little to say to them, good luck finding your freedom. If, we as a free people, are a beacon of hope to all humanity, we must also accept the responsibility that we bear to do everything within our power to ensure that our fellow people have the opportunity to enjoy their freedom, for they are equally God's children, as are we.

So I would suggest to the President of the United States that he recall that the struggle, what John F. Kennedy called the bitter twilight struggle between freedom and communism is not over. It is not time for a victory lap. It is time for a rededication of ourselves as a free people of a Nation conceived in liberty to continue our historic and our moral mission to emancipate all humanity from this insidious ideology.

For we are a revolutionary country by birth, and we must remain a revolutionary country in present. If we fail that mission we lose part of ourselves, not only our legacy but the legacy we must leave to our children and to all humanity.

In conclusion, I would urge the President of the United States to realize that the victory over communism is not complete and that we as Americans must continue to be champions of human freedom in our world.

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

(Mr. SESTAK 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 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 Indiana (Mr. SOUDER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. SOUDER 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 Georgia (Mr. GINGREY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

30-SOMETHING WORKING GROUP

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

MR. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it's an honor to come before the House, and we know that we have been working very hard over the last couple of days in trying to move these appropriation bills. I hope that we are successful and on schedule in moving these bills, because the American people deserve it.

Also, as you know, when the 30-Something Working Group comes to the floor, we share the latest numbers out of Iraq. Unfortunately, they have gotten greater than they were before as it relates to casualties. Total deaths in Iraq at this time stands, as of 10:00 a.m. on the 7th of June, 3,490; and wounded in action and returned to duty, 14,208; and wounded in action and not returned to duty, 11,622.

I think it's also important to know that when we moved the emergency

supplemental act or bill, those two amendments did the following, one, provided those that are in harm's way with the necessary MWRAP vehicles that they needed for protection against IEDs, which is one of the main reasons why we lose men and women in Iraq.

It also set forth the benchmarks that we know that there will be two reports by September that will come before this Congress and that the dollars that are only troop essential, only for troops and not for the actual mission, will be taken under serious consideration.

I say, Mr. Speaker, that it's important that we have a bipartisan approach as it relates to looking at these two reports that will be given to us.

The only way we're able to find our way out of Iraq any time in the very near future is through a bipartisan spirit. I think it's important that we talk about this from a leadership standpoint.

To get out of Iraq and do the things that we need to do to meet the needs of this country, it's going to take courage; it's going to take leadership. I am not just talking about the elected leadership in this House on the Republican side or on the Democratic side, I am talking about leadership on behalf of the Members of this Congress in a bipartisan way from east to west, from south to north.

□ 1845

We have accomplished bipartisanship in the past on major issues that have come before this Congress. And many times I speak of the fact that it was the Democratic leadership that brought these issues to the floor, and we knew all along that a number of our Republican colleagues wanted to vote on these issues. But, now, in the 110th Congress we've provided an opportunity for them to do so. This is not a follow or lead kind of situation when it comes down to the safety of those that are in harm's way.

And I just wanted to also mention, not only the benchmarks, not only the reports and the debate that's going to be coming up on this floor between now and September, but also what took place in that other amendment, the full funding for the gulf coast area as it relates to Louisiana, Mississippi, even Texas, Katrina, Wilma, and Rita, funding that has been clogged up in this process for a very long time.

But I want to thank those that were very courageous in hanging in there and making sure in the bipartisan way that we passed that legislation to help those Americans that count on us to stand up on behalf of their needs as a country.

Also, I think it's important that within that legislation, that emergency supplemental that passed through, off this floor, in a bipartisan way, waived the 10 percent Stafford Act, which I recently heard my good colleague and my friend, the majority whip speak in a very eloquent way about this recently, Mr. CLYBURN.

9/11, the 10 percent requirement local match for Federal dollars in the Stafford Act, that's when Federal dollars are given to locals after a disaster, that the 10 percent match was waived. New York did not have to carry out that match. Even my very own community in south Florida, when Hurricane Andrew hit, that 10 percent was waived. And a number of other natural disasters, in California, one earthquake was 10 percent, was waived.

But until we had the strong leadership here in this Congress to even bring this issue to the forefront, because the administration did not want to deal with this issue, that it was brought to the floor to waive the funding for the people of New Orleans and the people of the gulf coast and all of the small parishes and cities in between. I think that came to some sort of number of 3.6-something billion, somewhere in that neighborhood, and that match alone saved the City of New Orleans, a little bit under a billion dollars with the 10 percent on that number.

I think it's important to understand that when we work in a bipartisan way, we can get things accomplished.

Now, could that have passed with just Democratic votes? Of course it could have. But there are less than 100 votes against us from sending those emergency dollars, not only to those victims of Hurricane Rita, Hurricane Katrina, Hurricane Wilma, but also it allowed us to have the opportunity to be able to stand up on behalf of the children without health insurance.

When I talk about bipartisanship and tie Iraq into that equation, I think it's important for me to pull the evidence out of how we've worked together under the democratic leadership in the House and bringing issues to the floor that we can be Americans on, not just Democrats and Republicans.

Implementing the 9/11 Commission recommendation, H.R. 1, passed with 299 votes, and with 68 Republicans voting in the affirmative with Democrats.

Raising the minimum wage, H.R. 2, passed 315, with 82 Republican votes, and the rest, a supermajority of them were Democratic votes.

Funding to enhance stem cell research, 253 in the affirmative, 37 of those votes were Republican votes.

Making prescription drugs more affordable for seniors, 255; 24 Republicans joined us in that effort.

Cutting student loan, low-interest rates in half, H.R. 5, 356 votes; 124 of those votes were Republican votes.

Working in a bipartisan spirit, creating a long-term energy initiative as it relates to making sure that we're able to invest in the Midwest versus the Middle East, 264 votes, which is H.R. 6, with 36 Republicans joining us in that effort.

I think it's important to know that, and that was just in the Six for '06. But I think it's important for the Members to understand that it's important, and as we approach these reports and these benchmarks and the things that the

Iraqi Government must do to be able to continue to receive, even beyond the 3-month funding that we've put in place until September; I want the Members to pay attention to these reports as they come before the Congress.

I want them to pay attention to the debate that we will have next month on this issue, and vote as an American, not as someone as a Democrat or Republican. I just want the Members to be able to understand that the Democratic leadership is providing this opportunity for us to come together as one on behalf of those that are in harm's way.

I think it's also important for the report that comes in in September, and I will tell you as a person that's paying very close attention to this, let alone, Member of Congress, I don't know if the report is going to be much better than what the situation is right now, but if there's a process to get our men and women out of our combat troops, I must add, out of Iraq, going door to door, kicking in doors, 3:00 searches to bring about security in an area of Iraq or Baghdad itself, we have to allow the Iraqi Government to be able to do those things on behalf of their country to be able to carry out those security missions.

And I will tell you, someone that has, you know, children and, hopefully they will have children, and as we move on to future generations, I think it's important for us to understand that there has to be some point in this war where we give a supermajority of the responsibility of security to the Iraqi people.

I think it's very, very important that if we don't live by the rules that have been put forth in these benchmarks and the benchmarks that was in the emergency supplemental, and if we don't treat these two reports to Congress as Members of Congress versus a member of a given party, then this whole process that we set up to be able to give the administration an opportunity to share not only to the world, but to this Congress, that our mission there is still needed for security of the Iraqi people.

I think it's very, very important for us, because, you know, it's good to say, well, you know it's good to make sure that families are secure. But it's counterproductive in many ways. And Madam Speaker, I think it's important that we really reflect on what are the positives and the negatives.

Well, let me just talk a few minutes about the possible positives, making sure that we can help for a longer period of time the Iraqi Government to be able to secure itself and stand up on its own two feet, have the kind of democracy that's good for Iraq, probably not as good for the United States, but good for that area of the world. And there are some other countries and people are saying, Good job, United States. Those are the possible positives.

Let's talk about the negatives just for a minute; not to say that there

aren't other positives that are out there, but I don't want to take too much time on this particular point.

The negatives: The negatives come in a package that many of us cannot comprehend. And I know a number of Members have not taken the privilege that many Members that are from the national security arena or serve on the committees, but I welcome the Members to go to the Pentagon, or I welcome the Members to get the kind of briefing that many of us have received here in Congress about what our men and women are doing in Iraq.

Well, it goes something like this, or you can just watch any of the cable news shows and it'll show you exactly what they're doing. Many times, as it relates to these security missions, because there's a civil war that's going on right now in Iraq that our troops are in the middle of, they have to carry out security missions. And in those security missions, many times, locks and deadbolt locks on doors are kicked in, and it's not at a reasonable hour when folks know when you're coming, house search, looking for insurgents. 3:00, 4:00 in the morning, families are brought into the middle of the floor, flashlights are shining in their face.

And I will tell you this: Someone that's living here in the United States, if something like that was to happen at my home, I'm pretty sure that all involved would never forget the event.

It's motivating our actions there of fighting on behalf of the Iraqi Government and the people and trying to keep the peace, even though we're all well-intentioned, and our purpose is not to harm individuals, but as you look at it, it's one of the things that kind of come along with security in that part of the world. And it's necessary as long as we're there. And that's the reason why we have to get our combat troops out.

Just like many Americans were super-motivated after 9/11 to go to either one of our Armed Forces offices to sign up to join the military and go to Afghanistan, these young men, mainly, and women, are signing up to join the jihad against the United States of America in a radical way. And it doesn't make sense to a lot of us, but all they remember is that someone who had a U.S. flag on their shoulder kicked in their door, and instead of bringing the peace, and instead of us getting the kind of rose petals and seen as liberators; and as it was explained to us by the administration and by many of the folks that came before the Armed Services Committee, I think it's important for us to understand that the negative is the counterproductive action that is taking place now that's putting us in a situation that we've never been in before, where we have other countries questioning our motivation for being in Iraq.

So I want to make sure I'm saying it in a very plain way, because I'm not trying to get into acronyms and trying to head into an area that many Members, because you don't serve on the

area or the subject, or you haven't served professionally in the Armed Forces, or you haven't been in a command position, I'm not talking—and I haven't either, but I want to make sure that we all understand, because I think the coming days and the coming weeks are going to be very, very important to not only the future of Iraq, but also the future of our country. I want to make sure that we have an opportunity to talk about some other issues here today.

But I wanted to recognize my colleague from Pennsylvania, who is here to not only talk about this issue, but other issues that may be facing the Congress.

I yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. SESTAK).

Mr. SESTAK. Thank you for yielding. I wanted to also speak about Iraq and our U.S. security.

I've always felt that Iraq is a tragic misadventure. I can remember being on the ground for just a short period of time, 2 months after the war in Afghanistan began, and I saw what needed to be done. I brought an aircraft carrier battle group back, 30 ships, 15,000 sailors, Special Forces, SEALs, Marines. And then I went back on the ground 18 months later in Afghanistan and I saw what had not been accomplished because we diverted our attention, our resources, Special Forces, psychological forces, civil affairs forces to Iraq.

I have always believed that not only is Iraq a tragic misadventure, but there is a strategy by which we can redeploy out of Iraq and not leave a failed state.

□ 1900

I have never believed in doubling down on a bad bet, and that is what we have done by this most recent surge of forces into Iraq. The last 2 months have proven that. We have had more U.S. casualties among our forces than any 2-month period back to 2004.

There is only one solution to Iraq, and that is not by continuing to flow forces there. It is by setting a date that is certain, a specific date by which everyone knows we will redeploy out of Iraq. I believe that this date certain, much like a tax policy here in the United States, is something that can begin to change the structure of incentives within Iraq and about the surrounding countries so that their behavior in Iraq, as well as in the critical Nation's of Iran and Syria, changes. If we are to set a date certain, the Iraqis will begin to understand that no longer will we continue to provide a political and a military cover for their 32 ministries in their government, that each is headed by an individual that is bent not upon Iraqi ambitions but personal ambitions to ensure that they consolidate as we provide them cover for their personal fiefdoms. We should let them know that we will no longer let them pursue these ambitions; that they must step up and assume personal, professional responsibility for the chal-

lenging political questions that must be addressed.

When Senator HAGEL and I went together to Iraq, we had the most senior Shia and Kurd leaders tell us that the reBaathification law, which would welcome back in the Sunnis, was something that was not only not important, but in their minds, it was appeasement. When will they begin to make the political decisions, to make the political accommodations to begin to reconcile their country so there can be stability? A date certain, at a certain length of time, my bill has said, for the last 4 months, at the end of December, is the one remaining leverage that we have in that region to also turn to Iran, who is involved destructively with Syria in this war, making us lead profusely while we are there, to change their incentives so that they understand that if we no longer keep this top on a simmering pot, that they will have to deal with the stability that will ensue.

There are 4 million Iraqis that have been dislocated from their homes, 2 million of which have overflowed the borders. The Iranians and the Syrians do not want to have the remaining refugees come over their borders so that they have to deal with that instability. And, second, they do not want a proxy war between these two allied nations, Shia, Iran, on the one hand; and Sunnis, Syria, on the other, as they then would be left fueling different religious factions, a proxy war between themselves if we are not there. If the United States has the confidence to lead not just with its military but with diplomacy in that region, bringing Syria, Iran together to understand that the term "insh'Allah" that is so well known in the Middle East, God willing, tomorrow, will no longer be accepted by us. Give them a date certain by which we should redeploy, because we also need to remember the length of that time cannot for us be tomorrow.

It took us 6 months to redeploy out of Somalia with a much, much smaller force. In Iraq, we have 160,000 troops and over 100,000 U.S. civilians. It will take us some months. But under a date certain, we can leave behind a strategy that can leave an unfailed state as we redeploy within that region to our bases in Oman, Qatar, and Bahrain, carry a battle group into Afghanistan and many to come home because we have an army that does not have one unit that is ready to deploy anywhere in this world from home because they are in such a low state of readiness.

As I conclude, I ask this Congress, the Democratic party, to ensure they pursue the strategy that will leave not an unfailed state but a state that is stabilized to some degree as we work with the regional nations to also understand to never again put our troops between us and the President.

Being in the military has the dignity of danger. It is a dangerous business, but it doesn't have to be unsafe. We must do this on an authorization bill, not an appropriations bill. The moneys

should flow for the safety of our troops as we do an authorization bill, set a date certain, 6, 9 months from today, and safely redeploy our troops as the one remaining leverage for those nations in that region to come together under U.S. confidence so that we can leave that nation, build up our strategic security again and focus on the rest of the world and here at home. And I am very grateful for the time.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Madam Speaker, I thank my friend from the great State of Pennsylvania. I think it is also important.

It is also important to recognize those that have been in the field. Like I said, I personally haven't, but I am a Member of Congress, and I do pay very close attention to what those that are in the field have to say about what is happening in the field and also with the administration. And it has been a great discussion.

One would say, we have a Democratic House, and we have a Democratic Senate. Why can't we bring about an end to this war? Well, I will tell you one thing: It can't be without effort.

We have talked so much, Madam Speaker, on this floor about Iraq that it is almost like Iraq, Iraq and that other issue, Iraq. And I think the reason why we have talked about it is the fact that we know that we have to bring an end to what we have presently in Iraq right now. And just like my good colleague from Pennsylvania said, it is going to take time. I mean, it is almost like when you are moving out of a neighborhood or out of a house, you just can't do it in a day. It is going to take time for you to pack and do the things that you need to do, and that is even more difficult when you start looking at moving brigades and battalions and also assets.

I want to just go through, Madam Speaker, the time line because I want to make sure that Members know that many of us here on this floor have done our due diligence in trying to get ourselves out of this situation. And we know, as it relates to the timeline, and I already talked a little bit about the benchmarks, but in February, there was a vote on this floor, which was a nonbinding resolution, but it sent a very strong message to the President of the United States that we did not stand with him as it relates to the surge technique that he came up with or the escalation of troops, as I call it, in Iraq. The Congress voted in the affirmative philosophy saying that it would actually work. That is one. It happened in February.

Also, there was also a resolution that imposed restrictions on the White House to responsibly begin a withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq. That was another vote that took place here on this floor, which then the President vetoed. It passed the House, passed the Senate, and he vetoed it. Then there was a big meeting at the White House of Republicans and the President, enough Republicans to assure that the

Congress could not override the President's veto. I think 1 day or 2 days after that, I think, we remember everyone kind of came out in front of the White House, and they said, "We support the President." And I am talking about the Republican conference in the House, mainly House Members, and they said, "We will not participate in the overriding of the President." We know that took place.

But still this Democratic House, along with the Speaker and I would even add maybe a couple of Republicans, and I am not sure, so don't quote me on that, voted to override the President's veto. And we failed. We did not have enough votes to do it. Why? It wasn't because Democrats went south on us or they didn't vote to override the President's veto. It happened because we didn't have the votes. We didn't have the bipartisan spirit that we needed to make it happen, and it did not happen.

Also, when we look at the force protection and when we look at the things that our men and women have, I would say it was a courageous vote if you voted for the supplemental or you voted against it. It was courageous. And, also, I think it is important for us to understand that many of the issues that we are facing right now and our troops having what they need through the Defense Authorization bill; we imposed the readiness standards on the Armed Forces and making sure that there are standards. We knew. We took this from the DOD rules, but no one wanted to enforce it over there. We voted for being responsible and complete as it relates to the redeployment of our troops and to be able to withdraw our troops again, a vote that received 171 votes. Many of the members of the Out of Iraq Caucus and others spearheaded that vote. And I voted for it. I think it is important for us to understand that that time has now come. So we have to get that process started.

One may say, well, why don't we stop? Well, the reason why we had to make sure that the men and women have what they needed, and no one wants anyone in the field not having what they need, is that we do have a political battle going on here and we do have a political impasse that is going on right here between the administration, members of the Republican Party that are in the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate, and it is important that we get past that impasse.

And that is the reason why, Madam Speaker, when I started out here today in this Special Order, I said it is going to take the bipartisan spirit that we had in the Six in '06 initiatives. It is going to take the bipartisan spirit that we had on the two emergency supplemental amendments. It is going to take that bipartisan spirit for us to get there.

Now we have these benchmarks. Now we have reports that are going to have to come before Congress. And I am asking the Members to not look at it as a

Republican or a Democrat or I am a real Republican or I am a conservative, a liberal Republican or a moderate or a conservative Democrat or a moderate Democrat. It doesn't matter. You have got to look at it through the eyes of being an American. And I think it is very important that we realize that, come the dates of the benchmark, when the reports have to come before the Congress, which is July 15 and September 15, that action has to be taken, and there will be other votes that will be coming up. There will be votes that will be introduced in September to deauthorize the war. That is not a secret. I will say it right here. It is going to happen. So do your reading. Do your research. Do your soul searching. Talk to your constituents because the bottom line is it is what it is. It is what it is. We are in the middle of a civil war in Iraq. And I don't need to even go back to the whole thing about Iraq originally having nothing to do with 9/11. We all know that. I don't even need to go back to the fact that we were told and the country was told about weapons of mass destruction, and there were no weapons of mass destruction. We all know that. I don't even need to go back to the administration, the Republican leadership at that time, saying we will use the revenues from oil in Iraq to be able to fund the war, and we will be greeted as liberators, and it will be the best thing since apple pie and Chevy trucks. We already know that, and I don't need to go back there and elaborate further on those issues.

A lot of folks like to talk about the past. Someone took a vote a couple months ago and has got a problem with that vote. Well, that's fine. You can have a problem with that vote. Let's talk about the votes that are coming up. Let's talk about the benchmarks where one has to report before Congress. Let's also talk about July 15. Let's talk about September 15. Let's talk about what is going to happen when the 3 months of authorization or funding that was given in the emergency supplemental, let's talk about that. Let's talk about looking at a step-by-step process to deauthorize the war in Iraq. Let's talk about those issues. Let's act on those issues.

And to those that believe that this war should have ended yesterday and that it has not ended yesterday because there is not enough leadership on the Democratic side to make it happen, well, look at this and listen to this: There wouldn't even be a vote on the floor if it wasn't for the Democratic leadership bringing these issues up. It wouldn't even be in the newspaper. It wouldn't have been considered. There wouldn't have been a number of hearings that have been held in the Rayburn building, the Armed Services Committee and in the Foreign Affairs Committee and the Appropriations Committee.

□ 1915

We have already surpassed the hearings on Iraq and all of those committees in this Congress alone, and we're not even past 7 months yet. So, for those that are saying well, what is the House doing and what is the Senate doing? Understand this; in the Senate, it's hard to even get the votes to even get half of the stuff that we've done here in the House, not because the will is not there, it's because we don't have that bipartisan spirit that I spoke of.

I think it is important here in this House that we realize, I mean, last night was a perfect example, that we have to work in a bipartisan way if we're going to stand up on behalf of the American people. We may have impasse, but we've got to get beyond that. We've got to make sure that we run this House in a way that the American people can be proud of it.

But, you know, it's one thing about procedural motions, Mr. RYAN, my good friend from Ohio, and it's another thing about action. And because so many American lives are in jeopardy in Iraq right now in the middle of a civil war, we don't have enough time to play politics here in Washington. The only thing that we have to do is to allow our troops to have the kind of representation, and their families, here in this House and over in the Senate and in the White House that will eventually reunite those families with their fathers, their mothers, their sisters and their brothers. There is a process. The name of this action of getting out of Iraq is not checkers, it's chess. We have to think about it and it has to be thought out.

We're not trying to microwave major decisions. But I can tell you, we don't have enough time for those who want to play "operation run the clock out" and see how long can we go until we get that end date. My good friend from Pennsylvania was just here saying that there has to be an end date. On the lease of a car, there is a date that you've got to return the car back in. On a loan, there is a date that the loan has to be paid off. There is a date that it has to be paid.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. MEEK of Florida. I will yield.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. The opposite of that, if there is not a date certain, that means that there is no end. And quite frankly, if there is no end in sight, how do we expect the Iraqi troops to get trained and to actually stand up if they think we are going to continue to be there? You know, it's like raising kids, at some point they've got to leave the house. They've got to stand up on their own. They've got to go pay their own rent, their own cars, their own insurance and everything else. I think that is what we are trying to communicate. We're not saying we want an end date just to have an end date. There is a reason. I think it is important for the Iraqis to know that the American people are not going to support this for-

ever, and they need to stand up, regardless of what side you are on on the vote a few weeks ago or at the beginning of the war.

I want to talk about what happened last night and today on the House floor and what bill we were trying to pass. As most people know who are paying attention to this now, we have a procedure here where we bring a bill to the House floor after it goes through the committee process. And yesterday it came to the House floor and it was what we will call an open rule, so anyone can offer an amendment. There were over 140 amendments to the Homeland Security bill. And our friends in the minority who used to run the Chamber, Republicans, Madam Speaker, were frustrated about earmarks in the congressional process, and so they were protesting this bill. They kept invoking a motion called a motion to rise, which basically ends debate on the bill and on the amendments and stops the process. They did this, I think, nine times last night, and debate went until 2 in the morning.

I share this with other Members and those paying attention, Madam Speaker, because they, in essence, filibustered the Homeland Security bill. And it is important for us to recognize what this bill does. This funds the Homeland Security Department. I want to go through this because our friends filibustered more border patrol agents, 3,000 that the Democrats were trying to fund and get to the border so that we can secure our border.

Now, we hear from our friends on the other side about border security, about illegal immigrants, about all of this stuff that they keep talking about about illegal immigrants and terrorists. Last night and today, Mr. MEEK, we tried to put 3,000 Border Patrol agents on the border, and they filibustered the bill. So we have not had a vote on this bill. It has not passed the House.

We had money in here for first responders, for our firemen, those people who would arrive on a scene first in the most critical time in the most critical positions. They filibustered that. So this bill did not pass the House.

We have equipment and technology that will allow us to keep our ports safe and to monitor what is coming into our ports and detect possible attacks on the United States; the Republicans filibustered that. And this bill did not leave the House floor today as it was scheduled. State grants for law enforcement, \$90 million, urban area grants. The list goes on and on. Transit grants; emergency management perform grants; fire grants; metropolitan medical response grants; interoperable communication grants; port security grants; REAL ID grants; explosive detection systems; air cargo explosive screenings. It did not pass the House because the Republicans filibustered the bill today. You know why? Because of earmarks. And you know what? There wasn't one earmark in this bill,

not one; not a Democratic earmark, not a Republican earmark. It was pure politics today on the House floor, Mr. MEEK. You know it, I know it, they know it. And who suffered through all of this? The American people.

Let me make one final point before I volley it back over to you. The National Intelligence Estimate stated last year that the war in Iraq has created more terrorists around the world who hate America. Okay. So whether you were for or against the war in Iraq at this point is irrelevant, really. What are we going to do now? Well, the National Intelligence Estimate has said that there are more terrorists who hate America now. So now there are more terrorists out there than there were before, around 9/11, that are going to come to America and try to harm us.

So, in order to combat that, the majority of the Democrats are saying, why are we fighting this war in a country that had nothing to do with 9/11, was not harboring terrorists, was not the Taliban, right? And we have this war going on. Democratic philosophy is, fund the Homeland Security bill. Protect our ports; protect our borders; fund our first responders. Let's put some money so we can have more Arabic-speaking translators so that the stuff we are pulling down off the satellites we can translate. Right now we don't even have enough translators to translate the tapes that we are taping from the satellites from terrorists around the world.

Let's be smart. This isn't 1940. You don't drop big bombs anymore. Everything is decentralized; it's more delicate, it's more complicated. It takes a more complex constructive debate, not filibustering the demagogue earmarks in a bill where there are no earmarks.

I thought what happened in the last 24 hours has been a real disservice to the American people, and I think it continues to point out why they had a change of heart in the last election.

A couple of the comments that I would like to respond to, Mr. MEEK, that were made today and last night. First of all, we hear a lot from our Republican friends, Madam Speaker, that the Democrats are fiscally irresponsible, okay? Which holds absolutely no water.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I would be happy to yield.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. RYAN, I always get into this thing that I don't even like to say what they say because it's just so, you know, it's almost like because they say it, I guess that it's supposed to be true. It is so far from the truth. It's almost like if you get a letter and you say, wow, in this letter it says that the rain goes up from the ground and into the sky, let me go outside and check. I mean, it's so funny. I mean, you know the rain comes down, so why do you have to check their point that it goes up?

You know, I came today, Mr. RYAN, to talk about and hopefully provide

some verbal leadership in a bipartisan spirit, because if it was just politics I would say, well, Republicans keep doing what you're doing and we're going to keep doing what we're doing and we will see next November how the people feel about it. You continue to dig the hole. But you know something, Mr. RYAN? The difference between politics and what happened on this floor last night and today is the fact that American lives are at stake.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. That's right.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. It's not politics. This is blood. It's family. You know? And it's very, very important that we all understand our responsibility.

I also think, Mr. RYAN, as you go on to speak in a very forceful way, and I am glad that you are doing that, as a member of the Appropriations Committee, that if we are going to get through this process we have to think about the institution of the House of Representatives.

Now, I am not a Member of Congress with a conspiracy theory, but the last time we were in control, all of the appropriations bills passed the floor and went through the process, conference and everything, on time. It wasn't continuing resolutions upon continuing resolutions upon 3 more months of a continuing resolution and say, oh, my goodness, we're into the following year. It wasn't that kind of effort. It was running the government like it is supposed to be operated.

We came in here this week to complete how many appropriations? Four, five appropriation bills? Four appropriation bills. And now we find ourselves behind schedule. We find ourselves in a posture that we did not plan to be in, and that's running behind, not because the will wasn't there on behalf of the committee, not because the staff didn't do what they were supposed to do to prepare the necessary bills to move to the floor and through committee and through subcommittee, it's because of the procedural moves that some Members of the House, Republicans, use.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Will the gentleman yield?

The arguments we were hearing today from our friends, two things that really struck me as funny, actually, it was so outrageous, one is, we are not fiscally responsible, Madam Speaker. That was the first argument is that we're not fiscally responsible. This is coming from a party who, in the last 6 years, Republican House, Republican Senate, Republican White House, borrowed more money from foreign interests than every President and Congress before them combined. Now we are going to get lectures on fiscal responsibility. Borrowing money from China, Japan, OPEC countries, South Korea, the list goes on and on. And we've only been in charge 5 months. We haven't even passed a bill yet and now they're saying we are fiscally irresponsible. It doesn't hold any water.

And then the other comment was that we are not spending the money properly. This is coming from the party that has been running the war in Iraq, where they are giving more money to Halliburton. Halliburton has already been fined for marking up food, trying to basically war profiteer off of what's going on in Iraq. The Pentagon lost a trillion dollars and nobody even knows where it is. And we're going to get lectures on how we are spending our money. Same group of people who oversaw Katrina, the disaster where people were dying because of the poor investment, poor management, poor execution, poor planning of this administration with a Congress that provided zero oversight, we are going to get lectures on how to spend money and how to run government. Doesn't hold any water.

Now, here's why I think, and I'm going to get out here on a limb here a little bit, Mr. MEEK. Here is why I think our Republican friends are trying to filibuster and distract and throw up red flags and put some smoke into the air to try to distract, and mirrors, just to try to get everybody thinking differently.

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Here is why I think. I want to just briefly review what we have done with our budgets out of committee. Some haven't passed yet, but some are on their way, and we are going to get these through, because the American people deserve it.

Our veterans budget, Mr. MEEK, was the largest, and we all know the veterans' problems across the country, we don't have to outline them, the largest increase in veterans spending in the history of the VA. Our veterans who come back home will be taken care of.

Saying that we support our troops is not a punchline for us. It is something that we take to heart. Budgets are about priorities and values, and in our budgets we have the largest increase for veterans. We have programs that are funded in there for brain injuries, for posttraumatic stress, to make sure the drug supply stays safe for our veterans, and on and on and on. We fixed the Walter Reed problem, rehabilitation, prosthetics. Everything that is needed for our veterans, they got.

In the last 21 years, there has been a small coalition of veterans groups who have their own little budget that they submit to Congress. Never before has Congress met what they wanted in their budget, until this year. We not only met it, we surpassed it by \$230 million. We went above and beyond even what the veterans groups were asking for, because that is the commitment that we have.

With that coming down the pike, if I was in the minority and been in charge for 16 years or 14 years and had a President, a Republican President, and didn't deliver on any of that, I wouldn't want to talk about the Democrat's success either. I would want to

start all kinds of other fights and filibusters and do everything else.

That is just the beginning. In the education bill, we increased the Pell Grant by \$600 or \$700. In Ohio, for example, where Governor Strickland now passed a budget where there is a zero percent increase in Ohio college tuition next year and a zero percent the next year, it used to be 9 percent and 9 percent, you take that, if you are a student going to school in Ohio, you go from 9 percent increases to zero percent increases and a \$700 bump on your Pell Grant, that is a tax cut for average families.

We have increased Community Health Centers, so poor and middle-class people can go to a Community Health Clinic, by \$400 million. Thousands of people in America who didn't have access to healthcare will now have access to it, at least through a clinic.

EvenStart, Head Start, after school programs, all funded with increases from the Democratic Congress. We passed the minimum wage, Mr. MEEK. We passed a \$200 million-plus investment in alternative energy resources and research.

Now, I am done, but I just want to make the point that with all of this positive news going on, Mr. MEEK, I wouldn't want to talk about our budgets either. I would filibuster anything to prevent the Democratic Congress from passing these bills, taking them to the American people and campaigning on them next year.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. I think what is important, Mr. RYAN, is that we look at this thing for what it is, we look at it for what it is, and we let it be known, because you know, it takes us a little while, Mr. RYAN, to kind of get ourselves in the groove of really talking about the situation at hand.

The situation is, unfortunately, politics is overruling the governance of this country. It is almost like having someone at the dining room table, Mr. RYAN, that will continue to be disruptive when you are trying to have a decent conversation at the table.

Now, let me just tell you, last night about 11 p.m., it was very interesting to hear some of the debate, about, you know, it wasn't about the fact that there was a lack of border agents in this bill or ICE agents or there was a lack of homeland security equipment to follow up on all the 9/11 recommendations. That wasn't the argument. It wasn't an argument that we were being weak on something. The argument was all about, well, you know, somebody told me that this is the procedure and I disagree with the procedure. This is the homeland security bill, and as we started to go through the process of showing that Democrats can govern, it was, well, how can we disrupt that process?

Now, there are two things, Mr. RYAN, when you were talking that came to mind. The President has said, as a matter of fact, he hasn't said it, he sent a

letter to the Speaker saying that if you send me a bill that is over the budget that I sent you, then I am going to veto it. That means if we have any great ideas as it relates to doing something about healthcare in this country, the President is saying I don't want to hear it, because it is not in my budget. So shall it be written, so shall it be done.

I know the President is a little spoiled. I know he is accustomed to having certain things from the rubber-stamp Congress and all, and this is a new kind of thing for him and the administration. But I think it is important that we pay very, very, very close attention to what is happening as we start to think about democracy.

Now, to say you are going to veto something, that means two things. This is speculation, maybe. Our colleagues on the other side of the aisle are saying, let's slow this thing down a little bit, because we get all of these bills passed, which they will pass, and then it goes to the President and he starts to veto these bills. Then they call us on the next day, the President, "come down to the White House," like they did when we passed the emergency supplemental, putting not only dates of redeployment, but also benchmarks, and if they weren't met, then redeployment would start automatically, and then had an end date as relates to making sure we get a majority of our combat troops out of Iraq. He called the Republicans down to the White House and they said, we are not going to override you. Okay.

Will they do that, or can they do that, Madam Speaker, when it comes down to education? Will they do that or can they do that when it comes down to homeland security? Will they do that, and when I say "they," the Republicans, stand with the President when it comes down to the largest increase in the VA history? Can they stand with the President to withstand an override or to help him withstand an override? That is the problem.

So as we start to look at this issue and as we start to march down the road of responsibility and moving this country in a new direction, that is what the people voted for, and, guess what? Some Republicans were elected on new direction too. Folks wanted a change. They wanted to come to Washington and do what they needed to do. Independent thinkers.

It didn't look like that last night. It looked like, you know, well, the leadership has told us this is what we have to do, and if we have to be here and the sun is going to rise, that is fine. We will be here.

I voted against rising last night. It is already on the record. It was on the board. I voted against it, because I didn't believe that it was right to allow anyone to do what they were doing to the level that they were doing it. That is fine.

The Democratic side, we have done motions to adjourn, done motions to

rise. But, guess what? One or two or three times, maybe. But when you start making history, and I haven't checked, maybe I need to check with the Clerk's Office or the Historian of the House, of double digit motions to rise in the middle of the night, that is something that we must question.

So, Mr. RYAN, as we start to focus on this issue of the true motivations of what is happening with these appropriations bills, I think the Six in 06 was a little bit too much for the Republican minority to swallow and go home and explain. And I think because there has been a date certain, again, Madam Speaker, it is interesting, we have a date certain to pass these bills off the floor, I think that they don't want to go home the 4th of July weekend and start to explain why they didn't vote for the largest increase in VA history, why they didn't vote for education and healthcare for our children, why they did not vote to protect our environment, why did they did not vote as it relates to the issues of transportation and infrastructure, and why, you know, Mr. RYAN, in closing, I take that from you, sir, why did we continue to stand with the President to withstand an override, because the President has said I am going to veto any bill that comes to me \$1 over the budget.

Now, here is the President that has sent us into a free-fall as it relates to deficits as far as the eye can see and record-breaking borrowing from foreign nations, higher than it has ever been in the history of the Republic. This is coming from this President. It is coming from the administration and the minority that was in the majority in the last Congress and the Congress before that of borrowing money in a rubber stamp fashion.

I just want to say that, because we have to figure out who is the pot calling the kettle black.

Mr. RYAN, we are brushing up on the last minute. I am going to yield back, and then you claim the time and we can go from there. You will have time.

Madam Speaker, I want to thank the leadership and also the Members for allowing me to serve, and I yield back the balance of my time.

THE 30-SOMETHING WORKING GROUP

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

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Madam Speaker, we are going to be brief. We just wanted to make a few more points here before we wrapped things up.

One of the issues that is a major issue for the country, for the Congress, for the American people, for people living on border states, is Customs and border protection.

We sat here many nights, Mr. MEEK and I, and listened to our friends come on the other side and give 5-minute

speeches, 1-hour speeches, on the issue of immigration, on the major threat to the United States of America of illegal immigrants coming over our border.

In this homeland security bill that our Republican friends filibustered today and yesterday, there is \$8.8 billion for Customs and border protection. \$1 billion is provided for border security fencing and tactical infrastructure, along with 3,000 additional Border Patrol agents being funded.

Now, we have a bill that they agree with. I mean, you want to talk about the Potomac Two-Step, Mr. MEEK? We have got a bill here that, across-the-board, everybody agrees with. You ask them why they are not voting for it, and they say, because we are against earmarks.

We say there are not any earmarks in here. Now why are you voting against it? Politics.

We have got to get past this, especially on an issue so critical as this.

Now, we added \$27 million for 250 additional Customs and Border Patrol Agents for commercial operations and validations of commercial vehicles, verifying that trusted shippers have placed necessary security measures mandated in the SAFE Port Act. I mean, I don't understand. I mean, you know, this is my fifth year here, but I don't understand.

We are trying to pass a homeland security bill, and one of our friends, our buddy from North Carolina on the other side, said today that we should have passed the defense bill first. That was his big argument he made today, when we just passed a defense supplemental bill for \$120 billion, with close to \$100 billion of defense spending in there. We just passed one, and the funding goes until September 30th.

We are talking about protecting the homeland, Mr. MEEK. We are not talking about all these other great things we are doing. This is essential. This is our constitutional duty, is to protect the country. Article I, Section 1 of the United States Constitution, Mr. MEEK, creates this House right here, and that is our first obligation, to make sure that we support that.

So I think it is important that those folks who are at home find out what is going on in this bill. Those folks in our own congressional districts across the country, who are members of law enforcement, who are police, fire, they need to know that we had millions and millions, and it probably adds up to billions of dollars, in here.

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One of the things you hear about is intra operable communication grants. If you hear from our local police and first responders, it is that they don't have the proper equipment in a crisis situation to communicate with each other. So we put in here \$50 million to continue a program to help local police, firefighters and first responders to talk to each other during a crisis.

Fire grants, \$800 million; that is \$500 million above the President's request