help the United States bring civil order to Iraq. The morning began with Japan announcing $5 billion in aid for Iraq redevelopment. The Washington Post reported Ambassador Howard Baker, Jr., thanked our Japanese allies for being ''generous.'' This was followed by the unanimous vote of the Security Council to approve a new resolution backed by America. The New York Times today editorialized ''President Bush won a big victory yesterday at the United Nations.''

Later, there was an historic meeting here at the Capitol of Speaker Ognyan Gerdjiko of Bulgaria with the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HASTERT), the first meeting ever of speakers from Bulgaria and America. Speaker Gerdjiko pledged partnership in the War on Terror, substantiated by providing 500 Bulgarian troops currently in Iraq.

With the supplemental vote today, America is proving its determination to win the war on terror by making all efforts to complete our commitment for victory to protect the American people.

In conclusion, God bless our troops.

BUREAUCRATIC INCOMPETENCE, INDIFFERENCE AND INTRANSIGENCE AT PENTAGON

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, today the House will vote to borrow $87 billion to continue the conflict in Iraq and build and revitalize the Iraqi economy. They say it is necessary to support the troops. It is not for dearth of funds that our troops lack ceramic body armor or armored Humvees and other essentials. There are ample, unspent funds, billions from the $79 billion we borrowed for this war last April, but it is bureaucratic incompetence, indifference and intransigence at the Pentagon. Secretary Rumsfeld and his advisors did not order armor because they did not think that we would need it, and they could never admit they were wrong. It did not fit their scenario.

They say it is necessary for the security of the American people that we are going to borrow $20 billion in the name of working Americans to invest and stimulate the Iraqi economy, to build their infrastructure, roads, bridges, highways, state of the art telecommunications, sewer and electric.

Well, it is not going to boost our economy here at home, and that is the security that my constituents and most Members' constituents are worried about. If we invest in the economy as the Democrats have advised, it would provide 1 million jobs for Americans.

WHY ARE WE BEING SO GENEROUS?

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

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, there has been a lot of discussion about our reconstruction efforts in Iraq, and why are we doing it, why are we not lending them the money at some exorbitant interest rate? Why are we being so generous? Well, there are five real reasons.

Number one, Iraq is saddled with a $200 billion debt already. If we give them a loan, what is going to happen is similar to what happened between France and Germany after World War I with the reparations: It will not help Iraq become independent and free and strong.

Number two, practicality. There is no ruling authority in Iraq at this point to make a loan to, and it will take a lot more time if we go that route.

Number three, we need to lead by example. As the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. WILSON) just said, because of the U.S. efforts, we already have other donor nations stepping forward.

Number four, perception. There is already an anti-American, anti-Western mood amongst Arab countries in the Middle East, and by doing this, we will become free of that suspicion.

Number five, it is in our national interest to have a stable, secure, democratic country emerging in the Middle East.

Mr. Speaker, this is why we are doing what we are doing. It is an important vote, and it is the right vote.

NATIONAL GUARD GETS HAND-ME-DOWN EQUIPMENT

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

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, under current practices today, the National Guard gets hand-me-down equipment from the regular Army. In many instances, it is never really anticipated those Guard units will go into combat. Now, because of manpower shortages, we are reaching so deeply into the Guard that we are having the Guard show up in Baghdad with old-generation Humvees without the proper equipment.

We will have an amendment later today to transfer $300 million out of the weapons of mass destruction search by David Kay that has turned up a vial of botulism that we are now told by the experts has never been turned into a weapon, and it was sold by an American company back in the 1980s and given to the National Guard so that when they rotate into Baghdad and into other parts of Iraq, they will have modern equipment.

We cannot sacrifice the lives of these young people because we failed to provide them the equipment or we gave them old equipment 7, 8, 10 years ago and they have to take that equipment into battle. This is absolutely crucial in terms of the safety and protection of our fighting men and women who are in the Guard who now find themselves stationed in combat zones in excess of a year.

RUSHED DEBATE ON SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATION INAPPROPRIATE

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, this morning we discovered that one more MP lost his life in the midst of Operation Iraqi Freedom. I heard yesterday the majority leader say ''our war.'' This war was rendered by a resolution of this House, but not by a Constitutional vote under the Constitution that required this Congress to declare war. This war was rendered on the premise of weapons of mass destruction and the fact that the United States of America was under imminent attack. We found both of those to be fallacies and untrue.

Mr. Speaker, today we are asked to abrogate our responsibilities as Members of Congress and do a circumscribed debate on issues important to the future of this Nation. I spent time with those young women and men on R&R from Iraq. Their courage has not been diminished, but their morale has been obliterated. Eleven of them have committed suicide. They recognize they do not have the proper equipment that they need; and I respect the appropriators for doing the best they can, but this rush to judgment in this debate on this particular appropriation is not appropriate. If we are to stand with the troops, we should be debating this through the weekend, and we should talk about the quality of life and provide them the resources necessary. This is a travesty and a farce because we are not doing what we are supposed to do, in supporting in the fullest way our U.S. troops by a thoughtful deliberative process of debate.

EMERGENCY SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS ACT FOR DEFENSE AND FOR THE RECONSTRUCTION OF IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN, 2004

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 396 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the further consideration of the bill, H.R. 3289.

□ 0913

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the

further consideration of the bill (H.R. 3289) making emergency supplemental appropriations for defense and for the reconstruction of Iraq and Afghanistan for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2004, and for other purposes, with Mr. LATOURETTE in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIRMAN. When the Committee of the Whole rose on Thursday, October 16, 2003, the bill had been read through page 2, line 2, and amendments considered under a previous order of the House had been disposed of.

Pursuant to the order of the House of that day, before consideration of any other amendment, except pro forma amendments by the chairman or ranking minority of the Committee on Appropriations or their designees for the purpose of debate, it shall be in order to consider the following amendments: An amendment by the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. KIND) or the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN); an amendment by the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD); an amendment by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. HOEFFEL); an amendment by the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE); an amendment by the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. RAMSTAD) or the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MOORE); an amendment by the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. TAUSCHER); an amendment by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. STUPAK); an amendment by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. REYES); an amendment by the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO); an amendment by the gentleman from New York (Mr. WEINER); an amendment by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DEUTSCH); an amendment by the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ); and an amendment by the gentleman from California (Mr. SHERMAN).

Each such amendment may be offered only by a Member designated or a designee, shall be debatable for 10 minutes, equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. KIND

Mr. KIND. Mr. Chairman, I offer an amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

Amendment offered by Mr. KIND:

Page 48, after line 21, insert the following:

SEC. 2213. The dollar amounts otherwise provided in this chapter under the heading ''IRAQ RELIEF AND RECONSTRUCTION FUND'', are each reduced by 50 percent.

The CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to the order of the House of Thursday, October 16, 2003, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. KIND) and the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. KOLBE) each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. KIND).

Mr. KIND. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself 2½ minutes.

Mr. Chairman, last week I had the opportunity to travel to Iraq visiting our troops in the field, and they are doing an incredible job under difficult and dangerous circumstances. Clearly, our Nation is paying a very high price in both lives and money due to the unilateral action that was taken in Iraq. Their high level of sacrifice, quite frankly, has not been met by the high level of planning that is required for this mission. I believe we have been derelict in our duty in Congress in demanding more accountability and more justification in regards to the expenditure and the use of the funds that are before us today and have been appropriated earlier this year.

That is why the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN) and I are offering this amendment which could be titled The Enhanced Accountability and Detailed Accounting Amendment, which would slash the reconstruction funds by one-half, not because we do not believe in the mission, but because we believe the administration should come before Congress to justify in a detailed fashion what current funds are being used for and what future funds are being requested and for what purpose.

The World Bank and IMF released a report last week that indicated that for the next year in Iraq, we cannot spend, more than $5 billion without running into difficulty, and yet we have a $20 billion reconstruction request before us today.

As a member of the Committee on the Budget, it has been very frustrating trying to get detailed listings of the amount of money being spent and for what purpose. Mr. Zakheim, Comptroller for Defense, indicated yesterday before us that it was the administration's intent to keep coming to Congress for future supplemental requests which do not have to be offset, which will result in more deficit financing, instead of budgeting it in the normal budget process.

We think it should be budgeted with future requests. I also believe by slashing funds by one-half, we would encourage greater savings and cost efficiencies.

I met with Kuwaiti officials last week who indicated that they did not understand what the administration was doing in Iraq. They were sitting on multiple 3,000 megawatt generators not being used and not being requested by the United States for use in Iraq. They are also sitting on multiple desalinization machines that could be used in Iraq to help with clean water difficulties; but again, they were not being asked to contribute.

General Petraeus of the 101st Airborne, when he discovered from U.S. engineers that it was going to cost somewhere between $15–$20 million to restore a cement factory in northern Iraq went out and talked to local Iraqi officials and was able to get the job done for $80,000.

I believe this Congress has an obligation to the American taxpayer, an obligation to our children and to our grandchildren to ask questions and to demand accountability in regards to the use of these reconstruction funds, and I would encourage support for my amendment.

Mr. Chairman, I yield the balance of my time to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN), one of the most fiscally responsible Members of this Congress.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. KIND) for offering this amendment. The gentleman has brought forward an important amendment that I hope we will consider and pass.

Regardless of how one may feel in support of the supplemental appropriation, I hope we all agree that reconstruction aid requires a higher level of scrutiny. That is exactly what this amendment does. It provides 50 percent of the money now. That is consistent with the analysis of the World Bank, the United Nations, and the International Monetary Fund as to how much funds can effectively be used by Iraq in the next year. It is consistent with our initiative to get our allies to pay a larger share of the reconstruction act.

The vote in the United Nations Security Council yesterday was encouraging. If Members believe our allies should be paying more of these reconstruction funds, Members should support the Kind amendment.

It is also consistent with our desire to have the Iraqis repay some of this money. We know that the other body has already taken action in that regard. If Members believe that we should be considering whether the Iraqis have the resources to repay some of these funds later, then Members should support the Kind amendment.

It is consistent with our responsibility for oversight. It is our responsibility to make sure these monies are properly spent, to monitor the use and get more accounting. If Members believe we should exercise that responsibility, they should support the Kind amendment.

It also allows us to get a plan from the administration to transfer authority to the Iraqis and bring our troops home. We should have that information. This amendment is consistent with that request.

Then if more funds are needed, this body can take it up with the condition, and in the form, that is consistent with the goals that we are trying to achieve. At that time, the Congress can take up additional resources and act on that request. I urge my colleagues to support this amendment. It is the right thing for us to do in order to successfully complete our mission in Iraq.

Mr. KOLBE. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in opposition to the amendment, and would like to point out that this is a little different amendment than we originally thought we would be looking at today.

This issue was debated twice yesterday on this floor, once with the Obey

amendment which would have cut the amount by half and put some in loans, the other time during debate on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. PENCE) which would have done the same thing. We have had a lot of discussion about the idea of how much we should have and whether we should reduce it, and whether some should be in the form of a loan or not. I believe that issue has been dispensed with.

I have just heard a couple of arguments from the other side that this amendment will require more scrutiny. Where in the words here does it require any more scrutiny? It just says it will cut it by 50 percent. It says that we think that the Committee on Appropriations' work is insufficient, we are just going to cut it in half.

Where does it say that it is going to require some repayment by the Iraqis? There is nothing in here about repayment or loans. It just says we are going to take the aid and the assistance we are going to provide to the Iraqis, and we are going to slice it exactly in half because we think that they do not really need that money for reconstruction.

Mr. Chairman, what we have heard over the last several days, and I know I am sounding like a broken record by repeating this, as General Abizaid, Ambassador Bremer, and many others have told us over and over again, every dollar for reconstruction is just as important as every dollar we provide to our men and women in uniform in Iraq. It is just as important.

If we are going to get our men and women home from Iraq, we have to turn the security of the country over to the Iraqis, and that means we have to train the Iraqis. We have to train the police force and the national army. If we are going to get our men and women home, we have to restore the Iraq economy and put Iraq back on its feet. Cutting the assistance to Iraq in half is not the way to accomplish that. If we want to be sure that our men and women in uniform stay in Iraq a lot longer, this is the amendment Members want to vote for.

I have great respect for the gentlemen who have offered this amendment, they are very thoughtful people, but I must say this amendment is absolutely the wrong direction. It does not accomplish what they want. It does not accomplish the kind of scrutiny they want, which is what we will find in the general provisions of the bill. We have a lot of oversight. We have more reporting, we have more oversight requirements, we have requirements that if there are changes in the amount of the funds, if it is moved from one to the other, there has to be notification to the Congress. We are doing that oversight. That is the responsibility of Congress. But cutting the amount of assistance to Iraq in half is not the way to proceed. I urge my colleagues to reject this amendment.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

The CHAIRMAN. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. KIND).

The question was taken; and the Chairman announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Mr. KIND. Mr. Chairman, I demand a recorded vote.

The CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. KIND) will be postponed.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. STUPAK

Mr. STUPAK. Mr. Chairman, I offer an amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

Amendment offered by Mr. STUPAK:

In the paragraph in chapter 1 of title I under the heading ''Military Personnel, Army'', insert after the dollar amount the following: ''(increased by $188,420,000)''.

In the paragraph in chapter 1 of title I under the heading ''Military Personnel, Navy'', insert after the dollar amount the following: ''(increased by $12,616,000)''.

In the paragraph in chapter 1 of title I under the heading ''Military Personnel, Marine Corps'', insert after the dollar amount the following: ''(increased by $11,643,000)''.

In the paragraph in chapter 1 of title I under the heading ''Military Personnel, Air Force'', insert after the dollar amount the following: ''(increased by $52,322,000)''.

In the paragraph in chapter 2 of title II under the heading ''Iraq Relief and Reconstruction Fund'', insert after the aggregate dollar amount the following: ''(reduced by $1,007,000,000)''.

Mr. STUPAK (during the reading). Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent that the amendment be considered as read and printed in the RECORD.

The CHAIRMAN. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Michigan?

There was no objection.

The CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to the order of the House of Thursday, October 17, 2003, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. STUPAK) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. STUPAK).

Mr. STUPAK. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I ask that my amendment to provide a $1,500 bonus to the men and women who have served in Iraq be joined by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. DOYLE), the gentleman from Washington (Mr. INSLEE), the gentleman from Texas (Mr. LAMPSON), the gentleman from California (Mr. CARDOZA), and the gentlewoman from Minnesota (Ms. MCCOLLUM), and all those who have cosponsored my base bill, H.R. 3051. They have all asked to join with me in providing this bonus to the men and women who have served in Iraq and Afghanistan during fiscal year 2004.

This amendment provides a $265 million increase in the base pay for all of our military services' troops. This is the amount that is needed to provide a $1,500 bonus to each person serving, including our National Guard and Reserve units serving in Iraq or Afghanistan.

This $1,500 bonus is paid for by cutting the appropriate sum from the bill, from the amount set aside to import petroleum products into Iraq. In this $87 billion supplemental appropriation for Iraq, we surely can afford to boost the pay of the service men and women by $1,500.

What this amounts to when we look at the total bill, for every $328.30, we are giving our troops $1. Certainly, we can afford $1 for every $328 we spend in Iraq and Afghanistan. Our troops are really carrying the true burden of our commitment to Iraq and Afghanistan, and at least we can give them $1 compared to $328 which we are pouring into Iraq and Afghanistan.

Our soldiers have lived basically in nearly primitive conditions. We had an amendment yesterday on the floor, the Obey amendment, which would increase the quality of life for our Armed Services while there, and when they come home. Unfortunately, that amendment was defeated. This is an opportunity to show our troops that this Congress is united behind them in the service they are providing.

These deployments that we are now undertaking of our troops, our Guard and our Reserve units, is the longest deployment we have had of military personnel since Vietnam. They have now been deployed for up to a year in Afghanistan and Iraq. Recently, the Pentagon provided a 2-week leave for our troops after they serve 12 months. We know some 700 soldiers a day come back to the United States. They are only paid to fly into BWI, Baltimore-Washington International Airport, and then they are stuck. If their family is in Michigan, Iowa, Tennessee, they have no way of getting home. They do not even get a government rate to finish the trip home. The military does not provide a ticket for them to see their families.

And how about our National Guard and Reserve units over in Iraq and Afghanistan, first they were only going to be called up for a few months, then 6 months, and now it is a year. While our National Guard and Reserve units are proud to serve, and are willing to leave their civilian jobs to serve, how do they support their families back home, when they leave their civilian jobs?

In my district, National Guard Unit 1437 from Slt. St. Marie, Michigan, just came back. They told me about the financial hardship it is to make ends meet at home while they are over in Iraq.

□ 0930

Right now the U.S. Army Reserve Unit 652, a bridge-building unit, is in Iraq. It is from the Harvey and Marquette, Michigan area. What about their financial burdens? What about the financial burdens we place on the families? Well, this $1,500 bonus is not going to solve all of these financial burdens for these people, and I do not believe that asking for $1 out of every $328 we are going to pour into Iraq and Afghanistan, to give our troops $1 is asking too much.

Again, to pay for this, in the amendment we propose to cut the oil import into Iraq. Iraq possesses the second largest oil reserves in the world. I did not know why we even have to import into Iraq, but I think we should at least be able to cut that and provide this bonus to these people.

I know some may argue that Iraq may not have enough diesel fuel or kerosene to see them through the winter. Therefore, we somehow ask the American taxpayers to make sure that they will have the diesel and kerosene to get through this winter to heat their homes. But what about our own energy needs here in this country? What about this winter? Heating oil, natural gas, and propane is expected to go sky high, and we will be in short supply here at home. Americans will be scraping and sacrificing to get through the winter. The Iraqis should at least share in this sacrifice when it comes to their oil needs.

Mr. Chairman, it still does not make much sense to me to have oil imported into Iraq which, again, possesses the second largest oil reserves in the world.

Mr. YOUNG of Florida. Mr. Chairman, I claim the time in opposition to the amendment, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, on the first amendment offered today, the amendment offered actually was different than the one that we had agreed to last night in the unanimous consent request, and that is okay; we have no problem with that. But I would just ask my colleagues that in the event that any amendment that they would offer, if it is different than the one that we agreed to last night, please let us know that when they actually offer the amendment, so that we are prepared to deal with the proper amendment.

Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent that the balance of the time be controlled by the gentleman from California (Chairman LEWIS) of the Subcommittee on Defense.

The CHAIRMAN. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume. Good morning, Mr. Chairman, and welcome back. The Chairman carried forward a very full day yesterday, and we appreciate his help.

This amendment, and amendments like it that we have seen much of the day yesterday, is a very appealing sort of amendment, for it essentially says we have money in this package, and why do we not take some of it and add additional funding for our troops one way or another. Obviously, that has appeal.

The gentleman from Michigan (Mr. STUPAK) is a very fine Member from Michigan and he has expressed his concern about the troops before. Yesterday I heard people who had never expressed concern for our troops and, in fact, had not even voted for our bill in the past who were suddenly very, very concerned, and that is a little disconcerting. The gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. MURTHA) and I, my colleague and partner, have made every effort in this package and packages before it to aggressively increase funding available for our troops, especially those who are serving our country overseas and those who are in harm's way.

This specific proposal adds $265 million to the military personnel accounts. It suggests that it is enough to pay for a $1,500 bonus for each serviceman who is in the region. The offset is to reduce $1 billion for the reconstruction effort in Iraq.

I must say, one of the strongest arguments regarding this, besides the fact that we have done everything we can to help our troops in the previous bills and in this one, is the reality that the experts, the generals in charge of our military effort over there, say that their number one priority is reconstruction, because it is the way to, first of all, secure our troops while they are there and, secondly, the way to make certain they get home as quickly as possible is to see the economy of Iraq move forward, get it back on track, and that is part of what this bill is about.

Mr. MURTHA. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. LEWIS of California. I yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

Mr. MURTHA. Mr. Chairman, I know that there is no one in this Chamber who has more concern about the Reserve and Guard than the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. STUPAK). He has units that have been deployed, as all of us have. I am getting questions and concerns from the families in my district, and all over the country they are writing to me. I had a 67-year-old say that he was retired for 10 years and they were trying to call him back.

But I do not think, as hard as we work for pay, I do not think an amendment like this helps us. I think we really have a problem. I know we all want to help the troops, but we struggle all the time trying to make sure we balance out the money they make. I just do not think this is the right way to do it. I think what we have to do is certainly take a look at it, working with the services themselves.

Mr. Chairman, 65 percent of our money right now goes to personnel. We put a big health care package in. Our subcommittee works helping the troops; that is what we concentrate on. I think it is just something we cannot accept. I would ask the Members to vote against this amendment, no matter how all of us would like to see the troops get more money.

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Chairman, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. KOLBE).

Mr. KOLBE. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania for his comments.

Mr. Chairman, here we go again. The last amendment cut 50 percent of the reconstruction dollars; this only cuts 1 billion of the dollars out of reconstruction. But I am still left with the question, what is it that members do not understand regarding the importance of reconstruction assistance? We have been told over and over again by our commanders, by everybody that is out there, that the dollars we are spending on reconstruction is part of national security. It is just as important as what we do for our Guard and Reserves. It is just as important as what we do in terms of providing ammunition and vehicles and all the armor and the other items that are needed by our troops that are over there.

The reconstruction is a vital part of this program; and if we short that, all we are doing is saying to the men and women in uniform who are there in Iraq that we are going to leave you there better off, with maybe more creature comforts, maybe with more vehicles, but we are going to leave you in this bleak, hostile landscape.

Where is this billion coming from? Is it coming from what we are going to do to try to create a new constitution? Is it coming from the governing council? Is it coming from the kerosene funding? Is it coming from the clean water for the children over there? Where is it coming from?

Mr. Chairman, to take this money out of the reconstruction is the wrong approach. We should not be doing that. I hope my colleagues will reject this amendment.

The CHAIRMAN. All time for debate has expired.

The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. STUPAK).

The question was taken; and the Chairman announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Mr. STUPAK. Mr. Chairman, I demand a recorded vote.

The CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. STUPAK) will be postponed.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. DEFAZIO

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Chairman, I offer an amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

Amendment offered by Mr. DEFAZIO:

At the end of the bill (before the short title), insert the following:

SEC. . None of the funds made available in this Act may be used for the participation of Iraq in the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC).

Mr. DEFAZIO (during the reading). Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent that the amendment be considered as read and printed in the RECORD.

The CHAIRMAN. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Oregon?

There was no objection.

The CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to the order of the House of Thursday, October 16, 2003, the gentleman from Oregon

(Mr. DEFAZIO) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO).

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

This amendment will not, as has previously been criticized, deduct from the funds that will be used to build Iraq or, I should say, the money we will borrow to build Iraq. It is a simple amendment. It says, none of the funds made available in this act, U.S. taxpayer dollars, may be used for the participation of Iraq in the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries.

Now, why would we want to restrict that?

Well, the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries is a cartel. It is an energy cartel. They flout international law, the World Trade Organization, and other agreements by artificially constraining production in violation of the World Trade Organization's precepts to drive up the price, to profit themselves; and, of course, U.S. consumers are the losers.

Now, OPEC controls about 40 percent of the world's oil production, three-quarters of the reserves, and they set these production quotas for its 11 members.

We have heard a lot about how Iraq is going to become a free market economy. It is going to have a tremendous impact on world oil prices when its production hits the free market. If they join OPEC, they will be assigned a quota; and their quota will be controlled in the interests of OPEC, not international oil supply, not the consumers of the United States of America, but solely to benefit members of a price-fixing oil cartel.

This same cartel agreed to cut oil production, they just voted a couple of weeks ago, on November 1, by 900,000 barrels a day, which is already raising the price of gasoline at the pump here in the United States, jacking up the price of home heating oil as we go into a home heating season here in the United States. And the Iraqi representative who was sent to the last meeting at the behest of Mr. Bremer and the United States, in all probability with U.S. funds, Ibrahim Bahr al-Uloum said Iraq should play an active role in achieving the objectives of this organization, which translated, means Iraq fully intends to participate in the price-fixing, the manipulation, and the cartel.

I do not believe that U.S. taxpayer dollars should participate in this activity, which is contrary to the United States, the precepts we advocate in world trade, and our own consumers and taxpayers.

Now, why do we need the amendment? Well, Mr. Bremer has supported the membership of Iraq in OPEC, the price-fixing cartel. There are ample discretionary funds in the bill in addition to the $2.1 billion that will go to rebuild the Iraq oil infrastructure and flows through the Iraqi oil ministry which could be used to facilitate the participation in this price-fixing cartel. I just do not think that the United States taxpayers should be asked to foot this bill.

Hopefully, in fact, the U.S. will try and convince the Iraqi council and others that it would not be in their best interests to participate in a price-fixing cartel, particularly if they are going to depend upon us for so many billions of dollars to fix their oil infrastructure.

I know the gentleman from Arizona believes very much in the rule of law and is a big advocate of the World Trade Organization, their dispute mechanism, resolution mechanism; and I am certain he is very well aware that the quotas of OPEC violate the precepts of the WTO. They are not based in a shortage; they create shortages. The only way we can constrain supply under the WTO in this manner is if we have a certified shortage or conservation of resources. This is neither. This is price-fixing to gouge American consumers and others in oil-importing countries, and the United States taxpayers should have none of this.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. KOLBE. Mr. Chairman, I rise to claim the time in opposition. I will not take 5 minutes. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I agree with most everything the gentleman from Oregon has said. I certainly do not believe the taxpayers of the United States should be paying for Iraq when there is a newly constituted government there to be participating in the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, known as OPEC. The fact is they most certainly, almost certainly, will continue to be a member of that organization; and, in fact, they have already attended meetings in kind of an observer status. But none of our funds should be used to do that, since they are generating a fair amount of oil funds now that are paying for much of their internal costs of government, although not enough to do the reconstruction, which is what we are having the discussions today about. That would be the funds that they would use to do that, but I quite agree that funds from the United States taxpayers should not be used for that.

Therefore, Mr. Chairman, I am prepared to accept this amendment.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

The CHAIRMAN. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MS. MILLENDER-MCDONALD

Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD. Mr. Chairman, I offer an amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

Amendment offered by Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD:

In the paragraph in chapter 1 of title I under the heading ''Operation and Maintenance, Defense-Wide'', insert after the aggregate dollar amount preceding paragraph (1) the following: ''(reduced by $50,000,000) (increased by $50,000,000)''.

The CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to the order of the House of October 16, 2003, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes on the amendment.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD).

Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Today I am offering an amendment that directs $50 million from the Operation and Maintenance Defense-Wide account to the Family Advocacy program that is administered by the Defense Department. This amendment addresses the fundamental needs that will be facing our returning military personnel and their families when they return home from Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom.

The Family Advocacy program provides support services to families that are transitioning from the frontline to the home front. This additional $50 million in funding will enable military families to get personal and marriage counseling which will work to reduce the incidence of domestic violence and suicide among our military personnel.

□ 0945

As we are all aware, Mr. Chairman, domestic violence occurs within all groups and levels of society. However, the military presents families with particular challenges not normally found in civilian society.

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Chairman, will the gentlewoman yield?

Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD. I yield to the gentleman from California.

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Chairman, I appreciate very much the gentlewoman yielding, and she is in the midst of a very important statement, but I wanted to share with her, as well as my colleagues, that I believe she is highlighting a very important problem.

We do provide for $22 million within the bill, but frankly, the Department tells me that the challenges are very real, we may need more money, and rather than taking my 5 minutes, I am inclined to let the gentlewoman know that we are going to accept her amendment.

Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman so much.

Mr. Chairman, I need not say anymore. I appreciate the other side accepting this.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

The CHAIRMAN. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD).

The amendment was agreed to.

Mr. KOLBE. Mr. Chairman, as the designee of the gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOUNG), I move to strike the last

word, and I yield to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. MANZULLO).

Mr. MANZULLO. Mr. Chairman, I was prepared to introduce an amendment. There will be a better time under the rules to do that, but I will just take a couple of minutes to explain what that amendment would have done, if that is okay with the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. KOLBE).

The amendment that we had been prepared to introduce, and which, actually, we will execute in another way as the chairman of the Committee on Small Business regards the reporting requires of H.R. 3289, and, essentially, what we are trying to do here is two things.

The first thing is to have the reporting requirement so that every 60 days the Federal Government will have to file a written report with the United States Congress stating the nature of these contracts that are being used for the reconstruction of Iraq, the country of origin of incorporation or entity getting the contract and the country of origin of the services or manufactured items. There is a very rich opportunity in this country to help restore the crumbling manufacturing base by taking the $21 billion in money to rebuild Iraq and to target that at United States' manufacturing companies which have lost nearly 3 million workers in the past 2½ years.

The present reporting requirements of H.R. 3289 are not adequate for Congress to perform the oversight functions. The present bill requires no reporting to Congress where a foreign company wins a contract to assist Iraq in a free and open competition. The bill, however, does require a report to Congress where a contract is awarded on the basis of restricted competition such as a small business set aside awarded to U.S. small business.

The issue here is accountability and, essentially, the issue is under Article I of the Constitution, section 9, where it says, No money shall be drawn from the Treasury but in consequence of appropriations made by law, and a regular statement and account of the receipts and expenditures of all public money shall be published from time to time.

We simply would have asked in the amendment, had it been ruled in order, for the United States Congress to follow the constitutional mandate of reporting. So we will find another time to do that.

Meanwhile, Mr. Chairman, what we have going on in this country is 93,000 manufacturing jobs have been lost in the past 60 days in America. The slide has continued for over 3 years at the rate of about 57- to 60,000 manufacturing jobs per month, and this Congress should step up to the bat and say if we are going to spend $21 billion in taxpayers' dollars, let us at least use it to help keep the jobs of the hard-hit manufacturing sector in this country.

I want to thank the gentleman from Florida (Chairman YOUNG) for the opportunity to speak, look forward to working with him. I will be writing to the people in charge of the conference to ask them to consider this extremely important amendment.

Another amendment that we would have introduced, had it been in order, would have been at least to request the people buying supplies in Iraq with American taxpayers' dollars to prefer American manufacturers and American suppliers of services. We need to find a way to help create jobs, to help stop the ebb of service sector jobs and manufacturing jobs in this country. We should be using this process to rebuild Iraq for that opportunity.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. REYES

Mr. REYES. Mr. Chairman, I offer an amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

Amendment offered by Mr. REYES:

In chapter 1 of title I, in the item relating to ''INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT ACCOUNT'', after the first dollar amount, insert the following: ''(reduced by $5,000,000) (increased by $5,000,000)''.

The CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to the order of the House of Thursday, October 16, 2003, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. REYES) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

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

Mr. REYES. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

This amendment is designed to address serious shortfalls in two critical areas to our national security, foreign language proficiency and diversity in their workforce.

Specifically, my amendment will cut $5 million from the general intelligence community management account and add $5 million for programs designed to increase language proficiency and workforce diversity in the intelligence community.

Success in the global war on terrorism and in Iraq demands that our Nation have the best intelligence collection and analysis possible. Officers with only a marginal understanding of the language and the culture of intelligence targets will only be marginally effective for this country.

The report of the joint inquiry into the events of 9/11 reflects my longstanding concerns about the lack of progress that has been made by the intelligence community in enhancing language proficiency and diversifying its workforce.

Specifically, it recommended that the intelligence community implement, expeditiously, measures to identify and recruit linguists outside the community whose abilities are relevant to the needs of counterterrorism.

The joint inquiry further recommended that the intelligence community should enhance recruitment of a more ethnically and culturally diverse workforce and devise a strategy to capitalize upon the unique cultural and linguistic capabilities of first-generation Americans.

To address these critical needs, my amendment will provide funds for training in critical foreign languages and language maintenance and award programs. It will also fund scholarship programs, recruitment efforts and other nontraditional programs that are designed to enhance the recruitment and the retention of a diverse workforce.

The intelligence community must have a diverse set of people that have the cultural awareness, the language familiarity and the skill sets that will allow our Nation to succeed against an increasing number of formidable foes around the globe. My amendment will provide funds for increasing diversity of the workforce and language proficiency, two vital and important national security imperatives.

I hope that I can get the support of all my colleagues on this very critical amendment.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Chairman, I rise very reluctantly to oppose this amendment.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman from California (Mr. LEWIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

The gentleman from Texas (Mr. REYES) is pointing to an area that the committee is very concerned about, and indeed the intelligence community has been, as has our Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence here in the House.

The amendment seems to have no real overall effect on the intelligence community's management account. It decreases the account by $5 million and then increases that same account, but the point that I would make is that this shifting of money would tend to have a direct impact upon both the FBI and the Department of Energy, as well as the broader intelligence community, in their efforts to develop our effort on the intelligence side in the war on terrorism.

In turn, in recent years, there has been sizeable adjustment in those accounts that addressed the question of linguistics, the training of people who know foreign language, et cetera, and as my colleague knows, identifying such people, first of all, takes time and takes time to train them, and so we just cannot throw money at it and cause a change like that. I mean, unlike a lot of accounts where we just put money in and something happens tomorrow, linguistic development, that kind of training is very difficult. So it is much more a regular order kind of process.

I could describe this in great detail in private between us, but some of the intelligence questions here really should not be discussed in this environment, but in turn, it is an important problem. If I thought a $5 million shift would make a difference and not affect other elements of our war on terrorism, I would support the gentleman's amendment, but I reluctantly oppose it.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. REYES. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I have a high degree of respect for my colleague. I have been on the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence finishing up my third year, and the bottom line is that we have not seen a strategic plan to, in fact, diversify the workforce or specifically address issues dealing with language.

My purpose in offering this amendment is to continue to highlight the critical nature and the imperative challenge that we face when we do not have this as a priority for our country. That is really why I left this at $5 million because I did not want to try to hurt any one program or this account in particular, but I specifically wanted to highlight the critical need and the lack of a strategic plan by our intelligence community to work in this particular area.

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. REYES. I yield to the gentleman from California.

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to have this exchange with my colleague. We are really coming from the same position. These accounts are very delicately balanced now, as the gentleman knows, and the impact that this shifting might very well have on work that is vital within the FBI, et cetera, concerns me.

In turn, I think our dialogue here, I think, is highlighting the matter. There is no doubt that the committee is reflecting the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence's concern about improving what we are doing relative to foreign language training and linguistics. There is little doubt that the Congress, the House of Representatives, has said very clearly in this bill in other sections, as well as this dialogue, that this is a priority. We expect the entire intelligence community to respond.

So, frankly, I want to be very complimentary of the gentleman's effort, but shifting the money here could make it very difficult to deal with the other body in a fashion that we hope to move forward with. So I am reserved relative to this amendment, but do very much appreciate my colleague's helping us highlight this important area.

Mr. REYES. Mr. Chairman, in deference to my colleague, I would close by saying I hope we can have a recorded vote, so that we can understand the importance of the issue. I hope the gentleman is in agreement.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

We certainly will but, frankly, I will end up opposing, asking for a ''no'' vote on that vote. I frankly do not like to see us end it that way, and we could very well end it that way, and maybe that does not help with the highlighting.

Mr. GIBBONS. Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of this amendment, and I commend my colleague on the Subcommittee on Human Intelligence, Analysis, and Counterintelligence for his work on this issue.

Today, our Nation is fortunate to have General Abizaid leading our troops in Central Command. General Abizaid is an expert on Middle Eastern affairs, and fluent in Arabic. He is the perfect man to have leading our troops in this region.

Unfortunately, people like General Abizaid are rare in the United States. Our Nation has neglected programs that build proficiency in those languages, and we are struggling to catch up. Last year, the GAO reported that the FBI had thousands of hours of audio tapes and pages of written material that have not been reviewed or translated due to the lack of qualified translators.

The GAO also noted that the State Department suffers from a language proficiency shortfall whereby Foreign Service officers are put in positions with lower-than-desired levels of proficiency. These shortfalls have not existed without cost. These shortfalls have weakened the fight against international terrorism and drug trafficking; and resulted in less effective representation of U.S. interests overseas.

The lack of trusted interpreters and human intelligence sources is slowing down the work to expose Saddam Hussein's weapons programs.

Most critically, the lack of skilled interpreters has slowed our efforts in the war on terrorism. This amendment will help alleviate these problems by focusing on the critical need to address the shortfall.

We cannot ignore this shortfall—the need for improved HUMINT is an emergency that I urge my colleagues to support with this amendment.

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. REYES. Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

The CHAIRMAN. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. REYES).

The question was taken; and the Chairman announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Mr. REYES. Mr. Chairman, I demand a recorded vote.

The CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. REYES) will be postponed.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. RAMSTAD

Mr. RAMSTAD. Mr. Chairman, I offer an amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

Amendment offered by Mr. RAMSTAD:

Page 3, line 13, insert after the dollar amount the following: ''(decreased by 98,000,000)''.

Page 7, line 7, insert after the dollar amount the following: ''(increased by 98,000,000)''.

□ 1000

The CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to the order of the House of Thursday, October 16, 2003, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. RAMSTAD) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. RAMSTAD).

Mr. RAMSTAD. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, I rise today to offer an amendment to the supplemental appropriations bill to provide travel and transportation costs for our brave troops to return home during R&R breaks. I want to thank my friend, the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MOORE), for his work on this important legislation. I would also like to thank the chairman and ranking member for their tireless work on the underlying legislation, which is so critical to our mission in Iraq.

Mr. Chairman, our military recently began employing its first Rest and Recuperation program during the Vietnam War. This means that soldiers who have served 12 straight months in Iraq qualify for R&R, and some 700 troops per day are currently returning to the United States to see their families. Unfortunately, once the troops reach our shores, they are too often stranded at the airport. That is because the airports to which they are flown are nowhere near their homes or families, and same-day airline fares are far too expensive for most of our troops to afford. Being stranded at the Baltimore Washington Airport will not provide much rest or relaxation to those who are making such great sacrifices to defend our freedom.

Anyone, Mr. Chairman, who has served in the military knows how important it is to get home, especially those serving in combat. The Ramstad-Moore amendment simply shifts $98 million in funds from the Iraq Freedom Fund to the Army's personnel account.

Mr. Chairman, an amendment stating Congress' intent to expand the R&R program to cover domestic travel costs was agreed to by unanimous consent during the other body's consideration of the Iraq supplemental. This amendment today would provide the funding necessary to pay for these costs and would put this body on record in support of this important initiative for our brave troops.

The Federal Government should clearly cover all travel and transportation costs necessary to return our brave troops to their homes, briefly reuniting wives and husbands, parents and children, friends and loved ones. Getting our brave troops home for rest and recuperation is the very least we can do to show our troops and their families that we appreciate their service and their great sacrifice, and I urge my colleagues to support this amendment.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Chairman, I rise to claim the time in opposition, though it is my pleasure to say that I am highly inclined to support the Ramstad amendment.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. RAMSTAD. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume to thank the distinguished chairman for accepting this important amendment to show our troops that we truly do appreciate their important service to our country and their great sacrifice.

Mr. Chairman, how much time remains?

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman has 2½ minutes remaining.

Mr. RAMSTAD. Mr. Chairman, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MOORE).

Mr. MOORE. Mr. Chairman, I want to thank my good friend, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. RAMSTAD), for his great work on this bill. This is a worthy bill that should be considered and adopted by this body, and I urge all of my colleagues to vote for the Ramstad-Moore amendment.

Mr. Chairman, back on October 1, I introduced House Resolution 387, a bipartisan resolution that now has 127 cosponsors, and basically it did exactly what the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. RAMSTAD) has written into this amendment, and that is pay for the rest and recuperation travel, full travel cost, for all of our military personnel serving in Iraq and Afghanistan.

I heard a story on NPR about 3 weeks ago and was frankly stunned to hear that young people who had been serving in Afghanistan and Iraq were being brought home for R&R after serving their several months in Afghanistan or Iraq, and then being deposited in Baltimore or some other port city, and said, you are here, you have to pay for your own travel home and back.

I was stunned. In fact, I did not believe that was really true. I asked my staff to check, and found out in fact it was true, that they were required to pay their travel costs home and back. This is not the way we show honor and respect for the young people who serve our military and protect our country.

So I applaud again the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. RAMSTAD) for his work on this, and I ask all of our colleagues to join with us in supporting this. Again, 127 have signed on a similar bill. There is broad bipartisan support in this body. And as the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. RAMSTAD) said, the other body has already passed a similar amendment by voice vote.

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume to say that I am prepared to accept the amendment and to yield back.

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. LEWIS of California. I yield to the gentleman from Wisconsin.

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Chairman, I simply would say that we certainly have no objection to this amendment on this side. We have had several other amendments, so it is about time it is accepted.

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Chairman, I rise to voice my support to the Ramstad-Moore amendment, which would allow troops on rest and recreation leave to return from Iraq to their home of record. This amendment benefits every member of the military serving in Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom from across the United States, its territories and possessions. I am pleased that this amendment will enable servicemen and women from Guam to return home, even if only for a few days. This amendment will make a great improvement in the morale of our troops because they will be re-united with friends and family who are hoping and praying for their safe return. On behalf of the children that will be reunited with a parent and the couples that will see each other for the first time in months, I strongly urge my colleagues to adopt this amendment.

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. RAMSTAD. Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

The CHAIRMAN. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. RAMSTAD).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MS. JACKSON-LEE OF TEXAS

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Chairman, I offer an amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

Amendment Offered by Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas:

Page 30, line 1, after the dollar amount insert ''(reduced by $100,000,000)''.

Page 30, line 5, after the dollar amount insert ''(reduced by $300,000,000)''.

Page 30, line 10, after the dollar amount insert ''(increased by $300,000,000)''.

Page 33, lines 19 and 20, after each dollar amount insert ''(increased by $70,000,000)''.

The CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to the order of the House of Thursday, October 16, 2003, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE).

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, I think it is important as we proceed with this debate for the framework to be established that this is the largest supplemental in the history of our country. If we were to follow the instructions of the Federalist Papers, where this body was the place of speech and discourse and debate, our Members would be engaged in this very serious debate for an extended period of time.

Our Founding Fathers established this place of democracy so that we could represent our constituents. In a town hall meeting just a few days ago, my constituents asked about issues such as accountability and issues as to how this money will impact both the peace and harmony of the world we have come to know and come to love. They were concerned about some very important issues: their children, the 19- and 20-year-olds that we have on the front lines.

Over this past weekend, I had the opportunity to meet with many of our troops that are experiencing an R&R from the Mideast. Mr. Chairman, I was aghast at some of the issues that they were concerned about. And I respect the appropriators, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOUNG) and the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. OBEY), and I know the gentleman from California (Mr. LEWIS) and the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. MURTHA) have worked very hard, as has the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. KOLBE) and the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. LOWEY); but it disturbs me not having the ability to offer important amendments. I hope I can work with both the authorizers and the appropriators so that we would have the opportunity to address the questions that I heard out of the mouths of these young men and women.

This young man, Mr. Chairman, is playing the song ''Amazing Grace.'' These young people are saying that it is important to understand what they are dealing with. Carpenters and electricians are being used as police officers without any training. Reservists and National Guard are not getting their pay on time. And they asked me the simple question of why they cannot rotate in a period of 7 to 8 months, as opposed to not knowing when they would leave. So I was going to offer an amendment that would ensure that if this is passed that no monies are expended until the Reservists and the National Guard monies are back on track and are being paid.

Secretary Wolfowitz said that we had enough money in Iraq so that we should not have had to have this supplemental of $20 billion; so the least we can do, if we are not using the Iraqi oil money, is to at least make sure our young troops are paid on time; that our young troops as well are able to come home in an orderly time. And I am going to engage the authorizers. I do not want their commentary to me, their plea for help to go on deaf ears. I hope there is someone on the other side of the aisle paying attention. Of course, Mr. Chairman, whenever a Democrat says anything, it is of no value. Most of our amendments have been voted down, and there is not a collegial and collaborative method of looking at this.

The amendment I intend to offer this morning is very simple. It responds to the concerns about Afghanistan, Iraq and human rights and the rights of women. And it simply asks that we move money out of the Iraqi oil, which is $2.1 billion. And, Mr. Chairman, if we want to put a new face on America and Iraq, if we want people to understand our values and the importance of protecting human rights, we want to move beyond the graves of bones and not have those who move into positions of power disrespect the diversity that is in Iraq, then we must invest in human rights.

If we are going to make sure that the Taliban stays out, then we must invest in the teachers of Afghanistan. Those

are the women. We must enhance human rights. We know recently that in the human rights area in Afghanistan, we have found that there have been 2,000 complaints. It is imperative that we have this money.

Mr. Chairman, we continue to shortchange Afghanistan's reconstruction and security, and at the peril of jeopardizing the rights of Afghan women and girls and hopes for a peaceful, democratic Afghanistan. The funding levels in H.R. 3289 neither adequately make up for the small amounts of reconstruction funding thus far nor do they meet the country's needs. In particular I am concerned about the rights of women and girls in Afghanistan. I am also concerned about human rights efforts in Iraq.

This amendment increases the funds for Afghanistan Relief and Reconstruction by $70 million in order to adequately support the human rights needs of Afghan women and girls. This amendment also addresses the human rights needs in Iraq by shifting $300 million within the funds for Iraq Reconstruction to the areas of human rights, education, refugees and democracy and governance.

My visit to Afghanistan in March 2002 demonstrated that we cannot abandon Afghanistan and must take necessary steps to help the women and children of that nation. In 1989 America turned its back on Afghanistan after Soviet withdrawal. The events of September 11th have proven that we cannot afford to turn a blind eye on a country that is still susceptible to deterioration, yet that is what we have done.

After the military intervention by a US-led coalition that led to the end of the Taliban regime in November 2001 Colin Powell, US Secretary of State, declared that, ''The recovery of Afghanistan must entail the restoration of the rights of Afghan women. Indeed, it will not be possible without them. The rights of the women of Afghanistan will not be negotiable.''

We must honor our promises to the women of Afghanistan, that is why a significant portion of the $70 million my amendment designates to Afghanistan relief and reconstruction must go directly to the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission. The Independent Human Rights Commission was established by the Bonn Agreement and is chaired by the courageous Dr. Sima Samar, the first Minister of Women's Affairs who was then forced from that position by fundamentalist forces. While there have been improvements since the fall of the Taliban, human rights violations continue to be rampant and the human right situation in Afghanistan has actually deteriorated over the past few months due to the lack of security. Since the Human Rights Commission was established in June 2002, it has received over 2,000 complaints of human rights violations, over 900 of these complaints have been since June 2003.

Under Dr. Samar's leadership, the Commission has established regional offices which create public awareness about women's rights and human rights and monitors rights violations, led human rights education programs, provided leadership for the inclusion of women's rights in the Afghan constitution, has established human rights training programs for police, and has intervened directly in numerous cases of human rights violations. As an independent agency, the Human Rights Commission is able to act on behalf of those whose rights are most vulnerable. We must strengthen the Human Rights Commission as a permanent institution within Afghanistan so that it can safeguard women's rights and human rights into the future. I urge that at least $10 million of the funds from this amendment be devoted to the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission to carryout their brave work.

Girls' schools are under attack by fundamentalist extremists. In the past year, more than 30 girls schools have been burned down or violently attacked. At most of the sites of these attacks, leaflets have been distributed threatening the families of girls who attend school or the teachers who teach them. Flyers distributed at the site of one of the first attacks read ''Stop sending your women to offices and daughters to schools. It spreads indecency and vulgarity. Stand ready for the consequences if you do not heed the advice.'' Some families are now afraid to send their daughters to school.

Recently, mosques in Kabul warned that if women did not quit their work with NGOs that jihad would be waged. Women who do not wear burqas routinely face harassment and threats. Trafficking of young women is a major problem in Afghanistan. Warlords in some areas continue to impose Taliban-like restrictions on women. In Herat, women are still forced to wear the burqa, are sometimes pulled off of the street for forced chastity tests, and are not allowed to attend classes taught by men.

Even if the constitution adopted by the Loya Jirga in December contains women's rights provisions, the work for women's rights will be far from over. Security in the country must be dramatically improved and rule of law established for the constitution to be enforced. Massive human rights and women's rights public education programs are necessary to make people aware of their rights, to deter human rights violations, and to bring the violators of these rights to justice, which is one of the reasons that the work of the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission is so essential.

Forced marriages are a major form of human rights violation faced by women. Under Taliban and also today, women routinely taken from their homes into forced marriages that are imposed against their will. Often these are underage marriages as well, with girls as young as 8 forced to marry old men. Some are cases where commanders force marriages on women in order to take control of land that the women have inherited.

Warring factions continue to fight, and in these areas of the country military commanders routinely rape women. In one case, women fled into a river and drowned father than suffer sexual violence at the hands of the commanders.

In the last two years only 1 percent of Afghanistan's reconstruction needs have been met. The country remains in shambles from two decades of war and lack of development. Most people in the country do not have access to electricity, health care, schools, and sanitation. Not only is the lack of reconstruction depriving people of very basic services, but it is contributing to instability in the country and a lack of confidence in the central government.

The transitional government in Afghanistan estimates that between $20–30 billion is needed over the next five years. In other post-conflict settings, an average of $250 per person was spent per year in aid. But in Afghanistan, donors spent only $64 per person in 2002.

The proposed $800 million Afghanistan reconstruction supplemental spending request represents less than 1 percent of the total $87 billion Iraq and Afghanistan package. The $20 billion request for Iraq reconstruction funding is 25 times as large as the Afghanistan request. Yet Afghanistan has approximately the same population size as Iraq and suffered more destruction over 23 year of war.

The administration has talked about modeling reconstruction efforts on the Marshall Plan. Yet funding proposed for Afghanistan in crucial areas is low or nonexistent—$49 million for health care, $191 million, for road construction and nothing specifically for human rights.

The mark to increase reconstruction funding for Afghanistan by $400 million is a step in the right direction. But still more must be done, especially for women and girls.

Women and girls continue to face severe hardship and violations of their rights in Afghanistan. Yet the Afghanistan request does not specify funds for programs to improve the status of women and to remedy the tremendous injustices they faced under the Taliban regime. My amendment proposes designating $70 million for women's programs in the area of political rights and human rights, education and training, and security, protection and shelters.

Some girls have gone back to school in Afghanistan, but the majority have not because there are not enough schools and those that do exist are in very bad shape. The Asian Development Bank estimates that an additional 13,851 primary schools need to be constructed, but the Administration request is only for 275 schools. Some 40% of schools in Afghanistan were completely destroyed during the war, another 15% were heavily damaged, and in many areas of the country there were no schools for girls.

We must provide direct support to help strengthen those women-led, permanent Afghan institutions whose mission it is to promote women's rights and human rights. That is why the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission and the Ministry of Women's Affairs should get support from this bill. These are funds already authorized in the Afghan Freedom Support Act of 2002, but which still for the most part have not been appropriated. We must take bold and meaningful steps to keep our promise to the women and girls of Afghanistan.

Mr. Chairman, In addition to my desire to express vehement opposition to the supplemental appropriation request for $87 billion of H.R. 3289 and the need for better accounting of this request, I rise at this time in support of amendment number JACKSO.150 that I offered to the Rules Committee for this bill. The amendment reads as follows:

> Effective as of the end of the 45-day period beginning on the date of the enactment of this Act, none of the funds made available in this Act for the Department of Defense may be obligated or expended unless the backlog, as of the date of the enactment of this Act, in the payment to members of the reserve components of pay and allowances accrued by reason of active-duty service has been eliminated so that such payments are current and in accordance with regular disbursement cycles.

This language will give the Department of Defense a reasonable amount of time to make timely payment of compensation funds to reservist and National Guard personnel and

eliminate the backlog that causes these men and women financial hardship.

During my visit to the As-Sayliyah Central Command Base in Doha, Qatar last weekend, I heard first-hand accounts as to the extent of the delay in receiving pay experience by these ladies and gentlemen who protect our lives each day in the Middle East. These troops, many of who rely on military compensation to provide the lion's share of support for spouses and children. When the compensation is untimely or nonexistent, the troops suffer the compound effect of stress over delayed payment of personal bills and the problems that stem from the misallocation of duties, namely, ineffective directives and increased vulnerability to potential attacks.

Army reservists and National Guard members are fielding threatening phone calls from bill collectors because the federal government is not promptly reimbursing them for lodging costs and other expenses. Military officials have repeatedly confirmed that there are delays affecting thousands of reservists and Guard members, including those stationed at the U.S. Central Command in Tampa, FL. They said the scope of the war on terror has overwhelmed the Pentagon's check-writing office.

Our reservists receive repeated telephone calls demanding payment for overdue bills from the Bank of America, ironically the administrator of government-issued credit cards. A reservist at MacDill Air Force Base complained that bank representatives called at all hours—at home, at work and on a cell phone. A Pentagon official said that the backlog in compensation affects 23,000 reservists, both Army Reserve and members of the Army National Guard. The Pentagon is considering creating the Reserve Pay Center of Excellence in Cleveland to help resolve pay issues. Another official familiar with the back-pay issue at CentCom, the nerve center of the Iraq war said hundreds of Army reservists and members of the Army National Guard were having trouble getting reimbursed for travel pay.

A commander of the Army Reserve Forces learned of the problem in recent weeks during town hall meetings with reservists. Our soldiers surely do not need that kind of pressure.

An Army Reserve spokesman at Fort McPherson in Atlanta, Steve Stromball, blamed the money problem on the Defense Finance and Accounting Service, the accounting arm of the Defense Department. He said the accounting service's workload has tripled because of the number of reservists who have been mobilized to help fight the war on terror.

Since 9/11, 80,000 Army reservists have been mobilized. Over 78,238 members of the Army National Guard also have been deployed. At MacDill Air Force Base, where there are about 1,400 reservists from the various services, the problem appears to be especially acute for soldiers who live off base. The problem often boils down to rent payments. When reservists arrive at MacDill for assignments that range from six months to a year, they can get lodging on base at the MacDill Inn, which has 300 quarters assigned to military personnel. Often there is no room available, so reservists are assigned off-base housing. MacDill has contracts with 35 hotels and 10 to 15 apartment complexes.

Moreover, Reservists can choose to cover the rent themselves, but many charge it on government-issued Bank of America credit cards. The credit cards, used to cover business expenses, including rent, food and car rental, are issued depending upon how often reservists travel. However, the delay in compensation frequently leads to diminishing creditworthiness for these heroes. Each credit card has a limit of several thousand dollars and the entire balance must be paid off each month.

To cover the rent, reservists file a voucher for reimbursement and pay off the credit card balance when they get reimbursed. A transaction that used to take federal officials eight days to process, however, now takes as much as 23 days, according to a spokesman for the Defense Finance and Accounting Service. Some reservists have been unable to pay their credit card bills on time, triggering telephone calls from the bank and diminished creditworthiness. If payment is more than a month late, the bank freezes the credit card account. People who fight on the front line for our freedom and safety shouldn't experience this hardship.

Instead of creating hardship and compounded stress for our war heroes, we need to adequately and timely compensate them. It is bad enough that they must fight under extremely vulnerable conditions and with no known exit plan. The least we can do is pay them for their services.

Mr. Chairman, although the War in Iraq will cost all American taxpayers dearly, the toughest burden will fall on the shoulders of our troops serving overseas and their families here at home. This amendment states that none of the funds made available in this Act may be obligated or expended until personnel policies have been implemented to ensure that none of our troops or employees are being required to remain in Iraq for more than six months at a time. This amendment will help ensure that our troops and their families remain mentally fit and rested, and that military tours will remain a reasonable commitment in service to this nation.

I would like to commend your attention to an article in today's Washington Post, titled ''Many Troops Dissatisfied, Iraq Poll Finds.'' I know that a lot of you do not believe our nation's biggest newspapers, and feel that they are painting an unfairly gloomy picture of the situation in Iraq. But this article is just reporting on a study conducted in Iraq by the Stars and Stripes newspaper funded by the Defense Department. That study questioned 1,935 U.S. Service members serving in Iraq on their attitudes toward the war, and the jobs they are doing.

Of those, half responded that their unit's morale is low. In a statistic with ominous implications for the future of our military, 49 percent reported that they did not plan to reenlist. The most troubled of our soldiers were reservists, who used to be known as ''weekend warriors''—many of whom have families and careers put on hold almost indefinitely, as this War continues without a clear exit strategy.

The president has stated that the War on Terror will be a long and involved one. Therefore, must pace ourselves and our troops, and we must ensure that our armed services can continue to recruit good people in the future. This amendment will help do just that. As the Stars and Stripes confirmed, life in Iraq is extremely stressful for our soldiers risking their lives trying to make the best of a difficult situation. Keeping our soldiers on six-month rotations will give them time to decompress and unwind—to see friends and family, or just to get a change of scenery.

If we plan to continue to have a voluntary service military, we must make every reasonable effort to retain the soldiers we have and to make service more palatable to potential recruits. There are many brave American men and women who would be willing to commit to protecting this nation and its interest. However, we cannot expect them to make unreasonable sacrifices. A six-month tour in Iraq is a great commitment, and it is reasonable.

I hope my colleagues will support this amendment.

Mr. Chairman, I yields 10 seconds to the distinguished gentlewoman from California (Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD) in support of the amendment.

Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentlewoman from Texas for yielding me this time, and I stand in accord with what the gentlewoman from Texas has said.

It is critical, Mr. Chairman, that we recognize the importance or the violation of human rights in Iraq and the women's rights in Afghanistan. For years, I have worked with a lot of Members of the House in working on women's rights in Afghanistan and ensuring that they have more of a governance, more education, and the same as in Iraq. So I urge everyone to support the gentlewoman's amendment.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. KOLBE. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to the amendment, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself the balance of my time, and I plead with my colleagues to understand that this is a monumental decision that we are making. We need to change the face of America and Iraq and Afghanistan. We need to engage by ensuring that they understand the true values of Americans, our love for democracy, equality, and our love and respect for women's rights, our respect for human rights. It is important that we overcome the undermining of our world status after 9–11 by a preemptive attack against Iraq.

It is important as well that we respond to the needs of our young troops who have been willing to give the ultimate sacrifice and who have lost their lives on the front lines in Iraq, by ensuring that we pay them on time and that we have an exit strategy to bring our troops home. With that, Mr. Chairman, I ask that my colleagues vote for the Jackson-Lee amendment that invests in human rights and women's rights in Afghanistan and Iraq and further I ask that my amendment regarding troop pay for Reservists and the National Guard adjusted so their pay is received by them promptly and my amendment regarding a date certain for the troops to return home to the U.S. be immediately addressed.

Mr. KOLBE. Mr. Chairman, I yield I yield myself such time as I may consume, and I do rise in opposition to the amendment.

Mr. Chairman, let me begin with noting my disappointment in the remarks

of the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) that Democratic amendments have not been accepted or not been listened to. We are now in our third day of debate on this bill. We have had a large number of amendments, most of which have come from the minority side, and a number of Democratic amendments have been accepted.

When the gentlewoman said it is not done in a collegial way, let me just note specifically in the area she is talking about, education in Iraq, that there is $90 million specifically set aside for education in Iraq that was not requested by the President, because the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. LOWEY), the ranking Democrat on the subcommittee, came to me and talked to me about this issue. So we have these funds in there at the request of the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. LOWEY), at the request of the minority, not because of the President's request, but because this body, this subcommittee, has worked in a collegial fashion.

Now, what the gentlewoman is suggesting is putting more money into that and more money into Afghanistan. But our committee, again not at the President's request, but recognizing the need for us to follow through with our commitment in Afghanistan and recognizing the deteriorating security conditions in Afghanistan, our subcommittee has increased the amount of assistance for Afghanistan by almost $400 million.

□ 1015

I have already noted that we specifically set aside $90 million for education in Iraq that was not requested by the administration.

As far as the areas where this would come out of, $100 million out of the IRRF fund, $300 million out of restoring the oil production in Iraq which, by the way, is the only way Iraq is ever going to generate enough funds that they can do their own reconstruction, that they can stand on their own feet, to take that $300 million out of there is to not only harm the infrastructure, the effort to reconstruct the infrastructure, but harm the immediate needs of Iraqi citizens to have heating oil and kerosene for cooking, the cooking and heating oil that is absolutely vital as we go into the winter months there in Iraq. It has to do not just with comfort for the people in Iraq but in many cases the very livelihoods, the very survival, particularly when children are involved.

I think the gentlewoman's intentions are good, but that is why we discussed this issue at length in the subcommittee and that is why we discussed it at the full committee level too. I think we have come with what, I think, is a fair and a balanced division of the funds as it is going to the various accounts in Iraq.

And so, Mr. Chairman, I think that this would upset that balance. I do not think it is the right way to go, though I respect the gentlewoman's intentions.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. KOLBE. I yield to the gentlewoman from Texas.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. I thank the gentleman for his very thoughtful explanation. This is the kind of debate I would like to see continue in this House. I respectfully, if you will, acknowledge our difference of opinion, but what my point was is that there were many, many amendments that we had on issues that were very important on this very historic and important vote and those were not allowed. But what I would like to simply ask the gentleman from California (Mr. LEWIS) is on the amendments that I did not ask on the payment of the National Guard, and all of us have had certainly constituents in our district who have been on the front lines and who are Reservists and National Guards. One of the issues they raise, and it may be a logistical issue, is getting their pay on time. I did not get a chance to offer an amendment that said, let us ensure that we put procedures in place so that our National Guards and Reservists get their pay on time. Can we work together or can we just ensure that the logistics will ensure, since it is authorized pay, that they will be able to get those payments?

Mr. KOLBE. Mr. Chairman, I yield to the gentleman from California.

Mr. LEWIS of California. I thank the gentleman for yielding, and the gentlewoman is much too young to remember this.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. I thank the gentleman for his compliment.

Mr. LEWIS of California. During the big war, there was a word, a phrase, it is really a word, a snafu was common among all people who were in the service. The military has often screwed up, I must tell you, and it is ridiculous. Absolutely, we agree with the gentlewoman's position. We will do everything we can to improve that process. Your highlighting it here is very helpful.

Mr. KOLBE. Mr. Chairman, reclaiming my time, I would urge the Members to reject this amendment.

The CHAIRMAN. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE).

The question was taken; and the Chairman announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Chairman, I demand a recorded vote.

The CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) will be postponed.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. HOEFFEL

Mr. HOEFFEL. Mr. Chairman, I offer an amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

Amendment offered by Mr. HOEFFEL:

In section 2212(b) (relating to report on military operations and reconstruction efforts), strike paragraphs (7) through (9) and insert the following:

(7) A description of progress made toward the establishment of an independent, sovereign, and democratic government for Iraq, including an estimated schedule for the drafting of a constitution and the holding of free and fair elections.

(8) A description of the extent of international participation in the stabilization and reconstruction of Iraq, including the amount and schedule for the provision of financial assistance by other countries and international organizations.

(9) The number of members of the Armed Forces (including national guard and reserve troops) deployed in connection with Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom, an estimate of the period of time for which such forces will be deployed, and a description of progress made in replacing such forces with international or foreign peacekeeping units.

Mr. HOEFFEL (during the reading). Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent that the amendment be considered as read and printed in the RECORD.

The CHAIRMAN. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Pennsylvania?

There was no objection.

The CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to the order of the House of Thursday, October 16, 2003, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. HOEFFEL) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. HOEFFEL).

Mr. HOEFFEL. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, I believe we need more information about our situation in Iraq. I would like to offer an amendment to add additional requests for information to a section of the bill that the Appropriations Committee added, appropriately so, an amendment offered by the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER) that requires the President to submit quarterly reports to Congress on military operations and reconstruction efforts in Iraq. I think the committee did the right thing. I think we should ask for more information. And so my amendment would add additional requirements to three sections of the reporting provision already in the bill.

One provision in the bill asks for a description of progress made toward the holding of free and fair elections. My amendment would add to that section a schedule for the transfer of power to the Iraqi people, including the drafting of an Iraqi constitution.

A second section already in the bill asks for a description of the extent of international participation in the stabilization and reconstruction of Iraq, including the amount of provision for financial assistance. I would add a schedule for the provision of financial assistance from other nations and from the United Nations be added as a requirement.

And, finally, a section of the bill asks for the number of Armed Forces deployed in connection with Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom be reported quarterly. I would

add to that section an estimate on how long our troops, including the National Guard and Reserves, will remain in Iraq and the progress being made in replacing them with troops from other nations or from U.N. peacekeepers.

I think these reports on a quarterly basis would help us understand the situation in Iraq, would help this Congress fulfill our constitutional duties of oversight and would help us better exercise our power of the purse. I am concerned that we have not had an adequate and a concrete plan to win the peace in Iraq. Our soldiers performed brilliantly and bravely and the military victory was a rousing success. I am concerned that we are not winning the peace. And we have a number of national goals in Iraq. We need to stabilize the country; we need to support and better protect our troops; we need to establish a pluralistic society and a representative self-government; we need to internationalize the construction and the security in Iraq; we need to put Iraqis quickly back in charge of Iraq. For us to do our job appropriately and to exercise our oversight and exercise our power of the purse, we need more information. I would ask the House to approve this amendment that would give on a quarterly basis more information to the Congress.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

The CHAIRMAN. Does any Member seek time in opposition to the amendment?

Mr. KOLBE. Mr. Chairman, I rise to claim the time.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman from Arizona is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. KOLBE. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I will not oppose this amendment. This perfects some language that was adopted in the committee offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. HINCHEY) on requiring quarterly reports to be made and placing some additional requirements in that report which, I think, is useful information for us to have. This substitutes some language in three of the paragraphs and adds to it, tightens that up, and, for the most part, I do not have any objection to it.

I do find a problem, and I just want the gentleman to know this because that is really an issue, I think, in the conference. I do have a problem with one issue in paragraph nine where it requires that the administration give the Congress an estimate of the period of time for which such forces will be deployed. That is probably not possible for them to do, to actually tell how long the forces are going to be deployed because we do not know the circumstances of what is going to happen in Iraq either with the democracy there or with external circumstances that might require them to be there longer than we would like. But other than that, I would think the language here is helpful, and we can deal with that issue in the conference. And so, Mr. Chairman, I am prepared to accept the amendment.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. HOEFFEL. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I thank the gentleman for his comments. Just two quick comments. I gave credit to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER) for this amendment in committee. The gentleman gave credit to the gentleman from New York (Mr. HINCHEY). Whoever deserves the credit should get it, because the Committee on Appropriations did a good job with that. Regarding the requirement of an estimate of the period of time, I am asking for an estimate, not an ironclad statement of future requirements because I know that is difficult. And as part of my language also, a description of the progress of bringing other troops in, I think that is all part of trying to get quarterly reports to the Congress so we can better understand what is happening. I thank the gentleman for his cooperation and his leadership.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

The CHAIRMAN. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. HOEFFEL).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MRS. TAUSCHER

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Mr. Chairman, I offer an amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

Amendment offered by Mrs. TAUSCHER:

Page 3, line 13, after the dollar amount, insert the following: ''(increased by $300,000,000)''.

Page 19, after line 20, insert the following new section:

SEC. . ____. The total amount appropriated by this chapter is hereby reduced by $300,000,000.

Mrs. TAUSCHER (during the reading). Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent that the amendment be considered as read and printed in the RECORD.

The CHAIRMAN. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from California?

There was no objection.

The CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to the order of the House of Thursday, October 16, 2003, the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. TAUSCHER) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. TAUSCHER).

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I am offering an amendment with my friend and colleague from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) to transfer $300 million from the weapons inspectors in Iraq to pay for lifesaving equipment for the Army National Guard and Reserve troops currently serving there. Our amendment would leave the remaining $300 million to focus on finding weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, if there are any. Some 300,000 of our Guard and Reserve personnel have been called to active duty to fight terrorists in Africa and Asia and secure the peace in Afghanistan, the Balkans and Iraq. They are being called on to serve multiple tours and will continue to serve until we either stabilize Iraq or get international troops in there to share the burden. Yet our Guard and Reserve forces are working in Iraq without bulletproof jackets, armored vehicles and other basic lifesaving equipment. I am deeply concerned that if the demands of the Guard and Reserve do not ease up in the coming months, we will severely undermine our ability to attract new Reservists and keep ones that we have, which will prevent those who are currently serving in Iraq from returning to civilian life. If we are to depend on our brave citizen-soldiers to secure the peace in Iraq and prosecute the war on terrorism elsewhere, it is critical that they have the same equipment as everyone else.

I urge my colleagues to vote for this amendment to increase funds to protect the lives of our troops currently serving in Iraq.

Mr. Chairman, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER).

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Chairman, I thank my colleague from California for introducing this amendment and making sure that it was in order. It raises a very important question. It is a matter of life and death for the members of our National Guard.

Currently we have a policy in place which makes a lot of sense in ordinary circumstances for the taxpayer and for the use of our equipment and, that is, that the Guard gets essentially hand-me-down equipment as we buy new equipment for the active forces to engage in combat. But now what we find out is because of our manpower problems and the longer deployments of the Guard and a deeper reaching into the Guard structure in this country to deploy people in Iraq, in Afghanistan, we are in the situation where we now have the Guard entering the field of combat with old and, in some cases, obsolete equipment, equipment that is not compatible, communications equipment that is not compatible, Humvees that are from the first generation that do not provide the kind of protection to the occupants of that vehicle that the newer Humvees do. Yet, now we find, as I have been told by Guard members on the phone from Baghdad, in letters from Baghdad, they are seeing modern equipment being rotated back to the United States as those units are rotated out and the Guard is still left with old, obsolete, unsafe equipment.

The National Guard must not be put into the theater of combat with less than the same equipment that the active Army is put into the field of combat with. We cannot treat them as second-class citizens. This is a policy that

makes sense in peacetime, but this is a policy that is now lethal to our Guard members. I would hope that the committee, in its deliberations, would be able to address this problem.

I thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN).

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentlewoman from California and the gentleman from California for this amendment which would provide additional equipment to our troops and still leave our U.S. inspections team with adequate resources for the search. But there is a simple way for the United States to supplement our search efforts by bringing back the highly trained U.N. troops to help in the effort. We have all said the international community should share in the burden and share in the cost. We have an opportunity right now. The U.N. has a team of over 354 inspectors on the ground, trained, ready to go on short notice. What would it cost the United States? Nothing. They are paid for through the U.N. dues. They can also supplement our effort in another way. They can bring us something that money cannot buy, which is credibility. The fact of the matter is that this administration has lost much of its credibility with respect to claims it made of weapons of mass destruction.

□ 1030

If we want the international community and the American people to have faith in the findings, it is important that we bring in an independent inspection team to join our efforts. Only then can we convince the international community that any findings they make are legitimate and unbiased.

So I thank the gentlewoman for offering this important amendment. It is a win-win.

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Chairman, I claim the time in opposition.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman from California (Mr. LEWIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I do not intend at this moment to use the 5 minutes, but I must say I absolutely understand the gentlewoman's presenting this amendment for, indeed, we spent time together in Iraq, I have been saying a whole month in one weekend in Iraq together. That is not because of our wonderful charm, but because of what we experienced there together, the reality that Saddam Hussein is the worst tyrant, clearly competing with Hitler and Stalin. We learned that he was capable of almost anything. I will never forget the gentlewoman, as we were together at the killing fields, urging me and others to join together in a moment of silence, thinking about the potential of mass destruction as a part of this guy's everyday existence as long as he was ruling that country.

Indeed, I do not know exactly what we might find. I am hesitant about reducing this amount of money. I am going to be willing to talk about it as we go forward, but, indeed, the things that David Kay is about in his work are very important for us as we look at the challenges of dealing with people like this. So it is with great reluctance that I resist and ask for a ''no'' vote on the gentlewoman's amendment.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I want to thank the chairman of the Defense Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations for not only including me on the trip but for his eloquence and his leadership. I appreciate the fact that he recognizes the urgent needs of our Guard and Reserve. I know that he intends to work diligently to provide them with the money to get this new equipment. I do think that it would be wiser for us to have U.N. inspectors in there not only to have more credibility but also to share the burden. And I urge my colleagues to vote ''aye'' on this amendment.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I just might mention that the gentlewoman's expression of international involvement is a very appropriate one, and I would highlight her remarks by mentioning that the U.N. voted unanimously yesterday, getting the U.N. really on board for the first time in helping us with this effort. In the meantime, moving this money around in this fashion when we have done so much as we have in O & M and the bill in general, I hesitate about it, and therefore I ask for a ''no'' vote. And I want to tell the gentlewoman I very much appreciate the work she has done with me.

I might mention, just to take the time, when we were together following our weekend, we actually sat down together for hours, our team of 17, and in the midst of it, one of our colleagues said, I am one, a liberal Democrat, who voted ''no'' to going to war, but after seeing what I see here about Saddam Hussein, I must say I have got to be ahead of my people. It is going to be unpopular at home.

It is time for us to lead, and therefore I am going to support this request of the President to carry forward this war on terrorism.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Chairman, we have an opportunity to immediately obtain the help of the international community in sharing the burden and cost of some of our efforts in Iraq.

As part of his $87 billion request, President Bush has asked for an additional $600 million to pay for our team of weapons inspectors in Iraq—known as the Iraq Survey Group—so that they may continue their search for weapons of mass destruction. This team of 1,200 inspectors, led by David Kay, has searched for WMD in Iraq for many months now. The President's request would increase that team to 1,400 inspectors.

I had an amendment prepared would allow us to greatly reduce the costs to the American taxpayer of conducting that search and dramatically increase the credibility of any findings made by the inspectors. The Republican majority refused to allow that amendment to come to a vote. I am pleased that Rep. Tauscher has offered this amendment. It provides for better equipment for our troops and leaves $300 million for our inspection team. We can supplement our team by bring back the U.N. inspectors. The President should immediately invite the existing team of United Nations' inspectors—known as UNMOVIC—to participate in the search for WMD in Iraq. The U.N. has a pool of inspectors who have 12 years of experience investigating Iraq's programs and many of whom speak Arabic. According to its most recent report, UNMOVIC has a roster of 354 trained experts available to serve in Iraq at short notice. This important resource should be put to use, allowing us to reduce the size and costs of our team of inspectors.

What would it cost us to engage these trained experts? Nothing. The costs of UNMOVIC are borne by the United Nations and paid for through the dues of the member nations.

Engaging the U.N. weapons inspectors in the search for WMD would also get us something that money can't buy—credibility. With respect to the existence of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, the Bush Administration has lost its credibility with the American people and has undermined American credibility in the international community. Before the war, our Secretary of State told the United Nations that the Iraqis were attempting to import nuclear weapons material from Africa. The U.N. inspectors reviewed the evidence and determined the claims were based on forged documents. The U.S. conceded the point and, worse, it turns out that agencies within the U.S. government had already questioned the veracity of the documents. Our Secretary of Defense told the world that we knew the location of the weapons of mass destruction. We now know that was untrue. In the aftermath of the war, the President claimed that two mobile trailers found in Iraq were evidence of a biological weapons program. Our inspection team has recently had to retreat from that claim. Again and again, Administration officials from the President on down have made false claims about Iraqi WMD. Even the Economist magazine, which had been a booster of the war, has stated that the Bush Administration is seen around the world as having its own arsenal of WMD—Wielders of Mass Deception.

The only way to restore confidence in the search for WMD is to bring in an impartial team of international inspectors. David Kay, the leader of our team, is stuck in a fundamental contradiction. He wears two hats, serving as both fact finder and salesman for the Administration. No matter how high his personal integrity, this dual role undermines the credibility of any findings his team may make.

It is critical to the integrity of the process that independent U.N. weapons inspectors be invited to participate in the search and given

the opportunity to independently evaluate any claims made by David Kay and the Iraq Survey Group. The American people should not be asked to spend an additional $600 million to fund a search that is widely perceived to be an effort to provide cover for an Administration that has lost its credibility on this issue at home and abroad.

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

The CHAIRMAN. All time for debate has expired.

The question is on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. TAUSCHER).

The amendment was rejected.

Mr. KOLBE. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the last word.

Mr. Chairman, I yield to the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. LANGEVIN) for the purposes of colloquy.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman for yielding and the opportunity to address this critical issue on the floor today.

Mr. Chairman, as we are poised to invest billions of dollars in the reconstruction of Iraq and Afghanistan, I believe that it is imperative that we address the infrastructure needs of people with disabilities in the rebuilding process. Conflicts in other countries result in higher-than-average rates of disabilities for people, and the need for their consideration in the planning and design stages of new construction simply cannot be understated. Furthermore, given the history of discrimination and abuse of people with disabilities in Iraq, targeted programs through multi-inclusion of Iraqis with disabilities in public life and education will be necessary and, in fact, imperative. Including these matters, I believe, as a forethought will result in little up-front cost and save significant time and expense down the road. It is always more difficult and more costly to retrofit than it is to plan it in the earlier stages when construction is just being planned.

Finally, I believe that it is time to align our foreign policies with our national priorities, and currently foreign assistance funding is not required to be used in a manner that ensures access to people with disabilities. And this is inconsistent with our own civil rights laws, most notably the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Mr. Chairman, I was hoping and wanted to ask as this bill moves forward and goes to conference that the gentleman would be willing to work with me to perhaps ensure that those things are considered.

Mr. KOLBE. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman from Rhode Island for bringing this issue to our attention, but most importantly for his strong leadership on this issue.

I agree with him that our foreign assistance dollars ought to be spent in a manner that is not only efficient but that is inclusive of all peoples including those with disabilities. I agree that the needs of people with disabilities ought to be a priority as we proceed with the reconstruction in Iraq and Afghanistan; and as we negotiate the terms of this spending bill, I certainly intend to keep the gentleman's comments today here in mind as we look at the report language and bill language. I thank the gentleman for his comments.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman and look forward to working with him.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. SHERMAN

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Chairman, I offer an amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

Amendment offered by Mr. SHERMAN:

At the end of the bill (preceding the short title), add the following:

SEC. . None of the amounts made available and allocated for oil infrastructure under the heading ''IRAQ RELIEF AND RECONSTRUCTION FUND'' may be used to enter into any contract using procedures other than competitive procedures.

The CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to the order of the House of October 16, 2003, the gentleman from California (Mr. SHERMAN) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes of time on the amendment.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. SHERMAN).

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

The supplemental proposal before us today provides $2.1 billion for oil infrastructure improvements and reconstruction in Iraq. The public and the world are a bit skeptical as to how that money will be spent. The answer to that skepticism is in government contract law which provides for procedures for competitive bidding. However, there are on many occasions exceptions to the competitive bidding rules that have been employed by this administration.

The purpose of this amendment is to say that, with regard to the oil work, there will be no further exceptions at least for the money being spent under this bill.

This amendment does not affect our military procurement or our troops. It does not affect any emergency acquisitions of food or medicine or other humanitarian assistance. It deals only with the lucrative construction projects for the Iraqi oil system. And as to those projects, we should say no sole-source contracts.

Last night we debated a part of this issue. Congress demanded notification whenever there was sole-source contracting, and that is important as far as it goes. But with regard to these highly sensitive oil contracts, we need to go further and say no sole-sourcing at all. It is not just a matter of notification. There is no exigency, no national security justification for secrecy and sole-source contracting when we are talking about building oil wells in Iraq.

I am particularly concerned with the one company, Halliburton. This administration seems unable to contain its affection for this one corporation. Before the war, Halliburton won $1.4 billion for Iraq on a no-bid basis—before the hostilities even began and at a time when the administration was saying that hostilities were our last resort. The Halliburton Company greatly overcharged the American Government for its work in Kosovo. Recently, the gentleman from California (Mr. WAXMAN) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. DINGELL) brought to the attention of this House the fact that Halliburton was charging a $1.70 a gallon for gasoline in Iraq at a time and a place where others were selling it for only 70 cents. American taxpayers are being ripped off for over half the price. This amendment will make sure that the building of the Iraqi oil infrastructure is done legitimately, that American taxpayers and the entire world know that fair processes are being pursued.

Given the incredible justification for skepticism as to how oil contracts have been let by this administration, it is appropriate for us to impose ''regular order'' in dealing with these oil contracts.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. KOLBE. Mr. Chairman, I claim time in opposition, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Let me use this 1 minute to address another issue, and that is to commend the United States Senate for adopting an amendment yesterday similar to one debated here on this floor. That amendment says that half the money being used to rebuild Iraq will be in the form of loans. That is an important decision by the United States Senate. The Senate version of that amendment was, I think, crafted in a more sophisticated manner than we were able to offer here on this floor given the House rules. I think that amendment might have passed this House, and in any case I urge our conferees to recede to the Senate on the issue of a $9 billion loan, $9 billion gift to rebuild Iraq.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. KOLBE. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I do rise in opposition to this amendment. We already had a full debate on this issue last night, as a matter of fact. The bill that we have before us has provisions, rather extensive provisions, dealing with competition and providing for full and open competition. These were provisions that were worked out with the chairman of the Committee on Government Reform and the staff and, I believe, ranking members as well. Those provisions were amended last night here on this floor in the House. A perfecting amendment was added to it, which struck a particular exception on the notification. If it was a sole-source contract, it struck the exceptions for that. So notification

has to be given before those contracts are awarded.

This sets up a separate procedure that has no exception at all for it, even for an urgent situation. I am not sure if the gentleman has thought about what happens if there is a break in an oil line, what happens if there is a fire. They cannot go through a long bidding process for that. They have to take the money that is available and do an immediate contract. But even under those circumstances, there are procedures for competitive bidding and for open bidding, for making sure it is done in an open manner; and that is basically what the law that the Committee on Government Reform has the responsibility for is all about. That legislation, which is quite extensive, provides for open competition, provides for the bidding process, and it provides for the exceptions which are in there. And as I said last night on this floor, this body decided to eliminate at least one of those particular exceptions.

So I think we have thoroughly debated this issue, and I might say that the language as it is drafted here is not really, it seems to me, in legislative or legal form where it says ''enter into any contract using procedures other than competitive procedures.'' That ''other than competitive procedures'' is not a term which appears in the law anyplace, so we do not know exactly what ''competitive'' means there. ''Fully competitive'' is something that does appear in the law, but ''competitive'' does not.

□ 1045

So it is not at all clear what really the impact of this would be. Mr. Chairman, I oppose this amendment and urge its rejection.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

The CHAIRMAN. All time for debate has expired.

The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. SHERMAN).

The question was taken; and the Chairman announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Chairman, I demand a recorded vote.

The CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. SHERMAN) will be postponed.

The CHAIRMAN. The Committee will rise informally.

The Speaker pro tempore (Mr. LEWIS of California) assumed the Chair.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Ms. Wanda Evans, one of his secretaries.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Committee will resume its sitting.

EMERGENCY SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS ACT FOR DEFENSE AND FOR THE RECONSTRUCTION OF IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN, 2004

The Committee resumed its sitting.

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the last word, and I yield to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. CORRINE BROWN).

Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida. Mr. Chairman, I have with me a bulletproof vest. My colleagues can see that it is extremely heavy. It weighs about 16 pounds. I was horrified to learn that tens of thousands of our troops were sent out to battle without the proper armor and, to this day, they still lack necessary items, life-saving items like this bullet-proof vest.

Mr. Chairman, 44,000 troops do not have this bullet-proof vest that costs $1,500. The family members are writing the checks and sending these vests to their family members. So the taxpayers are paying twice. They are paying their dollars. We are not getting assistance from any foreign sources. The family members are writing checks, sending these vests to their family members to make sure that they have the necessary items to protect their lives. This is unacceptable.

This is an important issue. I want every American citizen to know that the President did not request one penny for these vests. He did not request one penny for these vests. Mr. Chairman, 44,000 soldiers in Iraq without body armor, and the President did not ask for a cent to protect these soldiers. I guess our brave men and women will have to wait until Halliburton, Halliburton, Halliburton starts making body armor before they can get the protection they need and deserve.

Congress approved $310 million in April to buy 300,000 bullet-proof vests for our troops; but, sadly, only 75 million of these dollars have gone to the officers, Army officers that are responsible for purchasing these vests.

Where is the accountability that this administration promised this Nation?

The Republicans keep telling us that this bill is all about the soldiers, and everyone in this Congress supports our soldiers. But how can a bill for our soldiers not include money for basic protection like body armor, boots, armored vehicles, Humvee tires, signal jammers, and chemical suits? We cannot even provide those brave men and women with simple, necessary items like drinking water, showers, tennis shoes, and even toothpaste. And women, they do not have personal items that they need. This is unacceptable.

Just 6 months ago, we appropriated $79 billion for the war effort; and yet relatives have to resort to sending body armor to protect their family members.

The American people who are writing the checks for Iraq do not want a grants program. Like anyone who lends money in the real world, they want their money back.

I would encourage every citizen, if it were me, to call their Senator or their Congressperson and let them know that they do not support a blank check slush fund for this administration.

Vote ''no'' on the bill and ''no'' for another blank check for the President and his campaign contributors. Mr. President, this account is overdrawn.

I was horrified to learn that tens of thousands of our troops were sent out to battle without proper armor. And to this day, they still lack many necessary items. I spoke with several soldiers who suffered injuries to their legs, and many who totally lost their legs when bullets crashed through their vehicles because the cars were not fortified with armored plates. I met with soldiers who suffered chest injuries because they did not have bulletproof vests.

This is a very important issue, and I want the American public to clearly understand this point. Even though we have 44,000 soldiers in Iraq today without proper bulletproof vests, the President asked for absolutely nothing to protect these troops. Let me repeat that. We have 44,000 soldiers in Iraq without body armor, and the President didn't ask for a single cent to protect these soldiers. I guess these brave men and women will have to wait until Hailburton starts making body armor before they can get the protection they need and deserve.

Congress approved $310 million in April to buy 300,000 bulletproof vests for our troops. But sadly, only $75 million of that money has gone to the Army office that is responsible for purchasing these vests. Where is the accountability that this Administration promised this Nation.

The Republicans keep telling us this bill is all about the soldiers, and everyone in this Congress supports our soldiers. But how can a bill for our soldiers not include money for basic protections like Body Armor, Boots, Camouflage, Rucksacks, Armored Vehicles, Tank Tracks, Humvee Tires, Signal Jammers, and Chemical Suits. We can't even provide these brave men and women with simple necessities like drinking water, showers, tennis shoes, and even toothpaste.

Just 6 months ago, we appropriated $79 billion dollars for the war effort, and yet relatives have resorted to buying body armor in the U.S. and shipping it to troops in Iraq. What happened to this money Mr. President. These families and this Congress want and deserve to know.

The American people who are writing the check for Iraq do not want a grant program. Like anyone who lends money in the real world, they want their money back. I would encourage every citizen to call their Senators and Congressperson to let them know that you do not support another Blank Check slush fund for this administration.

Vote no on this bill, and no on another blank check for the President and his campaign contributors. Mr. President, this account is already overdrawn.

I was shocked to find out that the Services did not fully meet immunization and other predeployment requirements. Based on GAO review of deployments from four installations, between 14 and 46 percent of servicemembers were missing at least one of their required immunizations prior to deployment. As many as 36 percent of the servicemembers were missing two or more of