

leadership's budget resolution. We are at war in Iraq; we are in fiscal crisis at home. We have critical needs for our hometown security.

Next week, this House will debate the President's \$75 billion supplemental request to support the immediate costs of the war and the immediate needs of homeland security. This House was also going to take up a tax bill to approve at least the \$726 billion in tax cuts desired by the President. That tax bill might now be temporarily postponed because yesterday the other body was shocked into a moment of clarity. If only this House might also be jolted into facing reality.

Mr. Speaker, I had, and I still have, great reservations about our policy in Iraq. I continue to believe that this Congress has abdicated its responsibilities by not having a real debate about the war for more than 5 months. As parliaments and assemblies and congresses around the world debated this issue, the United States House of Representatives was silent. What a shameful performance.

We must not repeat that mistake by failing to ask the tough, necessary questions: How much will this war cost? What are the long-term consequences of occupying Iraq? How will that affect our ability to fund other priorities? What does it mean for our war on terrorism?

I believed then and I believe today that Congress must have the basic information to meet its foreign and domestic obligations. We were told during the budget debate that the administration did not know how much the war might cost or what might be in the supplemental. Two days after the House passed its budget, however, they obviously had a very clear idea and a very specific request for \$74.7 billion.

Mr. Speaker, this House passed a budget that makes a mockery of our duty to protect and promote the common good of the American people. We are not responding to the needs of the people when we pass a budget that closes down hospitals, lays off police and firefighters, shuts down after-school programs and child care centers, and cuts \$15 billion from veterans health and benefits.

We are now preparing to debate a supplemental that deliberately fails to provide Congress information on the full cost of the war, of rebuilding Iraq, and of protecting our communities. Now it is being described as the first installment; but we do not know how many other installments are coming, or when, or for what purpose. We do know that this first installment includes items that have nothing to do with the war, the reconstruction of Afghanistan, or homeland security. In fact, Colombia receives more aid for military security in this supplemental than my State of Massachusetts does for homeland security.

How sad. We must do better. We must make sure that America can meet its critical needs at home and abroad. We

need to support our troops, and we also need to support their families and our States and our communities right here at home.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, I urge my colleagues to get real.

ALERTING MEMBERS TO NEW REPRESSION IN CUBA

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

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening to express my concern regarding a disturbing chain of events that have unfolded in Cuba over the last week and a half.

With the United States and the world preoccupied with the situation in Iraq, Castro is using this opportunity to take steps to dismantle the pro-democracy movement on the island. Hoping his actions would be overshadowed by world events, the regime has arrested and detained over 70 nonviolent human rights activists, pro-democracy leaders and independent journalists. These are the harshest acts of oppression taken by the Castro regime to silence opposition in recent years. Many worry these are only the first steps in an all-out campaign to silence all opposition on the island.

Last Monday, Castro issued an official communique that accused dissidents on the island of conspiring with U.S. Interests Section Chief James Cason and other American diplomats to undermine the island's leadership.

On Tuesday, Castro agents began the first wave of a series of arrests on the island, rounding up dissidents, independent journalists, owners of independent libraries, leaders of opposition political parties, and pro-democracy advocates who have worked to gather signatures for the Varela Project.

Detainees have been charged with counts of counterrevolutionary activities, subversion, and conspiracy with U.S. diplomats. Many fear that Castro will use this as an opportunity to prosecute the prisoners under a much-criticized 1999 Cuban law that makes it a crime to publish subversive materials provided by the U.S. Government, and that carries with it a sentence of up to 10 years.

Mr. Speaker, leading up to last week's events, Castro was becoming increasingly agitated by Cason and other American diplomats on the island who have met in public with opposition leaders in an effort to encourage democracy in Cuba. Cason and his associates have logged countless miles of travel and have crisscrossed Cuba to distribute shortwave radios and a wide array of books and pamphlets aimed at promoting American culture, democracy, and human rights.

In an effort to silence these efforts, the Cuban Government announced on Tuesday that it was restricting the travel of Cason and other Americans at

the U.S. Interests Section, and quarantining our diplomatic officials in the province of Havana.

I would like to take this opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to note that one of the independent journalists currently in custody is Omar Rodriguez Saludes, whose work I have mentioned during previous speeches on the House floor, and who was featured in a story last June by The New York Times.

At the time, Omar shared his struggles and those of other independent journalists currently working in Cuba. He told of how he traveled around Havana on a battered child-sized bicycle and wrote his articles in longhand, or on a 20-year-old typewriter that a group of reporters share; and how he gathered every 2 weeks with other journalists in a cramped apartment in Havana to wait his turn to place a phone call and dictate his stories to audiences in the United States.

Castro believed the U.S. and other nations would be too engaged in world matters to notice the atrocities that he and his regime were committing against Omar Rodriguez and other voices for change in Cuba. I urge my colleagues to join with me and speak on the House floor and in other public forums to shed light on the situation in Cuba and show Castro that the world is indeed watching.

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

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

A RUSH TO EXEMPT DEFENSE DEPARTMENT FROM MAJOR ENVIRONMENTAL LAWS

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, in the wake of our march to war with Iraq, too little attention has been placed on the rush to exempt the Department of Defense from most of America's major environmental laws.

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This is more than just another misguided assault on the environment by the Bush administration. It is a significant missed opportunity for the military.

Our defense-related activities are the source of the Nation's largest pollution and Superfund sites. From the radioactive legacy at Hanford, Washington, to the toxic residue of our chemical testing and manufacturing around American University here in Washington, D.C., every State, district and territory struggles with this problem.

More exemptions are not going to help. A lack of controls created this toxic legacy across America in the first