

way we do that, I think, is to start off this discussion by clearly pointing out to the American people something that they are gradually beginning to see, and that is this, that we are fighting two distinct wars; one war is on terror, the other war is in Iraq.

One war is of necessity. It was necessary. That is the war on terror, which is where we went into Afghanistan to go after the terrorist organization that attacked us on 9/11. That was a war of necessity, and we went there because that is where the enemy was that attacked us. That is where al Qaeda was. That is where bin Laden was, on that border between Afghanistan and Pakistan. We got the support of NATO and we got the support of the government of Afghanistan, with their help, and we went in there.

But then we went into Iraq, and we went into Iraq on a lot of manufactured, now we know the truth, incomplete information, maybe false information, perhaps even manipulated information. Those are the facts. That is what is out there. But, nonetheless, we went into Iraq in a war of choice.

Now we need to do a cost-benefit analysis, which brings me to the point I wanted to get to earlier, to segue back in, to show these two connecting points of what happened today, where the President of the United States is upstaged by the President of Iran, a president we did not even know about 5 years ago.

But when you do the cost-benefit analysis on the war of choice, which is the war in Iraq, not the war on terror, which is the war of necessity in Afghanistan, and do a cost-benefit analysis, in other words, look at our cost: 2,600 soldiers, men and women who gave their lives, who were killed; nearly 20,000 wounded; over \$600 billion expended at a rate of \$3 billion every week. That is the cost.

Who benefited? Who benefited? Who benefited? Iraq. When we went into Afghanistan, although we went in on the war on terror, we went after the Taliban, doing, again, Iraq's bidding. That was their enemy.

When we went into Iraq, without question the chief beneficiary of that was Iran. They were the beneficiaries, because Saddam Hussein was their worst blood enemy. We did the dirty work for Iran. On the other account, we established a Shia regime there, a Shia government in Iraq. That, again, was a benefit to Iran.

□ 2210

They were able to control that.

The other thing, all the while we are doing this, they are busy developing their nuclear capacity so that now that they have the nuclear capacity, again, a checkmate and a benefit for Iraq.

So that now my point is simply that because of some of our policies, most definitely going into Iraq, the major beneficiary of our going into Iraq is Iran, which now is boosted on the stage and is here this day, in this country, at

the United Nations, giving a speech. And here is a man who is the sponsor of the very terrorist organization that controlled the Lebanon situation, as well as the Hamas, which controls the Palestinian.

All I am simply saying is our national security policies, our foreign policies have had a devastating impact, and that when we do the cost/benefit analysis, it certainly benefits Iraq. It has taken us away from pursuing the goal of finding and decapitating the head of the mastermind of the terrorist organization that came to destroy us.

That is why the American people are beginning to see this differentiation, and we are not going to be able to find our way out of this unless we finally do so we can understand exactly what this situation in Iraq is doing, and like you, we are not standing here just talking. We are standing here explaining how we earnestly feel as Americans, strong, patriotic Americans, who care about this country, and who resent the President of the United States saying that anytime we question that, we are not patriotic. We are doing our duty that the American people sent us up here to do to raise these important issues.

We cannot stay the course, not this course. Sixty-three percent of the American people say they want a new direction. It is up to Democrats to provide that direction.

The other issue which concerns me is the state of our military. Not only must we explain to the American people and help to dramatize and explain clearly and show how we are dealing with two distinct wars, one of necessity, one of choice, but the drain on the military, we have got to correct that. Our military is in a draining state. We are not meeting our recruiting goals. We are on two and three tours of duty there.

We are in a terrible hole in Iraq, and we have got to extricate ourselves out of it. The challenge is to do so with yet the dignity and the respect that we must do so to honor the sacrifice of our men and women who have given their lives there, while at the same time putting the responsibility on the Iraqis themselves to manifest their destiny. They want democracy. We cannot shove it at them with a gun. They have to feel it in their soul. They have to go forward and grab it. That is not happening, and that is what we have to do to get this moving forward in a way that gives the respect to our military who have given their lives there.

Mr. SCHIFF. I thank the gentleman very much for your comments, for your leadership on this issue. It has been a great pleasure and honor to share a few thoughts with you and our colleague Mr. VAN HOLLEN and our whip Mr. HOYER. Once again, I want to thank the great State of Georgia for sending you to Congress.

THE OFFICIAL TRUTH SQUAD

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. SCHMIDT). Under the Speaker's an-

nounced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. PRICE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Madam Speaker, it is indeed a privilege to come back before the House as representative of the majority party. And as I was sitting and listening to the tail end of my good friends on the other side of the aisle with their recitation of doom and gloom, Madam Speaker, I was reminded of a radio personality who has a wonderful program on daily. He comes on and he introduces his program by saying, "And now for the rest of the story."

So, Madam Speaker, I come before you tonight and before the House with another version of the Official Truth Squad. The Official Truth Squad began a little over a year ago with a group of freshmen Republicans in the United States House of Representatives who had, frankly, grown tired of the lack of response to the disinformation and the misinformation and the distortion and the demagoguery and the hyperbole that we hear over and over and over on the House floor. And, Madam Speaker, you have been treated to a particularly virulent form of that kind of disinformation and misinformation in the past hour.

Before I get into the comments that I had prepared for this evening to talk a little bit about national security and talk about our economy, I do want to point out a couple of items for those folks in the House who are listening and have just heard the comments on the floor.

I think it is important to make certain that we talk about the truth, and when we talk about the truth, I am reminded of Daniel Patrick Moynihan's famous quote. It is one of my favorites. Senator Moynihan was a Democratic Senator from the State of New York, and he said that everyone is entitled to their own opinion, but they are not entitled to their own facts. Is that not true, Madam Speaker? Everyone is entitled to their own opinion, but they are not entitled to their own facts.

So I am here to point out just a few of the opinions that we have heard this evening that, in fact, bear no resemblance to the truth and bear no resemblance to fact, but that are so divisive to us as a Nation. That is what concerns me, Madam Speaker.

My background is as a physician. I came to Congress after over 20 years practicing medicine, and I knew that when I dealt with my patients and when I dealt with my colleagues, that we had to talk about the truth. We had to talk about real things. We had to talk about facts, because when you did not talk about facts, then you made the wrong diagnosis, and when you make the wrong diagnosis, somebody gets hurt. Somebody gets hurt.

So, Madam Speaker, when my colleagues on the other side of the aisle do not want to talk about the facts, and they do not want to talk about the

truth, then somebody gets hurt, and in this instance it is the American people. It may even be the American fiber and the American spirit, the unity of America.

What we just heard is a remarkable demonstration of disunity, of division, of folks who, I do not know how long people have been listening, but I did not hear a single solution, not one solution offered.

Churchill said that criticism is easy; it is achievement that is difficult. Another one of my favorite quotes. Criticism is easy, but achievement is difficult.

You just heard a remarkable statement, and we have had a remarkable day with our President going to the United Nations and addressing the United Nations in his annual address. Because we are the host Nation, there is a defined time for that annual address, and it occurs in second speaking order. So it happened to occur during the middle of the day today. My friends on the other side of the aisle want to attribute the fact that the President was not on prime-time television tonight to some remarkable foible of this administration. Madam Speaker, what kind of nonsense is that? What kind of distortion of the truth is that?

So when we hear these kinds of things, it really disturbs me, it saddens me, because it cheapens the debate that we have here when you have that kind of distortion.

The question was asked, how did the President of Iran get to be so strong? But one of the reasons he is so strong is because our friends on the other side of the aisle have not participated in assisting us on an energy agenda that will make it so we have American energy for Americans. There is some truth for you. The folks who continue to throw stones on the other side of the aisle constantly, and we will talk about this this evening, make it so that they put roadblocks in the way of trying to increase American independence in the area of energy.

So, Madam Speaker, in fact, I would appreciate some help from the other side of the aisle for some United Nations reform. We have had a bill on the floor of the House here to reform the United Nations, to reform the United States' participation in the United Nations.

□ 2220

And goodness knows we can't get any support from our good friends on the other side of the aisle, but they are ready, willing, and able to come down to the House floor and criticize the United States for their participation in the United Nations. Are they willing to help us solve the problem? Madam Speaker, I haven't seen that.

I also heard my friend from Maryland this evening talk about the contractors in Iraq. And he used as the font of all wisdom and knowledge about the contractors in Iraq who were hired. Madam Speaker, did you hear who he

used as the resource for all of that? You know, when we were growing up we would have to cite our resources in our papers for school and for university, and it had to be something reliable. Did you hear who we used, Madam Speaker? The Washington Post. Now there is a reliable source for you.

But when he brought that information, he didn't bring it by way of enlightenment; he brought it by way of criticism, by way of division, by way of tearing down those individuals who are working just as hard as they can to make certain that Iraq is restored and has an opportunity to become a democratic and sovereign nation on its own. Division, division, distortion, demagoguery,

misinformation, disinformation. Madam Speaker, I would ask the gentleman from Maryland to apologize to the Members, to the United States citizens who are working as hard as they can in Iraq as independent contractors, risking their lives just like the military. Some of them have actually been murdered by our enemies in Iraq. So I would hope that the gentleman would reconsider what he said.

Don't you get tired of it, Madam Speaker, that kind of distortion of the fact, that kind of division? I certainly do, and I know my constituents do at home. They get tired of the fighting, of the backbiting. They get tired of three or four individuals who can stand up here for an hour on the floor of the House and not offer one single, one single positive solution to the challenges that confront us as a Nation. And the challenges are big; these are big challenges. They are not Republican challenges, they are not Democrat challenges, they are American challenges.

And so, Madam Speaker, I am pleased to come and have the opportunity at the pleasure of the leadership to be able to come and talk a little bit about some positive things about America, some positive things that we have done, but also to provide some truth. Remember Senator Moynihan's comment, everyone is entitled to their own opinions but they are not entitled to their own facts. So we would like to bring some facts tonight about a couple different areas, primarily national security because it has been talked about just recently, and the issue of the economy, the economic perspective in our Nation. And I think it is extremely important that when we discuss this, that again we remember that truth and facts are important. And so I am going to present some information here that I hope that Members of the House are listening to. I hope that they are listening to, and, frankly, I hope that the American people are listening, because there is some information that I think that they will be extremely, extremely interested in, especially when we talk about votes as it relates to issues on the floor of the House.

So the Official Truth Squad is pleased to be able to come and talk a little bit about national security and about the economy.

Now, there is certainly no more important function of the Federal Government than the security of the American people. And Republicans, as everyone knows, have always been committed to national security. Our Nation's defense, our Homeland Security and border control and the global war on terror are not just priorities for this administration, but they are indeed priorities for all House Republicans. And if there were ever any question in anyone's mind about whether or not we are a Nation that remains at risk because of enemies around the world, then all one has to do is look to a very recent activity in England where the United States, along with our good friends in Great Britain and friends in Pakistan, were able to thwart a plan by our enemies, by our enemies who have sworn to make certain they end our way of life. We were able to thwart a plan to bring down many, many airliners that would kill thousands, thousands of innocent civilians.

So it is clear that the global war on terror is indeed a huge priority. It is a priority for us. I would hope that it would be a priority for all Members of the House. However, the Democrats continue to try to obstruct our security plans, and they have been essentially a party of "no," with no alternative plans to meet our security needs. And I would ask, Madam Speaker, folks to remember just the hour that we have just heard by our good friends on the other side of the aisle, and try to recollect one single solution that was offered. Madam Speaker, I suspect that you, like I, can't remember it, because in fact there were no solutions that were offered.

For instance, Democrats have called time and time again for the redeployment of our troops. And there was a commentator or an interviewer on television recently who asked a member of the Democrat Caucus, where do you want them redeployed to? And he couldn't come up with an answer. But occasionally they will come up with an answer, and oftentimes they will say, well, they ought to be able to redeploy to Okinawa. Well, now there is a thought, Madam Speaker, redeploy the troops from Iraq to Okinawa. If you take a look at the globe, the port of Newport News and Norfolk is closer to Iraq than Okinawa. So redeployment of troops to Okinawa makes absolutely no sense whatsoever.

Now, the other side of the aisle, the Democrats are certainly good at saying no, but they are not good at laying forth alternative plans. What they don't seem to understand is the magnitude of the threat of terrorism or indeed what is at stake. Their leader has been quoted as saying, "We don't even have a party position on the war." This is certainly evidenced by their inability to present a plan for combating terrorism in this remarkably difficult and changed post-9/11 world.

There is one Democrat leader who has in fact said that the global war on

terror isn't really all that relevant. Can you imagine, Madam Speaker, we have the remarkable activities in England just last month, the knowledge and understanding that our enemy is making plans day in and day out to try to kill innocent civilians across all free nations, to try to do their best to make certain that we end our way of life, that they end our way of life, and we have a Democrat leader in this House who says that the global war on terror isn't really all that relevant. Well, with a stance like that, our leader says, with a stance like that, it is easy to see why Capitol Hill Democrats have no record of accomplishment on national security issues and lack a coherent agenda on the biggest challenge of the day.

Just this month, House Republicans will continue to focus our floor action on important security issues. We will be authorizing the President's Terror Surveillance Program, which is designed to identify and disrupt terror cells planning to attack against the United States. This is the kind of program that was utilized to assist in the activities that foiled the plot in England.

Now, when I go home, Madam Speaker, I don't know about you, but when I go home and I talk to my constituents and they say, what on Earth are you all arguing about? How can it be that anybody in this Nation believes that we as a Nation don't have the responsibility, in fact don't have the absolute imperative to make certain that we are listening and hearing and determining what our enemies are saying if they are outside the United States? I have significant concern on privacy issues when you are talking about communication between a United States citizen in the United States and another United States citizen in the United States. That is a different issue, Madam Speaker. And when individuals confuse and confound those two, they do a disservice to every single American.

□ 2230

The issue is not whether or not that kind of communication is protected. The issue is, in fact, whether or not we, as elected representatives of constituents all across this Nation, will respond to what they believe, our constituents believe, Americans all across this Nation, is an imperative for our government to do, and that is to have a terrorism surveillance program that lets us know what the bad guys are going to do before they do it. Clearly that is the most effective means of combating the war on terror, is to make certain we know what our enemy is going to do before they do it and then stop them before they do it.

In the House this month, we will be authorizing military tribunals for suspected terrorists. These are noncitizens fighting under any flag. These are terrorists. They have proclaimed to kill you and me and end our way of life as

a Nation. They are not fighting for a nation. They have never signed the Geneva Accords themselves. These are evil people who must be dealt with by different rules. This is unlike any war the world has ever seen. That is not to say that they ought to be treated inhumanely, but they need to be treated with different rules in order for us to gain the kind of information that we need, in addition to being able to hold these people who are interested in doing us great, great harm, great harm.

This month the House Republicans have passed a resolution to recognize the 5-year anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. As I go through these, I think it is important for Members of the House as well as Americans all across the Nation to appreciate as these votes come up, watch where the votes go, watch who is supporting these commonsense protections for the American people.

A resolution recognizing the 5-year anniversary of the 9/11 attack, we even had some Members on the other side of the aisle vote against that. They objected strenuously that it came to the floor of the House for a vote.

Strengthening border security. We had a debate on building a fence along the southern border to make sure that our Nation is secure. This week we will deal with some issues that will provide for allowing local law enforcement individuals, both State and local, the right and privilege to detain and retain illegals who come under their jurisdiction until the Federal Government comes and is able to deport them. Right now that is not the case. We will have a bill on the floor that will once and for all end the catch-and-release program that has been operating at the border.

I ask the American people to watch who is voting on these issues. There is no reason on Earth that we ought to apprehend an individual coming across our border illegally and then give him a piece of paper and say, you have to come back in 90 days and we will try you. They just blend into society.

A catch-and-release program does not work. There are over 400,000 individuals who have already in this Nation gone through the process. They were here illegally, they are found to be guilty of another crime and been ordered deported, and yet they are told to come back and report for their deportation date. And the catch-and-release program does not make any sense.

We will have on the floor this week a bill to provide for a catch-and-return policy, which means if they are apprehended coming into our Nation illegally, they are returned to their country of origin.

There was the discovery once again of another tunnel between San Diego or the San Diego area and Mexico. Apparently it was some 400 feet long, and it was used to smuggle drugs and contraband and illegals into the United States. That was just discovered. We

will have a bill on the floor to strengthen the laws as it relates to the building of tunnels for the purpose of bringing drugs and smuggling aliens in.

We will have on the floor funding and protecting American troops, the defense authorization conference report, and defense and military quality of life appropriations conference reports, and then homeland security conference reports which will provide that funding for border security and for the barriers that I talked about.

And it is extremely important to watch who is voting for these things and who is opposing them. Oftentimes what we find is that individuals will say one thing at home, and then they come to Washington, and there is something in the air here that makes them do something different. We respectfully request that folks watch and see who is voting for what.

On the issue of border security, maintaining the integrity of our borders is an economic and a security concern. Americans are worried about the vulnerabilities at our borders, and House Republicans have passed several pieces of legislation to strengthen our borders, put more technology and personnel at the borders, and develop systems to ascertain who crosses the border and for what purposes. We need to know who is coming in to our Nation.

The Republican plan for border security focuses on providing more Border Patrol agents, strengthening security through additional fencing and infrastructure, stricter enforcement, and enhancing State and local law enforcement authority. These are the foundations that must be set before we can begin the next step of immigration reforms. It is imperative, the American people are demanding, that we put our priorities first on controlling the border, making certain we know who is coming into our Nation.

It ought not surprise anybody to get a little truth now, and that is that the Democrats have not supported the efforts to secure our borders. We passed the REAL ID Act, the act that provide for an appropriate form of identification for people traveling on an airplane. This would go a long way in identifying individuals here illegally, and 152 Democrats voted "no," including the top two members of their leadership. They voted against the REAL ID Act.

We passed the Border Protection Antiterrorism and Illegal Immigration Control Act, which was the bill that has been proclaimed by those individuals who truly know and appreciate what it is going to take to control and secure our border. They believe it is the most appropriate bill that has come through Congress, certainly more appropriate than the version that came out of the Senate. But on that bill, 164 Democrats oppose that bill, including the top two in their leadership.

So folks may say one thing at home, and when they come to Washington, they oftentimes do something completely different.

On our Nation's defense, people who fight for our freedom must be fully supported. The House Armed Services Committee and our Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense and Military Quality of Life have concentrated their efforts on making certain that we meet those needs, as well as helping transform the Department of Defense to meet the threats for the next century.

In the area of intelligence reform, this is where I talked about making certain that we know what the bad guys are going to do it before they do it. Republicans have worked with the administration and intelligence agencies to help transform our intelligence-gathering capabilities and analyzing system. Rather than accept that we need to focus our efforts on this kind of reform, Democrats instead want to focus on just attacking the administration. You hear it over and over again.

Madam Speaker, it is like a broken record. They have tried to discredit the terrorist surveillance program that we talked about and other policies which have helped protect our Nation from further attack. It is not a mistake or just a happenstance that we as a Nation have not been attacked since 9/11. There are incredible individuals working day and night to make certain that we are safe as a Nation.

The 9/11 Recommendations Implementation Act that was proposed in 2004, these are the recommendations of the 9/11 Commission that you hear people talking about on the other side of the aisle all the time and that we should implement them. We had the bill that implemented a significant portion of those, and what happened? A majority, 125 Democrats, including their leader, voting to oppose it, voted "no" to implement significant recommendations of the 9/11 Commission.

So, Madam Speaker, remember, you are entitled to your own opinions, but are not entitled to your own facts.

The global war on terrorism is truly the most important activity, most important war of our generation, and it is a war like no other, as we have talked about. It is fought on many different levels: military, intelligence, economic, technology, cyberworld, Internet, all corners of the Earth.

Again, this is not a war that we sought. We didn't go out looking for this. It has been brought to our shores and brought to us, and there are terrorists out there who truly want to kill us, and they say that explicitly.

□ 2240

If you don't believe me, you just ought to listen to them. They are interested in murdering and killing innocent civilians and ending our way of life. If we do not take their words seriously and take them at their word, we do so at our peril. It is the simple and horrible truth, Madam Speaker. We must face this fact and employ all efforts, all efforts, to thwart their many attempts.

Oftentimes the Democrats will talk a good game on protecting the homeland;

but when push come to shove, they certainly demonstrate that they don't understand the real issues that affect our homeland and our national security. Again, they have been the loud party of "no," with no alternative plans to meet our security needs. And although we still cannot fully understand why the terrorists hate our way of life so much, we do understand this much: that we are in a real war.

Almost 5 years after the attacks on 9/11, Islamic extremist groups, jihadists, continue to represent the most immediate threat to the United States and to our allies and to our interests abroad. And at the urging of Osama bin Laden, every American man, woman, and child has become a legitimate target in their jihad. And, again, this is their words. It is not our conjecture. It is not our opinion. It is truth. It is fact.

Now, we are blessed with an absolutely outstanding military that has taken the battle to the enemy, and it is extremely important that we fight these battles at their point of origin. We have many good and faithful allies all around the globe, and we have taken that fight forward, supporting the governments of Iraq and Afghanistan in rooting out the enemy before he can strike again. And we are cooperating with friendly forces from the Philippines to Africa and from the Middle East to South America. And we are united. We are united against this threat.

But the United States, we remain a Nation at war. We are not safe simply because we have not seen an attack on U.S. soil since 9/11. We are safer today because of the professionals of the worldwide network of intelligence and military and law enforcement officials who continue to pressure and strike al Qaeda and its followers. And we must continue the pressure on these radical organizations until victory for all freedom-loving people of the world is assured. September 11, 2001, showed us the danger of Islamic jihadism, and it also taught us that deficiencies in our own system made it possible for terrorists to operate right under our noses.

Our most important duty, as Members of Congress, is to protect our Nation from ever experiencing that lesson again. And for that reason, we must, we must continue to focus on improving our national security, our homeland security, and our intelligence systems.

But, again, the fact of the matter is the Democrats do not seem to understand that the threat of terrorism exists or even what is at stake. Remember what their leader said, they do not even have a party position on the war and an individual in their leadership said they didn't think the global war on terror was really all that relevant.

Recently, just a couple weeks ago, their leader, in a press conference, made a stunning and contradictory assessment that capturing Osama bin Laden, the leader of al Qaeda, the ter-

rorist organization responsible for numerous attacks against the United States, including those of 9/11, would "not make America any safer." "Even if he's caught tomorrow, she said, "I don't think that makes us any safer."

Now, with a stance like that, it is easy to see why Capitol Hill Democrats have no record of accomplishment on national security or their issues and that they lack a coherent agenda on the biggest challenge of the day for this Congress and, yes, this Nation.

As I mentioned, they have called for implementing the recommendations of the 9/11 Commission. Over and over they have called, but repeatedly Capitol Hill Democrats have opposed legislation implementing the recommendations of the 9/11 Commission meant to strengthen America's national security and to prevent further attacks.

The 9/11 Commission said: "The government has made significant strides in using terrorism financing as an intelligence tool." So what happened on House Resolution 895, the legislation supporting intelligence and law enforcement programs that track terrorists and condemn with proper congressional oversight the publication of any classified information that could potentially impair the fight against terrorism, that is, implementing one of the 9/11 Commission recommendations? What happened? 174 Democrats voted "no." 174 voted "no."

They call for the immediate implementation of the 9/11 Commission recommendations. One of the 9/11 Commission recommendations was: "The READ ID Act has established statute standards for State-issued IDs acceptable for Federal purposes, though States' compliance needs to be closely monitored." What happened with that bill that the 9/11 Commission said was a wise idea and ought to be adopted? 152 of our friends on the other side of the aisle voted "no." 152.

They talk about immediately implementing the 9/11 Commission recommendations. A quote from the 9/11 Commission: "The House and Senate have taken positive steps, but Secretary Chertoff and his team still report to too many bosses. The House and Senate Homeland Security Committees should have exclusive jurisdiction over all counterterrorism functions of the Department of Homeland Security." That is a recommendation of the 9/11 Commission, a recommendation that our good friends say ought to be immediately implemented. So when the proposal comes up to do just that, a majority, 120 of them, vote "no."

Madam Speaker, you are entitled to your own opinions, but you are not entitled to your own facts.

So in the area of national security, I think it is clear. There is a party, there are leaders in this Congress on the Republican side of the aisle who understand the threat, understand the gravity of the situation, understand and appreciate that we have a real enemy, understand and appreciate that that real

enemy is interested in causing significant harm to our Nation and in murdering innocent civilians, and we are taking actions day in and day out, including this week, to make certain that we are more safe and more secure as a Nation.

So I challenge and call on my friends on the other side of the aisle to join us. Don't just talk about it. Don't just come down here and paint doom and gloom. There are people here who are working hard. Remember what Churchill said? "Criticism is easy. Achievement is difficult." "Achievement is difficult." So join us. You might find that being part of the solution instead of just railing against the individuals who are in positions of leadership now is actually beneficial, that your constituents actually appreciate the work that you are doing in a bipartisan manner. Boy, wouldn't that be wonderful? We certainly would welcome you to participate.

Madam Speaker, I talked about the concern that the Official Truth Squad has about all of the disinformation and the misinformation that goes on, and I was looking a little over a year ago for a quote. I am a fan of quotes. I enjoy quotes, and I think that oftentimes individuals in history have given us great perspective on our Nation and great perspective on our principles and the roots of our Nation. And the "politics of division" really irritates me, and I think it does a disservice to our Nation because we are so strong and we are united as a Nation.

But the other side of the aisle seems intent on tearing down, on dividing. You have heard some of it this evening. The extending tax cuts for millionaires you heard tonight and all sorts of remarkable divisive statements. The comment about the contractors in Iraq was a divisive statement, where we have hardworking American citizens who are putting their lives at risk and they get criticized in order for some divisive purpose, to try to gain some political points. Madam Speaker, it is just disheartening to hear that kind of conversation, and it does a disservice to our Nation.

When I attempted to find a quote that would crystallize that emotion, I came across this one, the Reverend William Boetcker, who was a leader and a public speaker in the late 19th and early 20th century. He was trying to crystallize the philosophy of Abraham Lincoln in his social philosophy, and it is one of my favorite quotes. He said: "You cannot bring about prosperity by discouraging thrift. You cannot strengthen the weak by weakening the strong. You cannot help the wage earner by pulling down the wage payer. You cannot encourage the brotherhood of man by encouraging class hatred."

□ 2250

You cannot help the poor by destroying the rich. You cannot keep out of trouble by spending more than you earn. You cannot build character and

courage by taking away man's initiative and independence. And you cannot help men permanently by doing for them what they could do for themselves.

And so, Madam Speaker, I turn now to addressing the issue of vision and addressing the issue of the economy. House Republicans have realized, certainly do realize the importance of developing and having a vision to focus our efforts and to ensure that we address what is important for the American people. And we came together and highlighted a vision earlier this year that would address this new American century. And we came up with the following vision. We will promote dignity and future of every individual. It is important to talk about the individual. Madam Speaker, often times you hear the folks on the other side of the aisle talk about groups of folks. And again they like to separate people into groups so that they can divide and conquer.

But it is the individual, it is the individual who makes things great. So we will promote the dignity and the future of every individual by building a free society, under a limited, accountable government that protects our liberty, our security, and our prosperity for a brighter American dream.

Now, the Democrats had no such vision. Again, they are the "party of no," they have got no plan to lead the Nation. That is a dangerous way to try to take over the majority of the House of Representatives. And it is clear. We heard it again tonight. Their actions are guided by politics and discrediting the administration over and over again rather than focusing on a positive agenda for the American people.

Again that is the kind of information and the kind of requests that I get at home when I talk to my constituents about a passion for a positive agenda for America. Because, we are a great, great Nation. And we work so well together when we work unified. And that is what folks at home tell me that they would desire, that we move together forward in unity.

Now, I want to talk a little bit about our economy. And I think it is important to appreciate that our economy today is truly remarkably strong. And the numbers prove that. Our Nation has bounced back from the blow that the economy took following the attacks of 9/11. Our unemployment is low. Home ownership across all sectors of our society is the highest it has ever been.

And recently, as I know in your home state, Madam Speaker, the gas prices are falling. Now, we got a lot of criticism for the gas prices going up, so we ought to take a fair amount of credit for them coming down. The most recent economic numbers are truly remarkable.

Although this chart is a little old, the trends are absolutely accurate and correct. Unemployment. The Employment gains continue. 128,000 new pay-

roll jobs were created in August, A total of 5.7 million new jobs since August of 2003.

The unemployment rate is at a point, at a level of 4.7 percent, 4.7 percent. I know that there are some economist amongst our midst who understand and appreciate that full employment is basically 5 percent, used to be 6 percent a number of decades ago, but they revised it downward to 5 percent being full employment. That means that basically folks who are interested having a job have a job.

GDP growth for the second quarter was revised up to 2.9 from an earlier estimate of 2.5 percent. Gasoline prices have fallen recently with the average regular unleaded gasoline falling to below \$2.70 a gallon. I know in my area it is \$2.22 cents when I drove to the airport this morning to come here.

Oil apparently today was down to less than \$62 a barrel, which is a significant move downward. And, Madam Speaker, this is due, these numbers are due to the policies put in place by this Republican Congress and our effort to spur the economy and lay the foundation for the economy of the next century.

Now, elections are coming up. I know that is a surprise to some. But if you heard the kind of comments made earlier on the floor this evening you can tell that elections are coming up. But the American people understand that elections are about choices, and they are about the future. And there is a clear choice between Republicans who are working to enact serious reforms that will grow our economy, and reduce the deficit, and Capitol Hill Democrats who are interested in spending more of America's taxpayer dollars on wasteful Government programs as they see fit.

Now, I want to point out two things on this and the next poster. This poster here has the years down on the lower portion here, 2000-2006. And it has, this blue line here is the number of new jobs created, the number of new jobs created. And since August of 2003, this has 5.3, it is actually 5.7 million new jobs created in that period of time.

There is a vertical dotted green line here. And that vertical dotted green line marks the point where the tax decreases, the appropriate and fair tax decreases for the American people were enacted by this administration and by this Congress. And since that point, what you have seen, again, here is jobs growth going down. Tax decreases put into place, and jobs go up.

These red bars are business investment in these quarters. See business investment down, which means a slower economy, not as many jobs, not as much economic activity or growth. What happens when appropriate, fair tax decreases are put in place? The economy flourishes. No mistake about it. It occurs every time that significant tax reduction is put in place, has been put in place over the last 50 years in our Nation.

President Kennedy knew it. It occurred when he instituted appropriate tax decreases. President Reagan knew it. It occurred when he instituted tax decreases, and occurred with president George W. Bush with the appropriate tax decreases of 2003.

Now, I think it is important to appreciate that the other side truly has no plan for the economy. In fact they have not proposed any plans to address the mandatory programs, Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, those things that are on automatic pilot that now comprise about 54 percent of the budget, and unless they are addressed in relatively short order they will cause a significantly greater drain on the economy, decrease the economic growth and activity that we have seen.

The other side is literally blind and has not proposed any proposals to improve or to reform those spending programs. In fact, what they have done is to propose in the last fiscal year 2006 budget, these were their proposals, these were the things that they actually did write down and bring to committees and bring to the floor of the House, new spending to the tune of \$21.5 billion, and new taxes, new taxes to the tune of \$54 billion with again no savings, no savings in Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, those items that if nothing is doing to those three items by 2030, they will consume the entire budget, the entire budget.

So it is not something that you can just say, well, do not worry about it, we do not have to do anything to those items because they will take care of themselves.

Over the past 4 years, if the Democrats had been in control, they talk about their desire to take control of the House and to lead, well, what would have happened if they would have been in control for the last 4 years and had their proposals put in place?

If they had been in control, discretionary spending would have increased by over \$106 billion. Amazingly, although they talk a good game, they have voted consistently against any significant budget reform efforts.

The Deficit Reduction Act, that bill that was passed earlier this bill that saved approximately \$40 billion, \$40 billion saved, the Democrats unanimously, unanimously voted against that bill, the Deficit Reduction Act.

In fact, one of their leaders was heard to say something like, we are not going to give them a single vote on this, and said it with great pride. Again, that is that politics of division, that desire to not be productive, to not be positive about solutions as they come forward here in the Congress.

□ 2300

What about the line item veto? When I go home, I hear folks talk about budgetary improvements we could make here in Washington. Many of them ask about the line item veto, why can't we allow the administration, any

administration, to pick those items in the budget and say no, we ought not be spending money on that specific item. Good idea. I have supported it. The vast majority of my colleagues on the Republican side have supported it.

What happened when the bill came here to the floor for a vote? Well, Madam Speaker, the vote occurred earlier this year, rollcall vote 317, and the number of individuals on their side of the aisle supporting it, 35. The vast majority, 156, voting no.

That is the line item veto. That is one of those proposals that you hear them talk about all the time, wanting to make certain that the line item veto is passed. But when given the opportunity, when given the opportunity to stand up and say yes, that is exactly what we want to do, what do they say? No. "No, we don't believe that we ought to have that kind of reform," even though that is what they say when they go home.

Earmark reform. What about earmark reform? We had the Lobbying Accountability and Transparency Act. These are the special projects put into bills. We have had a couple of votes on this.

The first one that we had earlier, H.R. 4975, 192 Democrats vote no, including their top two members of their leadership.

Recently all it was was a sunshine bill. It said that if you are going to put a special project into the budget, that you ought to put your name beside it. I had a bill that I called "sunshine for earmarks." It said that if you are going to have a special project in an appropriations bill, that you ought to have to put your name beside it so that your constituents know you put it in there and they can look at it and say yes, this is what we want our Member of Congress to do, or no, we don't think that is something that he or she ought to be doing, so the colleagues here, Members' colleagues in the House, can know where these kinds of requests are coming from. It is important. It is important to have that kind of sunshine.

It is a simple, simple proposal. It is important for the press to know so that when they are providing their oversight of the fourth estate, that in fact they know who has put these items in.

So what kind of vote did we get? Again, this is a proposal that they talk about all the time. "If we could just have some earmark reform." So we bring it to the floor, call for a vote, it passes because the vast majority of colleagues on my side of the aisle, our side of the aisle, the Republican side of the aisle supported it. But what did those folks on the other side do? 147 of them, the vast majority voted no, including 15 ranking members. These are Members who are the most senior members on the committees in the United States House of Representatives. These are the individuals, if the other side were to by some chance take over and gain the majority, these are the individuals who would be chairmen. They would be chairs of the committees.

And what do they say with their vote, the vast majority? They say no, we don't want earmark reform. We don't want special project reform. We may say we do, but we really don't. We don't believe it in so much that when given the opportunity to vote for it, they vote no. And the leadership, what did the leadership do? Voted no. That is what they did on the other side of the aisle.

So, Madam Speaker, every single Member, every single individual is entitled to their own opinion, but they are not entitled to their own facts, and these are the facts about who is truly interested in budgetary reform and earmark reform.

To make matters worse, they are more than eager to raise your taxes. You hear the code words, and the code words recently have become "shared sacrifice." Have you heard that, Madam Speaker, "shared sacrifice?"

What that means is raising your taxes, because they believe that they know how to spend your money better than you. That is one of the principles that they have about how they plan to grow the government, how they plan to cover all these special projects and programs that they wish to have adopted. That would have not only a horrible impact on the economy, but it would also give them even more revenue, increased revenue in the government to spend.

Madam Speaker, when I hear the other side talk, if you just listen to them, you get so doggone depressed. But I am optimistic about the future of this Nation. I am optimistic about this economy.

The United States has the number one economy in the world, and in order to assure that vibrant economy in the 21st century, we in the House have focused on a comprehensive set of policies and incentives that will build on a solid economic foundation.

This won't be accomplished by Federal funds though, because Federal funds don't solve that kind of challenge. That is done by private capital. The private sector, not government bureaucrats, know how money should be spent, what resources are needed and what type of training workers will require. Unfortunately, unfortunately, there are way too many government roadblocks that stand in the way of business development and that deter investment, both here and abroad.

There are steps that we can take and we will take to restore our Nation's competitiveness and ensure that America remains the land of opportunity. We are not the status quo party. The Republicans are not the status quo party. We are the party of change, we are the party of vision, we are the party of entrepreneurship, we are the party of individual responsibility, we are the party of success.

So we will work to address health care security, termination of bureaucratic red tape, lifelong learning, trade fairness and opportunity, tax relief and

simplification, energy self-sufficiency and security, innovation and investment, and ending lawsuit abuse and litigation management.

I tell you, Madam Speaker, that is an agenda that the American people can be proud of. It is an agenda that the American people can embrace with enthusiasm, with optimism, with passion, not with a dour look on your face and say "woe is me, isn't the world awful."

These are the exciting kind of proposals. These are exciting proposals that we will put forward before the House as we continue our leadership, our strong leadership, to bring about increasing American competitiveness.

For 3 years, House Republicans have promoted the House economic competitiveness agenda. This year alone we have passed over 39 pieces of legislation that will help make America more competitive. We have real solutions. Republicans offer real solutions. We invite our colleagues to join us in moving America forward and providing an opportunity for the United States businesses and working families.

But instead, they have no plan, and instead of working with us at the committee level or on the House floor, the Democrats have tried to undermine the economic competitiveness agenda over and over and over again.

Again, their so-called innovative agenda is not innovative. It is a call for increased government spending, presumably fueled by increased taxes. In response to our economic agenda, at so many different points they have been nothing but obstructionists over and over again.

For example, college access for all. They say they are for expanding access to college, yet they voted against the College Access and Opportunity Act, 181 of them, including the top two leaders in their party, 181 of them voted against the College Access and Opportunity Act.

Energy independence, Democrats say they want to end our dependence on foreign oil, and yet they try to obstruct every single plan to access America's own oil and natural gas reserves, such as tapping into ANWR and the OCS.

The Energy Policy Act, 183 Democrats, including their top two leaders, voted no. Refinery Permit Process Schedule Act, 176 Democrats, including their top two leaders, voted no. And the Deep Ocean Energy Resources Act, 156 Democrats, including their top two leaders, voted no.

Affordable health care, a difficult challenge for so many large and small businesses around our Nation, Democrats say they want to help employers provide health insurance to their employees. But they vote against every single measure to do so. The HEALTH Act, 185 Democrats, including their top two leaders, voted no. Small Business Health Fairness Act, 165 Democrats, including their top two leaders, voted no. And recently, the Health Information Technology Promotion Act, something

that would truly streamline health care for our Nation, 139 Democrats, including their top two leaders, voted no. So, Madam Speaker, it truly is a remarkable contrast between the two parties.

I want to put up one more chart, because when you think about what would happen if the other side were in fact to be in the majority, I get questions at home, what would they do? What would they do?

Again, elections are about choices and they are about the future, and to determine what they would do, all you have to do is look at the legislation that they have proposed, the legislation they proposed. I presume that is what they would do, don't you, Madam Speaker?

□ 2310

The top two bills that they have proposed, H. Res. 635 and H. Res. 636, the first step in impeaching President Bush resolution and the second step in impeaching President Bush resolution.

Madam Speaker, I do not believe that the American people are interested in leadership in this House of Representatives that has as its number one priority the impeachment of the President of the United States. That is not what the American people are interested in.

What else are they interested in? H.R. 4683, the Federal Health Care System Government-Run Health Care Act. House Democrats want to create a Federal health care system without choices, which would combine the efficiency of the Department of Motor Vehicles and the compassion of the IRS, and they would tax Americans to get to it. They would amend the Social Security Act, the bill would, to impose on the income of every individual a tax equal to 1.7 percent of wages received, and on every employer an excise tax of 7 percent of the wages paid to each employee, and on the self-employment income of every individual a tax equal to the applicable percentage of the self-employment income for such taxable year. Who cosponsors that? Ranking Democrats, remember, the individuals who would be chairmen of the committees, ranking Democrats and senior members of the Democrat Caucus.

Madam Speaker, I do not think that is what Americans are bargaining for. That is not what I hear my constituents say they want when I go home and talk to them which is every single week. They are not interested in the Federal Government running health care.

H.R. 1018, it is called the Permanent Welfare Housing Act. I call it the welfare reform repeal Act. Public housing, this bill would remove provisions that residents of public housing are required to participate in 8 hours per month of either community service or economic self-sufficiency activities in order to retain their public housing. Who are the sponsors? The ranking Democrats, remember folks who would be chair-

men of these committees, and multiple, multiple senior Democrat Members.

Madam Speaker, one of the most incredible and productive and positive pieces of legislation that has passed through this Congress in the past 12 years has been welfare reform. It has put literally millions of Americans back to work, to be productive citizens, to have pride in what they are doing, to believe that they have some worth and they have some input into the productivity of this Nation. What is it that the other side wants to do? Well, they want to repeal portions of it that would provide that kind of sense of accomplishment and sense of participation.

So, Madam Speaker, Republicans understand that it is the American people who built this Nation, American people who built this economy and made this the land of opportunity. Washington's job as the people's representative is to provide national and economic security and to give each individual the freedom and the protection to pursue their American dream.

The imagination and hard work of the American people have built this wonderful and beautiful Nation, and they have made it prosperous. Our task as Members of the United States Congress is to ensure that this remains true for the next century.

Once again, the other side relies on the vague promises and big government programs to solve every perceived problem in the United States. Government is not the answer, and this philosophy, which is truly left over from previous bureaucratic administrations of the 1960s and 1970s, has only slowed down progress in our Nation every single time it has been instituted.

Madam Speaker, we live in a glorious Nation. It is a wondrous Nation, a Nation that is still seen by men and women around the world as a beacon of liberty and repository of hope. I am incredibly proud to serve in the United States House of Representatives and to have the opportunity to share this positive perspective and this positive vision with my colleagues and with the Nation as we have done tonight.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. LYNCH (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today.

Mr. MCGOVERN (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today.

Mr. MOORE of Kansas (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for the week of September 18 on account of the death of his father.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to: