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THE WAR ON TERRORISM FIVE YEARS AFTER SEPTEMBER 11—HOW SAFE ARE WE?

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DENT). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from California (Mr. SCHIFF) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, next Monday will mark the fifth anniversary of the most calamitous day in the modern history of this country. Not since the British torched Washington during the War of 1812 has the American homeland suffered such a devastating attack. For all of us, the terrible events of September 11th remain an all-too-fresh memory that still casts a pall over our national life.

For the families of the more than 2,900 people killed in New York, Washington and Pennsylvania, the 9/11 attacks remain an open wound. Many of them have sought to redirect their anger and grief into ensuring that we as a Nation are secure and safe from future attacks. In pursuing this goal, they have only asked that our Nation's leaders be honest in assessing the state of our Nation's security, willing to address shortfalls in our defense and that we act together as Americans and not as Republicans and Democrats.

Mr. Speaker, bipartisanship has been at the center of America's national security policy-making for most of our history. In standing behind our Armed Forces, in standing up for our diplomatic priorities, in supporting the intelligence community and in supporting the President in times of crisis, Congress has often spoken with one voice.

This unanimity was never stronger than in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. When President Bush addressed the Congress and the Nation on September 20, this Nation was more united than at any time since the Second World War.

That unity extended around the world, to friends and foes alike. In the wake of the attacks, NATO invoked for the first time in its history Article 5 of the NATO Charter, declaring the attacks on the United States to be an attack on the alliance. As American military assets rushed toward Afghanistan in preparation for the invasion that would topple the Taliban regime, allied early-warning aircraft patrolled American skies to protect us.

Five years later, this national and international unity seems quaint. Here at home, the President and his fellow Republicans have made no secret that they intend to exploit the 9/11 attacks and the war on terror for political advantage in the upcoming midterm elections, and they have sought to smear as unpatriotic anybody who questions their conduct of our Nation's security policy, most recently, as Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld did, likening war critics to Nazi appeasers.

Overseas, we are isolated. Where America was seen as a victim in the wake of 9/11, it is wrongly viewed as an aggressor. American troops are fighting and dying in Iraq while our closest allies sit on the sidelines, many of them refusing to help.

President Bush and the Republicans have not only squandered domestic unity and international goodwill, they have poorly prosecuted the war on terror and failed to improve our security here at home. Even as we spend $1 billion a week in Iraq, basic security here at home has not been improved as it should have been. This failure has been most clearly demonstrated by the administration's woefully inadequate performance in implementing the recommendations of the independent and bipartisan 9/11 Commission.

In fact, in December of last year, the 9/11 Commission Public Discourse Project, made up of the members of the commission, issued a report card on the lack of progress in improving our Nation's security. The report card was filled with Cs, Ds and Fs. In a statement accompanying the report card, Chairman THOMAS Kean, a Republican, and Vice Chair Lee Hamilton, a Democrat, said, ''Many obvious steps that the American people assume have been completed have not been. Some of these failures are shocking.'' What we have seen over the last 4 years, Mr. Speaker, has been a failure of leadership and a failure of initiative.

My friends on the other side of the aisle, as we heard tonight, I guess have decided that their best response to the criticism of the 9/11 Commission is to blame Bill Clinton. I guess that is the new national security strategy of my friends in the GOP, blame Bill Clinton. I suppose that would be fine if Bill Clinton was the President of the United States, but the last time I checked, it was George W. Bush and had been for a great many years. The last time I checked, it was a Republican House and a Republican Senate.

If we step back 5 years to the immediate aftermath of September 11th and we ask ourselves, would we as a country choose a course that would lead us 5 years hence to a place where we were mired in civil war in Iraq, where Osama bin Laden was still at large, where he and al Zawahiri were issuing a dozen taped messages just in this year alone, where North Korea is testing missiles to carry nuclear bombs that it has manufactured, where Iran is thumbing its nose at the international community and going forward with its nuclear program, where we have become more dependent on foreign oil, not less, how many of us would choose that course for the United States of America? I submit none of us would. None of us would choose that course.

The administration, all they can say is, stay that course; stay a course that has made us more energy dependent on the Middle East than ever; stay that course where Afghanistan's opium production now exceeds what it did under the Taliban; stay that course where sectarian violence is increasing and it is now a civil war in Iraq; stay the course where we have not protected the homeland; stay the course where we have earned Cs, Ds and Fs from the bipartisan 9/11 Commission. Stay the course is the best they can come up with.

If anyone is hitting the snooze button that my colleagues on the other side of the aisle refer to, it is this administration and this Congress. The majority has dubbed this Security September. Well, that has a lovely ring to it, Security September. The problem with Security September is I suppose that in October it will be something else. It will not be security month anymore. Security September will be over. What will October be? October will be, what is a good old term for the political agenda on the floor?

The problem is the Nation's security is not a political agenda to be talked about in the September before a midterm election under the quaint title of Security September.

My colleagues on the other side of the aisle say that everyone has a role to play in the Nation's defense, and with that I wholeheartedly agree, but who has the administration asked among us, other than those brilliant and brave Americans wearing the uniform of this country and their families, who has been asked to be Rosie the Riveter? Who has been asked to make a sacrifice? Has the President asked the American people to sacrifice on the war on terror?

When he was interviewed recently by Brian Williams, who said, Mr. President, many have criticized that you have not asked the American people for a sacrifice; the President said, no, that is not true; the American people have sacrificed. They pay taxes.

That, I guess, was the extent of the sacrifice Americans have been asked to make in the war on terror. The President could have gone on to say he has asked the American people to sacrifice by paying less taxes, by ringing up large deficits on our children to pay for the war, to pay for our own security. That is not the kind of sacrifice, that is not the kind of role that we have to play in the Nation's security.

Now I would like to go through briefly some of the criticisms of the 9/11 Commission that have not been addressed. One of the core parts of the Democratic real security plan is, we will implement the recommendations of the 9/11 Commission. We will put them into effect, and when we go through some of those tonight, we will see just how important they are, just how derelict the majority has been and the administration has been in not implementing these recommendations.

I am joined tonight by CHRIS VAN HOLLEN of Maryland and by DAVID SCOTT of Georgia, two leaders on national security issues, and I want to turn to them after I go through some of the failing grades that we have

earned as an institution and this Congress, under majority GOP rule and that the administration has earned.

First, in its report, the 9/11 Commission talked about having a national strategy for transportation security. The commission said, ''Hard choices must be made in allocating limited resources. The U.S. government should identify and evaluate transportation assets that need to be protected, set risk-based priorities for defending them, select the most practical and cost-effective ways of doing so, and then develop a plan, budget and funding to implement the effort. The plan should assign roles and missions to the relevant authorities, Federal, State, regional and local, and to private stakeholders. In measuring effectiveness, perfection is unattainable. But terrorists should perceive that potential targets are defended. They may be deterred by a significant chance of failure.''

Well, that was what the 9/11 Commission recommended. Now let us see what the 9/11 Commission said about how this administration and the majority have done. The grade: C. ''DHS,'' the Department of Homeland Security, ''has transmitted its National Strategy for Transportation Security to the Congress. While the strategy reportedly outlines broad objectives, this first version lacks the necessary detail to make it an effective management tool.'' C on the National Strategy For Transportation Security.

Airline passenger prescreening: The 9/11 Commission urged that ''improved use of 'no-fly' and 'automatic selectee' lists should not be delayed while the argument about a successor to Computer Assisted Passenger Pre-Screening continues. This screening function should be performed by the TSA, and it should utilize the larger set of watch lists maintained by the Federal Government. Air carriers should be required to supply the information needed to test and implement this new system.''

What grade did the 9/11 Commission, the bipartisan commission, give this administration and Congress? An F, failure. ''Few improvements have been made to the existing passenger screening system since right after 9/11. The completion of the testing phase of TSA's prescreening program for airline passengers has been delayed. A new system, utilizing all names on the consolidated terrorist watch list, is therefore not yet in operation.'' Remarkable. We do not have a unified terrorist watch list in operation that is trustworthy, that we can rely on to keep dangerous people off our planes. F, failing grade by the bipartisan 9/11 Commission.

Checked bag and cargo screening. The 9/11 report stated that ''more attention and resources should be directed to reducing or mitigating the threat posed by explosives in vessels' cargo holds.''

Well, that has not happened either. The grade here: D. Now, we all know we have got to take our shoes off and we cannot carry fluids on the plane, but you can still ship a crate the size of a piano in the cargo hold of a passenger plane, and it will not be screened for explosives. This is a glaring hole. We have known about it for a long time. The 9/11 Commission has talked about it, written about it, cajoled about it, as have the Democrats in Congress. What has been done about it? Very, very little. Precious little. Dangerously little.

Airline passenger explosive screening, the grade given by the 9/11 Commission for the administration and Congress work in that area: C.

Critical infrastructure assessment, where we determine the risks and vulnerabilities that will guide the distribution of Homeland Security funds to the most threatened areas. You would expect that when we are identifying what the risks are to the country, that we would go about it in a logical way; we would identify these are the most vulnerable sites, these are the areas where terrorists could cause the most catastrophic damage and losses, and we will prioritize our resources, addressing the most significant risks first.

Well, if that is what you thought we were doing, then you were wrong. Grade by the 9/11 Commission: D. ''A draft National Infrastructure Protection Plan spells out a methodology and process for critical infrastructure assessments. No risk and vulnerability assessments actually made; no national priorities established; no recommendations made on allocation of scarce resources. All key decisions are at least a year away.'' That is negligence with the Nation's security.

Information sharing between government agencies. The grade the 9/11 commission gave: D. ''Designating individuals to be in charge of information sharing'' within the government ''is not enough. They need resources, active presidential backing, policies and procedures in place that compel sharing, and systems of performance evaluation that appraise personnel on how they carry out information sharing.''

Intelligence oversight reform, grade given by the 9/11 Commission: D.

International collaboration on borders, grade given by the commission to this administration and this Congress: D.

Let me just talk about border security for a minute. Again, my colleagues on the other side of the aisle blame Bill Clinton. Well, that is great. Let us blame Bill Clinton for everything, but border security? We have had a Republican President. We have a Republican House. We have a Republican Senate. If the GOP wanted to pass border security, it could have been done years ago. Positions that we appropriated in this House to fill border patrol positions have remained vacant. The administration has not followed through.

Well, okay, Security September, maybe October will be border Security October. Maybe they will get around to it in October because, after all, the midterms are in November. But one cannot help escape the conclusion that this is driven by the midterm elections and not the national security of the United States of America, and that is wrong.

Those brave people that protected this Capitol when that plane was over Pennsylvania headed our way, those brave people that protected this Capitol deserve better from the people working in this Capitol. They have the right to expect that those working in this Capitol will use their best efforts to protect the rest of the country and not just with the midterm coming up, a couple of months away.

Now, I am joined tonight by two great leaders on national security issues, and I would like to turn first to my colleague from Maryland, CHRIS VAN HOLLEN, who has joined me on several of these national security Special Order hours, in fact, when it was not Security September, and I thank Mr. VAN HOLLEN for his leadership and yield to the gentleman.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from California (Mr. SCHIFF) and thank you for your leadership on these very important national security issues, and as you have suggested, national security issues should not be devoted to just 1 month. We need to make sure that we are watching after the national security every day of this year.

I am pleased to join you and Mr. SCOTT here this evening to discuss these issues because the President has said he wants a national conversation on national security issues in Iraq, but in the same speech, he begins finger pointing; he begins name-calling. Secretary Rumsfeld and Vice President CHENEY are out around the country name-calling and pointing fingers and trying to malign anybody that disagrees with them. That is not a national conversation.

Let us have a national conversation. I say, bring it on when it comes to a national security discussion here in the Nation's Capital and throughout the country because, unfortunately, if you look at Iraq, if you look at our national security policy and the implications of that policy around the world, you can see we have created a mess and that in so many ways we have made ourselves less safe than we could be if we had been smart, smart and tough as we went about it.

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And it is very difficult to listen to President Bush and Vice President CHENEY talk about how if we only stick with their plan, we would begin to see a way out of here. After all, we all remember President Bush when he was on the aircraft carrier USS *Lincoln* back in May 2003, with a big banner in front of him declaring ''mission accomplished.'' May 2003. Well, here we are today in Iraq and we just had a report come out a few days ago from the Pentagon saying things are worse than

ever before. Clearly, we are a long way from mission accomplished.

We had Vice President CHENEY say more than a year ago that the insurgency in Iraq was in its final throes, and yet the report that came out just a few days ago from the Pentagon, a report I must say was required by Congress, it wasn't volunteered by the administration, Democrats in Congress pushed for a little small measure of accountability. Not what we need, but we got this report. And while the Vice President said the insurgency was in its last throes more than a year ago, the report says the Sunni-based insurgency remains ''potent and viable.''

And Secretary Rumsfeld, from day one has looked at Iraq through these rose-colored glasses. I remember when he sort of referenced an estimate by people at the Office of Management and Budget regarding the costs of the war as just a few million dollars. I mean, the figure he gave was peanuts compared to what we already have spent in Iraq.

So I say to all those people who for all these years have said to us, trust us, we know what we are doing, just look at your record. Let us have that debate and let us have a real national conversation on these issues. Because the mantra ''stay the course'' is not a strategy.

Do we really want to keep doing exactly what we have been doing when just a few days ago the report that came out of the Pentagon said things are worse than they have been in Iraq? Is that a strategy for success? Is that the plan for victory that the President announced last November at the U.S. Naval Academy in Maryland?

I represent a congressional district in Maryland. The President went there and unveiled his plan for victory, he called it. Again, we have a report just a few days ago out of the Pentagon saying things are worse than ever. So I say we need a national conversation. We need to work together to find our way forward here.

Mr. SCHIFF. If I can interject for just a second, we had a nonclassified briefing, so I can raise this point, before we had the August recess with Secretary Rice, Secretary Rumsfeld, Director Negroponte, and General Pace, and I asked a question that is based on your comments. It was acknowledged at that time that the sectarian violence now exceeded the violence from the insurgency.

I asked them how are we changing our strategy, militarily or politically, because the strategy used in dealing with the counterinsurgency effort and the strategy you use in trying to bring a halt to a civil war are two very different animals. So I asked, how are we adjusting to these new conditions on the ground? And the long and short of it was, we are not adjusting to the conditions on the ground. We are doing the same thing, the same strategy, the one-size-fits-all, the stay-the-course.

That, I think, given the history you have outlined, where this congressionally compelled report indicates things have gotten worse across almost every metric, not better, that stay the course just doesn't cut it any more.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. It doesn't. And what is unfortunate is people on the one hand are saying let us have this national conversation and then finger-pointing at people who raise questions about what is happening in Iraq and elsewhere in our national security policy, when any sensible person looking at what is going on would have questions. So let us really get together and have a genuine national conversation about these very important issues.

Now, you mentioned, and others have mentioned, that we are coming up very shortly to the tragic fifth anniversary of the September 11 attacks on our country, and I do think it is important to take a moment to reflect again on where those attacks came from and the reaction of the international community, which you have outlined a little bit. Because we all know that those attacks were launched from Afghanistan. They were launched by al Qaeda. They were launched by Osama bin Laden as the head of al Qaeda, and they were launched from Afghanistan because the Taliban government gave al Qaeda sanctuary there in Afghanistan.

When we were attacked on September 11, this country, and in fact the international community, responded. You already referred to the action taken by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. But in fact also the United Nations unanimously passed a resolution saying they were with the United States in its fight against terror and they were with us in going after al Qaeda and Osama bin Laden. And in fact, when we went into Afghanistan, we were united as a country and the world was united behind us.

You would think, given a lot of the recent talk and rhetoric out of the administration, until just a few days ago, that Osama bin Laden had kind of been forgotten. We weren't talking a lot about Osama bin Laden. But now, just the other day, as we approached September 11 and the anniversary of that tragic attack, the President again raised the words of Osama bin Laden and the very real threat that Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda and their virulent form of extremist Islamic ideology poses.

But I think we should ask the question, given the fact that the President has now reminded us again of where those attacks came from, what are we doing in Afghanistan and how much progress have we really made? If you look at the situation now and you look at the southern part of Afghanistan, we have seen, by all accounts, including from the testimony of the Defense Intelligence Agency, the head of that is General Maples, that you have seen a resurgence in Taliban activities in southern Afghanistan. That is the hotbed of the resistance in Afghanistan. Yet, while we are seeing that resistance grow, we have actually seen a reduction in U.S. military forces in that area. That is not the way you address a real threat.

Secondly, this administration disbanded the one unit, the one unit within the Central Intelligence Agency that was specifically dedicated to targeting al Qaeda and Osama bin Laden. They got rid of it.

We have also seen reports today that opium production in Afghanistan is now at a record high, the highest levels ever recorded in terms of opium production. And those are funds that are able to be used by al Qaeda to help arm themselves and help promote their ideology and help promote their efforts against the United States and others.

At the same time, we learned today that Pakistan, Pakistan, has now entered into a deal with the pro-Taliban militia in the Waziristan portion of Pakistan, that rugged mountain area along the Pakistan-Afghan border, where the Taliban have been assembling and using as a launching pad for their attacks into Afghanistan. We have heard that Pakistan apparently is no longer going to sort of prosecute the war against al Qaeda.

So if you look at the state of play today, and you ask yourself what have we done to eliminate the threat that attacked us on September 11, I would say the answer is pretty clear. We have a long way to go before we can hang up a banner of mission accomplished. And we need to redouble our efforts in Afghanistan.

Unfortunately, what has happened is we have, as a result of the war in Iraq, diverted our resources and gotten ourselves bogged down in a very messy situation with a huge amount of sectarian violence, a budding civil war, civil war, whatever you want to call it. We heard from the Pentagon it is the worst situation they have seen. We have gotten bogged down there and we haven't finished the job against al Qaeda.

Yet, at the same time, we have actually fueled the forces that support the extremists. We have added to their allies. We have provided a great recruiting tool for them. And the biggest beneficiary of all has been Iran. The biggest beneficiary of all has been Iran, which is right there next to Iraq. They fought a long war with Iraq. During most of the 1980s Iraq and Iran were engaged in a very bitter war. But now, with Iraq in chaos, Iran is extremely well positioned and is taking advantage of the situation. They are emboldened and they are trying to expand their influence in the region through Hezbollah and through other proxies.

So I think as we have this national conversation, it is very important that the American people, not just looking at some of this rhetoric out there, but they really try to figure out what is going on. Because one of the biggest consequences of the administration's mistakes, and many of them are coming home to roost now, is that they

refuse to listen. They refuse to listen to many generals regarding the best way to prosecute the war in Iraq. They refuse to listen to the experts at the Central Intelligence Agency about the possible consequences within Iraq of taking the lid off Pandora's box and unleashing the forces between the Sunnis, the Shiias, and the Kurds.

They have all the answers, the administration. We have got all the answers. Who are you to question us? And you know what this Republican Congress said? You are right, you have got all the answers, so we are not going to ask you the tough questions. This was a blank-check Congress. No tough questions. No accountability. And the result has been very clear: when you ignore failure, or when you reward failure, you are going to get more failure.

So what we are saying is, let us have a real national conversation. Let us have a Congress that will begin to ask the hard questions.

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Let's hold people accountable when they make mistakes.

The finger pointing, you have got to scratch your head, as you pointed out. We have President Bush in the White House. We have Republicans controlling the Senate and the House. They really have no one to look around right now to blame. Yet they still are out there in the field trying to tell the American people that somehow it is the other guy's fault that we are in this mess now.

It is time to hold them accountable.

Mr. SCHIFF. On that point, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, we had one of the very few hearings, you were in attendance, on Iraq in committee, after years of asking the committee leadership in International Relations to hold a hearing on the Iraq war. You would think it wouldn't be so difficult. We finally had a hearing.

During that hearing, I asked the administration witnesses, who has been held accountable for some of the disastrous decision making that has been made? Who has been held accountable for the standing down of the Iraqi army? Who has been held accountable for the intelligence failures that led to the Iraq war? Who has been held accountable for any one of these innumerable errors?

There was this long, painful, prolonged silence. And the answer was clear: No one. No one has been held accountable.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. We know what the consequence of that is. We know what the consequence is. When you don't hold people accountable for failure, you shouldn't be surprised when you get more of the same. But more of the same is not a good strategy in Iraq. More of the same is not a good strategy in terms of our national security. These are tough, difficult issues. Nobody has all the answers.

So, it is very important that the Bush administration and the Republican leadership stop pretending that they have all the answers, because their view of the world has gotten us to where we are now, and we can be doing a lot better.

I want to thank you and Mr. SCOTT for your very sensible leadership on these national security questions.

Mr. SCHIFF. I thank gentleman. You really put your finger on it. The reality is that ''stay the course'' is nothing but more of the same. That doesn't cut it anymore.

I yield to my good friend, a leader on national security issues, David Scott from the great State of Georgia.

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. Thank you very much. It is good to be here with you and my good friend, Congressman VAN HOLLEN, always a pleasure, and I commend both of you on your expert comments and thought-provoking comments here today.

Accountability is the issue that we just left trippingly off our tongues. Accountability. The timing is right now for accountability. ''The buck stops here,'' as Harry Truman said. ''The buck stops here.'' And the buck is stopping within 9 or 10 weeks, for we are right around the corner from true accountability. That is accountability with our customers, our clients, the people who put us here. They want some accountability.

We have all just come back from our August recess. Paramount on their minds is security. The American people have lost faith with the direction in which we are headed. Every poll speaks that. I don't care if it is the Fox poll, the CNN poll, the Washington Post poll, the ABC poll, every poll that has been taken speaks clearly; 63 percent of the American people are dissatisfied with the direction this country is moving in, in Iraq, and half of the people in this country are finally getting the picture, the ability to separate the war in Iraq from the war on terror.

That is very fundamental. That is a sea change. That has been a very serious part of our problem, and it has really been the Achilles' heel of this administration, of the Bush administration. I think a serious mistake was made in trying to link the war on terror with the war in Iraq, and we have had a muddled policy ever since.

It is no wonder then that here we are on the eve of the fifth anniversary of 9/11. If you would have told me 5 years ago, right after 9/11, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, that 5 years from now we would not have been able to catch Osama bin Laden; if you had told me 5 years ago that we will have expended 2,600 precious lives of our American soldiers in the so-called war on terror, and yet and still al Qaeda is still running around stronger than ever before and Osama bin Laden is turning out more videotapes and CDs than Michael Jackson ever did, 25 at the last count that he has turned out.

And yet for this President to say that we are winning this, that we are succeeding, that we are safer? We are not safer, Mr. SCHIFF, when the butcher that masterminded that mass murder of our citizens and citizens of the world on 9/11 is still alive, and yet we know where he is. And, Mr. SCHIFF, he is not in Iraq. That was the mistake.

What have we done? We have wasted precious resources, not only just in the lives of our precious soldiers there, but to the tune of nearly $3 billion every week. But Osama bin Laden is alive. Al Qaeda is alive. Terrorist attacks have increased over 250 percent since 9/11.

No, we are not safer than where we were. And, yes, we have an accountability coming, and the American people are saying one important thing; they are saying we need a change. We don't need more of the same.

Yes, the Republicans will throw out to us, if you get up here and criticize the President here, you are being un-American or you are not being patriotic or you are talking about ''cutting and running.''

We are talking as Democrats about being courageous, being bold and being smart. We will win this war on terror, but we will never win the war on terror as long as Osama bin Laden is running around on the border of Pakistan and Afghanistan. We will never win this war on terror if we do not realize we are going to have to develop better intelligence.

Military might alone won't do it, not in this war. We are not fighting states or countries. We are fighting non-state actors. We are fighting rogues. We are fighting folks who, like rats in the night, are looking for holes to scurry in. Now they are secure in that hole over there on the border of Afghanistan and Pakistan. And you tell me how far we have come, when the government of Pakistan just last week condescended to them to give the terrorists safe haven in that section of Pakistan and Afghanistan.

No, no, no, that is not winning this war. That strategy is not right. There is something wrong with this picture.

They can talk and say all they want to say about Democrats, but the American people are very delighted and very pleased that Democrats are finally getting this Congress to stand up and be Congress. That is what they elected us for, to provide the oversight, to ask the questions.

We control the purse strings. And before we turn loose these purse strings, we have to ask the questions the American people want to know. They want to know when are we getting to get and cut off the head of bin Laden? They want to know when are we going to arrest and solve this worldwide terror problem?

Who would have thought, 5 years? On this anniversary, as we look, let us look at the landscape. Let's look at it clearly. Who would have thought that a terrorist group named Hezbollah would be basically running the nation of Lebanon? Who would have thought that a terrorist group, Hamas, would be running the Palestinians over in Palestine? Who would have thought that

Iran would be on the verge of nuclear weapons? Who would have thought that North Korea would have eight nuclear weapons as we speak and the capacity of producing at least six or seven in a year's cycle? Unstable regimes.

And who would have thought that China would be eating our lunch in two ways, two essential ways; not only in terms of the free market and the market economy that they are developing over there at the same time they have a planned socialist economy, but the fact that they are one of our largest creditors, and we are one of their largest debtors. We are borrowing $328 billion from China, a huge debt.

Are we safer? I don't think so. And this administration has some serious questions that they have got to answer, and the American people are expecting it.

I hope, Mr. SCHIFF, that each night that we can come on this floor, and we are going to take this national security, and we are going to show the American people that Democrats are stronger on national security. You know why? Because we are smarter.

We are going to find bin Laden, and we are going to destroy him. We are going to beef up our resources in intelligence and the State Department because we know that this war on terror cannot be won strictly with bullets and bombs. It cannot be, for we are not dealing with a standing target to bomb. Nations we can. But we need to make friends with these nations.

We have got the world's best military, but because we are in Iraq, our military is coming off at the wheels. I am not going to get into very direct specifics on that; I don't want the enemy to know. This is going over C–SPAN to the Nation. I don't want our enemies to know just what our situation is. But you know what it is, and I know what it is.

Without question, we are the superior force. But, by Jove, we have got to keep it that way. That is the greatest deterrent to these terrorists, to know that we have that military capacity.

But we won't be able to win the war on military alone. We have got to beef up the State Department. We have got to make sure we have the kinds of relationships with these countries that no nation would do what Pakistan has done. That is unconscionable. That is one of the great defeats that we have had.

Democrats can change that. No, we don't want the same course. We want to get smart. We want to fight this war on terror, and we want to win it. And in order to win it, we have got to be smart.

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. SCOTT, I thank you for those words. They are right on the mark. You pose the question, who would have thought, and it is a good one. Who would have thought, here we are, 5 years after 9/11, that the mastermind of the butcher of thousands of American lives would still be at large? Who would have imagined that the strongest nation on Earth would not have succeeded in hunting him down and killing him? That is an astounding, astounding fact.

But I think the important thing here tonight is this country cannot, must not, accept this as the best America can do. We can do better. We can do better in aggressively taking it to our enemy. We can do better defensively protecting America. We have to do better.

The fact that this crowd that runs this House, that runs this White House, can't capture and kill bin Laden doesn't mean he can't be captured and killed. He can. He must, but not on the course this crowd is on.

The fact that this crowd can't stop Iran from developing a nuclear bomb doesn't mean they can't be stopped. They can be stopped. They must be stopped.

The fact that this crowd in this House and in the White House can't stop North Korea from testing its missiles doesn't mean North Korea can't be stopped. But it does require a certain competence in an administration. It does require a certain diplomatic skill in an administration. It does mean that you cannot alienate the rest of the world and expect them to come to your assistance, to rally to your cause.

We seem to compartmentalize and think that we can spurn the rest of the world on other things, and then on the issues that we care about, that we can count on them.

□ 2200

It hasn't worked that way. But just because this crowd has failed, it doesn't mean that failure is inevitable. It isn't. I believe in this country, as I know you do. I believe there is a better way. I believe the Democrats have a better way. I believe part of that better way is to make this country energy independent so we are not relying on these Middle Eastern nations.

Do you know why Iran can thwart the international community, they can thumb their nose at us? Because they are a petroleum-rich state, and petroleum prices are through the roof.

It is the same reason Russia can thumb its nose at the United States now, because they are awash in oil money. And part of the reason they are awash in that oil money is because we have that addiction to oil that this oil-soaked administration isn't willing to confront.

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. Well, I think you are absolutely right, and I think a part of that is those who are at the helm, President Bush and those in the White House, are good decent people, but they are oil people. I mean, they think like oil people.

That is it, when our future is not in that way. We have got to have a clean energy policy. We have got to invest in our own farms and our agriculture products like corn and soybeans and sugar cane so that we can develop ethanol as an alternative. We have got to have a robust economy in this country that is based upon our own self-sufficiency of oil.

We should be going down to Brazil by the planeloads, learning and seeing what they have done. If Brazil can take their own automotive industry, their main means of transportation, and run it 80 percent on ethanol made from sugar cane, what is keeping us from doing that? Why must we be so dependent on Middle Eastern oil? It is the way they think in the White House.

Now, I am telling you, it is not just me here. You have been around this country; all the polls are saying it. Americans want a difference. They want a change in direction. Quite honestly, that is why you have two parties. That is why you have parties here. That is why the Founding Fathers made it that way.

One party cannot have it all the time, and the American people deserve a change. I am convinced President Bush has stayed the course. America says, no, no, we want a new direction.

Well, you can't take a new direction with somebody who says stay the course, do what the job has done, we are here, this is the way we are going with the Republican-led Congress. We have got to have some changes. Democrats are aggressive. Democrats are smart. We have shown time and time in the history of this country, when this country was in a world war. This President was in the world, the business talks about Naziism, he talks about fascism and he talks about all of that about Hitler.

All that time, who stood up to Hitler? Who was it who said the only thing we have to fear is fear itself? A Democrat, Franklin Delano Roosevelt. When the communists were threatening in South Korea and North Korea, who was there? Harry S. Truman, who said, the buck stops here.

When we had that missile crisis down in Cuba, when we were on the throes, right on the edge of what many say meant the end of the world if that had happened, can you imagine? It was a Democrat with steely eyes who stood there and looked Khrushchev in the eyes and had the courage. It was John Fitzgerald Kennedy, a Democrat.

Now, the world can rest assured this Nation will be secure in the hands of Democrats. We are waiting on the chance to provide the change and direction. I am just proud of our national security review by myself and Mr. ISRAEL, who for the past 3 years have provided leadership on this very issue where we have had great leaders like Senator Nunn, Senator Sam Nunn, who has provided the way, my friend from Georgia all the way in; and Sandy Berger, we have had men and women at the helm of national security that have done a fine job and we are here to do that job. This is the way for us to go, strong and smart.

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. SCOTT, I think this is the key importance of our being here

week after week, as you and I and Mr. VAN HOLLEN and others have. The country recognizes we cannot go on with business as usual in our national security. We can't just have a policy that says more of the same. More of the same has put this Nation at inordinate risk.

And so the country is asking, all right, we don't like what this crowd is doing. We don't like what the crowd in the House is doing; we don't like what the crowd in the White House is doing. What are Democrats proposing? And for weeks now we have been laying that out, in the pillars of our own security plan, where we will rebuild our military, because that is what it really means at this point.

Our military is strained so thin, stretched so thin, we are now using professional recruiters to try to recruit. We are getting bonuses to recruit people in the Armed Forces. We are using involuntary recalls. These men and women in uniform, they deserve our undying gratitude, because, boy, are we asking a lot of them, not only them but their families.

But our military is at the breaking point. Our forces are stretched, our equipment is degrading in the conditions in Afghanistan and elsewhere. It needs an investment, it needs to be better managed than this administration has done, and we will build that 21st century military. We are committed to the war on terror and to going after the heart of that war, which is Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda. When I was in Afghanistan, Mr. SCOTT, do you know what one of our troops said to me?

He said, Mr. SCHIFF, you know, we here in Afghanistan, we feel like we are the third front in a two-front war, third front in a two-front war. This won't be the third front in a two-front war under Democratic leadership.

Homeland Security? We will implement those recommendations of the 9/11 Commission that the snooze alarm policy, the snooze button policy this administration has ignored. In Iraq, we will recognize the facts on the ground, which is now a civil war. We will adjust our strategy. We will reduce and redeploy our forces so the Iraqis have to take control of their own country.

If Shiite and Sunni are determined to murder each other in large numbers, it is not the job of American troops to stand in the way and catch the bullets. We ought to play a supporting role; we ought to do everything we can to reduce the conflagration there. But ultimately Iraqis have to decide they want to be one country.

Finally, we will achieve energy independence. That is a key part of our national security agenda. The fact that this administration has failed in so many of these respects doesn't mean failure is acceptable or inevitable. This country has always done better and can do better, will do better.

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. You know, that certainly doesn't sound like cutting and running to me. It says sticking and staying, but sticking and staying smart. Nobody is running away from this war on terror. You cannot run away from it. We are simply talking about putting our resources where they need to be. We are talking about building a military and not dragging it down. Let me give you one example of where I am talking about where we will make choices. Democrats will not make this mistake. Right now we are facing our military. We are trying to make choices about air superiority versus ground superiority. It should not be one versus the other. We have got to have both.

But here we have got right now, in my home district in Atlanta, Georgia, in the Atlanta metro area, I represent CBO county, Marietta, which is the Lockheed Martin base where we make the F–22s. Right now there is debate, the Army, the Air Force wants 318 F–22s. Well, we have got 75 already moving off the line, but they cut down their request now to about 125.

If the Air Force says we need 318, we should make 318. That is what the military says we need in order to maintain the superiority. The F–22 fights in the air and on the ground. We need that, but here is the rub. The rub is the Defense Department right now is saying we cannot even afford the 125.

Why? Because the war in Iraq is making us choose between how we are going to fit our military. That need not be. We need not allow the war in Iraq to be a drag on the resources of our military operation. No wonder you have Iran doing what they are doing. No wonder you have Syria and North Korea, China, even Russia.

No wonder we can't get around and even talk with Russia and the Eastern European countries about gathering up those loose nukes. Sam Nunn brought that to our national security meeting and made it very clear that quite honestly that is a number one threat to the security of this country.

So when you look at the entire fix we are in, we are talking about a reallocation of resources. Democrats are talking about being smart, taking our resources and using it, stopping the drain on it, making sure that we don't have soldiers who are going over into Iraq for the third and fourth tour, or having soldiers, last we had about 30,000 marines called up, their retirement was cut short and having to go back to Iraq.

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. SCOTT, let's look at this, let's look at this through the prism of more of the same, or stay the course, as our majority is advocating, as opposed to what we have outlined in a new direction on each of these items.

What does it mean to stay the course? Well, what it means in terms of energy independence is that we continue and increase our reliance on Middle Eastern oil, and all of the national security risk that entails for that country. That is what stay the course means on energy independence that we remain dependent on Middle Eastern oil.

What does more of the same mean in Iraq? More of the same in Iraq means most costly, the continuing casualties, American troops losing their lives and becoming severely injured. But in addition to that, more of the same in Iraq means if you look at the course of Iraq, it means an increase in the civil war violence, because when you look at the curve of the Iraqi violence, it has been a steady increase in sectarian violence.

So what does stay the course mean? It means stay the increasing course of civil war violence. The insurgent violence, which has been on the increase, the number of incidents over the summer reaching all-time highs. What does stay the course wartime policy mean? It means more insurgent violence.

Is that the course we want to stay on? The only, and, boy, I have searched, I have searched high and low for some good news to report out of Iraq. The only positive news I have seen out of Iraq has been in terms of the political development in terms of the elections in Iraq, the unity government.

But, unfortunately, that government has not been able to solidify its control over Iraq. It doesn't have the confidence of the Iraqi people. Unfortunately, if we stay that course, that doesn't offer much hope either. Homeland security, what does stay the course, more of the same mean for America under homeland security?

It means more Cs, more Ds, and for more Fs for our failure to do more for airports, nuclear plants, chemical plants. More of the same on the war on terror, more of the same means more messages from Osama bin Laden, more of the same from Zarqawi, more of the same bombings in London, Madrid, Turkey, elsewhere, more sanctuary in Pakistan. That's what stay the course means in the war on terror.

More of the same in the military means people on their third deployment, fourth deployment, sixth deployment. That is what more of the same means in the military. That just is not right for America.

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. No, it is not, and more of the same means this, Mr. SCHIFF: this is the latest report on terrorism, what the facts are. On 9/11, more than 5 years ago, there was an estimated number of al Qaeda numbers worldwide, and on 9/11/2001 it was 20,000. Now, the estimated number of al Qaeda numbers worldwide is 50,000. Then on 9/11/2001, the number of al Qaeda terrorist attacks in the 5 years before 9/11, three.

The number of al Qaeda attacks in the 5 years since 9/11, 30. The number of days Osama bin Laden has been at large since U.S. military operations commenced in Afghanistan, 1,784 days and counting. What do we have to show for that?

If we look again at the 2,600 American soldiers that we have loss in this war on terror, good brave soldiers, where we score the more of the same, no more of the same, no more of this

staying the course on this course. We have got to correct the course and stay and fight the war on terror, deal with the situation in Iraq, but do it smartly with the resources we have.

□ 2215

NATIONAL SECURITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PRICE of Georgia). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING) is recognized for half the remaining time before midnight.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the privilege and honor to address you here on the floor of the United States Congress. I am pleased to be back in Washington, D.C., where we can join together and work together to resolve the issues that are in front of us between now and the election and after the election.

As I awaited this opportunity to address you, Mr. Speaker, and I listened to the remarks made by my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, I have to say that it is a bit depressing to listen to that litany, but as I look back across these Presidents that have done such a fantastic job, I think in terms of who was in charge when we got into those wars that were ended when they were in charge, it is the same person.

I don't take a great issue with the way the Second World War was conducted by FDR. In fact, I am quite proud of the way Harry Truman had enough vision and courage to do what he did to end the Second World War. But as I listened through the rest of that, who was in charge when the war in Vietnam began, and the first troops were sent over there by John F. Kennedy, who was in charge at the Bay of Pigs when air power was taken off to protect the lives of the Cuban freedom fighters who were caught out in the open and slaughtered in the Bay of Pigs, that was John F. Kennedy who decided not to provide the air cover that he had guaranteed them. They went in there thinking they had air cover, they didn't have air cover, and Castro has been in power ever since down there in Cuba.

I would go further. Not only did Kennedy send the first troops into Vietnam, but Johnson accelerated the operations that were there. As I listened along throughout some of these Presidential candidates, and I am just simply giving the balance on the other side, Mr. Speaker. I didn't come here to make a case to denigrate any of our proud Presidents that we have, just to put some balance in this perspective that we have here and hopefully I can get that done and then move on to some other subjects that I came here to talk about.

But the Johnson administration got to the point where Lyndon Johnson would not run for a second term of office. Those of us that were here remember that. He knew he couldn't win. The streets were full of demonstrators. Things had melted down in Vietnam to the point and melted down in this country to the point that he had lost confidence, and he came to the American people and said I will not be a candidate for a second term for President.

So that some characterize as a failed Presidency, and I just point this out to bring some balance to the reality of it all.

I also recall what happened in the aftermath of the issue that nobody is proud of, and that is the Watergate break-in. That put political power in the hands of the people on the other side of the aisle. And what was the first thing that they did with it? They passed legislation that said there won't be a dollar spent in Vietnam helping anybody defend anybody from the North Vietnamese. There won't be a dollar spent for a meal or a bullet or a tank or a gallon of fuel for air cover to protect the people that we pledged to protect.

And in a matter of a few months, the North Vietnamese stormed through South Vietnam. And you wonder why they couldn't defend themselves. They didn't have munitions to work with. They didn't have air cover support which we had pledged them. And there were hundreds of thousands, in fact, millions that died in the aftermath because we made a commitment and didn't keep that commitment because of political fighting here in Congress. Not because of the lack of the will of the American soldier or the lack of the will of the South Vietnamese soldier, for that matter, at least during that era.

And as we move forward throughout history and we bring ourselves up to the Clinton era, I just have a little note in my pocket from a speech that I gave a couple of nights ago. In fact, it was last night. Someone remarked in that meeting that I was at that they knew what the meaning of the word ''is'' is. Well, all I have to do is say that, Mr. Speaker, and I think it brings back to mind all kinds of images of things that went on through the 8 years of the Clinton administration.

I didn't notice that there were some strong remarks there, but I do remember the remarks that were made with regard to Sandy Berger, the proud adviser to the Clinton administration, and how he had provided for a strong military.

Mr. Speaker, there is something about the image of Sandy Berger with his socks full of secret documents at the National Archives that just belies any kind of image of Sandy Berger contributing to a strong military. In fact, on his watch, and on the watch of Bill Clinton, we saw our military be reduced from 2.4 million military down to about 1.4, perhaps even 1.3 million in our military. Now, that is not what you call contributing to a stronger military. That is reducing the military. That is what they called the peace dividend.

If you remember when the Wall went down on November 9, 1989, most of the people in the mainstream media thought that had to do with a family reunion between East and West Berlin families. But what it was, when that wall went down, the Iron Curtain came crashing down at the same time and peace echoed across Europe almost bloodlessly in what I would consider to be nearly a historical miracle.

But in that period of time after a couple of years and that soaked in and we got around to the 1992 elections, people in Congress then coupled with the President decided, and that would be President Clinton, decided we have this great peace dividend. Now the Soviet Union is no more. There is no evil empire out there. Of course, they wouldn't have called it an evil empire. That was Ronald Reagan that defined our enemy there. But the evil empire had fallen apart and been separated into its parts. And, of course, it wasn't equal to the sum of its parts. Each part was separate. They didn't pull together anymore. And the threat from a superpower from without diminished substantially.

When that happened, the decision was made here, Mr. Speaker, in this Congress, to dramatically reduce our military and take the savings and spend them on growing government programs. That is what was going on during the reign of Sandy Berger. I don't know how he was the guide that propped up and beefed up our military.

There are compliments that we can lay into every administration and criticism that we can lay into every administration, but it is pretty difficult to lay out a clear perspective that is subjective because all of us have a different viewpoint. We have that different viewpoint. It has driven us to come here to help serve the American people.

But out of this Congress needs to come a consensus that can help direct the American people, Mr. Speaker. It doesn't serve us well to be tearing down our effort of our military when they are overseas, when their lives are on the line for our safety, for our freedom, to win this global battle and this war on terror and provide an opportunity for freedom for the Iraqi and the Afghani people.

And who knows what might be next. Who knows what people might be next. Who knows who might be attacked next. But we are on the eve of the fifth anniversary of September 11, 2001, and I am standing tonight on the floor of Congress listening to a lamentation of sadness and despair because the resolve to finish this appears to not be there with some of my esteemed colleagues on the other side of the aisle. I regret that, and it saddens me.

But I ask: if they say staying the course is not a plan, and I am looking for some direction that can resolve this thing more quickly myself, Mr. Speaker, but if they say staying the course is not a plan, I have to tell you, it is no