the defensive and brought some level of security to many Iraqi communities where there had been none before.

Now I know it's hard to admit when you are wrong, but there are many in this Chamber who came to this floor and opposed the surge saying it would be a failure. Well, it hasn't been. It has been a success. In fact, even the United Nations is recognizing the success of the Petraeus strategy. The U.N.'s top envoy in Iraq acknowledged the improvements in security and even tentative steps towards national reconciliation this week.

Even for the war's opponents, it is now time to admit the success of the surge strategy in Iraq. But, instead of honoring the great work of our troops, all I hear is silence.

THE WAR IN IRAQ

(Mr. KUCINICH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KUCINICH. The Center for Public Integrity, in a report released today, has found the Bush administration led the Nation to war on the basis of erroneous information that it methodically propagated and it culminated in military action against Iraq on March 19, 2003. * * *

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman will suspend.

Mr. STEARNS. Madam Speaker, I demand that the words of the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH) be taken down.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the words.

□ 1030

Mr. KUCINICH. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to withdraw the offending words, to the end that they be stricken from the RECORD, and that I be permitted to revise and extend my remarks for the RECORD.

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

Mr. STEARNS. Reserving the right to object, Madam Speaker, I will accept this time the gentleman's request to withdraw his words, but his clear and egregious violation of House rules needs to be fully understood by himself. Both sides wish to restore civility here with legitimate debate and not utter personal accusations.

With that, Madam Speaker, I withdraw my objection.

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

There was no objection.

INTELLIGENCE GATHERING CRIPPLED

(Mr. AKIN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. AKIN. Madam Speaker, February 1 is an extremely important date for us in terms of American security. You might wonder why that is, and that is because a law that we passed last summer is expiring and our intelligence agencies are going to be greatly crippled in their ability to make intelligence intercepts because of the change in the law.

What has happened is the Democrats are trying to get us to go through a very complicated procedure with the FISA court to check on surveillance before we can actually make the wiretap. What the result is going to be is that it is going to make it very, very difficult to do these intercepts.

Now we debated this at the end of last year, and we found that with the law that was being proposed, we wouldn't be able to arrest bin Laden even if we knew where he was going to be and what time he was going to be there. Since World War II, we have done these intercepts. We have intercepted Japanese and German wire transmissions.

The bottom line is quite simply we are going to lose 60 percent of our intelligence gathering if this law is not fixed.

COMMENDING IOWA FIREFIGHTERS AND MAQUOKETA RESIDENTS

(Mr. BRALEY of Iowa asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BRALEY of Iowa. Madam Speaker, I rise today to salute the people of Maquoketa, Iowa, for their extraordinary sense of civic duty during the course of a severe fire that destroyed a sizable part of the city's historic downtown early Saturday morning. I also want to recognize the efforts of firefighters from Maquoketa and 27 surrounding communities to extinguish the blaze and keep it from consuming other downtown buildings.

The fire was a blow to Maquoketa's historic downtown, completely destroying five buildings and causing severe damage to several businesses and homes.

While the fire left behind physical and emotional scars, it also demonstrated what makes Iowa such a great place. Firefighters battled tirelessly through subzero temperatures and wind chills of 20 below zero to get the blaze under control. Meanwhile, hundreds of Maquoketa residents open their homes and businesses to provide warm shelter, hot food, and emotional support for the firefighters and residents impacted by the fire.

Perhaps young Maquoketa resident Kalli Muhlhausen said it best: ''They have our hearts, and we have their backs.''

Iowans dismiss such an outpouring of generosity as simply ''the right thing to do,'' but the people of Maquoketa deserve a special thank you.

DISPROPORTIONATE MEDIA COVERAGE

(Mr. SMITH of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Madam Speaker, the national media continue to devote a disproportionate amount of news coverage to the Democratic Presidential campaign.

For example, on the day before the Republican primary in Michigan, NBC's Today Show gave almost 7 minutes to the race between Democrat Senator BARACK OBAMA and Senator HILLARY CLINTON, compared to about 30 seconds to the close Republican race.

NBC isn't the only network giving more coverage to the Democratic campaign. The January 7 edition of ABC's Good Morning America devoted almost 15 minutes of coverage to analyzing the race between BARACK OBAMA and HILLARY CLINTON. Just 30 seconds were given to the Republican side.

We must continue to encourage the media to report with fairness rather than partiality. Only then can the American people get the balanced coverage of this important Presidential campaign that they need and deserve.

ECONOMIC STIMULUS PACKAGE

(Mr. COHEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. COHEN. Madam Speaker, this week and in the coming weeks the American people need this House and Senate and the President to work in a bipartisan fashion to come up with a monetary policy and a fiscal policy here that will help our economy. It needs to be temporary, timely and targeted. And I would hope that we can work with our Republican colleagues in a bipartisan fashion to direct that to people in the middle income and lower income levels who need the help and will spend the money immediately.

To give rebates to people who are making a lot of money, people earning salaries such as we are in Congress, and others, is not the right thing to do. We need to give money to people who are suffering the most from the high gas prices, from the loss of employment, and from the other economic effects that are hurting the people at the bottom.

I ask my Republican colleagues and the President, and hopefully he will in the State of the Union, address those who need help the most and help this American and world economy.

RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE IN MALAYSIA

(Mr. POE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. POE. Madam Speaker, the Malaysian Government recently seized