

took us into war, but we cannot be free until we have a reconciliation with the people of Iraq. And we can't do that until we have truth. America is going to have to go through that period. We will never recover from 9/11 if we continue to move down the rabbit holes of war that were based on lies or based on a misreading of history and a misapplication of power.

So where do we go from here? Well, we have to get ready to leave Iraq and we have to get ready to leave Afghanistan, and we have to stop bombing the borders along Pakistan. And we have to start working with the international community on matters of security. And if we need to continue to track down anyone who is associated with mass violence against the people of our country or any other country, that should be a matter of international police action.

And we must stop the policies of interventionism. We must stop the reach for empire. It is destroying our Nation. It is destroying us morally, and it is destroying our capacity to be able to meet the needs of the American people for jobs, for housing, for health care, for education, for retirement security. We have to challenge the underlying premise about war being inevitable. Because as soon as people start beating the drums of war, there is an entire marching band and Shouter Society at the Pentagon and their people in the contracting business who are ready to try to make a case for war at any time and any place. We have to begin to critically analyze the mentality that issues forth that causes us to put so much of our resources on the line.

General Eisenhower warned about it. He served as President of this United States two terms, and he recognized in his valedictory that we should beware of the military-industrial complex, we have to be careful about what we are being told and the motivation of those from outside this Congress who are telling us certain stories about why we should go to war. It is time for us to try to come into resonance with our power to achieve diplomacy.

I am not naive about the world, but I also understand that if we do not try to exercise our capacity to relate to people in other places, people who may have different ideologies, different religions, different colors, creeds; if we do not try to pursue that, then we are destined to have more wars. But if we pursue what President Franklin Roosevelt called the science of human relations, then we have the possibility that we can move toward making peace, not war, inevitable.

It is that type of thinking that led me to bring forward a proposal to create a Cabinet-level Department of Peace. I know there are people who say, "Oh, peace. Right. Okay, Dennis. We got it. You want peace. Next." And they try to project peace as impractical.

Mr. Speaker, you want us to talk impractical? How about a war based on

lies that cost this country over \$3 trillion? That is impractical. How about a war that cost the lives of over 1 million innocent Iraqi civilians, a war that cost the lives of thousands upon thousands of our troops, and tens of thousands of our troops injured? That's impractical.

We need to summon our capacity and our capabilities to be able to take this Nation in a new direction that does not include a quest or reach for empire; that pulls back its military resources which are spread all around the world to the cost of tens of billions of dollars annually, and we need to start coming home, create peace at home. Let's look at gun violence in our society. Let's go to domestic violence, spousal abuse, child abuse, violence in the schools, gang violence, racial violence, violence against gays.

If we started to focus on addressing violence in our society, the causal nature of it, not just the symptoms of it, not just the effects of it, we may put ourselves on a path where we could in our Nation create what many years ago people called a New Jerusalem, a shining city on a hill, the potential to be able to have all of our material concerns met, and be able to have peace.

Frankly, I don't know any other way that we can do it except working towards peace. But we have to build structures of peace in our own Nation, in our own neighborhoods. That is what legislation to create a Department of Peace is about, not creating a new bureaucracy.

Think about it. If we spend more than \$1 trillion every year for wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and the Pentagon budget all combined, wouldn't you think we ought to have a few bucks available to talk about how we can create a more peaceful society so we don't doom future generations to continue to support these endless wars?

We have to start redefining who we are as a people, and this is as good a time as any to begin to do it. We are on the eighth anniversary of the initiation of the war against Iraq, March 20, 2011.

In the last hour, Mr. Speaker, I have sought to create a review of the record of what was said at the time to bring about the war, how the President and the Vice President at that time did not tell the truth to the American people, did not tell the truth to Congress; how the consequences have been extraordinary for the people of Iraq, for the people of the United States; how many innocent civilians died; how we have to find a way to reconcile with the people of Iraq, how we will have to find a way to reconcile at some point with the people in Afghanistan the innocents who have died. How we have to recognize that there are some things in the world that are beyond our control, that we can't tell other people what kind of political system they should have. We cannot try to redesign the world according to what our idea of a democracy is.

Wouldn't it be nice if here in the United States we actually focused on

creating the fullness of the democratic process, which we were assured would have the chance to unfold with the independence of the United States and with the creation of our Constitution?

Mr. Speaker, I intend to keep bringing forth the truth of what happened that resulted in the United States being taken into war against Iraq based on lies, and I intend to keep bringing forward alternatives so that we can not just get out of Iraq and Afghanistan, but stop this reach for power abroad which comes at the expense of our vital needs at home.

□ 1640

AMERICAN ENERGY POLICY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FLEISCHMANN). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I wish every one of my colleagues and everybody in America would listen to this Special Order tonight, not because I want the attention, but I just think there are some facts that the American people ought to know and my colleagues ought to know about our dependence on energy from other parts of the world.

It really bothers me that we continue to depend so much on our adversaries or people that aren't our friends rather than we do on ourselves. We could be energy independent within a relatively short period of time, and I am talking about 5 to 10 years, if we just did certain things. So tonight what I want to do is I want to point out to my colleagues and anybody else that might be paying attention where the energy is in America, what it is, and how difficult it would be to extract it.

Now, right now, people that are paying attention in their offices know that we are paying \$3.60 or more for a gallon of gasoline. Diesel fuel is over \$4 a gallon. And my chief of staff went to the grocery store the other day, and he told me he bought two tomatoes and it cost \$5. He bought one avocado and it cost \$3.

People are telling me there is no inflation. That is baloney. The cost of food is going up. The cost of gasoline is going up. The cost of everything is going up, and in large part it is going up because the cost of energy is rising very, very rapidly. And it need not be that way.

I talked to a fellow the other day that came in to see me about new technologies, and he told me if we developed our coal shale, converted it into oil, we could lower the price per barrel of oil from \$105 a barrel to \$30 a barrel. Do you know what that would do to the price of gasoline if we were to do that? It would lower the price of gasoline from \$3.60 down to about \$1.40 or \$1.30 a gallon. And what do you think that would do to the economy and what

would that do to lowering the prices of goods and services that we go all the way across the country in dealing with? Yet we are not doing anything.

So I want to read tonight a little bit about where we are, what we could do, and what we can accomplish if we just start paying attention to what is here in the United States.

The old adage goes that those who don't learn from history are going to make the same mistakes over and over again. And apart from creating what we call the Strategic Petroleum Reserve in this country, we haven't done anything over the last 30 years to become energy independent.

Now, the Strategic Petroleum Reserve is a reserve we set up so that if we have an emergency, we will have some oil in the ground that we could use for energy purposes. And it goes for maybe 90 days, but 90 days is not a very long time, and we could exhaust that in a very short period of time if we don't move toward energy independence.

Right now on the northern tier of Africa, everybody that is paying attention knows we have got problems in Libya. We have problems in Egypt, problems in Tunisia, problems all along the Persian Gulf coast, Bahrain and the other countries, and we have got Iran there; and there is a real possibility that we could see a terrible problem occur there in the future which would minimize our ability to get oil from that part of the world.

We get over 30 percent of our energy from countries in that region and other places in the world where people don't like us very much. And if that place goes up in smoke, the cost of energy, the cost of gasoline, the cost of everything that we have is going to skyrocket. So we have to do something about that.

In 1972, we imported 28 percent of our oil and energy from outside this country. Do you know what it is today? It is 62 percent. So we said we are going to be energy independent. It was 28 percent in the seventies. We said we were going to be energy independent. A lot of people remember the long gas lines when OPEC tried to do us in. They remember people carrying gas cans to get 5 gallons of gas to get to work. They remember all that. But we didn't do anything but create the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, which is only a 90-day supply.

So we imported 26 percent or thereabouts in the seventies, and today, instead of being energy independent, we are importing 62 percent. We are more dependent on Saudi Arabia, Venezuela and other parts of the world now than we were then by more than double, more than double our dependency on foreign oil.

So today oil has gone up to over \$105 a barrel. It may be down a little bit now. We are paying in many parts of the country close to \$4 for gasoline and over \$4 a gallon for diesel fuel, which transports our goods and services across this country.

Oil is the lifeblood of this country. It supplies more than 40 percent of our energy needs and 99 percent of the fuel that we use in our cars and trucks. They talk about the new Volt automobile, electric car, that that is going to solve our problems. They talk about windmills that are going to solve our problems. They talk about nuclear energy, which is very problematic right now. They talk about all these other things, including solar energy. But all of that combined will not put a dent, not even a dent, in our energy needs. And as we know right now, 99 percent of the fuel that we need for our cars and trucks comes from oil, and our current energy demand is about 21.5 million barrels a day.

What a lot of people don't realize is for every one penny that it costs more for gasoline, it increases the cost to consumers by \$4 million a day. So every time you go to the gas pump and you see the gas price has gone up a penny or a nickel or 10 cents, for each penny it is a \$4 million hit on our economy each and every day.

Now, there are a lot of things I want to talk about, but I won't have time to get into all of them tonight. But the thing that is very disconcerting to me is that we have the energy that we need right here.

For instance, if you look at this chart, this is the oil production in this country. If we use the recoverable oil we have, the natural gas we have and the coal resources that we have, that is equivalent to 1.3 trillion barrels of oil, 1.3 trillion. Now, when you realize we are using only about, what, 21 million barrels of oil a day, you can see we would have an almost inexhaustible supply of oil if we just used the resources that we have.

Let me just give you some examples. In the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, we have about 10.4 billion barrels of oil, more than double the proven reserves of the entire State of Texas and almost half of the total crude reserves in the U.S., which is 22 billion barrels of oil. That is in ANWR alone, almost half of what we need. If we drilled in ANWR, we could increase our reserves by nearly 50 percent in that one area.

President Clinton vetoed the ANWR energy production in 1995, and the United States could be today getting almost 1.5 million barrels of oil a day if we did that. But instead of moving toward energy independence, we continue to talk about it, but we don't do anything about it.

Currently, the President of the United States will not allow us to get new permits to drill offshore in the Gulf of Mexico or off the continental shelf or in ANWR or anyplace else. We just aren't drilling, so we continue to import oil.

Now, a lot of people don't realize this, but we spill more oil from the oil tankers that bring oil from Saudi Arabia and Venezuela, we spill more oil each and every day than the oil that was spilled from that horrible tragedy

that took place in the Gulf of Mexico. And yet we continue to import with these tankers, and we say it is an environmental problem because look at what happened in the Gulf of Mexico. That is an excuse to not drill in this country, because we are wasting energy by not getting it right here. And, as I said before, we are spilling more out of those tankers than we had in the Gulf of Mexico tragedy.

So we ought to be drilling. And we could do it in an environmentally safe way if the government of the United States and our regulators made sure they watched these oil wells. The technology is there.

Now, as I said before, we have 1.8 trillion barrels of oil and as much as 8 trillion barrels of oil if we use the deposits that we have in oil shale. Maybe I haven't said that yet, but we do have.

Now, listen to this. I had a fellow come in to me the other day, and I may have mentioned it to some of the people earlier, and I sometimes get mixed up because we have covered this thing before, but he told me if we drilled here and used oil shale, we could reduce the cost of oil dramatically, dramatically, as much as 60 or 70 percent, and it would reduce overall costs of energy dramatically to our houses, our cars and our trucks which bring goods and services and food all across this country.

Currently, the United States produces roughly 30 trillion cubic feet of natural gas every year, 30 trillion feet of natural gas every year. If we went after the Marcellus shale formation where they have 500 trillion cubic feet of natural gas, we could more than double our domestic production of natural gas almost immediately, and we could use that natural gas to move our trucks.

I had some of the leaders in the natural gas industry come to see me not too long ago, and they told me if we just converted our 18-wheelers that transport goods and services across this country and food, if we just converted those to natural gas, we could cut our dependency on foreign oil by 50 percent.

□ 1650

Just that one thing. Yet we're not drilling for that natural gas because the administration will not give the permits and move to utilize those resources that we have.

The Obama administration, for whatever reason, I don't know if it's intentional or just because of ignorance, they're not using our resources and not exploring for our resources. It makes we wonder sometimes if the environmental extremists in this country don't want us to go back to horse and buggy and using wood to heat our houses. They wouldn't want wood to be used to heat our houses because obviously they're concerned about things like the spotted owl.

But the fact of the matter is we in this country could reduce our cost of

living, could reduce our dependency on foreign oil. All we have to do is use our resources, but we need the administration to do what is necessary. And at a time when the world is on the precipice of some major wars, we need to move toward energy independence. If the Persian Gulf goes up in smoke, it's going to be disastrous for this economy. If Venezuela and President Chavez down there, who's a Communist dictator, if he decides not to let us have the oil that we've been buying from him, it will be tragic for this country.

And he's working with Tehran. They have flights going back once every week—back and forth—and they're working together for things other than the good of the United States of America. And so we're dependent on people that don't like us, would like to see our free enterprise system and the freedoms we enjoy dissipate into nothing, and we're continuing to depend on them for foreign energy.

The President has said it's a real danger to drill in the Gulf of Mexico; we want to protect the environment. Yet we just sent \$1 billion down to Brazil so they could drill offshore. Now think about that. We're concerned about the environment, and yet we're sending billions of our taxpayers' dollars to a country like Brazil so they can do deepwater exploration for oil. It makes absolutely no sense whatsoever.

The administration—just to let people know what is going on in their offices—the administration canceled 77 onshore drilling leases in Utah just weeks after taking office. So we had 77 onshore, in the Continental United States, drilling leases in Utah that were going to be used to bring oil to the surface—and natural gas—and they stopped those weeks after they took office. And they later re-offered only 17 of them. So we lost 60 potential areas of oil and gas.

The administration has consistently delayed oil and shale development leases. The administration has repeatedly blocked development, as I said before, in places like the ANWR. And I've been up to Alaska. People talk about how it's going to hurt the environment up there and the bears and all the other animals. The ANWR is way out in the boondocks. It's not going to hurt a thing. People don't realize Alaska is 3½ times the size of Texas. There's only 500,000 people up there. There's tremendous oil and other natural gas resources up there, and we can't drill for them because of environmental concerns. It makes absolutely no sense. No sense whatsoever.

America's reliance on oil and natural gas is going to continue for decades to come. There's no question about it. When the administration says we have to transition to other forms of energy—nuclear and solar and wind and hydro ways of getting energy—that's great. All of us want to do that. We all want a clean environment, but in the meantime we have to rely on fossil

fuels because we're not going to be able to get where they want us to be by relying on these other sources of energy for at least 10, 15, 20 years.

So what are we supposed to do in the meantime? I don't think we should continue to depend on foreign sources of energy. America's reliance on natural gas, as I said, is going to continue for decades to come; and trying to ignore that reality by arguing that it takes time for new fields to come on-line is simply passing the buck to the next generation.

If we responded to the widespread outcry to drill 3 years ago, the last time oil and gasoline prices were over \$3.50 a gallon, we would be that much closer to having additional supplies of domestic energy. But we aren't. We're importing 62 percent of our energy, and just a couple of decades ago it was only 26 or 28 percent.

Expanding America's energy production will lower prices, create new jobs, reduce our dependence on foreign oil, and strengthen our national security and raise revenue to help tackle our historic \$14 trillion in national debt.

One of the things that I hope all young people in this country will realize and all the seniors will realize is that we're passing on to that young generation \$14 trillion in debt. The debt has increased in the last 3 years by \$4 trillion. From the beginning of the Republic to the last 3 or 4 years, we didn't come close to that kind of spending. Yet we increased the debt in 3 years by \$4 trillion. ObamaCare is going to add a great deal more to that, in addition to rationing health care and all the other things that people have heard about.

But the thing that concerns me the most is the standard of living that we have today and what we're passing on to the future generations. By not becoming energy independent, by running up these huge debts because we're coming up with these new programs that we can't afford, by creating a bigger bureaucracy in Washington, including 15,000 new IRS agents to implement the rules and regulations of things like ObamaCare, all those things are going to add to the debt and the quality of life that I've had and my parents had is going to deteriorate.

I'm afraid we will pass on to our children and our grandchildren higher taxes, higher inflation, a lower standard of living because we're living way beyond our means today. Natural gas and coal shale and oil are ways that we can cut our dependence on foreign oil and reduce that dependency on government and lower the cost that we're incurring as far as our national debt is concerned.

I don't know what we have to do to convince the administration. Sometimes I wonder if it's because they're not aware of the future, they're not aware of what is going on, or maybe they're just doing it on purpose because the President believes in more government control over various parts of our society.

One-sixth of our society is health care; and that's been nationalized by the ObamaCare plan, which we're trying to repeal because that will create long lines to get to see a doctor and socialized medicine. That's all a result of more government control and more government spending and more national debt.

Can you imagine what it would be like if we came back in 50 years—and I probably won't be around then; I'm sure I won't—but we come back in 50 years and there's some young person struggling to get along and they say, Why in the world did our fathers and grandfathers leave this kind of a society for us? They lived so much better. The cost of living was lower. The cost of energy was lower. The cost of health care was lower. Everything was lower. They lived so much better than us. Why didn't they do something to make sure we had that quality of life? And the answer is simply: we're not doing it. We're opening up the government credit card, we're charging all this money, we're depending on other sources of energy from other countries, and the credit card just keeps gathering steam and gathering more debt and gathering more debt and gathering more debt.

If my colleagues in their offices are paying attention right now and they said to their wives, We overspent last month by \$5,000; what are we going to do, their wives and the wives of the people that might be paying attention would say, We've got to cut back on spending. We've got to budget our money. We can't live like this. We'll go bankrupt. And I tell you right now, America is in the same situation. We will go bankrupt. In fact, we are bankrupt, but we're printing money as fast as we can to keep from declaring bankruptcy.

They talk about Social Security being insolvent in 15 or 20 years. If you go into the vaults and look at Social Security receipts, it's all a bunch of paper. They've used that money for other purposes. We're robbing Peter to pay Paul for Medicare and Social Security as we live today. So we just add to the debt and add to the liability that we leave to the future generations.

So if I were talking to the President tonight, Mr. Speaker, I would say: Mr. President, if you love this country as much as we love this country, then take steps to do what's necessary to cut spending, to do away with a lot of these wasteful programs that aren't accomplishing anything, to make sure that we come up with a health care plan that does not create a dependency on government but on the private sector by doing tort reform and coming up with savings accounts that people can deduct from their taxes so that they can pay for a lot of their own health care needs. There's a whole bunch of things we can do without socialized medicine.

So I would say: Mr. President, let's look at the other avenues. Let's re-evaluate ObamaCare and come up with

a solution that's not going to put this country in red ink ad infinitum. And I would say, These new programs you're talking about are the programs that we've tried for years and years that have been nothing but a drain on taxpayers' dollars but haven't improved anything.

Let me give you one example. I hate to digress from this energy issue, but I think it's important that we talk about this. If you look at the grade levels in our schools and high schools and our colleges across this country, you will find that the last 20 years, the grade levels have not gotten better. The quality of education has not gotten better.

□ 1700

If you look at the chart and see how much we're spending through the Department of Education at the Federal level, you'll find that we're spending billions and billions and billions of dollars, and they're not accomplishing a thing except for paying a lot of bureaucrats' salaries and sending money back to some of the unions that feel like they need that money to take care of their union members, and those union members continue to support people who want to keep that gravy train going.

So there are things we can do. We could say let's leave education where it belongs, at the State and local levels, which is where it has always been, instead of spending all this money at the local level. Do away with the Department of Education. We could do that and save hundreds of billions of dollars, and that money could be passed on to debt reduction and to lower our dependence on the future generations of this country.

I'd like to just end tonight, Mr. Speaker, by saying that, if you look at these charts, you'll see, first of all, we have—it's unbelievable—trillions and trillions of cubic feet of natural gas in the United States. All these pink spaces here show where shale gas is in the lower 48 States, and it doesn't even include Alaska. Those trillions of cubic feet of natural gas could be brought out of the ground and used to take care of our energy needs to a very large degree.

As a matter of fact—and let's put that chart up here—as to the coal shale that we have, they estimate that the amount of coal shale we have in this country would create 1.8 to 8 trillion barrels of oil—1.8 to 8 trillion barrels of oil—right here in this country and that it would immediately reduce our dependency on foreign oil. If you think that the Saudis and the others wouldn't lower their prices per barrel very quickly if they thought we were producing that, you're just not paying attention, because if they saw that we were becoming energy independent, they would want to keep their market share, and they would lower their prices as quickly as possible.

Then you talk about coal, itself. We have tremendous resources of coal—

584.5 billion tons. Our reserves in coal at these blue places that you see on the map are 4 trillion tons of coal. Now, they say that that will hurt the environment. Well, we've got to make sure that we protect the environment, and that we've got scrubbers on the generating plants and all kinds of things that do protect the environment, but even if we had an environmental problem, we would still work to clean that up.

Even if we had that, do we still want to be dependent for our existence, for the defense of this Nation, for the economy of this Nation on foreign sources of energy like Saudi Arabia and Venezuela and others that don't like us and would love to see us go down? Go under?

We need to use our resources, and the President is succumbing to pressure from radical environmentalists and others to not drill for these resources—natural gas, coal shale—that can be converted into oil, oil that we have onshore and offshore, and coal, itself.

It is time that we realize that we can be energy independent. The future of America can be great. We can see this city, as Ronald Reagan said, in 20, 30, 40, 50 years as a shining city on a hill if we move toward energy independence. That one thing alone would help solve our economic problems. It's a defense issue as well as a national economic issue.

So, like I said, if I were talking to the President tonight—and I presume, from time to time, the White House does watch what we're doing on the floor—I would say: Mr. President, if you love this country—and I believe you do—I would start doing what's necessary to move toward energy independence. You will be revered as a great President if you do that, and you'll probably get reelected. But if we continue with this huge deficit spending that, in large part, is caused by our dependence on foreign energy, then you run the risk of being a one-term President.

So I think the President, being a patriotic citizen as I believe and hope he is, will take to heart what we're talking about in this body and become as close as possible to energy independence within the next 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10 years. If he would do this, his legacy that will be left behind will be something that we'll all be proud of.

If we don't do that, and if I were talking to the President, I would say: Your legacy will not be very bright, Mr. President. I don't think any President wants to leave behind for history that kind of a legacy.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I will just say that I hope that everybody has paid attention to this tonight, and I will be back on the floor to talk about this in the future.

Mr. Speaker, I am told we have another colleague who wants to come over, so I'm not going to do my imitation of Al Jolson or tap dance, but I guess I could talk about the deficit a little longer.

All right. Well, let's give you some facts and figures while my colleague is on his way over here. I was going to save this for my next Special Order, but we'll cover it right now.

The total demand for coal reached 1.12 billion tons in 2008. Over half of our electricity is generated from coal, so you can imagine, if we don't do what's necessary to get coal out of the ground, we're going to become more dependent on foreign sources of energy.

Nine out of every 10 tons of coal mined every year in the U.S. is used for domestic electricity. So, when they tell you we can't use coal anymore because of environmental concerns, well, what are we going to do?—because 9 out of every 10 tons of coal is used for electric generation.

Each person in this country and everybody who is paying attention uses 3.7 tons of coal a year. So what are we going to do without it if we don't have it? Coal is the most affordable source of power fuel per million Btus historically, averaging less than a quarter of the price of gas and oil. There are approximately 600 coal-generating facilities generating 1.4 generating units in manufacturing utilities across this country, according to the U.S. Energy Information. Coal accounts for 32 percent of U.S. total energy and 23 percent of total energy consumption.

Now, that's all I want to talk about as to coal, but it's important that we realize that we are dependent on that source of energy and that we need to continue to use it until we come up with an alternative that's going to work and will be with us. Solar and wind and the other sources will replace that over time, but we are still going to need oil, coal, and gas for at least 10 or 15 or 20 years at the levels or at more than the levels that we're using today.

May I inquire of the time remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MEEHAN). The gentleman has 32 minutes remaining.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. I can talk about anything, I guess, but I don't want to bore my colleagues back in their offices or bore anybody else who's paying attention to this other than to say these charts that we have here are things that everybody ought to be familiar with, and I will be happy to make these available to my colleagues.

It shows that we have plenty of oil, coal, natural gas, and coal shale to take care of our energy needs within the next decade if we'd just get on with it.

I am told everybody has gone home. Everybody is going back to their districts. It's kind of interesting that these issues that we're talking about here tonight are so important, and yet people are going back to their districts to talk to their constituents. I wish I had been able to talk to them before they left and give them copies of all these illustrations so that they could go to their town meetings and show the people of this country that we do have

the energy we need to be independent. I will try to do that next week, the next time we have a recess and they go back to their districts for their town meetings.

□ 1710

For those who are wondering why I'm standing down here, the rules of the House are that when we adjourn at night we have what's called Special Orders, and when we have Special Orders, each side gets 1 hour, and I'm taking the leadership hour on the Republican side. Each side gets 1 hour to discuss issues of relevance to the American people and to their colleagues. And then after that, each side gets a half an hour, and we go back and forth like that until we've used up 4 hours of time.

So my colleague, Mr. GOHMERT, who is on his way over here right now, is going to use, I presume, part of our first half-hour when he gets here, and I imagine LOUIE is going to be talking about constitutional law because he was a judge, and he will also be talking about the national debt and the legacy we're leaving behind for our kids. And so when LOUIE gets here, after I hit him in the nose for not being here on time, I will turn it over to him and let him talk about these issues.

What are you laughing at? We have the staff up here, and I think they're getting a little giggly since we're here not talking about anything of relevance. Where is LOUIE? Coming from the Moon? I mean, we've got the press up there that's being entertained. Oh, it's St. Patrick's Day. You don't think he's been having a little green libation, do you?

I guess I should digress and talk about some of the other issues facing this country. There are so many. But I don't want to get started on that and then have LOUIE come in and have to stop my discussion right in the middle of our talk. You need to write about this in the papers, folks.

Well, there's a new movie out. You know, last night they had an Irish American function here in the Capitol, and they had some of those Irish dancers that were extraordinary. And I was watching television this morning, and they had Michael Flatley on, who's got a new movie that's coming out today about the Irish dancers, and I would urge all of my friends and neighbors to go see that movie if they like Irish dancing.

Folks, I want you to know that Judge LOUIE GOHMERT, with his green tie, has just arrived, and LOUIE, what are you going to talk about tonight?

Mr. GOHMERT. I appreciate the gentleman yielding. We're going to talk some about the CR. We're going to talk about government spending and what we ought to be doing.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Well, there you have it, folks. I was very psychic. I told you he would be talking about government spending and how we can get control of this budget.

And so with that, Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

CUT FOREIGN AID TO UNFRIENDLY NATIONS

THE SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) is recognized for 30 minutes.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, I am grateful to my dear friend DAN BURTON. He is a patriotic American. He stands for what he believes in. And if we had a lot more DAN BURTONS in Washington, the country would be that much better off. So we're grateful to him and his service.

It is an honor to serve in this body. It's been rather frustrating lately, and one of the things I wanted to mention was that another good friend, former fellow judge as I was, a district judge—I lost credibility as far as some of the district judges believed when I became chief justice of the Court of Appeals—but my friend TED POE from Houston is pushing a bill that I'm sure glad to cosponsor with him. I'm glad he's doing it. It goes a bit hand-in-hand with a bill that I've been pushing ever since I've been here.

But Congressman POE's bill would allow an up-or-down vote on all the different countries that we provide foreign assistance. It's a good idea. I mean, for all of the years that I've been here in each Congress, three times we have filed a U.N. voting accountability bill, and my friend TED POE has been on that bill cosponsoring with us, and I'm glad to support his bill.

My bill simply says any country that votes against us more than half the time gets no foreign assistance the following year. We know there's sometimes when there are emergencies, there are things we need to do, and so there's an exception for that in the event of an international emergency, but otherwise, we're not going to tell foreign countries how they vote in the U.N., but you can tell a lot about who is your friend and who isn't by who stands with you during difficult times and on difficult issues, and you're able to discern who has the same moral beliefs as you do.

For example, there are countries where sharia law is the rule of the land, and life does not have the value that we in America believe that God gave life to have. So it's okay. In fact, you can find your way to paradise, some believe, and not all Muslims believe this, but there are those who believe that you can find your way to paradise and differing number of virgins waiting for you if you die while you're killing infidels, people that don't believe in the same things you do. Well, that's fine, but if you believe in torturing, killing, taking a life, taking innocent lives for nothing, or just because of someone's religious beliefs, then we should not be financing that.

It's deeply troubling to see that in Egypt, one account said that Presi-

dent—or king, whatever you want to call him—Mubarak had \$70 billion in the bank. Another account said he had \$7 billion in the account. Either way, can't help but wonder if that couldn't be a whole lot of U.S. taxpayer dollars back when we weren't having to borrow to give away money like we are now. We were giving \$2 billion or so a year, and it wouldn't be surprising if most of that money were United States dollars that had been given to Egypt.

□ 1720

On the other hand, we know that there are despots, there are dictators, there are corrupt leaders of countries around the world who believe that it's fine to even force women to have abortions. As my friend and I both believe, abortion is wrong. It is wrong. It is taking innocent life. Yet, we are just handing money out around the world hand over fist, and people taking innocent lives, the unborn of others.

We know that there was about to be a hanging of a man who converted from Islam to Christianity over in Afghanistan, and we're still just pouring money into Karzai's regime. There are issues about him and his brother, whether or not there is corruption there, and we're just pouring money in there that we don't have. And we're having to pay, 40, 42 cents in interest of every \$1 on loans because we don't have the money to do that.

In any event, my friend CHRIS SMITH is here, and I would be happy to yield to him.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. I thank my very good friend and colleague for yielding.

I do raise my voice today, and I join my friend from Texas and others in a bit of a celebration—although it needs to be a cautious celebration because the tyranny on the island of Cuba continues unabated for so many others. But Nobel Peace Prize nominee Dr. Oscar Biscet of Cuba, one of the bravest and brightest human rights defenders on Earth, was released on March 12 from a wretched Cuban prison where he had endured 8 years of torture with periods of solitary confinement for his exemplary human rights work. It was Dr. Biscet's second long-term, totally unjustified incarceration by Cuba, by Castro, totaling almost 12 years in prison. According to his wife, Elsa Morejón, he was arrested at least 27 periods and jailed for short periods of time between 1998 and 1999 alone, yet he persisted and has an indomitable will that continues to this day. Dr. Biscet's release and that of other prisoners of conscience was negotiated and announced by Cardinal Jaime Ortega, archbishop of Havana.

Yesterday, I had the high honor and the privilege to speak by phone with Dr. Biscet who is still in Cuba. And I conveyed my and, I would say, our collective respect, admiration, and abiding concern for his welfare and well-being as well as that of his wife. He said during the conversation that she