

suggestions and ideas, one of which is to use our telecommunications folks, perhaps, and others, to get information and insights into al Qaeda and to radical jihadists.

Members of Congress are brought in. The current Speaker of the House was briefed four times, I believe, within the first 8 months in terms of what we were going to do, what we expected to collect and how that would keep us safe. And today, these folks are thrown under the bus.

This unilateral disarmament makes America less safe. The President has said, I'm willing to stay until Congress completes its work. I'm willing to postpone or delay a trip to Africa that's been in the planning stages for a long time so that Congress can complete its work. I'm willing to work with Congress to make that happen.

The Senate did their job. Senator ROCKEFELLER was being briefed at the same time, 6 years ago, that the current Speaker of the House was briefed. He recognizes the responsibility that they have and that the Senate has to making sure that America keeps these tools in the hands of our intelligence community. They did the right thing. Overwhelmingly, the other body passed a bill that keeps America safe, bipartisan, protecting those who helped our government to stay, to put in place the mechanisms to keep us safe over the last 6 years.

And now, the House walks away from this for the next 12 days. And each day that we are gone, our ability to monitor radical jihadists and the threats to the United States begins to erode just a little bit each and every day. But every time we identify potentially a new threat to the United States, we need to go back through a cumbersome process, one that ties the hands of our intelligence community. As al Qaeda and radical jihadists have evolved, and they're becoming more coordinated and more effective in planning attacks against the United States, we're moving back and we're degrading and we are unilaterally disarming.

It is a disappointment and a disgrace that this House is leaving today without finishing this business.

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

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

□ 1615

WE ARE STANDING AT A CRITICAL CROSSROAD

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

Mr. TIM MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, we are facing massive problems with regard to the price of energy. Energy costs money, and expensive energy costs jobs, and we are

seeing that now happen in our economy.

We are standing at a critical crossroad, and if we fail to deal with our energy needs in a responsible way, we will face not only the concerns about the environment, but we will face and we are facing economic recession threats and major job losses.

Earlier today, the Department of Commerce released December's trade deficit numbers, which, once again, strongly underscored the need for American energy independence. The good news is that the trade deficit shrank by 6.9 percent to \$58.76 billion. But the bad news is that energy imports continue to make up over half of our trade deficit, over half, 55 percent. In November, it was the reason why we had major increases.

We continue to see risk that oil was sold for only \$50 a barrel a year ago and gas into \$2.50, and is going to continue to climb.

As long as we continue down this road of importing foreign oil to the United States, we will be allowing OPEC nations to call the shots for our economy and becoming more dependent upon hostile countries for oil. When OPEC manipulates production, rural oil prices soar. And our President is left to go and ask Saudi leaders to produce more oil, more Saudi oil, not more American oil.

We have Venezuelan leader, President Hugo Chavez, threatening to cut off oil to the United States and Exxon. If they were to do that, the price of oil would increase throughout the world. Chavez himself predicted the cost per barrel would double to \$200 and increase our prices. Such a move would show all of these oil-producing countries that they can control our actions by shutting down our access to oil. We've already seen natural gas prices manipulated by Russia. We've seen these energy prices increase. But when we buy oil from countries with a history of supporting terrorism, the worst part about this is we are funding both sides of the war on terror.

Meanwhile, what has Congress done in the last year or two? Well, it's put on an embargo on our own oil. It's blocked exploration for American oil. Congress has voted to prevent oil production, oil drilling in the Atlantic coast, the gulf coast, the Pacific coast, Colorado and Alaska. These bans on drilling for our own oil are particularly preposterous in light of the fact that China and Cuba are drilling within 60 miles of our Florida coast while we are not allowed to drill off our coast.

The U.S. contains 70 percent of the world's shale oil reserves, enough to supply our country with energy for hundreds of years if we are allowed to use it. But rather than turning to this resource that can lead us to energy independence and energy security, we once again turn our backs to it. Last year, we cut off access to 2 trillion barrels of shale oil in the western States in the omnibus spending bill. Such policies have forced us to continue this increase of importing oil.

What happens is the impact upon the American family in terms of costs. We see increased costs for food as we also try using corn for ethanol. But when 20 percent of corn is being used for ethanol, we see the cost of food go up. We see the costs of transporting food go up. We see the cost of wheat climbing because not only is it a concern with regard to shortages of wheat coming from other nations, but it's also a huge concern on the cost of transporting that wheat. So what was \$16 per hundred weight last year for wheat for our bakers to use their flour, now it's \$40, with anticipation to climb much more.

How will Americans react when they know that while Congress continues to embargo the American oil resources, a loaf of bread is going to climb from \$1.50 to \$3 a loaf. Americans don't understand why we cannot drill for our own oil.

Yes, we need to do so many things to clean up the air. Yes, we need to make sure we are investing in clean coal technology so that the 300 years' worth of coal we have in this Nation can be used to cleanly produce electricity. We have to make sure we are using clean nuclear energy. We have to make sure that natural gas is used for what it's supposed to be as a chemical product to make fertilizer rather than producing energy at a very high cost and thereby allow us to use it for making fertilizer and other products that can help also reduce the cost of our food products.

But instead, we continue to say no to American oil, and it just doesn't make sense. Here is what America's going to face by 2050: our energy demands are going to double. That means we have 400 coal-fired power plants that need to be rebuilt and an additional 400 built. We have 100 nuclear power plants that need to be rebuilt because they are old, and we need to build an additional 100.

That means starting in the year 2010, we have to open up a new clean coal power plant every 2½ weeks and a nuclear plant every 2½ months, and we haven't even started building them yet. It cannot be done. Instead, what we are probably going to face is rolling brownouts because the efforts we are doing are not going to suffice.

I hope this House will move forward, take the embargoes off coal, and begin to really move towards clean coal technology and stop the embargo on oil.

THE WHITE FLAG OF SURRENDER?

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

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, it's 4:14 p.m. on the 14th day of the second month of this year. This House is basically empty except for a few of us. Everyone has gone home.

We found time today to do important business for the people of the country.

I have some of the bills that we passed today. One of those was that we had the time to vote after debate on regulating insects, roaches, fungus, and rats in the United States. Oh, such an important piece of legislation that the House of Representatives debated and voted on.

But while we had the time to vote on these important issues of regulating the rats and roaches and fungi in the United States, we didn't take the time to protect the American people from those people throughout the world who want to kill us, who want to do harm to us and our families. And not to America only, but to all freedom countries throughout the world.

Because we didn't have time to work on the Protect America Act, a bill that does exactly what it says, Mr. Speaker, it protects America. It protects America from terrorists. And one of those ways is being able to eavesdrop into conversations when one terrorist overseas talks to another terrorist overseas, amending the FISA, the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance, Act. But, oh, we didn't have time to do that.

Mr. Speaker, it troubles me because has the House of Representatives, without firing a shot, raised the "white flag of surrender" to those people who wish to do us harm? The head of the National Intelligence Service has told us that 50 percent of the intelligence that they attained is through FISA. And yet we have cut off that resource by failing to vote on that, failing debate on that. But yet we had time to talk about roaches, rats, and fungi.

Mr. Speaker, this ought not to be. Under FISA, we have been able to prevent crimes from being occurred against the United States. One of those was the bombing of the Brooklyn Bridge, another was the bombing of Fort Dix in New Jersey. Those were prevented because of FISA, because we had the intelligence, because we had the eavesdropping, the legal eavesdropping capability.

Mr. Speaker, the House of Representatives has not done a service to the people of the United States by failing to debate this issue and at least have an argument, a lively debate, and then vote on it to protect the United States. The people of the United States deserve better from us. Our job is to protect America through legislation. And, Mr. Speaker, I think we have not done that today because we are off doing other things.

So I hope that I am proven wrong by history that this did not hurt the United States down the road for failing to act on this important legislation. And it's important that the House come back as soon as possible and deal with the issue of protecting America first and making sure that we know what they're saying throughout the world when they want to do us harm, because the people we fight, the war we fight against are people who will do anything to get their way and their radical beliefs including killing chil-

dren and women and the innocents and car bombs and anyone else that gets in their way.

And there is probably joy throughout the terrorist cells in the world that the United States Congress did not do its duty today.

And, Mr. Speaker, that's just the way it is.

THE MILITARY FREEDOM ACT

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

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege to follow my friend, a former judge also, from Texas, Mr. POE; and he nailed it on the head. And I tell you, following up on that is another travesty going on this week, and that's why I just filed a bill in the last 15 minutes called the Military Freedom Act.

We are endowed by our creator with liberty. But like any inheritance, we only get to keep it if we are willing to fight for it. That is precisely why so many of our uniformed military members have laid down their lives. And the plain fact is that there is no more important purpose for the Federal Government than to provide for the common defense.

In order to do that, there's got to be a military. But we have all of the rights of freedom of speech. Even those rights have limits, such as when you can't yell "fire" in a crowded theater. There is, however, no right to trespass, there is no right to obstruct lawful ingress and egress into a military recruiter's office. The City of Berkeley, California, chose not to protect the Marines' lawful right to ingress and egress. They instead chose to aid and abet lawbreakers by encouraging them and passing an ordinance to make it easier to violate the Marines' rights.

The restricting of funding that is proposed and put forward in the bill I have just filed has been done previously in matters such as the speed limits of States or to encourage States to limit drinking and driving. So it's nothing new.

It has been deemed appropriate to encourage political entities in areas in which the Federal Government has a vested interest, and it has no more vested interest than what we have in providing for the common defense.

But Berkeley and any other city has the right to rule over its own city as they wish, and they're welcome to do that. But the Federal Government should not reward a city that chooses to obstruct and prevent the obtaining of military members who provide the very freedoms and the umbrella of freedom under which that city acts. They have a right to use freedom of speech, but they have no right to take United States taxpayers' dollars to aid and abet hurting our military readiness.

We took an oath in this body, in this room, to defend this Nation against all enemies, foreign and domestic; and

those who prevent the United States from attaining military members are not the Nation's friends. Though such a city may deserve punishment, all we are trying to do with this bill is just not reward them for hurting our national defense.

Other city leaders, such as those in San Francisco, Toledo, Ohio, like the mayor there, have snubbed or restricted our military. They need to be aware that when they begin to prevent the military from having enough troops to protect us and being militarily ready, they should not expect Federal subsidies to assist them.

It is true that the actions addressed in the Military Freedom Act are mainly actions or omissions by community leaders and not all of their citizens. We understand that. There are good citizens in each of those towns. But the choice of the citizens is either to replace the hurtful leaders or bear the consequences or move. The old adage is democracy ensures the people are governed no better than they deserve. Therefore, those cities either deserve to have better leaders who don't hurt our national defense, or they deserve not to have funds to award their harmful conduct.

Cities like Berkeley should take stock of how many of their very own first responders in the business in their cities of saving lives were trained in the military.

I would remind you also, and I remember vividly because I was about to go on active duty about the time Vietnam was ended, our heroes came back from Vietnam and were spit on. Some of the hippies that did the spitting cut their hair, got into positions in cities and have found, figuratively, new, effective ways of spitting on our military.

But everyone should understand, Mr. Speaker, this is not taking away money for expressing free speech. It's simply not rewarding the obstruction of providing for the common defense. Since it will cost additional money to overcome the obstruction to our military readiness, the Military Freedom Act takes money from the appropriate place to do that.

This is the ultimate PAYGO bill for military readiness and national security.

In any event, I hope and I encourage the leaders, the majority leaders, the Democratic majority leaders of this body to bring this bill to a vote and let the cities know that we don't reward those who prevent our providing for the common defense.

□ 1630

PAY ATTENTION AMERICA

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

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, the American people mostly don't pay