

Why do all of the Florida guardsmen have the modern vests, and the Oregon soldiers do not? The answer is political clout: Rep. C.W. Bill Young, R-Fla., is the powerful chairman of the House Appropriations Committee.

The safety of U.S. troops should not depend on who represents them in Congress or how quickly their parents can acquire hard-to-find body armor. It also should make no difference whether the soldier is on active duty or a year long National Guard commitment.

Only the ceramic body armor can stop bullets such as the 7.62mm rounds fired by Kalashnikov rifles found everywhere in Iraq and Afghanistan. The vests work: Army Sgt. Chris Smith, 24, was shot in the chest during an ambush in Iraq in August. Smith's armor shattered as it was designed to do and he suffered only a bruised chest. He returned fire and killed his attacker.

The Interceptor vests have been in production since 1999, but only now, with Congress and soldiers' parents criticizing the Pentagon, has the pace of manufacturing rapidly increased.

The Pentagon is trying to lay the blame on manufacturers, but that won't wash. A year ago, when the military was preparing for war with Iraq, it was content to hire just three manufacturers producing about 3,000 ceramic plates for Interceptor vests per month. Now that U.S. soldiers are being shot down and the political pressure is on, the Pentagon has scrambled to hire more manufacturers, which are churning out more than 25,000 plates a month.

There should have been a sense of urgency about this long before now. The shortage of body armor among U.S. troops in Iraq is not a matter of money; it is a matter of priorities.

The Bush administration promises that all the U.S. troops in Iraq will have Interceptor vests by December—a "Merry Christmas" from the Pentagon. We're guessing a National Guard unit will be the last to get the body armor, and with it the measure of safety the Pentagon should have provided long ago.

Mr. YOUNG of Florida. Mr. Chairman, I move that the Committee do now rise.

The motion was agreed to.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. LINDER) having assumed the chair, Mr. LATOURETTE, Chairman of the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration 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, had come to no resolution thereon.

LIMITATION ON CERTAIN AMENDMENTS DURING FURTHER CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 3289, EMERGENCY SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS ACT FOR DEFENSE AND FOR THE RECONSTRUCTION OF IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN, 2004

Mr. YOUNG of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that during further consideration of H.R. 3289 in the Committee of the Whole, pursuant to House Resolution 396, before consideration of any other amendment, ex-

cept pro forma amendments by the chairman and ranking minority member 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 Mr. KIND or Mr. CARDIN; an amendment by Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD; an amendment by Mr. HOEFFEL; an amendment by Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas; an amendment by Mr. RAMSTAD or Mr. MOORE; an amendment by Mrs. TAUSCHER; an amendment by Mr. STUPAK; an amendment by Mr. REYES; an amendment by Mr. DEFAZIO; an amendment by Mr. WEINER; an amendment by Mr. DEUTSCH; an amendment by Ms. VELÁZQUEZ; and an amendment by 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 in the House or in the Committee of the Whole. An amendment may amend a portion of the bill not yet read, except that an amendment proposing to transfer appropriations among objects in the bill must conform to clause 2(f) of rule XXI.

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

There was no objection.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LINDER). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

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

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

EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take the time of the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LIPINSKI).

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

There was no objection.

CONCERNS ABOUT EMERGENCY SUPPLEMENTAL

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, I had hoped to be in the well this evening to

offer an amendment to the pending legislation, the legislation under which the House of Representatives has been asked by the President of the United States to borrow \$87 billion to continue to pursue the conflict in Iraq and nearly \$20 billion of that will be used to build Iraq. This is not an issue of rebuilding Iraq; it is building Iraq. Many of the things that are included in this legislation will provide Iraq with infrastructure that they could not even have dreamed of before this war: wireless Internet network, a 911 cellular system, new sewer systems, combined cycle turbines for their electricity. These are not things that were destroyed in the war; they are things that were neglected through 30 years of dictatorial rule by Saddam Hussein.

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And now we are being told that somehow it is the responsibility of the American people to borrow money to construct these projects generally in an exorbitant price.

I had hoped to offer an amendment to the American Parity Act that the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EMANUEL) and I introduced early in the year, that would require that we match dollar for dollar the expenditures in Iraq with similar expenditures in the United States. For instance, under this legislation we are going to invest, the United States of America is going to borrow on behalf of the American people and send \$50 million more to Iraq to further improve their port, which is already a fully functioning port in which the American people have already invested \$50 million since the war. But I have ports in my district that cannot get a penny for dredging.

Under this legislation, the United States Congress is going to borrow, at the request of the President, on behalf of the American people, and send to Iraq tens of millions of dollars to pay Iraqis for no-show jobs, former members of the regime, former members of the military. They will be paid not to work. Yet the President tells us that we cannot afford to draw down the \$20 billion unemployment trust fund here in the United States of America and give extended unemployment benefits to Oregonians and others who have exhausted their benefits and cannot find a job through no fault of their own.

We are going to give them a state-of-the-art energy infrastructure despite the fact that the lights blinked out here in the eastern U.S. this summer, in my part of the country two summers ago. Our whole system is underinvested in, unstable, but the Iraqis have 1960s boilers, and Mr. Bremer is appalled so we are going to purchase them brand new combined-cycle turbines at exorbitant prices to be installed by Halliburton and others to give them a state-of-the-art energy infrastructure with money borrowed from the American people.

The American people are going to borrow money and spend tens of millions of dollars to buy new AK-47s for

the police force of Iraq. We could not even have a buy America provision and give them M-16s or something made in the United States of America. These things are not going to benefit the American people. I do not believe they are going to protect our troops. Our troops need the flak vests, they needed armored Humvees. They need rides all the way home. They need some basic things they are not getting. And none of the billions in this bill are going to that either.

But this amendment that I would have offered, I went to the Committee on Rules, and I asked to have it made in order. I said just allow us a vote. All we want is a simple vote up or down, do the Members of this House think it is at least as important to invest in the economic reconstruction and stimulation of this country, putting people to work, unemployment benefits, roads, bridges, highways, hospitals, schools, health care. That would have been a statement from this Congress where we would have put more than a million people back to work by matching the investment in Iraq.

But I have been shut down by the Republican majority, the majority Committee on Rules. I am not being allowed to offer that amendment. And that is too bad because I think a majority, a large majority of the American people would support such an amendment.

There has been a lot of hypocrisy here tonight. People who said they supported loans instead of grants, but then when they were given finally an opportunity to vote for a loan instead of a grant, those who stood bravely here and said they would support a loan instead of a grant and were denied a vote by the Republican majority, their own party, when they were given a chance to vote on a Democratic amendment for loans versus grants, they voted no. And I hope they are held to account by their constituents.

I hope people are held to account by their constituents for the fact that this House, the people's House, the Republican majority, are refusing to allow us to vote on matching investments, investing in our country, in our people, in our infrastructure, in our economy, at least comparable to that which we are borrowing to invest in Iraq.

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

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

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

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

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

EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time of the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) on my behalf.

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

There was no objection.

AMENDMENTS TO THE SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS BILL

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

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Madam Speaker, I want to associate myself with the remarks of my colleague, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) who just spoke in the well and fully agree with him that we should have been given an opportunity to make the same kind of investments in America that we are prepared now and voting on to make in Iraq. I think we owe it to the American people. We owe it to our economy. We owe it to our families.

Earlier, just a few minutes ago our colleague, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. MCDERMOTT), spoke about the realities of the war taking place in Iraq and the real impact on the young men and women who are there fighting that war, fighting the continued hostilities that rain down on them on a daily basis, many, many times a day.

He has, like so many of us, had the honor and the privilege to visit with some of our soldiers who have returned home in a wounded condition, in many instances in a severely wounded condition. Young men and women who are now amputees, in some cases multiple amputees, who have been received at Walter Reed Hospital for their care.

When you meet these young men and women, you are honored to be in their presence. You are honored by their decision to take part in our Armed Forces. But we have not served them well with the plan that currently exists for postwar Iraq. We did not serve them well in the first days and weeks and the months since this ceasing of hostilities in Iraq with the formal fighting.

And I would like to read a letter from a young man from my district who is part of a military police unit. He sent this letter to me after he talked with me on the phone from Baghdad. And I want to quote part of the letter beginning with, he says, "Now, I feel it is my duty as an American to point out a few simple facts to the people who depend

on me and my compatriots to be strong, reliable soldiers in the National Guard. First of all, often when my military police unit discovers large caches of weapons, 80 millimeter rockets, mortars, and rocket-propelled grenades, we are ordered to leave them where we found them, completely unsecured, waiting to fall in the hands of the enemy. The reason? There are not enough EODs, explosive ordnance disposal teams available. So dangerous weapons that are used to kill Americans are left just to sit there. Imagine how frustrating it is to walk away from the weapon cache as neighborhood children climb and play on it, hoping beyond hope that yours won't be the life taken by something in that pile.

"Secondly, it may surprise you that many of us do not even have bullet-proof vests and that everyone in my unit is driving an old first-generation Humvee, and, also, that does not repel bullets. My unit was on the ground in Iraq for a month without vests. Our communications equipment is archaic. Regular Army personnel have all of the up-to-date equipment, National Guard gets the leftovers.

"Our unit is now west of Baghdad living in a disgusting old prison that, among many other things, is an asbestos nightmare. Will there be health care available for those when we come home ill? Probably not since the Veterans Administration budget has already been trimmed by \$1 billion. I would be willing to bet that the officials who gave the thumbs up to extending the National Guard tours for 6 months to 1 year wouldn't have done so if they had been in Iraq facing the very dangers that we do every day. Morale has begun to go downhill pretty darn fast and we are likely to crash if the extension stays in effect."

That is a letter from a young soldier who puts his life in harm's way every day doing his duty as ordered by this country. One of the things he points out is that the National Guard units are now showing up in the theater of combat in Iraq with inferior equipment. Hopefully, tomorrow we will have made in order an amendment by the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. TAUSCHER) and myself that will take some of the money from the hunt for weapons of mass destruction because we add 600 million new dollars to continue this quest where we found no weapons, we would take \$300 million of that and transfer that to the National Guard so that no longer will we send these young people and these military police units that are from my district and from the West Coast to go into harm's way in a Humvee that is a first generation.

The National Guard, which we are going deeper and deeper into calling up them, and the Army Reserve, ought to be able to go in with the same first-class equipment as the Regular Army. These are not second-class citizens. We are relying on them to do a job in Iraq.