

better at policing, military policing in these sorts of situations, have a lot more experience than we do, but we are going to hire consultants and pay \$1 billion, borrow \$1 billion to take the Iraqis out of their country to train them.

Then we have got to arm them. Of course, the U.S. military has confiscated hundreds of thousands of weapons, many in the original grease and wrappers. But, no, that is not good enough for the Iraqi police force. We are going to spend \$200 million to buy them brand-new weapons. I thought, well, maybe this is good. Maybe it has got a Buy America component to it. Maybe we are going to buy from American arms manufacturers. No, AK-47s, that is what the Iraqi police want. We have confiscated tens of thousands of them, but instead of reissuing the ones we have confiscated, we are going to buy them brand-new ones at more than list price from our friends, the Chinese.

This is not waste, fraud, and abuse. No, the Washington Waste Watchers over there do not have their eyes set on Iraq and this kind of stuff, they are talking about the \$100,000 missing over there at the Department of Education that might have fed some hungry kids. But, no, if it is a huge contract, wasting billions of dollars in Iraq; that is just fine. The President asked for it. We have to do this.

Let us talk about the cement plant in northern Iraq. Our estimators looked at it and said \$15 million to rebuild that plant. So the Bush administration put out a request for proposal for \$15 million. The Iraqis didn't want to wait. They rebuilt it themselves. Cost: \$80,000.

Now, there is Mr. al-Barak, who is a member of the Ruling Council which we named. You would think he would be beholden to us since we put him in place. But he has been a little critical of our spending. He says, "You know what? We can do it for 10 cents on the dollar. The Americans are wasting incredible amounts of money."

We are going to be asked to borrow nearly \$20 billion, indebt Americans for the next 30 years for waste, fraud, and abuse and war profiteering, and the Iraqis say they can do it for 10 cents on the dollar.

There was a contract to feed the Iraqi Ruling Council, which we named, which Mr. Bremer put out, no bid, of course. I guess it was from Sardi's in New York because to feed 25 people a day, \$5,000 a day. The Iraqi council was aghast, and Mr. al-Barak said, No, thanks, we can feed ourselves for a lot less than \$5,000 a day. They think we are nuts. They really do.

Waste, fraud, and abuse, apparently is only when it might benefit Americans. But when it can benefit war profiteers and no-bid contractors overseas in the gold-plated building, not rebuilding, of Iraq, there is a blind eye being turned here.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gen-

tleman from Florida (Mr. FEENEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ADMINISTRATION'S IRAQ REQUEST

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

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Speaker, in the last 24 hours, three more American soldiers have died in Iraq. They are part of a group of young Americans who are doing everything they can to stabilize the situation over there in extraordinarily difficult circumstances. They deserve our support.

There are reports in Iraq of some successes on the ground, but as we look at the situation in Iraq today, it is hard not to come to the conclusion that this was an enormous strategic mistake, because we are now there with 130,000 of our military men and women for a very long time to come if this President's request is to be understood for what it is.

Before we invaded Iraq, representatives of the White House and the Pentagon came to Members of Congress and said to the American people that Iraq had developed some of the most lethal weapons ever invented, that it was an imminent threat not only to the neighbors of Iraq, but to this country as well. We were told over and over again that we would be welcomed as liberators. We were told over and over again that, in this case, Iraq, because of its oil resources, could fund its own reconstruction. None of that was true. And today we know it was not true.

This is a case where the administration hyped, overstated, distorted the intelligence that we had which was a lot more obscure and uncertain than we were led to believe.

But today we are there. We are in Iraq. We have 130,000 people. We have replaced the government. We have a responsibility to try to create stability in that country and restore it to a better place.

Now, we should begin, I believe, in trying to figure out what to do. It seems to me there are three basic changes we have to make, three basic policy approaches we have to make. First of all, we have to take this \$87 billion request we have been given and scrub it, look at it carefully, review it. There is an enormous waste in this particular request, and we ought to do our best to figure out what some of the cases are.

As previous speakers have said, Look, you have got \$3.6 million for 600 radios and phones, \$6,000 apiece. And according to Business Week on May 12, this is a quote, "When Baghdad's telephone system was knocked out during the war, small-time Iraqi businessmen ordered up satellite phones from Jordan for \$900 each." As the previous

speaker said, Let us go to Radio Shack. We can do better than that.

The \$87 billion includes \$33,000 apiece for 80 pickup trucks. Well, go down to your local auto dealer. You can buy pickup trucks in this country for \$14,000. What are we talking about? And those who paraded up here earlier on the other side of the aisle and said waste, fraud, and abuse is a problem for this government, we can begin with waste by simply looking at the administration's request.

One more item. \$50,000 per prison bed, double the average cost in the United States.

Those who want simply to rubber stamp the administration's proposal are making a big mistake.

The second thing we ought to do is we ought to pay for this. We should not be borrowing this money from our children and grandchildren. That is simply an outrage. We ought to reduce, roll back the tax cuts that have been given to people earning over \$330,000 a year, the wealthiest 1 percent in this country. And we simply have to do that. If we are going to be fiscally responsible, we have to take that kind of step.

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Third, we need to step forward and do what the administration is trying to do, although past actions make it difficult, we need to build international support. More international resources, more international police, more international troops to try to get us through what is an extraordinarily difficult problem. But having abused and alienated our allies, it is hard now to get them back into Iraq the way they need to.

Fourth, we need to change the way we are doing this postwar reconstruction. It has been another fundamental mistake to have the Pentagon overseeing this operation. The very people who said we would be welcomed as liberators, that Iraqi oil would pay for its own reconstruction, those people are in charge of the postwar planning, and the postwar planning has been bungled. We need to give back authority to the State Department, USAID and those Federal agencies that have shown in the past they can deal with this kind of reconstruction effort. Those who came to this Congress and misrepresented the intelligence that was available to them should also be replaced.

MEDICARE PHYSICIAN REIMBURSEMENT

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

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call attention to the decline in Medicare reimbursement for physicians. Effective January 1, 2004, physicians and other providers paid pursuant to the Medicare physician fee schedules face at least a 4.2 percent cut