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House of Representatives

The House met at 10:30 a.m.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Mr. Monahan, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed without amendment a concurrent resolution of the House of the following title:

H. Con. Res. 84. Concurrent Resolution providing for the acceptance of a statue of President Dwight D. Eisenhower, presented by the people of Kansas, for placement in the Capitol, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the Senate has passed a bill of the following title in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 318. An act to provide emergency assistance to nonfarm-related small business concerns that have suffered substantial economic harm from drought.

MORNING HOUR DEBATES

The SPEAKER. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 7, 2003, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to not to exceed 30 minutes, and each Member except the majority leader, the minority leader or the minority whip limited to not to exceed 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY).

KEEP SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS NARROWLY FOCUSED

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, the President of the United States has no greater responsibility than to protect and defend the American people. While defending our freedoms half a world away, this administration is just as focused on the security needs right here in our homeland. These dual priorities are expressed in the President's supplemental budget request.

This war budget will meet America's needs directly arising from Operation Iraqi Freedom and our ongoing war against terror, including $63 billion for military operations, $5 billion in assistance to help our brave coalition partners and $4 billion for the Departments of Justice and Homeland Security to address the immediate and emerging threats to American soil.

Predictably, detractors are surfacing to criticize the President's request. It should come as no surprise that many of the people criticizing this war budget are the same ones who have criticized all along the bold policies it would pay for.

The war in Iraq and the war on terror are vital to the national security of the United States. The Secretaries of Defense, State and Homeland Security and the Attorney General have assessed their needs and asked the President for the funds necessary to meet those needs. This supplemental then reflects the informed opinions of the experts on President Bush's national security and homeland security teams. Yet the pseudo-experts say it is not enough.

The ballooning of spending bills seems to be an annual ritual here in Washington, D.C., but before we are tempted to spend money for projects unrelated to our pressing security needs, we should all remember what it is we are doing here. This is not a normal appropriations bill. Its purpose is to fight and win the war in Iraq, to liberate an oppressed people from a brutal dictator. Its purpose is to fight and win the war on terror and defend our Nation from those who would revisit on us the horrors of 9/11.

Let us keep in mind the seriousness of the times and the cool deliberation required of our homeland security experts to determine our needs. We must give our national and homeland security agencies the money that they need to protect us, and we must make sure every dime we spend in the supplemental goes to that purpose, and that purpose alone.

VETERANS' NEEDS GOING UNMET

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SHUSTER). Pursuant to the order of the House of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, the good news is that we can afford to meet the funding needs of the Veterans Administration. We have the money. But the Republicans, in spite of the comments from my colleague from Texas, have other priorities. They are going to award the wealthiest 1 percent of Americans a tax cut. The top 1 percent of Americans are people who make an average of $968,000 a year. Half the tax cut goes to that 1 percent.

The total cost of that tax cut for the top 1 percent, those making on the average $968,000 a year, the total cost of that tax cut is larger than the entire budget of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Most veterans are not millionaires, but their contributions to this country are immeasurable. If they do not qualify for the President's tax cut, then they must sacrifice. That is the way that people around here are thinking.

We cannot begin to place a value on the sacrifices they have made. But apparently President Bush and House Republicans are putting a value than their contribution, and, under the budget my friend from Texas just mentioned, they think that veterans can stand to lose $28 billion in services. Republicans believe it is more important to focus on millionaires who qualify for tax cuts than on the men and women who served this country and qualified for veterans benefits.

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