

This is a country, Mr. Speaker, where we have spent almost \$200 billion in the last couple of years. This is a country for which we have done more than any other country has done for another nation in the entire history of the world.

When I led a delegation to Iraq at the end of January, we were proudly told by one general he would have 110,000 Iraqis working for him, or, more accurately, for our taxpayers by July 1, and he controlled only about one-eighth of the population there. Apparently the only Iraqis who have a favorable view of the U.S. are the ones we have working for us.

These people do not appreciate what we have done and are doing for them, and because we have such a huge national debt and such a huge deficit we are borrowing all these billions we are spending there. Some try to say that only a small portion, about \$20 billion, is being spent to rebuild Iraq. This is false, or at least very misleading.

Most of what the military is doing there, building roads, bridges, schools, setting up free health care clinics, fixing airports and telephone and power and water systems, would be called foreign aid in any other country. In fact, our operation in Iraq is the most massive foreign aid program in history.

Saddam Hussein was an evil man, but his total military budget was just two-tenths of 1 percent of ours. He was no real threat to us. Harlan Ullman, a columnist for the Washington Times, who started out favoring this war, wrote a few days ago: "Compared to Hitler and the might of the Third Reich, Saddam was a relatively minor villain. The original reasons for war; namely, weapons of mass destruction and links to al Qaeda, have drifted out of sight."

Anyone who says it is isolationist to oppose this war is resorting to childish name-calling, rather than a mature discussion of the issue on its merits, or lack thereof.

We should be friends with all nations and help out, in fact lead the way, during humanitarian crises, but we should not get involved in every political, ethnic or religious dispute around the world. This just creates more enemies for us and makes terrorism more likely.

We need to follow a foreign policy of enlightened neutrality that relies on war only as a last resort when there is no other reasonable alternative.

At the first of last week, the Chicago Tribune had a story about a young soldier who had just been killed in Iraq. Just a few days earlier he had called his mother and told her, "This is not our war. We should not be here."

When our handover of sovereignty comes on June 30, we should make this a real handover, not just in name only. Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz, the main architect of the war, told the Committee on Armed Services a few months ago we would be in Iraq for 10 years.

I hope not.

Some big companies and some military leaders want us to stay there that

long because it means more money for them, but this decision should not be dictated by money. We should declare victory, Mr. Speaker, and begin a phased, orderly withdrawal. We should slowly bring our boys and girls home. We should all hope and pray that no more are killed or maimed for life.

This should not be our war.

Columnist Georgie Ann Geyer wrote recently: "Critics of the war against Iraq have said since the beginning of the conflict that Americans, still strangely complacent about overseas wars being waged by a minority in their name, will inevitably come to a point where they will see they have to have a government that provides services at home or one that seeks empire across the globe."

Mr. Speaker, there is nothing conservative about this war in Iraq. We need to start putting our own people first once again and turn Iraq back over to the Iraqis.

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

RATE OF ECONOMIC GROWTH OR LACK THEREOF IN AMERICA

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. Mr. Speaker, last night on the floor of this Chamber there were two interesting 1-hour presentations, as many of you remember. One was several colleagues from the Republican side, if I recall from Texas, Illinois, Arizona, my State of Ohio, West Virginia, Florida, Indiana and a couple other States, who spoke about the rapid economic growth we are experiencing; how this is, as the Secretary of Commerce said, quoting now, "It is the best economic climate in my lifetime," he said; that "things were great on the job front; lots of new jobs created, lots of economic prosperity."

Then there also was a group of people, mostly from my State of Ohio, that told stories of letters we have received from constituents, people saying that their college tuition has gone up sharply, 13 percent at Ohio State, for example; they have lost their drug coverage; their programs for education in their communities have been cut, both by local governments and also State governments, and, thirdly, in some cases the Federal Government.

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There was major job loss. Companies like Timken in Ohio, for instance, have lost one out of six manufacturing jobs. But what was curious about the difference in the view of the country is

that it is pretty clear my Republican friends kind of all meet in a huddle like a football game and they are all coming out, I do not mean to mix metaphors, but coming out as cheerleaders because they have been sort of instructed by the White House that the only way to win this election is by saying over and over and over and over that this is the best economy we have had in years.

The problem is, and I do not think we are being nay-sayers, I am just passing on, we are all passing on what our constituents in Ohio and Illinois, like the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY) and others, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. McDERMOTT) and the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) here and others are just passing on what our constituents are telling us, that we need to change the direction of this country.

If the cheerleaders on the other side of the aisle, the President's football squad, if you will, that comes out of the huddle, if they continue to talk about how great the economy is, it means that they are not willing to admit the mistakes of the last 3 years in how our economy and our country are going in the wrong direction.

The only way to correct things is to say, well, maybe we are going in the wrong direction and maybe we need to change course. But the President's answer in every single situation, for every bad piece of economic news the President says two things: we need to cut taxes for the 5 percent wealthiest Americans, maybe some of it will trickle down and create jobs. That clearly has not worked. We have lost 2.7 million jobs since he took office. President Bush will be the first President since President Hoover to have lost jobs during his time in office.

And his other answer is more trade agreements like the North American Free Trade Agreement. He wants us to pass the Central American Free Trade Agreement; free trade agreements with Singapore, Chile, Morocco, Australia, the Free Trade Area of America, which will quadruple the number of low-income workers in the NAFTA trade block. He wants us to continue to do that when those policies clearly are shipping American jobs overseas.

Now, those policies, as the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN) said on the floor last night, those policies clearly help the President's political friends, they help his wealthy contributors; but they are not helping workers in this country.

I do not question the motives of my friends on the other side of the aisle, the cheerleading, for saying this economy is in such great shape. I think they really believe it because they spend their time with the 5 or 10 percent of the people in this country who are doing great, the 5 or 10 percent of the people who see profits going up. They are corporate executives, they are big stockholders, they are getting bigger dividends, they see the stock