

THE WAR IN IRAQ AND ITS
AFTERMATH

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

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Madam Speaker, 160 or so years ago, former President John Quincy Adams, then a Congressman, came to the House floor and shared with Members of Congress letters from his constituents, mostly from women, who at that time could not vote. In those days, the conservative leaders of the House of Representatives actually passed a House rule prohibiting, banning the discussion or the debate of slavery in the U.S. House of Representatives. John Quincy Adams, believing that slavery should be abolished first and, second, believing that the elected Representatives of our country should be allowed to debate that issue, came to the House floor day after day, night after night, week after week, sharing those letters from constituents protesting the actions of the conservative leadership in this Congress.

In that tradition, I have, night after night since July, come to this House floor sharing letters from my constituents about their concerns about the war in Iraq and about what has happened now with the President's not owning up and telling us the truth about the war and the aftermath of the war. We have faced the same problem here where this Congress has refused to debate many of the questions investigating whether the President and the administration told the truth about our reasons going into Iraq and told the truth since about the unbid contracts going to Halliburton, about how much money we are spending, about our plan to get out of the war, about how he is, in fact, taking care of our troops, something that unfortunately has been forgotten. And I want to share letters from my constituents today with Members of the House of Representatives.

I will start with Tonya who writes: "I am a veteran, and I know better than most people what the military needs right now. I support our troops in every way possible." Tonya, a veteran, writes: "They all deserve raises and increases in their hazardous-duty pay," something that President Bush has opposed. "In my opinion, our troops should be brought home. Let the UN and the Iraqi people clean up the mess." This can be done. "Use that same \$87 billion to stimulate the economy in the United States."

Ann writes: "Congress must shift from the passive stance taken after September 11 and accept their constitutional responsibility of oversight. Congress has required far too little accountability from the Bush administration and allowed them far too much discretion. This President has proven to be a failed leader incapable of running this country." What Ann is talking about is the unbid contracts. We

are spending \$1 billion a week in Iraq right now. Three hundred million dollars of that has gone to private contractors, many of them the President's friends, many of them people who contributed money to the President's campaign. One of those companies that Ann is talking about is Halliburton, a company which has been beneficiary of hundreds of million of dollars in unbid contracts and just happens to be the company where Vice President CHENEY used to be the CEO, and a company that is still paying Vice President CHENEY \$13,000 a month. That is Ann, a constituent.

Peter writes: "The President and his clique should recognize the mistakes of the past and do what's fair to the Iraqi people. Let them decide for themselves, let them become a sovereign nation under the auspices of the UN. Bring back the troops, work through and with the UN. Spend the \$87 billion and more at home for schools, health care, basic infrastructure. Take care of the people at home."

George writes: "If Bush wants his mess cleaned up by U.S. taxpayers, then he needs to concede that the tax cuts for the wealthy cannot stand." What George is referring to is that 42 percent of the tax cuts this Congress passed went to the 1 percent wealthiest people in this country. The average millionaire got a \$92,000 tax cut, while half of my constituents got literally zero. George writes: "Nothing good will come of this, with control passing to the UN for rebuilding." And, yes, we must pay for what we broke. "The tax cuts for the wealthy should be repealed immediately."

The last letter I will read, Barbara writes: "We cannot leave Iraq in the mess we have created. However, if the \$87 billion is to be used to rebuild, we should have contractors from Iraq do the work, not Halliburton." Remember, that is the company where Vice President CHENEY still receives \$13,000 every month from while our Government is giving unbid contracts to that company to the tune of hundreds of millions of dollars in Iraq. "We need to turn this disaster over to the UN, if it is willing, get the world involved and turn this into a worldwide humanitarian effort. Bush has been extremely successful at raising money for his unopposed" in the primary "reelection campaign. Perhaps he should get out there and start requesting donations to rebuild Iraq, and let's not forget Afghanistan. I would gladly return my \$400 tax rebate, and I am sure that his supporters would continue to attend the \$2,000-a-plate dinners for the cause they support."

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Madam Speaker, it is pretty clear that people all over my district, my State, this country are unhappy with how the President has failed in supporting the troops by opposing pay raises, by cutting veterans benefits when they come home, and that my

constituents are concerned about the billions of dollars we are spending in Iraq with no accountability. Madam Speaker, my constituents are concerned about the corruption coming right out of the White House where unbid contracts are going to the President's friends, the President's contributors, and the Vice President's company, which still continues, continues every month since he has been Vice President, every month since they have been given contracts in Iraq, continues to give Vice President CHENEY \$13,000 every single month.

THREE SIMPLE STEPS

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

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, today, as ranking member of the Committee on the Judiciary, I am calling upon the White House to take three simple steps which would send a signal that they want to get to the bottom of the growing controversy concerning the leaking of a CIA operative's name to the press.

The first thing I would ask them to do is to call upon the Attorney General to appoint a special council. The second thing I would ask that they do is to order any and all staff advisors to comply with a lie detector test. Third, I would ask the President to order his staff and advisors to waive any confidential privilege they have as confidential sources with regard to the press.

This probe has led to the following news breaks: NBC, Brokaw, the leak: Did someone in the White House blow the cover of a CIA agent to discredit a critic of the administration?

This is from the National Journals daily briefing on politics. CBS's Rather: The CIA scandal charges that the White House blew the cover of an undercover CIA agent. An investigation is launched.

ABC's Jennings: the President's advisor says he did not leak the name of a CIA officer whose husband criticized the President.

CNN's Jay King: the President quickly left the room after this afternoon's bill-signing, ignoring shouted questions. His spokesman says Mr. Bush sees no need for an internal White House investigation and no need for an outside investigation by a special prosecutor.

White House chief of staff Andy Carr told senior staffers Monday that anyone with information about the leak should contact the Justice Department. But at this time, there is no formal directive to the White House staff, and the President is not asking for an internal review, despite reports that the illegal leak came from within the White House.

CNBC's Seigenthaler, tonight on the news: Did someone at the White House break the law by leaking the name of a top secret CIA agent?

FNC's Hume: Washington is in a frenzy over the alleged White House leak of a CIA agent's identity, but is there any evidence that it was the White House?

NBC's Miklaszewski: At the White House today, President Bush was beginning to feel political heat.

And CBS's Roberts: the White House tried to jump out in front of the potentially damaging controversy today, insisting that it would never authorize the leaking of a CIA operative's name.

Now, my recommendation is that the President call upon the Attorney General to appoint a special council. It is the only way to ensure the American public that the investigation will be performed fairly and impartially, to call upon the Attorney General to appoint the special council.

Now, if we read the Code of Federal Regulations, volume 28 at section 600.1, the Attorney General is required to appoint a special council when a "criminal investigation of a person or matter is warranted"; and, two, the investigation "by a United States Attorney's Office would present a conflict of interest for the Department"; and, three, "it would be in the public interest to appoint an outside special council to assume responsibility for the matter."

Now, it so happens all of the facts are present here. First, the allegations, if true, constitute an obvious serious criminal violation under 50 United States Code section 421. The disclosure of a name of a covert agent is punishable by up to 10 years in a Federal prison.

CONSTITUENTS EXPRESS THEIR VIEWS ON PRESIDENT'S REQUEST FOR \$87 BILLION SUPPLEMENTAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Madam Speaker, I wanted to join my colleague, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN), who, along with him, I have been reading some letters and e-mails from constituents regarding their view on the ongoing war in Iraq, and their views about the request for \$87 billion. A number of these e-mails that I have gotten have been generated by moveon.org that has an online petition where hundreds of thousands of people have signed on, and many of them have written comments regarding their unwillingness to spend \$87 billion, particularly while the leadership team that got us into Iraq is still in place, and as long as we fail to internationalize the effort in rebuilding Iraq.

So I thought it would be useful to read some of the letters and the e-mails that I have gotten.

Rebecca from Park Ridge says, "This Congress has a responsibility to ensure that our tax dollars are used well, but President Bush is demanding another enormous blank check. Congress must withhold the \$87 billion requested by

President Bush until he dismisses the team responsible for the quagmire in Iraq, starting with Defense Secretary Rumsfeld, and end the U.S. occupation of Iraq by transferring authority for rebuilding to the United Nations."

Doralee of Evanston says, "I beseech you as moral people who care about the survival of this world to deny Bush's request for \$87 billion and fire Rumsfeld and develop a whole new approach to restoring Iraq by involving the United Nations. This is such a serious matter that you cannot give Bush blanket authority anymore. He has not handled this situation in a competent manner."

And Barbara from Wilmette says, "I was stunned and disheartened to read that President Bush is asking for \$87 billion from Congress for an occupation in Iraq that has only lead to the death of our soldiers and Iraqi civilians and further bitterness of the Iraqi people toward the United States."

Oletta from Chicago says, "This war has been fiscally and morally mismanaged and should not garner any further financing without an exact budget and defined timelines. Don't let Bush and his administration continue to bankrupt America because he still doesn't know what he is doing or is going to do."

Pamela says, and she is from Chicago, "I believe we need to invest in rebuilding Iraq and protecting our troops, but we need to do it in a sensible way, in concert with the world, and in a way that benefits the people of Iraq. So, the quid pro quo for the money is a change in policy and in leadership."

Cecelia, also from Chicago says, "I don't begrudge funding, as long as I feel that the war is properly managed. I don't. Our soldiers are vulnerable, the Iraqis seem to hate us, the terrorists are picking us off, and we don't seem to have a plan to change any of this. Firing Rumsfeld would be a start."

David from Chicago says, "I hear story after story of parents of our men and women serving in Iraq sending regular care packages with things like sun screen because their children are not being provided these items by the military. It is clear that the money being spent is not being targeted to those in the service and apparently not to the Iraqi people who still lack power, water, food, and medical facility. It does appear that Halliburton is profiting quite nicely from its no-bid contract. I object to sending more money until Mr. Rumsfeld is removed and we get an accounting of how the money is being spent and who is getting their pockets lined with it."

Janice from Chicago says, "Congress must withhold the \$87 billion requested by the President until he dismisses the team responsible for the quagmire in Iraq, starting with Defense Secretary Rumsfeld, and ends the U.S. occupation by transferring authority for rebuilding to the United Nations."

Jonathan from Chicago says, "Don't reward failure. The war in Iraq was

won handily, but the Defense Department's hamfisted attempts to run things in Iraq, over the objections of the more experienced State Department, has been dismal and embarrassing. By all means, fund the continued rebuilding efforts in Iraq, but not while the architects of the current mess are still choosing how to spend our money."

And David from Chicago says, "Please make sure we don't alienate the rest of the world more than we already have. Please make this administration admit that it has made a misstep by not involving the world community in the Iraq situation from the outset."

Jeffrey from Chicago said, "This is outrageous, given the fiscal crisis our States are in, and the fact that the money would go a long way to shore up education or help programs that confront the issues of homelessness or poverty. Get up and do something about this. I'm keeping track."

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 1474, CHECK CLEARING FOR THE 21ST CENTURY ACT

Mr. OXLEY submitted the following conference report and statement on the bill (H.R. 1474) to facilitate check truncation by authorizing substitute checks, to foster innovation in the check collection system without mandating receipt of checks in electronic form, and to improve the overall efficiency of the Nation's payments system, and for other purposes:

CONFERENCE REPORT (H. REPT. 108-291)

The committee of conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 1474), to facilitate check truncation by authorizing substitute checks, to foster innovation in the check collection system without mandating receipt of checks in electronic form, and to improve the overall efficiency of the Nation's payments system, and for other purposes, having met, after full and free conference, have agreed to recommend and do recommend to their respective Houses as follows:

That the House recede from its disagreement to the amendment of the Senate and agree to the same with an amendment as follows:

In lieu, of the matter proposed to be inserted by the Senate amendment, insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) *SHORT TITLE.*—This Act may be cited as the "Check Clearing for the 21st Century Act" or the "Check 21 Act".

(b) *TABLE OF CONTENTS.*—The table of contents of this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.

Sec. 2. Findings; purposes.

Sec. 3. Definitions.

Sec. 4. General provisions governing substitute checks.

Sec. 5. Substitute check warranties.

Sec. 6. Indemnity.

Sec. 7. Expedited recredit for consumers.

Sec. 8. Expedited recredit procedures for banks.

Sec. 9. Delays in an emergency.

Sec. 10. Measure of damages.

Sec. 11. Statute of limitations and notice of claim.