

that our men and women in uniform have helped to deliver there on the ground, her Iraqi sisters are now elected officials. Imagine that. A woman in Iraq, many women in Iraq who are holding elected office. It is change. It is a step forward.

□ 2000

While we were in Israel, we talked peace, not just a distant hope for peace generations from now, but of a long-term agreement and soon. This is because of our steady and dedicated commitment to involvement in the Middle East.

In Iraq, we reviewed the Iraqi military training with General Petraeus, who had been the commanding general at Fort Campbell. This American-Iraqi military training is going to help give that nation the protection, the ability to protect from the insurgents who are there every day, growing weaker; but they are there. It will help the Iraqis take responsibility for their security. We have got about 150,000 Iraqis that are trained; and some of our big Tennesseans, the 278th regiment from east Tennessee, they are working hard, and they are helping train many of the Iraqis.

In Jordan, we visited with the Iraqi police training facility. We have got about 50,000 Iraqis who are now trained, carrying on the work of the police force in Iraq.

When you are there in Iraq on the ground, you cannot help but notice the green fields and the sense that order is taking place to their daily lives, not only in government but also in business.

The progress made in Iraq is sending shockwaves throughout the Middle East. We have seen the Lebanese people resist the Syrian domination of their government. In Saudi Arabia and Egypt, there is movement. It is slow, but there is movement towards democracy.

None of this would have been possible without our military men and women, and it is that change that is going to destroy terrorism.

Mr. Speaker, I just stand today to commend the men and women in uniform, to say a special thanks to our Tennesseans who are serving, and I know that America joins me in thanking them and their families for their sacrifice, their bravery, and their dedication.

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

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

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. COOPER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to speak out of order for 5 minutes.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Tennessee?

There was no objection.

FEDERAL BUDGET DEFICIT

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

Mr. COOPER. Mr. Speaker, the Federal budget deficit is one of the gravest problems that our Nation faces. It is one of the largest it has ever been. It is \$412 billion this past year. It is likely to continue at that size for the foreseeable future.

\$412 billion is a whole lot of money, but the truth is that the real budget deficit is even higher than that because, due to the Social Security surplus of about \$155 billion this last year, that is used by the administration to disguise the true size of the deficit. So that means the true deficit is not \$412 billion, even though that is a near record setter. The true deficit this last year was \$567 billion.

We have a real problem in America because each annual deficit turns into debt, debt that we have to pay interest on. We have no choice about that because America has never defaulted and will never default on its obligations.

Those interest costs add up. It took the first 204 years of our Nation's history to get us the first \$1 trillion in debt, 204 years to do that; and now we add another \$1 trillion every 2 or 3 years.

Mr. Speaker, we do that because our Nation is simply not paying its bills today. It is too easy to spend money that we do not have, too easy to spend money that we are borrowing increasingly from dangerous countries like China. We are borrowing \$1.3 billion a minute, over \$1 billion a day; and, Mr. Speaker, that adds up to a terrible debt burden for our children and grandchildren.

We have got to do something about that. It is sad but true that it is unlikely that the Congress this year will even have a budget. We passed one in the House of Representatives and the Senate passed one, but the two are so different they are probably irreconcilable.

Guess what, Mr. Speaker, last year we did not have a budget either. So how is our Nation, the greatest nation in the history of the world, going to proceed without a budget, meanwhile running some of the largest deficits in American history, adding, as I said earlier, \$1 trillion to our children's and grandchildren's debt every year or two now?

Well, most Americans are not informed about this, and that is an outrage because what the leadership of this House has done is they eliminated any votes on raising the debt ceiling. That used to be a way that the American public could tell when the debt was being increased dramatically,

when we bumped up against that debt ceiling. Now there are few, if any, recorded votes on that. No news to report. It just happens automatically.

Mr. Speaker, everybody talks about spending cuts as a way to get out of the deficit hole. That is a great idea; but, Mr. Speaker, it is unlikely that a body of 435 in this House and 100 in the Senate is going to come up with spending cuts. We need Presidential leadership, and that has been conspicuously lacking for the last 4 or 5 years.

Mr. Speaker, President Bush is the first President in the United States since James Garfield never to have vetoed a bill. Not one single piece of legislation has President Bush vetoed, the first President since Garfield, who served back in 1881; and poor Garfield was only in office for 6 months before he died. We are now in the 5th year of the Bush Presidency, and he has yet to veto a bill.

To give President Bush credit, he says he really needs the line item veto, the special narrower form of veto that would enable him to cut individual programs out of larger bills. That would be a wonderful thing for the President to have, but the Supreme Court has ruled it is unconstitutional. It would take at least 2 or 3 years to pass a constitutional amendment. Meanwhile, we would have another President.

But what the President has not acknowledged is he has got rescission power which is just about as good as the line item veto power; and guess what, just like the real veto, he has never used the rescission power either.

President Clinton used rescission power 163 times, and he won 111 of those cuts; but President Bush, in his 5 years as President, has never asked for a rescission power. Period.

Well, that is an outrage. So not only are we not seeing Presidential leadership on the veto, we are not seeing Presidential leadership regarding rescission power either.

I think the American people need to ask. We want Presidential leadership and he has provided excellent leadership in a number of areas, but regarding our Federal budget deficit, there has been almost no leadership.

We need to start a clock saying when is the President going to finally veto a bill and try to discipline a Congress that likes to spend money too much? When is the President going to rescind spending and start disciplining Congress? The American people deserve to know the answer.

STANDING BEHIND OUR MEN AND WOMEN IN HARM'S WAY

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

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, tonight I would like to read just a few paragraphs from an article written by Mona Charen, who is a well-known journalist here in Washington,