Clark Misner served as project manager for the Rollins Pass reopening in 1987. Now the county's transportation director, he said Straight's love of railroads and the old wagon route over Rollins Pass prompted his interest in the project.

''He was a really decent guy, a straight shooter, no pun intended,'' Misner said. ''He was direct about what he thought should happen. He was honest and just a good guy.''

Memorial services will be held at 2 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 10, at Westview Presbyterian Church, with the Rev. Bruce McQueen officiating. Military honors will be presented by the Mile High Honor Guard, USAF.

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests memorial donations to the American Red Cross, the Boy Scouts, the Rollins Pass Restoration Association, Shrine Children's Hospitals or Westview Presbyterian Church in care of Ahlberg Funeral Chapel, 326 Terry St., Longmont 80501.

RECOGNIZING HAYDEN OSWALD FOR ACHIEVING THE RANK OF EAGLE SCOUT

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 16, 2007

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Hayden Oswald, a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 59, and in earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Hayden has been very active with his troop, participating in many Scout activities. Over the many years Hayden has been involved with Scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community.

Madam Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Hayden Oswald for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

ON OBSERVING THE 2007 NATIONAL SALUTE TO HOSPITALIZED VETERANS WEEK

HON. JEFF MILLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 16, 2007

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor our nation's veterans as we observe the National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans Week.

Each year, during the month of February, our nation's hospitalized veterans are recognized for their brave service to this nation. However, each day I am thankful for their selfless service as they put their lives on the line to defend our freedom at home. Many gave the ultimate sacrifice, and many returned home injured. Over 98,000 veterans currently receive daily care in a Department of Veterans Affairs medical center, clinic, or nursing home. It is to these brave and women we extend our deepest gratitude.

The price of freedom can be high, but soldiers fighting for our country believe freedom is worth every bit of that price and more. They are the reason we can sleep at night here at home, knowing full well that when we wake up the next day liberty will still be the cornerstone upon which this nation stands. We, as a nation, owe them a debt of gratitude, and I hope that Americans all over the world will take a moment this week to remember what our soldiers put on the line for our liberty here at home.

The National Salute Chairman for this year is none other than famous singer and actor Jerry Reed. I have great confidence that Mr. Reed's memorable face, humor, and famous singing and songwriting will draw increased attention to Salute to Hospitalized Veterans Week, and I applaud his dedication to such a noteworthy cause. His leadership will be vital to informing others about our hospitalized veterans.

Madam Speaker, on behalf of the United States Congress, it is a great honor for me to personally salute those who have borne the battle while we recognize the 2007 Salute to Hospitalized Veterans Week.

EXPRESSING SORROW OF THE HOUSE AT THE DEATH OF THE HONORABLE CHARLIE NORWOOD, MEMBER OF CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF GEORGIA

SPEECH OF

HON. PETE SESSIONS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 14, 2007

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join my fellow colleagues in mourning the passing of Congressman CHARLIE NORWOOD. My friend and the honorable representative for the people of the Ninth District of Georgia passed away on Tuesday after his long battle with lung disease and cancer. This Chamber, and the State of Georgia has lost a friend and one of our most capable and dedicated Members. Even before CHARLIE came to Congress in the election of 1994, he was a courageous individual and public servant. The former Army dentist was a decorated officer serving in Vietnam, having been awarded the Combat Medical Badge and two Bronze Stars for his service.

Words cannot fully express the sorrow that is felt by those who have known and loved CHARLIE. My heart goes out to CHARLIE's wife, Gloria, their two sons, Charles and Carlton, and their four grandchildren. I also will be keeping CHARLIE's staff in my thoughts and prayers, as I had the pleasure of working with Dr. NORWOOD on a variety of issues, and his staff was always a delight to work with. I can only imagine how tough it is for them, and all of CHARLIE's family and friends right now during this difficult time. I will be keeping CHARLIE's memory in my thoughts and prayers. He was always a dear friend of mine, someone who I looked to for his opinion and judgment.

CHARLIE is now leaving us for a better place, but he leaves behind a lasting legacy, and shoes that can never be filled. We have lost a hero and a champion, God bless.

RECOGNIZING GARLAND AND MILDRED KING

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 16, 2007

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize two outstanding constituents of Missouri's Sixth Congressional District: Garland and Mildred King of Harrison County, MO. Garland and Mildred celebrated their 74th wedding anniversary on December 3, 2006.

Garland and Mildred King were married on December 3, 1932 in Trenton, MO. They have 6 children, 14 grandchildren, 24 great grandchildren, and 1 great-great grandchild on the way. They have owned a family farm in Harrison County for 64 years.

Garland and Mildred King have been outstanding citizens of Harrison County and northwest Missouri. They are dedicated and active members of Melbourne Baptist Church where Garland is a deacon.

Madam Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in recognizing Garland and Mildred King. Their marriage of 74 years is inspirational, and I am honored to represent them in the United States Congress.

FORGETTING THE LESSONS OF HISTORY

HON. NEIL ABERCROMBIE

OF HAWAII

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 16, 2007

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Madam Speaker, the following 1984 speech by former Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger provides an important perspective on the use of military force in Iraq.

THE USES OF MILITARY POWER''

(By Caspar W. Weinberger)

Thank you for inviting me to be here today with the members of the National Press Club, a group most important to our national security. I say that because a major point I intend to make in my remarks today is that the single most critical element of a successful democracy is a strong consensus of support and agreement for our basic purposes. Policies formed without a clear understanding of what we hope to achieve will never work. And you help to build that understanding among our citizens.

Of all the many policies our citizens deserve and need to understand, none is so important as those related to our topic today the uses of military power. Deterrence will work only if the Soviets understand our firm commitment to keeping the peace, . . . and only from a well-informed public can we expect to have that national will and commitment.

So today, I want to discuss with you perhaps the most important question concerning keeping the peace. Under what circumstances, and by what means, does a great democracy such as ours reach the painful decision that the use of military force is necessary to protect our interests or to carry out our national policy?

National power has many components, some tangible, like economic wealth, technical pre-eminence. Other components are intangible such as moral force, or strong national will. Military forces, when they are

strong and ready and modern, are a credible and tangible addition to a nation's power. When both the intangible national will and those forces are forged into one instrument, national power becomes effective.

In today's world, the line between peace and war is less clearly drawn than at any time in our history. When George Washington, in his farewell address, warned us, as a new democracy, to avoid foreign entanglements, Europe then lay 2–3 months by sea over the horizon. The United States was protected by the width of the oceans. Now in this nuclear age, we measure time in minutes rather than months.

Aware of the consequences of any misstep, yet convinced of the precious worth of the freedom we enjoy, we seek to avoid conflict, while maintaining strong defenses. Our policy has always been to work hard for peace, but to be prepared if war comes. Yet, so blurred have the lines become between open conflict and half-hidden hostile acts that we cannot confidently predict where, or when, or how, or from what direction aggression may arrive. We must be prepared, at any moment, to meet threats ranging in intensity from isolated terrorist acts, to guerrilla action, to full-scale military confrontation.

Alexander Hamilton, writing in the Federalist Papers, said that it is impossible to foresee or define the extent and variety of national exigencies, or the correspondent extent and variety of the means, which may be necessary to satisfy them. If it was true then, how much more true it is today, when we must remain ready to consider the means to meet such serious indirect challenges to the peace as proxy wars and individual terrorist action. And how much more important is it now, considering the consequences of failing to deter conflict at the lowest level possible. While the use of military force to defend territory has never been questioned when a democracy has been attacked and its very survival threatened, most democracies have rejected the unilateral aggressive use of force to invade, conquer or subjugate other nations. The extent to which the use of force is acceptable remains unresolved for the host of other situations which fall between these extremes of defensive and aggressive use of force.

We find ourselves, then, face to face with a modern paradox: The most likely challenge to the peace—the gray area conflicts—are precisely the most difficult challenges to which a democracy must respond. Yet, while the source and nature of today's challenges are uncertain, our response must be clear and understandable. Unless we are certain that force is essential, we run the risk of inadequate national will to apply the resources needed.

Because we face a spectrum of threats from covert aggression, terrorism, and subversion, to overt intimidation, to use of brute force, choosing the appropriate level of our response is difficult. Flexible response does not mean just any response is appropriate. But once a decision to employ some degree of force has been made, and the purpose clarified, our government must have the clear mandate to carry out, and continue to carry out, that decision until the purpose has been achieved. That, too, has been difficult to accomplish.

The issue of which branch of government has authority to define that mandate and make decisions on using force is now being strongly contended. Beginning in the 1970s Congress demanded, and assumed, a far more active role in the making of foreign policy and in the decision-making process for the employment of military forces abroad than had been thought appropriate and practical before. As a result, the centrality of decision-making authority in the Executive branch has been compromised by the Legislative branch to an extent that actively interferes with that process. At the same time, there has not been a corresponding acceptance of responsibility by Congress for the outcome of decisions concerning the employment of military forces.

Yet the outcome of decisions on whether and when and to what degree to use combat forces abroad has never been more important than it is today. While we do not seek to deter or settle all the world's conflicts, we must recognize that, as a major power, our responsibilities and interests are now of such scope that there are few troubled areas we can afford to ignore. So we must be prepared to deal with a range of possibilities, a spectrum of crises, from local insurgency to global conflict. We prefer, of course, to limit any conflict in its early stages, to contain and control it but to do that our military forces must be deployed in a timely manner, and be fully supported and prepared before they are engaged, because many of those difficult decisions must be made extremely quickly.

Some on the national scene think they can always avoid making tough decisions. Some reject entirely the question of whether any force can ever be used abroad. They want to avoid grappling with a complex issue because, despite clever rhetoric disguising their purpose, these people are in fact advocating a return to post-World War I isolationism. While they may maintain in principle that military force has a role in foreign policy, they are never willing to name the circumstance or the place where it would apply.

On the other side, some theorists argue that military force can be brought to bear in any crisis. Some of these proponents of force are eager to advocate its use even in limited amounts simply because they believe that if there are American forces of any size present they will somehow solve the problem.

Neither of these two extremes offers us any lasting or satisfactory solutions. The first undue reserve would lead us ultimately to withdraw from international events that require free nations to defend their interests from the aggressive use of force. We would be abdicating our responsibilities as the leader of the free world responsibilities more or less thrust upon us in the aftermath of World War II war incidentally that isolationism did nothing to deter. These are responsibilities we must fulfill unless we desire the Soviet Union to keep expanding its influence unchecked throughout the world. In an international system based on mutual interdependence among nations, and alliances between friends, stark isolationism quickly would lead to a far more dangerous situation for the United States: we would be without allies and faced by many hostile or indifferent nations.

The second alternative employing our forces almost indiscriminately and as a regular and customary part of our diplomatic efforts would surely plunge us headlong into the sort of domestic turmoil we experienced during the Vietnam war, without accomplishing the goal for which we committed our forces. Such policies might very well tear at the fabric of our society, endangering the single most critical element of a successful democracy: a strong consensus of support and agreement for our basic purposes.

Policies formed without a clear understanding of what we hope to achieve would also earn us the scorn of our troops, who would have an understandable opposition to being used in every sense of the word casually and without intent to support them fully. Ultimately this course would reduce their morale and their effectiveness for engagements we must win. And if the military were to distrust its civilian leadership, recruitment would fall off and I fear an end to the all-volunteer system would be upon us, requiring a return to a draft, sowing the seeds of riot and discontent that so wracked the country in the '60s.

We have now restored high morale and pride in the uniform throughout the services. The all-volunteer system is working spectacularly well. Are we willing to forfeit what we have fought so hard to regain?

In maintaining our progress in strengthening America's military deterrent, we face difficult challenges. For we have entered an era where the dividing lines between peace and war are less clearly drawn, the identity of the foe is much less clear. In World Wars I and II, we not only knew who our enemies were, but we shared a clear sense of why the principles espoused by our enemies were unworthy.

Since these two wars threatened our very survival as a free nation and the survival of our allies, they were total wars, involving every aspect of our society. All our means of production, all our resources were devoted to winning. Our policies had the unqualified support of the great majority of our people. Indeed, World Wars I and II ended with the unconditional surrender of our enemies. . . . The only acceptable ending when the alternative was the loss of our freedom.

But in the aftermath of the Second World War, we encountered a more subtle form of warfare warfare in which, more often than not, the face of the enemy was masked. Territorial expansionism could be carried out indirectly by proxy powers, using surrogate forces aided and advised from afar. Some conflicts occurred under the name of ''national liberation,'' but far more frequently ideology or religion provided the spark to the tinder.

Our adversaries can also take advantage of our open society, and our freedom of speech and opinion to use alarming rhetoric and disinformation to divide and disrupt our unity of purpose. While they would never dare to allow such freedoms to their own people, they are quick to exploit ours by conducting simultaneous military and propaganda campaigns to achieve their ends.

They realize that if they can divide our national will at home, it will not be necessary to defeat our forces abroad. So by presenting issues in bellicose terms, they aim to intimidate western leaders and citizens, encouraging us to adopt conciliatory positions to their advantage. Meanwhile they remain sheltered from the force of public opinion in their countries, because public opinion there is simply prohibited and does not exist.

Our freedom presents both a challenge and an opportunity. It is true that until democratic nations have the support of the people, they are inevitably at a disadvantage in a conflict. But when they do have that support they cannot be defeated. For democracies have the power to send a compelling message to friend and foe alike by the vote of their citizens. And the American people have sent such a signal by re-electing a strong Chief Executive. They know that President Reagan is willing to accept the responsibility for his actions and is able to lead us through these complex times by insisting that we regain both our military and our economic strength.

In today's world where minutes count, such decisive leadership is more important than ever before. Regardless of whether conflicts are limited, or threats are ill defined, we must be capable of quickly determining that the threats and conflicts either do or do not affect the vital interests of the United States and our allies. . . . And then responding appropriately.

Those threats may not entail an immediate, direct attack on our territory, and our

response may not necessarily require the immediate or direct defense of our homeland. But when our vital national interests and those of our allies are at stake, we cannot ignore our safety, or forsake our allies.

At the same time, recent history has proven that we cannot assume unilaterally the role of the world's defender. We have learned that there are limits to how much of our spirit and blood and treasure we can afford to forfeit in meeting our responsibility to keep peace and freedom. So while we may and should offer substantial amounts of economic and military assistance to our allies in their time of need, and help them maintain forces to deter attacks against them usually we cannot substitute our troops or our will for theirs.

We should only engage our troops if we must do so as a matter of our own vital national interest. We cannot assume for other sovereign nations the responsibility to defend their territory without their strong invitation when our freedom is not threatened.

On the other hand, there have been recent cases where the United States has seen the need to join forces with other nations to try to preserve the peace by helping with negotiations, and by separating warring parties, and thus enabling those warring nations to withdraw from hostilities safely. In the Middle East, which has been torn by conflict for millennia, we have sent our troops in recent years both to the Sinai and to Lebanon, for just such a peacekeeping mission. But we did not configure or equip those forces for combat they were armed only for their self-defense. Their mission required them to be and to be recognized as peacekeepers. We knew that if conditions deteriorated so they were in danger, or if because of the actions of the warring nations, their peacekeeping mission could not be realized, then it would be necessary either to add sufficiently to the number and arms of our troops in short to equip them for combat, . . . or to withdraw them. And so in Lebanon, when we faced just such a choice, because the warring nations did not enter into withdrawal or peace agreements, the President properly withdrew forces equipped only for peacekeeping.

In those cases where our national interests require us to commit combat force we must never let there be doubt of our resolution. When it is necessary for our troops to be committed to combat, we must commit them, in sufficient numbers and we must support them, as effectively and resolutely as our strength permits. When we commit our troops to combat we must do so with the sole object of winning.

Once it is clear our troops are required, because our vital interests are at stake, then we must have the firm national resolve to commit every ounce of strength necessary to win the fight to achieve our objectives. In Grenada we did just that.

Just as clearly, there are other situations where United States combat forces should not be used. I believe the postwar period has taught us several lessons, and from them I have developed six major tests to be applied when we are weighing the use of U.S. combat forces abroad. Let me now share them with you:

First, the United States should not commit forces to combat overseas unless the particular engagement or occasion is deemed vital to our national interest or that of our allies. That emphatically does not mean that we should declare beforehand, as we did with Korea in 1950, that a particular area is outside our strategic perimeter.

Second, if we decide it is necessary to put combat troops into a given situation, we should do so wholeheartedly, and with the clear intention of winning. If we are unwilling to commit the forces or resources necessary to achieve our objectives, we should not commit them at all. Of course if the particular situation requires only limited force to win our objectives, then we should not hesitate to commit forces sized accordingly. When Hitler broke treaties and remilitarized the Rhineland, small combat forces then could perhaps have prevented the holocaust of World War II.

Third, if we do decide to commit forces to combat overseas, we should have clearly defined political and military objectives. And we should know precisely how our forces can accomplish those clearly defined objectives. And we should have and send the forces needed to do just that. As Clausewitz wrote, ''no one starts a war or rather, no one in his senses ought to do so without first being clear in his mind what he intends to achieve by that war, and how he intends to conduct it.''

War may be different today than in Clausewitz's time, but the need for well-defined objectives and a consistent strategy is still essential. If we determine that a combat mission has become necessary for our vital national interests, then we must send forces capable to do the job and not assign a combat mission to a force configured for peacekeeping.

Fourth, the relationship between our objectives and the forces we have committed their size, composition and disposition must be continually reassessed and adjusted if necessary. Conditions and objectives invariably change during the course of a conflict. When they do change, then so must our combat requirements. We must continuously keep as a beacon light before us the basic questions: ''Is this conflict in our national interest?'' ''Does our national interest require us to fight, to use force of arms?'' If the answers are ''yes,'' then we must win. If the answers are ''no,'' then we should not be in combat.

Fifth, before the U.S. commits combat forces abroad, there must be some reasonable assurance we will have the support of the American people and their elected representatives in Congress. This support cannot be achieved unless we are candid in making clear the threats we face; the support cannot be sustained without continuing and close consultation. We cannot fight a battle with the Congress at home while asking our troops to win a war overseas or, as in the case of Vietnam, in effect asking our troops not to win, but just to be there.

Finally, the commitment of U.S. forces to combat should be a last resort.

I believe that these tests can be helpful in deciding whether or not we should commit our troops to combat in the months and years ahead. The point we must all keep uppermost in our minds is that if we ever decide to commit forces to combat, we must support those forces to the fullest extent of our national will for as long as it takes to win. So we must have in mind objectives that are clearly defined and understood and supported by the widest possible number of our citizens. And those objectives must be vital to our survival as a free nation and to the fulfillment of our responsibilities as a world power. We must also be farsighted enough to sense when immediate and strong reactions to apparently small events can prevent lion-like responses that may be required later. We must never forget those isolationists in Europe who shrugged that ''Danzig is not worth a war,'' and ''why should we fight to keep the Rhineland demilitarized?''

These tests I have just mentioned have been phrased negatively for a purpose they are intended to sound a note of caution that we must observe prior to committing forces to combat overseas. When we ask our military forces to risk their very lives in such situations, a note of caution is not only prudent, it is morally required.

In many situations we may apply these tests and conclude that a combatant role is not appropriate. Yet no one should interpret what I am saying here today as an abdication of America's responsibilities either to its own citizens or to its allies. Nor should these remarks be misread as a signal that this country, or this Administration, is unwilling to commit forces to combat overseas.

We have demonstrated in the past that, when our vital interests or those of our allies are threatened, we are ready to use force, and use it decisively, to protect those interests. Let no one entertain any illusions if our vital interests are involved, we are prepared to fight. And we are resolved that if we must fight, we must win.

So, while these tests are drawn from lessons we have learned from the past, they also can and should be applied to the future. For example, the problems confronting us in Central America today are difficult. The possibility of more extensive Soviet and Soviet-proxy penetration into this hemisphere in months ahead is something we should recognize. If this happens we will clearly need more economic and military assistance and training to help those who want democracy.

The President will not allow our military forces to creep or be drawn gradually into a combat role in Central America or any other place in the world. And indeed our policy is designed to prevent the need for direct American involvement. This means we will need sustained Congressional support to back and give confidence to our friends in the region.

I believe that the tests I have enunciated here today can, if applied carefully, avoid the danger of this gradualist incremental approach, which almost always means the use of insufficient force. These tests can help us to avoid being drawn inexorably into an endless morass, where it is not vital to our national interest to fight.

But policies and principles such as these require decisive leadership in both the Executive and Legislative branches of government and they also require strong and sustained public support. Most of all, these policies require national unity of purpose. I believe the United States now possesses the policies and leadership to gain that public support and unity. And I believe that the future will show we have the strength of character to protect peace with freedom.

In summary, we should all remember these are the policies indeed the only policies that can preserve for ourselves, our friends, and our posterity, peace with freedom.

I believe we can continue to deter the Soviet Union and other potential adversaries from pursuing their designs around the world. We can enable our friends in Central America to defeat aggression and gain the breathing room to nurture democratic reforms. We can meet the challenge posed by the unfolding complexity of the 1980s.

We will then be poised to begin the last decade of this century amid a peace tempered by realism, and secured by firmness and strength. And it will be a peace that will enable all of us ourselves at home, and our friends abroad to achieve a quality of life, both spiritually and materially, far higher than man has even dared to dream.

EXPRESSING SORROW OF THE HOUSE AT THE DEATH OF THE HONORABLE CHARLIE NORWOOD, MEMBER OF CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF GEORGIA

SPEECH OF

HON. HENRY E. BROWN, JR.

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 14, 2007

Mr. BROWN of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I join my colleagues in mourning the passing of CHARLIE NORWOOD. As a Member of Congress from the neighboring state of South Carolina, I was fortunate enough to serve with CHARLIE and see firsthand his dedication to public service. Coming to Congress with a medical background, CHARLIE championed issues regarding a patients' bill of rights which was designed to give people better access to healthcare. As a decorated Vietnam Veteran, CHARLIE was a fighter. He fought for 12 years as a member of Congress on behalf of his constituents. I worked with CHARLIE on a number of issues including education, military, and veterans' issues. As Subcommittee Chairman of Health on the Veterans' Affairs Committee, I had the pleasure of participating in a Town Hall meeting with the veterans from his district.

Diagnosed with cancer in 2006, CHARLIE continued to serve the people of Georgia bravely and honorably in the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES despite his ill health. He fought to the end, and in his final days, he returned home to be with his family.

CHARLIE will be sorely missed, but his legacy will never be forgotten. My thoughts and prayers are with his wife Gloria and his two children during this sad time.

RECOGNIZING RUTH ELVIRA DOBBINS

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 16, 2007

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in recognizing Ruth Elvira Dobbins of Sibley, Missouri. Ruth celebrated her 80th Birthday on January 17th and it is my privilege to offer her my warmest regards on achieving this important milestone. Ruth is a fine citizen of Missouri and the Sibley community. It is an honor to represent Ruth in the United States Congress, and I wish her all the best on this birthday and many more in the future.

THE PRESIDENT'S FY 2008 BUDGET

HON. JAMES R. LANGEVIN

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 16, 2007

Mr. LANGEVIN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to express my disappointment with the President's budget proposal for Fiscal Year 2008. The President has said repeatedly that he wants to work with the new leadership in Congress, but his budget request tells a different story. It is clear evidence that he has little interest in making the hard choices facing our Nation and that he continues to favor tax cuts for the wealthy at the expense of working Americans.

One of the most notable changes in this budget as compared with those of previous years is the inclusion of supplemental spending requests for military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. I do appreciate this development, as it will enhance Congressional oversight, which has been sorely lacking in the past. However, this improvement does not alter my deep opposition to the President's plan to augment existing force levels in Iraq by 21,500 troops, a number that could increase significantly once additional support forces are considered. It has become evident that the problem in Iraq cannot be solved by more U.S. troops. As the Iraq Study Group and other experts have concluded, it requires a diplomatic and economic solution, as well as a renewed commitment by the Iraqi government to take greater control of its own security situation. Consequently, Congress will carefully scrutinize the supplemental funding request so that we continue to provide our men and women in uniform with the resources they need to remain safe and effective while moving toward a swift conclusion of our military operations in Iraq. The American people have asked us to act, and we will do so in the coming months.

Sadly, the remainder of the budget demonstrates the President's misplaced priorities and inability to operate within realistic expectations. Once again, the President claims he can have it both ways by making permanent tax cuts for the wealthiest while reaching a balanced budget by 2012. However, the numbers just don't add up. The President doesn't balance his budget through responsible decision-making; he does it by hoping for economic growth that may or may not occur. In fact, the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office estimates that the President has overestimated revenue projections in 2012 by more than $150 billion, and that his budget would actually result in yet another deficit. One hundred and fifty billion dollars is more than a rounding error; it is wishful thinking.

What does the average Rhode Islander get from all of that deficit spending? Unfortunately, it's not much. The President's decision to extend tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans would cost hundreds of billions of dollars in lost revenue, necessitating drastic cuts to important services and resulting in a massive middle-class tax increase. By choosing to extend certain tax cuts expiring in 2010 instead of fixing the Alternative Minimum Tax, the President has made clear that his priorities are with the richest Americans and not the middle class.

Our Nation's most vulnerable populations would also be harmed by the proposed budget. The President has called for $78 billion in cuts to Medicare and Medicaid, venerable programs that provide vital health care services to the elderly, the disabled and the poor. Part of those cuts would come from an 8 percent reduction in Medicare reimbursement rates to physicians. Congress has blocked such cuts in the past because we know how devastating they would be to our health care system, yet the President appears oblivious to how dangerous they would be. When I am in Rhode Island, I hear constantly from doctors about how proposed cuts to Medicare reimbursement rates would result in their inability to treat Medicare patients. My State's 16 hospitals would not be able to meet the needs of the community, and our senior citizens would suffer as a result. While I agree that we need to address the long-term solvency of Medicare, any reforms should be implemented in a way that benefits, not damages, our Nation's health care system.

The budget would also threaten to repeal health insurance for Rhode Island children. Rhode Island is one of 18 States that have implemented the State Children's Health Insurance Program to exceed minimum federal standards. Rhode Island's program, Rite Care, has leveraged SCHIP funding to provide health insurance to children in families up to 250 percent of the poverty level, as well as to additional populations such as pregnant women and parents. We have worked hard to bring our insurance coverage rate for children to 94 percent—above the national average of 88 percent. The President's budget would penalize States that are succeeding under SCHIP and increase the uninsured rate among children when we should be going in the opposite direction.

As chairman of the Homeland Security Subcommittee on Emerging Threats, Cybersecurity and Science and Technology, I am concerned that the budget proposal does not invest appropriately in important homeland security initiatives. Despite tragedies experienced in Madrid and London, we continue to ignore the importance of rail security; the Transportation Security Administration budget contains only $41 million for surface transportation security. The Bush Administration has also proposed cutting biodefense-related programs and the Department of Homeland Security's Science and Technology Directorate, both of which will help protect our Nation from emerging threats. Additionally, the budget would reduce funding for programs important to State and local law enforcement in Rhode Island, including the State Homeland Security Grant Program, which awarded $45.2 million to Rhode Island from 2003 to 2006, and the Law Enforcement Terrorist Prevention Program, LETPP, from which Rhode Island received $11.5 million in funding from 2004 to 2006. Despite their proven effectiveness in reducing crime in our communities, the Community Oriented Policing Service, COPS, and Justice Assistance Grants, JAGs, would also experience cuts in this budget proposal. The COPS program helps Rhode Island's law enforcement agencies hire police officers, enhance crime fighting technology, and support crime prevention initiatives, while JAG supports State and local drug task forces, community crime prevention programs and prosecution initiatives. In 2006 alone, Rhode Island received $1.6 million in JAG funding and $790,000 in COPS funding that helped keep Rhode Island families safe. An important component of homeland security includes providing our state and local law enforcement with the resources they need to be effective, and I will fight to block these proposed cuts.

A budget is more than a simple ledger of revenue and spending. It is a demonstration of priorities. In this case, the President's priorities are out of touch with what the American people want. The new leadership in Congress is ready to craft a budget that will support strengthening our national defense and will