

In addition to these accomplishments, he has been a tremendous ambassador for the game of golf, as well as a consummate gentleman and human being.

I had the privilege of being in Augusta on April 7, 2008 before the 72nd Master's Tournament as Mayor Deke Copenhaver awarded Crenshaw a crystal "key to the city." It is an honor for me to pay tribute to a great American golf legend, Ben Crenshaw.

### 30-SOMETHING WORKING GROUP

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

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Thank you, Madam Speaker, and good job on my name pronunciation. I have a hard time with it too.

Madam Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to begin the 30-Something Working Group's special order hour tonight. Speaker PELOSI has given us the privilege to come to the floor night after night to talk about the issues that are important to the American people, from our generation's perspective. And it is something that we have appreciated for a number of years because we've had an opportunity to engage the next generation of Americans, who clearly are yearning for their government to be responsive to them, to have their confidence in their government restored.

And tonight what we want to focus on, particularly because General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker came to Capitol Hill this week to talk about the so-called progress, or lack thereof, which is a better expression, in the war in Iraq, we felt it was important to highlight tonight the absolute cost of the war in Iraq and the toll that it is taking on, not just our military troops, but their families and on America as a whole.

And I think there is no more telling statement that could be made than the one that was made by General Petraeus himself in response to Senator EVAN BAYH's question, or comment, that there was much ambiguity in Iraq. And General Petraeus conceded that point.

General Petraeus stated this week, in fact I believe it was today, that in Iraq we haven't turned any corners; we haven't seen any lights at the end of the tunnel. The champagne bottle has been pushed to the back of the refrigerator, he said, referencing President Bush and former Vietnam-era General William Westmoreland's famous phrases.

It is clear that we have made virtually no progress, and that the only things that we are celebrating at this point is that there has been a reduction in violence. I wonder what that has brought us. What has that brought Americans?

Well, let's go through what the so-called progress in Iraq that was de-

scribed by General Petraeus today and this week, what that's brought us.

We spend about \$339 million in Iraq every single day, Madam Speaker. \$339 million. And I'd like to go through the actual monetary costs of the war in a little bit. But let me just talk about what \$339 million would get us and the investments that we could make in America, domestically, in the event that we were not hopelessly mired in this war in Iraq.

\$339 million would get us 2,060 more Border Patrol agents that could be hired to protect our borders for a year.

18,000 more students could receive Pell Grants to help them attend college for a year with \$339 million.

48,000 homeless veterans could be provided with a place to live for a year.

317,000 more children could receive every recommended vaccination for a year.

955,000 families could get help with their energy bills through the Low Income Home Energy Assistance program, that's the LIHEAP program, for a year.

Nearly 480,000 women, infants and children could receive nutritional help with the WIC program for a year.

2.6 million Americans without adequate health insurance could have access to medical and dental care at community health centers for a year for \$339 million.

More than 100 local communities could make improvements to their drinking water with help from the Clean Water State Revolving Fund for a year.

I could continue on and on, Madam Speaker, listing all the important investments that we could and should be making, were we not spending \$339 million in Iraq every day.

Now, let me just make that comparison again. I'm talking \$339 million that we're spending in Iraq every day, and the list I just went through details what \$339 million would buy for a year.

Now, I went home to my district a couple of weeks ago when we went into recess and talked to my constituents, had a lot of interaction with them. And you know, what was amazing was how top of mind the economy is.

We're less than a week from the April 15 tax deadline, and I'm sure that there are folks out there tonight that are sitting and doing their taxes while trying to figure out how they're going to write that check when they're done, and wondering how they're going to take their child to the doctor if they don't have health insurance, wondering how they're going to make sure that they can put food on the table and fill their gas tank, because now that gas is over \$3 a gallon, really over \$3.30 a gallon, it boggles the mind of my constituents and I know the constituents of virtually every Member, no matter what party we represent, that we are actually still, 5 years later, in Iraq, with an administration that just doesn't seem to get it; that doesn't seem to be willing to recognize that it

is time to bring our troops home; that we have taken too great a toll.

The question that my constituents and that Americans are asking is, how much is too much? At what point do we say the cost is too great?

I think you have to take a look at the toll that this is taking on military families. If we're not going to say that the investments we can't make because we're spending so much money in Iraq are worth the cost, then let's look at what the military leadership is saying about the toll that this war is taking on our troops.

An Army study of mental health, and this is from an article a couple of days ago, April 6 in the New York Times, an Army study of mental health showed that 27 percent of noncommissioned officers, a critically important group, on their third or fourth tour, exhibited symptoms commonly referred to as post-traumatic stress disorders. That figure is far higher than the roughly 12 percent who exhibit those symptoms after one tour, and the 18½ percent who develop the disorders after a second deployment, according to the study which was conducted by the Army Surgeon General's mental health advisory team.

So we're not talking about organizations conducting studies examining the mental health of our troops that are outside the military process. We're talking about military organizations that are saying that the strain on our troops mentally has really reached a breaking point.

We have combat troops that have been sent to Iraq for a third and fourth time, where more than one in four, more than one in four, show signs of anxiety, depression or acute stress, according to an official Army survey of soldiers' mental health. There is an increasing alarm about the mental health of our troops and, at some point, something has to give.

Again, when do we say enough is enough? When do we say that we have to make sure that we can focus on the needs here in the United States of America?

We are struggling with an economy that is at its breaking point. Yet, the economy in Iraq seems to be thriving. The Iraqi government is actually dealing with a budget surplus, and we are facing a deficit. There's something wrong with that picture, Madam Speaker.

Let me just, I really want to turn, I think people should be given a really clear picture about the monetary cost that we are dealing with when it comes to this war, this ongoing and continuous war in Iraq.

This is from our nonpartisan Congressional Research Service report, the Cost of Iraq War Rising. Here's the breakdown of what we're spending in Iraq per year, per month, per week, per day, per hour, per minute and per second.

If you take a look at the number per year, the amount per year that we are

spending in Iraq, we're spending \$123.6 billion per year.

Now, that's a hard number to maybe get your mind around. Billions and millions of dollars are very big numbers that most people aren't dealing with every day in their daily life.

So let's go down to the monthly expenditure that we're making here. That amounts to \$10.3 billion.

But if we want to drill down a little bit further and deal with the weekly and daily expenditures, weekly, we're spending \$2,376,923,077. Per day we're spending almost \$339 million, as I described a few minutes ago.

But hourly, this is really the number, Madam Speaker, that I think will hit home with virtually all Americans. We are spending, hourly, in Iraq, and this is, again, third-party validator, the nonpartisan Congressional Research Service report on the cost of the Iraq war and its rising cost. Per hour we are spending \$14,109,589 in Iraq.

I don't think it's necessary for me to go down to the minute and the second. I think the point is well made. \$14 million an hour. I mean, that is just unbelievable.

□ 2100

How many is too much? When do we say that the toll that this is taking on our troops is just beyond our capacity? Since the start of the war in Iraq, we have had 4,013 brave American men and women in uniform that have been killed. We have an estimated almost 30,000 servicemembers that have been wounded in Iraq, and as of March 1, more than 31,300 have been treated for noncombat injuries and illness.

According, again, to the Army's own mental health advisory team, soldiers who are on their second, third, and fourth deployments report low morale, more mental health problems, and more stress-related work problems.

Now, Madam Speaker, these numbers right here really sent chills down my spine. An estimated three-quarters of a million troops have been discharged since the war in Iraq began, many of whom have had compromised mental and physical health. An estimated 260,000 have been treated at veterans' health facilities, nearly 100,000 have been diagnosed as having mental health conditions, and an additional 200,000 have received some level of care from walk-in facilities. That is just unbelievable.

I can tell you that I have been to Walter Reed Army Medical Center to visit our wounded troops that have come back from Iraq. I've told this story during the 30-Something Working Group in the past. I will tell it again because really, as a mom with young kids, it was so disturbing to me.

I walked into this young soldier's room to talk to him about his injury and to talk to him about what he went through, and his wife and his 6-year-old little boy were in there with him. And I had a nice chance to chat with the little boy. He was very exuberant and

excited. It was really a lovely conversation. He was so excited. His dad had just come back from his third tour in Iraq, each of a year. Now remember, this little boy was 6 years old, and the father was telling me he had a stress-related mental health injury, and the father was telling me about how he was supposed to be finished with his tour in August, was still hoping to go back, by the way, which is amazing because these troops that represent the United States of America are just absolutely so committed and so patriotic, and really, I just so admire their bravery.

But what the little boy said when I had a chance to talk to him, he said he was so excited, my daddy is coming home after August. And when he said that, it occurred to me that this little boy being 6 and his father having been through three 1-year deployments in Iraq, this father had missed half of his son's life. Half of his son's life. That just was mind-boggling to me being a mom of 8-year-old twins and a 4-year-old. I just can't even imagine. I have children close to that age, and I can't imagine having missed half their life. I mean, that just takes a toll on families. It takes a toll on marriage.

Madam Speaker, even the time that myself and other parents serving in Congress here are away from our families, I know the toll that it takes on my husband when I'm here just working in Washington and not with him and leaving my kids with him to make sure that he gets them bathed and gets their dinner and the homework is done and all of the things that have to be done on a daily basis with families. It takes a toll that I am here and not with him to help him do that.

Add the stress of your family member being thousands of miles across the world in a war zone, in a war situation, not knowing whether they're going to ever come back, the not knowing when they're going to come back because the military keeps extending these tours of duty, keeps sending them back, does not give them enough rest in between the tours of duty. The Army, over the last several years, has extended the rest, extended the tours of duty from 12 months to 15 months, Madam Speaker, so now we are beyond a year for deployments. And General Petraeus said we may be able, by the end of the summer to pull back the length of the deployments from 15 months to 12 months, but we're still going to be at 140,000 troops once we draw down the amount of the surge. That means there is no difference, Madam Speaker, between where we are now and where we were before the start of the surge. How do you call that progress?

Someone is using a different dictionary than I am if that's progress. I mean, the dictionary that I use to define "progress" says that we see improvement, that the quality of life improves, that there's a light at the end of the tunnel, which General Petraeus clearly said we do not see right now.

I want to just quote, and in the 30-Something Working Group, we try to

use third-party validators. So it is not just our words that we use to demonstrate the statements that we are making; we try to back up our words with evidence.

So let me talk about the cost to military families from military leaders' perspective.

General George Casey said recently on March 26 in the Wall Street Journal that 15-month-long deployments are impacting on their families, it's impacting on their mental health. We just can't keep going at the rate that we're going.

General Richard Cody, the Army vice chief of staff: Our readiness is being consumed as fast as we build it. Lengthy and repeated deployments with insufficient recovery time have placed incredible stress on our soldiers and our families, testing the resolve of our all-volunteer force like never before.

Let's go down to what retired Admiral William Fallon, the former commander of the U.S. Central Command said: I will certainly tell you that I think our troops are in need of a change in the deployment cycle. We've had too many, from my experience, of several of our key segments of the troop population, senior NCOs, mid- to junior officers, on multiple rotations. He said, I look at my commanders, and some of them have logged more months in Iraq in the last decade than they have at home by a significant amount.

Can you imagine? More months in Iraq over the last 10 years than they have at home. Imagine the cost, the toll that that takes on their families. Let us go beyond the toll on families.

It is pretty clear that we have had a dramatic increase in the cost of fuel and the cost of a barrel of oil just during our time in the last 5 years in the Middle East. We have gone from gas prices being a little more than \$1, about \$1.26 or so, to now gas prices being well over \$3.30 and expected this summer to reach \$4 or more.

I can tell you that I am a minivan mom, Madam Speaker, and I regularly drive my kids around our community and car pool with the best of them. The last time I filled up my tank, which was last week, it cost \$65. Now, the last time I talked about how much it cost me to fill up my tank, and Mr. RYAN remembers this, I really feel like this is 30-Something redux. I mean, really. It's déjà vu all over again. You could roll back the tape to 2, 3 years ago when we were talking about the cost of the war in Iraq and the impact, and we are basically saying the exact same thing. It is just unbelievable.

But the last time I talked on the floor, spoke on the floor about how much it cost me to fill up my minivan, it was about \$55. And that's really only been about a year since the last time we talked about the impact of oil prices. And what the leaders that look and examine this information have said is that any time we have extended involvement in the Middle East, you see

a dramatic rise in oil prices that coincide with that.

The price of gas and the price of oil, in this environment and in this economy, is just devastating to American families.

So you have extensions of impact and extensions of costs beyond just the toll that it takes on the troops themselves, the toll that it takes on their families. There's a toll on America. There's a toll on society. I mean, it's so disconcerting and it's so disheartening to listen to our colleagues on the other side of the aisle who seem to just be in utter denial. I mean, they just keep saying the same thing over and over.

And we've been talking about the cost of this war, and I'm so glad to be joined by my good friend, Congressman TIM RYAN from the great State of Ohio who I have shared many an opportunity to speak on the floor about the things that Americans care about in the 30-Something Working Group.

It's just shocking that the administration is continuing to expect more of the same and to have there be more of the same and to expect a different result. There really is, and I would be happy to yield to the gentleman.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. As we've gone through this debate for years and years and years, as you said, we've been on the floor talking about this for a long time; and you start to hear these arguments, the same ones over and over and over regardless of what the facts are on the ground.

And the issue, I think, that has become most apparent, and some say the surge was a success. Some say, well, maybe it wasn't. Some say there hasn't been any political success. Some say there has been some. I think this has kind of gotten boiled down to one point. Some people are saying we need to stay. And you know what? Maybe, maybe if we accept that argument, maybe they're right. Maybe we should stay. But they're only going to stay at the expense of the future of this country. We will bankrupt this country if we continue to stay in Iraq.

And when you look at all of the great powers over time, they get too extended, too far out, too far out ahead of themselves; and what we are saying here is there is a reality on the ground that we need to deal with in order to address the issues that are facing the United States of America. This is about making sure that we are a strong country. If we are not a strong country, we are of no good to anybody else.

And the point that we are trying to make and that the Speaker is trying to make and the Democrats in the Senate are trying to make and like-minded Republicans are trying to make is that we can't sacrifice the United States of America for Iraq.

Now, we do bear some responsibility because we went in, but you can't continue to say that we are going to borrow, because we don't have this money. We are borrowing it all. \$3 trillion is what the projections are now for the

cost for Iraq when you factor in vets coming back and health care and what not. \$3 trillion? We are going to borrow it from China and Japan and OPEC countries to fund a war that we are not having any political progress at all?

The sides are not reconciling. They're not moving forward in the political process. That's a problem.

So, even if you say we need to stay, you need to then be willing to spend enormous amounts of money, United States dollars, over the course of the next several decades and, as some people have said, over the course of the next hundred years.

And what we are trying to say is, we've got problems here at home that we need to deal with. We've got an energy crisis. We've got a health care issue that needs to be dealt with. Growing inequality. We can't afford to spend \$3 trillion on this war.

Now, I don't think that's unreasonable because the strength of the country is at stake, and all we have to do is look around. We don't have this money. And this isn't just us. Joseph Stiglitz, Noble Peace Prize economist, there's no such thing as a free lunch, and there's no such thing as a free war. The Iraq adventure has severely weakened the U.S. economy whose woes go far beyond loose mortgage lending. You can't spend \$3 trillion, yes, \$3 trillion, on a failed war abroad and not feel the pain at home.

This is a political reality that we have to deal with in the United States of America. And we are making difficult decisions. No one is saying yank the rug out. We are saying have a responsible, planned exit in which this country and the soldiers that we have trained and the close to \$1 trillion that we have spent already, that investment, allow these people to take over their country.

I think there's a little bit of a misperception that there is not going to be, like we are going to be able to just leave Iraq, whenever it is, tomorrow or 10 years from now; and if we do it right, that there is not going to be any conflict, we will just kind of sneak out and everything will just harmoniously arrange itself.

And I think we need to realize that whether we get out 6 months from now or a year from now or 8, 10 years from now, there's going to be conflict. You have got groups of people that have hated each other for thousands of years. And there is not going to be any real polite settlement of this dispute.

□ 2115

And so we need to realize that. And by realizing that, I think it helps us get to the point where we say, well, maybe we need to just get out now because this dust-up is going to happen anyway.

And when you look at what happened the other day with the Iraqi offensive onto this militia group and then a thousand Iraqi soldiers left and abandoned the mission, would they have

left if we weren't there? That's a question I think we need to ask, would they have left? But they know we're there. This is part of the problem.

We're creating a welfare state. These people are in a state of dependency upon the United States, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. And if we continue to be there all the time, we're never going to leave, we're always going to be here for you. You know, you see all the time, this is the equivalent of a 35-year-old person still living at home with their parents. They get into a state of dependency, and they can never be responsible.

And I understand all the dynamics. I didn't want to go into this war in the first place, I was against it from the beginning, so we've got some responsibility to bear. But haven't we made the investment? And we know at some point they've got to step up and make their own way here. So I think a lot of us are just saying, let's just do it.

I yield to my friend.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Exactly. A lot of us are saying, it's time, that it is time to begin the drawdown, to begin to bring our troops home.

Many of us that believe it is time to begin the troop withdrawal, we're not talking about precipitous withdrawal. Our friends on the other side of the aisle like to, you know, they're really excellent at using strong language and scare tactics. And it's always interesting to listen to them try to exaggerate beyond all reasonable proportion what it is we're saying instead of actually listening to what we're saying. It would be nice if they would also listen to their own constituents because I have a feeling that they're not hearing anything different than what we're hearing when we go home, particularly when they are staring down the following facts:

Nearly 1.7 million U.S. troops have been deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan since September 2001; 1.7 million U.S. troops. That's 1.7 million different individuals. More than 599,000 have been deployed more than once. More than 782,000 servicemembers, Mr. RYAN, have been deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan that are parents with one or more children. Forty percent have been deployed more than once. Nearly 35,000 troops have been separated from their children for four or more deployments. And Mr. RYAN, I talked a little bit about that 6-year-old boy that I met when I went to Walter Reed whose dad had missed half his life. And I also talked about the toll that those separations from their families take on the parent who is gone, but particularly on the parent who is home, holding the fort down, making sure that they can move their children's lives and their lives forward by themselves and the stress that that brings on a family and on a marriage. The statistics that we know about say that, according to the Center for American Progress, 20 percent of marriages of deployed troops are headed for a divorce right now based on a

survey done by the Center for American Progress. According to a report, again by the Army's Mental Health Advisory Team, work-related problems due to stress, mental health problems and marital separations generally increase with each subsequent month of the deployment. So the length of these deployments is taking its toll on families.

An estimated 2,100 troops tried to commit suicide or injure themselves last year, which is up from 350 in 2002. That's an astronomical jump. I mean, we've got the facts right under our noses. When do we say that we care about these troops as people, not as fighters, not as defenders of America, but as people? And when do we recognize that there is a limit to their ability to hold down their lives and to be able to return to a quality of life that they had before they left? The insensitivity is mind boggling, and the refusal of this administration to recognize that there is a cost and a toll that is being taken on these families, on the individual troops, on the United States of America and on our economy.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Will the gentelady yield?

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. I would be happy to yield.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I don't know if you've had an opportunity to see the documentary, and I haven't seen the documentary, but I've seen Phil Donahue talking about the documentary that he did, it's called "Body of War." And it's basically these soldiers who have come back and the injuries that they're dealing with, the folks that we see going up to Walter Reed. And talk about an eye-opening experience when you first go to Walter Reed and you see these 21, 22-year-old kids without legs, without arms, severe brain damage, brain trauma, you know, all of the gruesomeness. But I think Donahue does a good job by bringing this to life and doing a documentary, Eddie Vetter does some of the music on it, so it's really a compelling case. But it goes to the point that we're all talking, you know, we're all talking numbers, 4,013, and 29,628 injured. I mean, these are numbers, but these are families that have been ripped apart, that will never be the same.

If we have an opportunity and enough facts to stop this thing, because it's not in the best interest of, obviously, a lot of these families, but this country, and you look at the human cost, as Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ has said, is tremendous. The financial aspect of this is detrimental to the future of this country. The readiness of our own troops, the lack of readiness, to be able to address some of these problems. And this is not something that you have to believe the Democrats or believe a politician on, this is retired Major General Punaro, Commission on the National Guard and Reserve, "we think there is an appalling gap in readiness for homeland defense because it will be the Guard and Reserve that have to re-

spond for these things." Army Vice Chief of Staff Richard Cody said the Army, "no longer has fully combat ready brigades on standby should a threat or conflict occur." We're not making this up. In this country, we need to be prepared to responsibly, prudently, and practically disengage ourselves.

Empower the Iraqis. We've trained them for years. You know, I hate to always fall back on this example, but it's like when you're getting ready for a football season or a basketball season or a baseball season, you go through spring training and then the game is on a certain day and the coaches are coaching you, at some point you've taught the team all you can teach them, you've practiced as much as you can, and you're not fully ready for the game, but you've got to go play. And the coaches can't go on the field for you. And that's the situation we're in.

The Iraqis are never going to be perfectly prepared, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. It's never going to be perfect. There's never going to be a perfect time where all these people are trained to the tee and we're going to be able to say, now they're ready. Because you always make mistakes, you're never trained enough, you're never prepared enough, especially when you're dealing with all the cultural issues that we're dealing with.

So what we're arguing is that they're never going to be perfectly ready. And I think there would have been a better chance the other day of these thousand soldiers sticking with the mission that they had and staying there, but they knew the Americans were there, and so it became convenient to say, I'm out of here, the Americans will take over.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. I think it's clear, and you're absolutely right, I think it's clear that the time has come. And this is not just our opinion, but it's clear that Americans believe that the time has come to shift our focus to the dire situation that we have with our economy.

And I can tell you, anecdotally, when I went home to my district during our recess, I had town hall meeting, and I do at least one town hall meeting every recess; when I did this last one, I actually, Mr. RYAN, had to bring Iraq up myself, otherwise the entire focus of the questions and the comments from my constituents would have been the economy. I actually had to affirmatively talk about the war in Iraq. And there was significant responsiveness on the part of my constituents, who agreed, it is long past time to bring the troops home. But really, at the top of their mind right now is the economy.

And just to illustrate that point, there was a new poll done recently by the New York Times, a CBS poll that showed 89 percent of those surveyed believe the cost of the war has contributed a lot or some to the United States' economic problems. When they were asked, from what you know, how much do you think the cost of the war

in Iraq has contributed to the U.S. economic problem, a lot, some, not much, or not at all, 66 percent of people who responded to this survey said that it has affected the economy a lot. And add 22 percent more to make 88 percent who believe that it has affected the economy even at all.

Now, this week obviously it was a big deal that General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker were coming to testify in front of Congress on the progress, or lack thereof, that has been made. There were lots of newspaper headlines with pictures of the general testifying, a plea from Petraeus in the Washington Post, and "Petraeus Urges Halt in Weighing New Cut in Force" in the New York Times. The Washington Times, "Petraeus Warns of Iraq Backslide." "Iraq Troop Levels Left Open" in USA Today. But arguably, the newspaper in America that most closely focuses on the economy and on the financial health of our Nation is the Wall Street Journal.

This is today's Wall Street Journal, Mr. RYAN. There is absolutely no headlines, nothing on the front page, any article related to General Petraeus's testimony. There is a little tiny entry under "What's News" that says "Petraeus recommended that U.S. troop withdrawals be halted indefinitely this summer, warning that security gains in Iraq are fragile." I mean, that's the priority that the Wall Street Journal places on the economy versus the war in Iraq, where every other article, "Bush to Expand Help on Mortgages," "Subprime Lenders Failure Sparks Lawsuit Against Wall Street Banks," those are the things that we should be focusing, like a laser beam, our attention on because our constituents are suffering.

There are folks that I represent who are having their homes foreclosed on that in a million years these middle class folks would never have been in that situation financially if we were not focused somewhere halfway across the world as opposed to getting our fiscal house in order here in the United States of America.

And if folks don't believe what we're saying here, let's use the third-party validators that we always use, Mr. RYAN. I will quote Robert Reischauer, the former Director of the Congressional Budget Office, also a respected institution here that is nonpartisan. He said, contrary to the notion that war spending bolsters the economy, he said recently that the "domestic benefits of war spending have been muted because spending is stimulating economies elsewhere, not the least being the economies of Iraq, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia."

I alluded to these numbers earlier, and now I've found them in my notes, the price of oil and the direct correlation to our involvement in the Middle East and the skyrocketing cost of oil. The price of oil has skyrocketed since the Iraq war began. The national average price per gallon of regular gasoline

before the start of the Iraq war was \$1.73. Today, it's \$3.34 cents, which is an increase of more than 93 percent. And this is predictable.

In March 2003, Sung Won Sohn, then an economist for Wells Fargo Bank, not exactly a progressive think tank, noted that "any time there is conflict in the Middle East, oil prices hit record figures." And he warned that the longer the war lasted, the higher prices would go.

We can't take higher prices for gas than we're facing now. We already expect this summer for them to go over \$4. When is enough going to be enough?

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Well, when you look at how many different ways the Iraq war is like that pressure point that you hit and it has all these different ramifications all over the country, all over the economy, all over our society in so many different ways, and this is the one issue that needs to be addressed if we are going to make any kind of headway into converting our economy over from manufacturing and basically the industrial age into a new high-tech economy that everyone benefits from it.

Now, in Youngstown, Ohio, or in Warren or Akron or Cleveland or the industrial Midwest or Pittsburgh, Detroit, whatever the case may be, if the amount of money that was spent already in Iraq, nearly \$1 trillion, was invested into these communities that, for example, have been hurt by globalization, and the big debate in the Ohio and Texas primary was NAFTA, NAFTA, NAFTA, and some areas benefited and some areas didn't, and Texas did this and Ohio did that and whatnot, just think, if all the communities that were very successful 50 years ago and pumped a lot of money into this country in steel and rubber and coal and all this stuff that were hurt by globalization, the investment of \$1 trillion was made into those communities in water lines, sewer lines, roads, education, community colleges, worker retraining, investments into the NIH research, investments in alternative energy, figuring out who's going to make the windmill, figuring out how biodiesel is actually going to work without having all these different adverse effects, figuring out who's going to make the solar panels and how we're going to make these investments, \$1 trillion that has been spent in Iraq, and we have no real signs of success.

□ 2130

No real signs of success. So this is what we're all factoring in here: The fact that it's costing us \$1 trillion already and projected to be \$3 trillion; the fact that all that money is borrowed; the fact that our friends on the other side raised the debt limit five times and borrowed \$3 trillion already from Japan, China, and OPEC countries; the fact that our homeland has suffered because of the Guard and Reserve, and so we are incapable now of addressing major threats to the United

States; the fact that our army is not at the level it should be, all of these factors in. The lack of readiness, the money, and then the lost opportunity.

We are Americans. We think about what can be. We think about the future. We think about where we want to go, what we want to be, what we want to do. And we are stuck because we don't have the resources to make the investments that Americans have always made: canals, railroads, Internet superhighway, investments in all these research projects that bounce into the Internet and put men in spaceships and land them on the moon. That's what Americans do. So let's put ourselves in a position where we can make these investments so these kids that we talk about all the time can have a future, have an economy. When you look at the benefits of NASA and science and technology and math over the years, how many corporations benefited from all of that, that's what we're talking about doing. Let's think about the future.

And when you look at this war as missed opportunities with Afghanistan, national security alone. We have missed opportunities catching bin Laden, focusing on Afghanistan, focusing on the global war on terror, these networks. We should have been tripling and quadrupling our special forces and hiring people who speak Farsi to translate tapes that we're pulling down from the satellites. All this stuff could have been done. A missed opportunity. Economically, missed opportunity.

So, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, thank you for coming down to this floor and claiming our hour tonight, and it's been great to be with you again. And we're going to keep plugging away here.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. We are.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. This is the pressure point. This is the issue facing our country, and we are going to keep speaking out on it.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Madam Speaker, what I think has been really interesting is observing the struggle that military leaders underneath General Petraeus have been going through in trying to be good soldiers and toe the party line about not being ready to withdraw and for us to leave those 140,000 troops indefinitely in Iraq, which is the decision that was clearly made before General Petraeus came to testify this week. But when they're asked specific questions about the impact on our troops, the truth comes through in their statements.

General Richard Cody, the Army Vice Chief of Staff: "Our readiness is being consumed as fast as we build it . . . lengthy and repeated deployments with insufficient recovery time have placed incredible stress on our soldiers and our families."

And we're not talking about retired commanders or retired military leaders, who some people might suggest are retired for a reason. We're talking

about the people who are currently fully engaged in our efforts over there.

Lieutenant General Benjamin Mixon, Commanding General of the U.S. Army Pacific: "We are going to have to change our strategy in Iraq to reduce the numbers of troops and thereby reduce the rotations and increase the dwell time that we get back here at home." That was January 27.

Lieutenant General Michael Rochelle, Army Deputy Chief of Staff, G1: ". . . I should mention that it's clear that the increase in suicide, as well as other measures that we track very, very closely, are a reflection of the amount of stress that's on the force."

And, finally, Brigadier General Michael Linnington, Deputy Commanding General of the United States Army Infantry Center: "Money is not the issue . . . They want an opportunity to catch their breath before deploying again and to have some control over their futures. They're tired and their families are tired."

We have got to reach a point where we focus on the things that we know we need to focus on, like Afghanistan, for example. We have shifted. When we went to war in Iraq originally with the stated notion of pursuing the weapons of mass destruction that supposedly Saddam Hussein had that he clearly never had, we shifted our attention and our focus away from Afghanistan, where we clearly were succeeding, where we clearly had the world community behind us and fully engaged, where we had the American people's full commitment. And when we did that, when we shifted our attention away from Afghanistan and focused on Iraq, we lost tremendous ground in Afghanistan.

The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Michael Mullen, said: "So should we be in a position where more troops are removed from Iraq, the possibility of sending additional troops to Afghanistan, where we need them, clearly, certainly it's a possibility. But it's really going to be based on the availability of troops. We don't have troops, particularly in Brigade Combat Team size, sitting on the shelf, ready to go."

The military is obviously stretched incredibly thin. And when I talk to constituents and groups of folks, I'll tell you that I represent a large section of the Jewish community in my State, and I am constantly being asked by members of the Jewish community leadership, What about Iran and what if we face an increasing threat from Iran? What are we going to do then, DEBBIE?

And my honest answer is, Well, we are spread so thin militarily now that it would be incredibly difficult for us to continue our efforts in Iraq, for us to maintain and not lose ground in Afghanistan, and also pursue the possibility of staving off a significant threat from Iran. And, again, that's not something that I'm saying. That's something that is backed up by military leaders.

I mean it's been 2,399 days, Madam Speaker, since the September 11 attacks, 2,399 days, and Osama bin Laden still remains free. We have gone backwards in Afghanistan since we left and shifted our focus.

In July of 2007, a de-classified version of a National Intelligence Estimate on the terrorist threat to the U.S. homeland concluded that al Qaeda in Afghanistan and the border area with Pakistan has regained its strength over the last few years and has now reached the strength it had before 9/11.

We have put ourselves in jeopardy. The administration and this President talks about the war on terror, the supposed war on terror, and how committed we are to it and how we have to fight terror in every corner of the world. Well, it is incredibly disturbing that a National Intelligence Estimate, not a progressive think tank and not the critics of the administration but our own National Intelligence Estimate on the terrorist threat to the U.S. homeland, concluded that al Qaeda in Afghanistan has reached its strength that it had before 9/11. The Director of National Intelligence, Mike McConnell, testified in February that Afghanistan's President Hamid Karzai and his government control just one-third of the country now, Madam Speaker. The remaining majority is under control of either the Taliban or local tribes.

We have got to make sure that we refocus our energy and our effort on the priorities of the American people. I know our Democratic leadership, under the leadership of our Speaker, NANCY PELOSI, is focused and determined to move an agenda that is going to improve this Nation's economy. The economic stimulus package that she was able to negotiate with Leader BOEHNER to try to inject some stimulus into this economy, checks that are going to be coming to Americans very, very soon, those are the kinds of efforts and energy that we need to be putting in to deal with the crisis situation that Americans are facing. Not continue to insist, as the administration does, that they are right and we are wrong. Not continue to say that we need to keep the same troop strength that we have where we made absolutely no progress between now and before the surge. Basically it's almost as if we have run in place. It's just incredibly frustrating.

So, Madam Speaker, I'm going to end where I began. And that is to say, the toll that this war has taken on the individual troops who are fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan, on their families, on Americans, where our administration's priorities are not focused on what they should be, which should be improving our economy and making sure that we can reduce the deficit and get our fiscal house in order and make sure that Americans have access to health care and aren't having their homes foreclosed on and the skyrocketing cost of housing, and the list just goes on and on. But at the same time, we're taking care of the needs of the people in Iraq.

They have a budget surplus. Their housing needs are being taken care of. Their children's schooling is being taken care of. Yet we still have the same 140,000 troops that the administration has committed to leaving in Iraq, as opposed to trying to bring these troops home and end this hopeless war that has not made progress. And at the end of the day, as Mr. RYAN stated, we need to ensure that the Iraqi troops can stand on their own and that they don't believe for generations to come that we are going to carry them throughout history. At some point we have to let them go and stand on their own, and we have reached that time.

With that, Madam Speaker, we appreciate the opportunity in the 30-Something Working Group that the Speaker has given us to talk about the issues that are important to the American people and to our generation and from our generation's perspectives. We hope that the people who have heard this presentation tonight will go to the Speaker's Web site and click on the 30-Something Working Group address. The charts that we have shown tonight are on that Web site, and they can feel free to e-mail us and contact us with any questions they have.

#### HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. BURGESS. Madam Speaker, I come to the floor tonight to do what I often do, spend a little time talking about health care. The hour spent in this way, I think, delivers for the Speaker and other Members of the House perhaps perspectives on health care that you wouldn't hear in any other location. I've heard the hour that I spend down here talking about health care referred to as the "House call." So perhaps that's a good way to look at it.

Madam Speaker, we have got a big job ahead of us here in this Congress and the next Congress. We are going to be talking about health care from all sorts of different perspectives. And really where we ought to be focusing our efforts, where we really ought to be channeling our efforts is delivering better care at a lower cost. And you know what? The good news is there are some examples out there in the real world. There are some examples in the real world that this House can embrace and expand upon and maybe accomplish this thing that we all want to accomplish, which is delivering more care to more people in our country at a better price. But we don't need to do it at the sacrifice of freedom because freedom is the foundation of life here in America. Without our liberty, we aren't America. So unlimited options, the unlimited opportunity that people have in this country, that's what makes this country great.

I always feel a little inadequate when I go into Starbucks because all I can do

is order a cup of coffee. But other people go into Starbucks and are able to order from a wide variety of menu options. Who would have believed, when I was growing up, that there can be 57 different ways to spend your money in a coffee shop all to purchase a cup of coffee?

□ 2145

Madam Speaker, innovation goes hand in hand with the ability to make choices. The combinations that are available for all of us to choose from have, in fact, engendered that market, and the young folks of today wouldn't have it any other way. And I think that is exactly as it should be. The same kind of options, the same kind of inventive technology and the same kind of innovation should be what makes health care great, as well.

And, Madam Speaker, when it comes to innovation in health care, the United States is the world's leader in health care. Now in October of 2006, in the New York Times, no less, and please don't tell anyone back in my district that I read the New York Times, but in October of 2006 in the New York Times a piece by Tyler Cowen talked about just that issue. He talked about how 17 of the last 25 Nobel prizes in medicine have been awarded to American scientists. He talked about four of the six most significant breakthroughs in the last 25 years having been developed in the United States of America, things like the CAT scan, things like neuro treatments for hypertension, statins to lower cholesterol, coronary artery bypass surgery, all the product of the inventive American mind. And, as we all know, American scientists are not done with advances in medicine. And we are now counting on the next generation of doctors and scientists, a whole new generation, to produce whole new generations of breakthroughs, things like single gene therapy, advancements in protein science, and the incredible revolution in the way information is transmitted and handled. All of that is on the threshold. All of that is just over the horizon and going to have a significant impact on the delivery of health care in this country.

And these breakthroughs occurred because there was an environment that encouraged innovation, an environment that embraced innovation, and yes, an environment that sometimes tolerated a little bit of chaos because that, after all, drove some of that creative energy. And this environment is better known as a competitive environment and one based on individual choice. Innovation and choice are the hallmarks of our health care system. But it doesn't mean that we can't make a good thing better.

Now, Madam Speaker, as someone who has spent 25 years in the practice of medicine, I do believe I have a unique perspective on some of the issues that face our Nation's physician workforce, and certainly some of the