

interest in even a 45-day security review with a country that had been implicated in some way, in the 9/11 attacks, that is the kind of thing I heard about when I went home.

I heard about how they are really deeply concerned about the lack of port security. I mean, we have invested now, we have third-party validators that we talk about here on this floor.

Mr. MEEK, when I went down to the port of Miami after the revelation came about the DPW port deal, the port personnel there, in our home port, talked to me about the \$18 billion that has been spent since 9/11 improving airport security, which is a good thing, and they are happy about that, and the less than \$700 million that has been spent to improve our port security, the less than 6 percent of U.S. cargo that comes through our ports that is physically inspected, 95 percent not inspected.

The general lack of confidence in our homeland security, in our government's ability to do the right thing on all fronts, is really, I think, at least from when I went home, something that is really disturbing them.

Ms. BEAN. Across the country, not just in Florida, but I think homeland security is a big issue across the board. I hear it in my town hall meetings and in the forums I had in my district as well.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Well, the way I look at this whole homeland security issue, and I am concerned, and I was over in the Senate, had an opportunity to sit down with some reporters, with Democratic Whip Steny Hoyer and also Senator SCHUMER from New York and some others, and I think it is important that we look at this for what it is.

The line is 95 percent of the containers that come into our ports are not checked. That is the real issue here. We can't really jump up and down about the 5, some say 6. I think it is important for us to remember, Madam Speaker, that this bipartisan effort that we should have as it relates to homeland security, I speak from the standpoint of being a member of the Homeland Security Committee, having the opportunity to serve on the oversight subcommittee and management and integration.

I can tell you right now, for us to go to 100 percent check is not a hard thing for us to do. But we have to set our priorities on what we want to do and how we want to do it, and when we want to do it.

I think the American people want to be protected, and I think it is important that we provide them that opportunity. As you know, we cry out for bipartisan support in this. I will tell you, Democrat, Republican, Independent, Green Party, you name it, any individual that is thinking about voting, I can tell you this right now. They believe in the security of our country. They don't care who brings about this security, who appropriates this money, they just want the job done.

We don't need a situation where a container is being shipped from the port of Mobile, Alabama, or through Illinois, what have you, and end up, God forbid, some sort of chemical agent is in this container because it was not checked.

Too many people in the world know that we don't check 95 percent of our containers, and that is dangerous on both sides of the ball. I think we are far beyond politics when we start talking about making sure that we increase our containers, container security and screening our containers. There are other countries that have 100 percent check.

I think that if other countries can do it, I know that the United States of America can do it. But it is all about our priorities. It is about how we set them, and it is about how we work together.

Unfortunately, we have some difficulty in that area right now, but hopefully we will be able to improve on that through pressure from the American people.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. MEEK, the thing that keeps coming to mind when I think about the comparison between the stress that has been put on airport security versus port security, if you ask, if you go out into the country and ask most Americans the difference that they have seen since 9/11 and in security in general, basically about the only thing that Americans could say that they could identify is they have to remove their shoes before they walk through a magnetometer at the airport.

I think most people really feel today that we should not be resting the sum total of our national security on taking your shoes off as you go through a metal detector. American people expect quite a bit more than that when it comes to homeland security, especially if you live near a port, like my district includes two, Port Everglades and the Port of Miami.

We have so many, so many potential openings around this country, and vulnerabilities. To focus all of our attention on only the ones that are most visible that provide the leadership here, the ability to say, see, we did that, we have taken care of that, and just provide surface reassurance about homeland security, that is the difference between words and action.

It is the difference between nice commentary in speeches and actually backing up those words with action.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. If the gentleman would yield, I think the great example that we have used here a million times is Katrina.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Exactly.

Mr. RYAN of OHIO. You guys are from Florida. We are from the Midwest, so we don't have hurricanes.

Ms. BEAN. Absolutely.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. We have a ton of snow, but no hurricanes. The fact that this government had days to prepare

for Katrina and couldn't figure out how to do it. Now, we are talking about something that may happen that we will not have 5 days' notice to plan for it. It is difficult for us to understand, but this needs to be addressed, and it needs to be addressed immediately.

Because the fact of the matter is, the American people were counting on us. Our first obligation here is to make sure that we are protecting the American people and to have 95 percent of the cargo not inspected, I think, is a dereliction of duty on our part. I will be happy to yield to our friend.

Ms. BEAN. I think I am going to yield back the balance of my time, if that is okay. But I want to thank you, my colleagues, for letting me join you during this 30-something hour, my first time joining you even though you let an older Member join you.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Well, you have two beautiful young daughters waiting in the cloakroom for you.

Ms. BEAN. That is exactly right. That is why I am yielding back my time. I appreciate you letting me join you today, in the interest of not only my kids, but the seventh graders we talked about today. It has been very important.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. It was wonderful to have you join us. I will see you at home.

30-SOMETHING WORKING GROUP

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. FOXX). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MEEK) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Madam Speaker, this is 30-something Part 2 here. I am glad Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ and Ms. BEAN had the opportunity to claim the first hour. I see Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ is proudly wearing her Florida pin, her Gators pin.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Go Gators.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. They are in the money, and I believe Florida will be able to do some great things.

Let me just say, Madam Speaker, as you know, we come to the floor to talk about a number of things, talk about what we as Democratic Members here in the House have to offer the American people. We want to make sure that there is no secret about our plans, about our initiatives, and what we are trying to do to be able to make sure that this country gets back on fiscal discipline, track, be more physically, fiscally sound, I am sorry, I am trying to get it out, it is a little late, but also just to make sure we are accountable to the American people, not just accountable to the Democratic citizens of the United States of America, but to make sure that we are accountable to all Americans.

I think that is the approach that we are taking, through the polling that I am seeing and reading, not only in periodicals, but also that I am getting

individuals that are e-mailing what people are saying and how they feel. Madam Speaker, to my e-mail, a number of them, I am very pleased about how the Democratic Members of the House and Senate have stood up to this administration.

As you know, Mr. RYAN, there are a number of issues that have been unearthed through what we do here on this floor, by sharing with the American people, Madam Speaker, with third-party validators and making sure that we share our plans with the American people and make sure that they are not what we say in some parts of the country, hoodwinked, bamboozled, or what we say here in Washington DC to be a recipient of the Potomac two-step.

I believe now more than ever, Mr. RYAN, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, and Mr. DELAHUNT that the American people should and deserve to be leveled with. I think that is what we are looking for. They are not looking for who is the greatest party on the face of the Earth, and who has the best mascot or who wears the best tie or the best dress or the best suit or whatever the case may be. They are looking for individuals that are willing to govern above the table and not under the table.

I know, with great confidence, that we are there 110 percent. On terrorism, we are there 110 percent. We are on the side of making sure that we track down the individuals who are responsible for 9/11. Not only track them down, but kill them if necessary. I think it is important that we lay that on the table right here, right now.

The bottom line is the fact that we on this side of the aisle have fought on behalf of increasing container security at the ports. We just had an example last week, Mr. RYAN. Mr. SABO had an amendment here on the floor. Another example that we are going to talk about a little later on is we tried to increase security at the ports on the heels of the whole lack of security at ports, Mr. DELAHUNT, and still the American majority voted it down.

I am excited about the fact that we are back. I am excited about the fact that we are going to talk about some of these issues tonight.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. One of the issues, too, is we are talking about this. We now have evidence where a recent report coming into our hands, through the United States Senate, that investigators smuggled in enough radio active material to build two dirty bombs into the United States, which calls into question this administration's efforts to secure our borders.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. RYAN, if you would just yield for a moment.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I would be happy to yield.

Mr. DELAHUNT. I think it is important to recollect for a moment our friends from the other side of the aisle, part of the Republican majority of this House, tonight were on the floor and they were talking about how for this

Congress, this Bush Republican Congress, national security and homeland defense were a priority.

It would appear that simply by repetition, by saying it somehow it translates into meaningful national security in real homeland defense. Yet we find again and again and again that this country, as a result of the actions by this White House and this Bush Republican Congress, have failed to provide homeland defense that is meaningful for this country.

That report, by the way, it should be noted, was conducted by the Government Accountability Office. That is an independent arm of this Congress. This is not Democrats picking on Republicans.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. This isn't, Mr. DELAHUNT, and Mr. MEEK, saying we are going to run a sting operation to check the ports and see how the borders are. This is the Government Accountability Office. This is their report, and they were able to sneak in, through the northern border and the southern border, enough radioactive material to build two dirty bombs in the United States of America.

We are not here because we want to pick on anybody.

Mr. DELAHUNT. If my friend would yield for a moment.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I would be happy to yield.

Mr. DELAHUNT. I want to commend a Senator, a Republican, that requested this particular GAO investigation and inquiry and commissioned that it be undertaken by this independent arm of the U.S. Congress. This is what that Republican Senator from Minnesota has to say about the findings and the conclusion of that report.

□ 2300

The Senator said, A report that investigators smuggled enough radioactive material to build two dirty bombs into the United States called into question the Bush administration's efforts to secure the borders.

Senator Norm Coleman, a Republican, a Minnesota Republican, who heads the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations which held a hearing said he was alarmed at the ease with which investigators brought the unspecified radiological material and transported it across the northern and southern U.S. borders.

Now, when I hear that this Bush Congress and this Bush White House have done something about homeland defense and national security, Madam Speaker, who is kidding who? Who is kidding who? Can't we have some honesty?

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. You know what strikes me when you say that is that we talk about the culture of corruption and cronyism and incompetence that has existed for quite some time now and it is only getting worse with every passing day, it is interesting that the administration appears to think that just by changing out a

staffer, by swapping one person, a chief of staff, for another, that that is somehow going to magically transform this administration into a competent one.

It is amazing to me that they could get materials into this country if they have been supposedly stepping up their commitment and our ability to keep our Nation secure in the last 5 years. How is that possible if they are running a tight ship like they say they are?

Mr. DELAHUNT. If I can, there is a second report in addition to the one that we were just discussing. This second report, again, commissioned by the Republican chairman of the Senate Subcommittee on Investigations, its conclusions were this: The Homeland Security Department has placed 670 monitors at ports around the country. At the current pace the department will fail, let me repeat that, fail to meet its goal for installing 3,034 devices by September 2009. To reach the goal the department would need to install 52 monitors a month for the next four years, though its current installation rate is 22 a month, the report said.

Now, this is to determine whether radioactive material that could be used in a dirty bomb is being detected. Now, by the way, if you happen to live in Miami or if you are from Georgia, you should know that the ports of Miami and Savannah, Georgia are among those without the devices that they need. So if you should be living in those particular States, be aware that you are vulnerable to have from the sea, through the ports, material that could be used in a dirty bomb come into your neighborhoods.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I want to comment. This is the same article, from the GAO report, again, a third party validator, not from the 30-Something Group.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. RYAN, that is a Blumberg news agency.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. This is a Blumberg news article. Thank you.

This quote is from a retired Coast Guard Commander who is now a Senior Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, Steven Flynn. "Both the opportunity for terrorists to target legitimate global supply chains remain plentiful and the motivation for doing so is only growing."

We are living on borrowed time. And all we are saying here is that the strategy from this administration is wrong. You cannot convince me, Madam Speaker, that we could not marshal the resources of the United States of America and focus this country's energy on the equipment, the technology, the research that needs to be done to develop the newest technologies, and put them where they need to be, you cannot convince me that we could not do that, Mr. MEEK. You cannot convince me that the United States could not do that.

What we are saying here, and we are not here to pick on anybody, we do not want to hurt anybody's feelings but it

seems that the end result can be tragic. And you know what, there may be a situation where we do all we can and it may not be enough. But to sit here and see this haphazard garbage, lack of focus, this administration has the worst case of political A.D.D. we have seen in a long time and it is hurting the country.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Just put the facts out on the table. I just find it so amusing when I hear that national security and homeland defense is something that this side of the aisle, the Republican side of this aisle, the majority that runs this House in conjunction with the administration that is headed by a Republican President and a Senate that has a majority of Republicans are suggesting that national security and homeland defense are a priority, and yet study after study, committee after committee reports that we are ill prepared.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. DELAHUNT, Mr. RYAN, you talk about A.D.D. and lack of focus in terms of making sure we can keep this Nation safe. Lest people think that the DPW port deal was an isolated incident where we think that that was an anomaly and we are not continuing down that path of engaging foreign governments and the corporations they own to help us with our national security or to be involved in our national security, right after the withdrawal of DPW we learn, and through a third party validator again, the Associated Press, that the administration acknowledged that they issued a no-bid contract to Hutchinson Whampoa Limited which represents the first time a foreign company will be involved in running a sophisticated radiation detector at an overseas port without American customs agents present.

I mean, what is going on?

We are from Florida. The Bahamas is 30 minutes by plane. It is really unbelievable that there is an astonishing lack of concern about the gaping holes in our national security that this administration appears to have no qualms about leaving unprotected.

Mr. DELAHUNT. I think it was you, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, that alluded earlier to the experience of Katrina and other national disasters. I mean, there was a report issued again by a subcommittee of this House that concluded that the response to Katrina was a failure of leadership. I mean, that cannot be said any more succinctly or simply.

A member of the committee, again, a Republican, let me repeat that, not a Democrat but a Republican, our colleague, CHRIS SHAYS from Connecticut, said this: The report is very tough on the President. It is very tough on the Department of Homeland Security. It is a blistering report but I think it is fair.

The panel found that Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff was detached, and that the then-FEMA Director Michael Brown was clueless,

Shays said. In one of the excerpts Chertoff was chided for executing critical responsibilities late, ineffectively or not at all, according to the report and to Mr. SHAYS.

□ 2310

Yet, when I turn on any of the stations and the issue is homeland security, the spokesman for the Homeland Security Department is often Secretary Chertoff. So let us just continue along that road, and you know what is going to happen? We are going to continue to find a failure of leadership in every instance that this administration is implicated in.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Madam Speaker, last week, we had an opportunity, Mr. SABO from Minneapolis-St. Paul offered an amendment in this House to add over \$1 billion to port security, homeland security, in the supplemental, and it got shot down on pretty much a party-line vote.

Time and time again, the Democratic Party has offered amendments in committee to increase funding for homeland security, and the majority side, time and time again, shoots down those amendments to add additional funding. But if it comes to giving tax cuts to the wealthiest people in the country, they are all standing, saying we have got to go for it, but if we need an extra \$1 billion for homeland security, everyone heads for the hills, and they hide under the seats.

Here's a list, June 17, 2003, Mr. OBEY from Wisconsin, increase port and maritime security by \$500 million. Republicans defeated the amendment on a party-line vote.

June 24, 2003, another amendment by Mr. OBEY, increase port and maritime security again by \$500 million. We are not even addressing the problem. I mean, \$7 billion more we need, \$6- or \$7 billion more just to address what the Coast Guard is telling us we need. Mr. OBEY is only asking for \$500 million, Madam Speaker. Republicans block consideration of that amendment by a vote of 222-200. That is Rollcall vote 305, Madam Speaker, and this other one was in the House Report 108-169, page 97, for the Members, Madam Speaker, who would like to look it up.

We are not making this up. You people want to know what the Democrats want to do? We want to increase funding for port security, and the Republican majority will not let us.

September 17, 2003, Mr. OBEY, Mr. SABO and Senator BYRD tried again to increase funding to enhance port and maritime security, \$475 million. Guess what happened, Madam Speaker. Republicans defeated this amendment on a party-line vote. You want to know what the Democrats want to do, Madam Speaker? We want to increase funding for port security by half a billion dollars.

June 9, 2004, another amendment by Mr. OBEY of Wisconsin in the Appropriations Committee to increase port and container security by \$400 million.

We are not asking for an arm and a leg here. We are still \$6.5 billion away from where we need to be, but we are just trying to chip away. Throw us a bone. Help us out. We just want to get moving in the right direction here. What happened again? Republicans defeated the amendment on a party-line vote, House Report 108-541, page 128. Go look it up.

I am quite frankly tired of hearing that the Democrats do not have an agenda because every single day in committee, no matter what committee it is, Appropriations Committee, Armed Services Committee, Education Committee, Homeland Security Committee, we are trying to get things done, and the Republicans block us every single time. This is what the Democrats want to do and we are getting blocked.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Madam Speaker, it comes down to who is telling the truth and who is not. I mean, just because I may put something behind me and say that I stand for homeland security, do I really stand for homeland security? We are in the minority. When you are in the minority, Madam Speaker, I think it is important for us to explain to Members and staff, in case someone did not get the memo, that when you are in the majority you set the agenda that comes to the floor. You raise your hand thumbs up or thumbs down for your caucus to vote in the way that you want them to vote, when I talk about the Republican majority.

I think it is important for us to understand that the White House has said, oh, we have a strategy for Iraq, and then we find out that they all along never had a strategy.

Oh, we do not know anything about outing CIA agents. Some folks forgot about that. We do not even know the lady's name. Later, we find out through an independent investigative counsel that they knew everything about it.

What are you talking about a port deal? We do not have any knowledge of this. What is going on on this, someone told me in the hall. I mean, they knew exactly what was going on and the reason why it is happening and the reason why folks are getting away with it.

Like Secretary Rumsfeld, I am on the Armed Services Committee. It is an outright joke, to come before an Armed Services Committee to tell us whatever they want to tell us, and so shall it be written, so shall it be done; why are you asking questions. Matter of fact, I am bothered to come to Capitol Hill and have to respond to the Armed Services that constitutionally you have oversight over the Department of Defense.

We have individuals that are in shirt and tie, have the look of frustration. I mean, you are going to ask us? Yeah, we have a war, and now, the President has just said, well, you know, as it relates to troop withdrawal, I guess that is up to another President.

Mr. RYAN was talking about it earlier. He represents Youngstown. Someone says, Congressman, are we ever going to have a strategy as it relates to education?

Mr. DELAHUNT. Madam Speaker, we never had a plan when we went in there, let alone a strategy to leave.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Let me say. Mr. RYAN and I were talking a little earlier, and it is like Mr. RYAN telling his constituents, well, I know we have to have an education strategy, but that is not my job; that is up to the next Congressman that represents Youngstown.

Madam Speaker, the reason why the President is saying whatever he wants to say, when he wants to say it, is because this Republican Congress has allowed him to say it and get away with it. Our job is not the day-to-day operation of the war in Iraq. It is our job to bring in this presidency, making sure that we are accountable to those troops that are on the ground and our mission.

The bottom line is, what is our mission? I mean, these are the individuals that gave this Congress bad information, and then the minute that they gave the Congress bad information got away with it.

There were weapons of mass destruction. Then apologize, well, we got bad information on weapons of mass destruction. I am sorry, you know, hey, it happens, but individuals have died. Now, we have Iraqi troops that are now being downgraded; they cannot even fight without U.S. troops backing them up.

Then the Secretary says, well, you know, there may be a civil war. There is a civil war going on in Iraq. Let us just say it. Let us put it out there.

The coalition, you do not hear anything about the coalition getting bigger and greater. No, it is not getting bigger and greater. Matter of fact, the Brits are leaving this year and a number of other countries have said, hey, you know, I am willing to take the training wheels off the Iraqi Army.

Let me just say this, Madam Speaker, because I think that Mr. RYAN laid it out so that everyone can understand. A new Member of Congress could understand what you just set out.

The bottom line is that trying is not good enough. We need the American people to chime in and make their Member of Congress stand up on behalf of the American people. Mr. RYAN said correctly, and backed it up with the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, the fact that we have a Republican majority that is more loyal to an individual riding around here making \$1 billion or \$1 million a year or record profits, or whatever their industry is, than they are committed to container security. It is not just what KENDRICK MEEK is saying. That is the fact, and Mr. RYAN laid it out, and yes, we do have a level of frustration.

Folks say you seem like you are upset. Well, we should be upset, and I

do not care if it is Democrat, Independent or Republican. Mr. DELAHUNT said it earlier, as far as ports. Containers come into a port. Guess what. There are trucks that they go on the back of and trains that they go on the back of. They go throughout America, and next thing you know, this issue makes it to the heartland or Sioux City, Iowa, or whatever the case. The people may say, well, that is a coastal issue. That is not a coastal issue. It is an American issue.

□ 2320

And they have been allowed to do whatever they want to do, whenever they want to do it because this Congress hasn't reined them in.

I am going to close in 1 second, but I just want to also point out, Madam Speaker, since we are pointing out a few things here, that we have turned on the lights here in the Chamber. This whole Dubai thing and the Republicans marching around, "We stopped that from happening; we blocked that deal." Well, guess what, there were a couple of votes before that where they tried to block it, but procedurally they blocked the Democrats from doing that. It is not who blocked it, it is about how we got there.

How did an under secretary level individual make this kind of decision; the outsourcing of American Security? It happens every day, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. And I can tell you this, "We are standing up to the President." No, you are not standing up to the President. But guess what? When all of America is standing on this side of the line and saying, are you representing us or who are you representing, are we standing up for Dubai?

What did the President say? I got a little confused there, Members. I am sorry. The President said, well, we have got to keep our word. What about keeping our word to the American people on security and health care and all those things he talked about during the campaign? And all the Republican Members won the majority because they said, trust us on security, trust us on fiscal responsibility.

Don't get me started on fiscal responsibility. It is almost like the guy running from the back of the class, who is an F student, who says I want to be the valedictorian of the class because I say that I am. Did not work, did not study, did not do the things that he needed to do to be the top person in the class, but better yet, because they say it, that makes it right.

What does this mean, Mr. DELAHUNT? This means if the American people see fit that the Democrats are in charge of the Congress, that the White House will not be making statements and saying, well, we have said it publicly so that means you can't do anything about it, Republican Congress.

And if folks want to talk about a Democratic plan in Iraq, it is accountability, it is making sure we take these no-bid contracts and put them on top

of the table and really get down to the reason why we are still in Iraq. I am just talking about what I am talking about, Mr. DELAHUNT. I am not saying there are some shady deals, but there are a number of articles that are out that are pointing to this.

Every day this stuff is coming out, Madam Speaker, and I think it is very, very important that we focus in on that.

Mr. DELAHUNT. If I can just make an observation, Madam Speaker, I asked my staff to count the number of hearings that the International Relations Committee has conducted in terms of the United Nations and the need to reform the United Nations, and also hearings that had a focus on the so-called Oil-for-Food program. Throughout Congress there were dozens of those hearings.

Do you know how many hearings we have had in the International Relations Committee on the issue of corruption that we know is going on in Iraq, Madam Speaker? Would you think maybe there have been 20 or 15 or five? No, there are none, despite repeated requests from Members of this House. Not a single hearing into the corruption that many different sources have acknowledged is rampant in Iraq in the past 3½ years. Not a single one. Because this Congress is afraid. This Congress is protecting the administration and is abrogating its responsibility.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Make sure we are clear about which part of the Congress is afraid and where the leadership has been exercised on our side of the aisle in terms of that oversight and where it has been shunned on the Republican side of the aisle, Mr. DELAHUNT.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Not a single hearing. Not a single hearing, Madam Speaker. Not one.

Can anybody, can any Member, Republican or Democratic, please respond and provide an explanation, when there have been reports after reports after reports, indictments, reports from the special Inspector General for Iraq reconstruction. It cries out for investigation. It cries out for oversight, Madam Speaker.

You know, when the CPA, the Coalition Provisional Authority, came in, and in the immediate aftermath of the fall of Saddam Hussein, and began to administer as a viceroy, if you will, for the nation of Iraq, there was \$8.1 billion left over from the United Nations Oil-for-Food program. There was an audit done subsequently. Not a single penny of that \$8 billion plus can be accounted for. That is outrageous.

Why haven't we heard from this Congress the need to conduct oversight hearings? If the American people were aware of the requests that have been made continuously to do the kind of work that we were elected to do and is not being done, there would be outrage, Madam Speaker.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. I just want to piggyback on your observations. I am the least senior of the four of us. I am a freshman, and about 15 months into my first term. We have talked many times on this floor in our 30-something Working Group about the lack of outrage, the astonishing lack of outrage, the deafening silence on the other side of the aisle about all these things we are talking about.

Why no hearings? Where is the accountability? Why aren't they demanding some answers from this administration about the results in Iraq, about how we got into Iraq, about the leadup, about the fact there were no weapons of mass destruction? And how come we haven't had any hearings on the intelligence and whether that was manufactured, or was it shaped around the decision that was already made clearly by this administration? Not one hearing. Not one hearing on almost anything since I have been in the United States Congress.

And what I have noticed, the observation I want to make is that we have had a very slow but now more rapid deterioration of our system of checks and balances. This Congress, the Republican leadership in this Congress could care less about oversight. They would just cede the whole ball of wax to this administration. This administration has run amuck. That is how I really believe the American people feel. This administration has been allowed to go unchecked, unresponsive. No one asks any questions.

You know what was really ironic, what was really interesting, was that it appears as though the outrage has built on the Republican side of the aisle, our good friends on the Republican side of the aisle. I noticed there was a whole lot of outrage that was cropping up all over during the Dubai Worlds Port deal. That sense of outrage on that side appeared to be in direct proportion to the reduction in the President's polling numbers. The lower his numbers got, the more outrage there appeared to be.

I think that it probably would be a little bit more comforting for most Americans if the outrage was more consistent about Katrina and its aftermath, about the war in Iraq, about the deficit, about the debt, about the corruption, about the cronyism, and about the incompetence. This administration has veered so far off to the right. There is a stranglehold that the right has on the Republican leadership in this country. They are so out of the mainstream now.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Not the right, if I can correct my friend and colleague, but the far right.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. The far right.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Not the traditional conservative Republicans that have made an enormous contribution to this country and whom we respect, but the radical neoconservatives.

And it is so interesting now to hear from those that were there right after

the inauguration talking about how at the first national Security Council meeting, Madam Speaker, there was discussion about war and going to Iraq and changing the regime and making it a national priority.

□ 2330

Again, if you want to get into competence, put aside whether you supported going into Iraq. I happen to be opposed because this administration in my view never made a case. But that is irrelevant. Talk about lack of competence.

Let me refer you to a story that appeared in the New York Times about a month ago. It states that the American general in charge of training the new Iraqi military after Baghdad fell says the Bush administration strategy to use those forces to replace departing American troops was hobbled from its belated start by poor prewar planning and insufficient staffing and equipment. The account by Major General Paul Eaton on January 31, after 33 years in the Army, suggests that commanders in Iraq might by now have been much closer to President Bush's goal of withdrawing American forces if they had not lost so much time in the first year to begin building a capable Iraqi force.

I am quoting a decorated American hero: "We set out to man, train and equip an army for a country of 25 million with six men." Referring to General Eaton, he worked into the autumn with a revolving door of individual lone talent that would spend between 2 weeks and 2 months and never receive even half the 250 professional staff members he had been promised. The general's assessment of the problems he confronted was seconded by Walter Slocumb, sent by the Bush administration to Baghdad 6 months to serve as the senior civilian adviser on national security and defense.

Again, Mr. Slocumb, an Under Secretary in this administration said, "I have to agree with General Eaton that it was hard to get the resources we needed out there. There was not a broad enough sense of urgency in Washington."

And today we hear this President, this Secretary of Defense, talking about the need to train Iraqis. Why didn't they listen to their own military commanders, specifically the one that was in charge. He was calling on them to do something and they turned a deaf ear, and we are still in Iraq today because of their incompetence.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Madam Speaker, the real issue is this. We want to talk about listening to the military commanders on the ground. I heard time after time again about oh, yes, whenever our commanders tell us what we need, we will give it to them. Well, if it has anything to do with America, if it had anything to do with Hurricane Katrina, and all of America saw the video that Michael Brown, of all people, said, Mr. President, we think that

the levees will break. We think that we need assistance immediately as it relates to evacuation. We need resources. Silence.

Afterwards we have a partisan committee appointed by the majority, and they have findings with no solutions.

Madam Speaker, I have a solution right here right now. The bottom line, if we were in the majority, and this is not make believe, this is a possibility, I believe those individuals who are not registered to vote are going to register to vote to bring about some sort of change from what is going on right now.

I feel very good Members coming to the floor and sharing with American people, not just Democratic folk because if I wanted to just share with Democratic folk, I would send some sort of blast e-mail out to a Democratic list of individuals, or I would go down to the Democratic National Committee and say I just want to do a Webcast and I just want to talk to Democrats.

No, Madam Speaker, we committed to the American people that we would uphold the Constitution and represent them, if they are Democrat, Independent, nonvoter, Republican, whatever the case may be. They are going to get representation. On this issue of national security and accountability, this administration has moved in an unprecedented way and is making history in the wrong areas, putting us in debt to foreign countries that we have never been in debt to, but putting us in debt to where it is going to be very difficult to get a plan to get out of debt.

We on this side want to pay as we go. Mr. RYAN knows. Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ knows, as does Mr. DELAHUNT. Once upon a time and youthful indiscretions, hey, I was a little loose with the credit cards. I will put my hand up. It happens. But I will tell you this, when those creditors call your house, they disrespect you from hello. They do not say, "May I speak to Mr. MEEK." They say, "May I speak to KENDRICK. Is KENDRICK home?" That is what is going to happen.

I want to talk about the third-party validators. Let me move my Republican rubber stamp; that is for later.

When we talk about this debt, it is wide open. I challenge, I will say it again, I challenge any Member of the majority to come over and take a mike and tell us how this can be positive for our country, for us to be in debt to foreign nations.

I am going to put Canada up here. They are our neighbor. They own \$57.8 billion of our debt.

Taiwan, toys are made there, and some American flags are made there, too. They own \$71.3 billion of our debt.

The U.K. has decided to take the training wheels off the Iraqi government and withdraw a number of their troops because they know it is time for the Iraqis to stand up for themselves. They own \$223.2 billion of our debt, and climbing.

Folks want to get all concerned, I know some folks who fought wars before, Germany owns \$6.57 billion of our debt.

Korea owns, and I know that is something to our veterans, too, \$66.5 billion of our debt, U.S. debt they own.

OPEC nations, and Mr. DELAHUNT, please name a few of the OPEC nations for us.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Well, there is Saudi Arabia. The gentleman remembers Saudi Arabia because 15 of the 19 hijackers were citizens of Saudi Arabia. Those are the 19 hijackers that were responsible for the deaths of in excess of 3,000 Americans. Saudi Arabia is part of OPEC, and how much money do we owe OPEC?

Mr. MEEK of Florida. We owe OPEC \$67.8 billion, but let us not leave Iraq and Iran and other countries that we have concern about where our troops are getting sand in their teeth right now. Let us not leave them out of the OPEC nations and allies and people of interest.

We have China, Red China, Communist China, China where U.S. workers are training their replacements in China to take their jobs, to make them unemployed. They own \$249.8 billion of our debt.

And Japan, the island of Japan, they own \$682.8 billion of our debt.

Now let me just say real quick to the Members, the Republicans have voted to put this on a credit card. They voted to put us into debt with interest. The Republican majority says we want to cut the budget in half by, and I do not know what the new number is, 2010, 2020. We have balanced the budget. The Democrats have balanced the budget. There is no other party in this House that can claim that something has been accomplished.

The bottom line is when these countries call in the tab on the United States of America, what are they going to say? Are they going to say, sir, ma'am? Or are they going to say "pay me." They are going to disrespect not only our seniors and others, but they are going to disrespect future generations.

The bottom line is if the Republicans wanted to govern, they would have done it by now. They set up the atmosphere to allow this administration to be out of control.

□ 2340

What are the Democrats going to do? We are going to bring them back into control. We are going to make sure that we have accountability.

We are going to make sure that folks come to the Hill and talk about why Osama Bin Laden is still running free. And without any great deal of fear of U.S. troops bearing down upon him once upon a time, why is he still out? Why is he still releasing audiotapes and videotapes and recommending books for the American people to read to understand him more.

The bottom line, Madam Speaker, people like Osama Bin Laden long ago

should have been tracked down and killed, period. That is just where it is and that is what we need to move towards.

Mr. RYAN.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I appreciate that. And you know, as we are beginning to wrap up here, I think it is important to make this point, because I am sure you did, and you guys have experienced this too. There is a certain level of frustration that I have because I feel like our generation is getting dealt a pretty bad hand here.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Kicked in the teeth.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. As you just showed, we are mortgaging off our future. This is public debt held by China that has quadrupled. We went over that earlier in the evening. The debt limit has been increased by \$3 trillion just since President Bush has been in, \$450,984,800 and recently almost up to, almost up to \$9 trillion in publicly held debt.

The war, I mean, this administration is strapping our generation with debt, with war, with lack of investment, with increased tuition costs, increased energy costs, millions of our fellow citizens without health care. This administration and the Republican Congress is dealing our generation a pretty bad hand.

And I started telling a lot of these student groups that come in and out of here, we go to schools and talk, hey, it is going to be our generation's responsibility, our life's work in this Congress, or wherever we may end up, to try to fix this mess. And that is exactly what it is.

I yield to my friend.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Thank you. And what just keeps striking me about all of what we are saying is that it feels enveloped by the stranglehold that is around this administration's neck by the far right and that ideology, that the stranglehold of the far right on this administration and this Republican leadership drives their incompetence, drives their decisions on Iraq, drives their decisions on Katrina, or lack thereof, drives their decisions on the deficit, on the debt.

We talk about incompetence. We talk about corruption and cronyism and incompetence, but you cannot detangle, disentangle their incompetence and their ideology because the two are intertwined.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. You are 110 percent right, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ.

We can't say it enough. The bottom line is the message that we are giving out to the American people and to all the Republican majority: As a matter of fact, we don't need permission from the Republican majority to lead; we just need the numbers in this House to lead. And we are leading in many ways.

We call the first play when it comes down to many of the pieces of legislation that move through this House of Representatives and bringing some

level of accountability to it. Sometimes we are successful, Madam Speaker, in getting an amendment or two onto a piece of legislation because it is so abundantly clear the reason why they are useful to a piece of legislation. But why does it have to be abundantly clear? Why can't it just be good governance? Why can't it just be a bipartisan approach?

I will tell you, and I commit, Mr. RYAN, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Mr. DELAHUNT, when we get in the majority which—I believe the American people will start asking questions and will take action against those that are allowing this history in all the wrong ways to take place, and elect Democrats to be able to allow us to come here and run this House in the way that all the American people can be proud and feel accountable, we will not bow down to the strong special interests and say, well, wait, we have to take care of them and then we will take care of you. And when we come down to take care of you, we are going to question you about why you need this assistance. And so I think it is important that we go through that.

As we make closing comments here, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, I don't know if you closed but you can go ahead.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. I will close just by saying this. It would be one thing, and the American people, I know, are understanding this and have an ever-growing understanding with every day that passes and they observe this administration and the Republican leadership here.

It would be one thing if they had the confidence that, you know, they could just sub out the Republican individuals here and sub in another, a different Republican and get a more competent person. Unfortunately, it is not just that the individuals here are incompetent or that this administration is led by incompetence. It is that the ideology and the incompetence are so intertwined that it doesn't matter which Republican you swap in.

We have seen the board lit up here where you have moderate Republicans, arms wrenched behind their back when they are trying to express what is supposedly their conscience, and instead they are forced to vote according to the ideological stranglehold that is around the neck of the Republican leadership and the Republican Party. And so it doesn't matter who you swap in and out. If the ideology doesn't change, which it is clearly not going to, then you will just get more the same. Just like you will have more of the same in swapping the individual, one individual for another in the White House, as the President did today, and what you would see if we didn't make the change that is so necessary with the leadership in this country.

I appreciate the opportunity to join my colleagues here again in the 30-something Working Group.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. DELAHUNT, we are making closing comments, sir.

Mr. DELAHUNT. You know what I also find disturbing and it really provokes a certain, let me use the word "disgust." When the administration is criticized, particularly some individuals, rather than speak of the policy, they speak in a language that refers to "them" or "those" or "some," never identifying "them" or "those" or "some." It is a particular trait of Secretary Rumsfeld. Actually, in today's Washington Times, there is a story about a speech that the Secretary gave to military officers at the Army War College. Let me just quote from the story.

"Defense Secretary Rumsfeld delivered harsh words to war critics yesterday saying, 'Some view al Qaeda operatives as victims.'" That is really unfortunate, because I would call on the Secretary to have the courage to stand up and identify who those "some" are. I dare say there is not a single Member in this House, Madam Speaker, that would view an al Qaeda operative as a victim. That is just simply disingenuous and certainly I would suggest demeans the office of the Secretary of Defense.

Who are "some," Madam Speaker? Not any American that I know, Madam Speaker. None. But if an American wants to criticize this war, this policy, this mismanagement by this Secretary of Defense, not only are they entitled to do it, Madam Speaker, they are obligated if they embrace everything that America stands for.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. As we wrap up, www.housedemocrats.gov/30something.

□ 2350

All of the charts, Madam Speaker, that we used here tonight are on this Web site for the Members to review and check out.

And again, in closing, before my friend wraps this up, I think again this administration, this Republican Congress, has really put the next generation behind the 8-ball with the war, with the debt, with the income inequality that has not been at this level of separation of the richest to the poorest since before World War II, and all the other issues we talked about. And I think it is unfair to do that to the next generation.

America has always been about making the next generation better. And, hopefully, with our advice and counsel, this Republican majority will take that and move forward.

If I do not get a chance to tell you guys, Go Gators.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Thank you. Go Gators.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. To the distinguished gentleman from Massachusetts and also the gentleman from Ohio and the gentlewoman from Florida, I just want to say that our whole reason for coming to the floor is to be able to share with the Members what is happening right now under the Capitol dome, not what happened 6 months ago, but what is happening today or a

couple of days ago, and about how we can correct ourselves.

The other message is letting not only other Members know, Madam Speaker, but the American people know that we are ready to lead. I always use the football analogy by saying, I am going to buy DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ a mouthpiece because she is ready to go. And I can tell you, there are a number of people, Madam Speaker, who are ready to lead.

Have you ever heard of "lead or get out of the way"? We are willing to do that. Do you want to talk about plans? This is just one binder of plans. Do you want to talk about innovation? Do you want to talk about homeland security? Do you want to talk about Iraq? Do you want to talk about education? Do you want to talk about health care? Do you want to talk about respecting our veterans and giving them the health care that we said we would give them? Do you want to talk about military families being dealt with in a way that they should be dealt with; and the men and women who are in harm's way, equipment for our troops? Do you want to talk about those things?

Well, other folks can talk about it. We are ready to act.

The only thing that is stopping us right now, Madam Speaker, are a couple of votes on this floor. And we want the American people and we want the majority to know that we are not on their heels, we are in front of them on this issue. And that is the only thing that is stopping us.

Now, either one of two things is going to happen. Either there are going to be some of our friends on the other side of the aisle saying, I am going to join with the Democrats and we are going to be bipartisan and we are going to do what we have to do on behalf of this country, or some individuals on the other side of the aisle, with all due respect to the gentlemen and the gentlewomen on the other side, are going to be unelected and we will lead. And we will show the American people, Madam Speaker, how we want to govern.

With that, we want to thank the Democratic leadership for allowing us to be here.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 609, COLLEGE ACCESS AND OPPORTUNITY ACT OF 2005

Mr. BISHOP of Utah (during the Special Order of Mr. MEEK of Florida), from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 109-399) on the resolution (H. Res. 741) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 609) to amend and extend the Higher Education Act of 1965, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. BOSWELL (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today on account of airline delays.

Mr. CAPUANO (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today.

Mr. GIBBONS (at the request of Mr. BOEHNER) for today on account of official business.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. PALLONE) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. DEFAZIO, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, for 5 minutes, today.

Mrs. MCCARTHY, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. PALLONE, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. WOOLSEY, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. BISHOP of New York, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. EMANUEL, for 5 minutes, today.

Mrs. MALONEY, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. GRIJALVA, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. KAPTUR, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. BUTTERFIELD, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at the request of Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. MCHENRY, for 5 minutes, today and March 29, 30, and 31.

Mr. BILIRAKIS, for 5 minutes, today and March 29.

Mr. DREIER, for 5 minutes, today and March 29 and 30.

Mr. PAUL, for 5 minutes, today and March 29.

Mr. JONES of North Carolina, for 5 minutes, today and March 29 and 30.

Mr. KELLER, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. ENGLISH of Pennsylvania, for 5 minutes, March 31.

Mr. KING of Iowa, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana, for 5 minutes, today and March 29, 30, and 31.

Mr. OSBORNE, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. GUTKNECHT, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. FOXX, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. POE, for 5 minutes, today and March 29.

Mr. MORAN of Kansas, for 5 minutes, today and March 29.

SENATE BILLS REFERRED

Bills of the Senate of the following titles were taken from the Speaker's table, and, under the rule, referred as follows:

S. 166. An act to amend the Oregon Resource Conservation Act of 1996 to reauthorize the participation of the Bureau of Reclamation in the Deschutes River Conservancy, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Resources.

S. 1608. An act to enhance Federal Trade Commission enforcement against illegal