

States House of Representatives, That the Secretary of the Army review the report of the Chief of Engineers on the Mississippi River between Coon Rapids Dam, Minnesota, and the mouth of the Ohio River published in House Document 669, 76th Congress, 3rd Session, and other pertinent reports, to determine whether modifications to the recommendations contained therein are advisable at the present time, in the interest of flood control, environmental restoration, and related purposes along the Mississippi River and its Tributaries with particular reference to the Meramec River in the vicinity of Pacific, Missouri, including the counties of Franklin, Jefferson, and St. Louis.

RESOLUTION—DOCKET 2771—ST. LOUIS,
MISSOURI

Resolved by the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the United States House of Representatives, That the Secretary of the Army review the report of the Chief of Engineers on the Mississippi River between Coon Rapids Dam, Minnesota, and the mouth of the Ohio River published in House Document 669, 76th Congress, 3rd Session, and other pertinent reports, to determine whether modifications to the recommendations contained therein are advisable at the present time, for the purpose of reconstructing the facilities of the St. Louis Flood Protection System, Missouri along the Mississippi River in the city of St. Louis and St. Louis County, Missouri to return the pump stations, gravity drains, pressure sewer emergency closure gatewells and other pertinent features to their original degree of protection.

RESOLUTION—DOCKET 2772—ESOPUS AND
PLATTEKILL WATERSHEDS, GREENE AND ULSTER
COUNTIES, NEW YORK

Resolved by the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the United States House of Representatives, That the Secretary of the Army review the report of the Chief of Engineers on the New York and New Jersey Channels, published as House Document 133, 74th Congress, 1st Session; the New York and New Jersey Harbor Entrance Channels and Anchorage Areas, published as Senate Document 45, 84th Congress, 1st Session; and the New York Harbor, NY Anchorage Channel, published as House Document 18, 71st Congress, 2nd Session, and other pertinent reports, to determine whether modifications to the recommendations contained therein are advisable in the interest of navigation, streambank stabilization, flood damage reduction, floodplain management, water quality, sediment control, environmental preservation and restoration, and other related purposes in Esopus and Plattekill Watersheds, New York.

RESOLUTION—DOCKET 2773—HASHAMOMUCK
COVE, SOUTHOLD, NEW YORK

Resolved by the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the United States House of Representatives, That the Secretary of the Army review the report of the Chief of Engineers on the North Shore of Long Island, Suffolk County, New York, published as House Document 198, 92nd Congress, 2nd Session, and other pertinent reports, to determine whether modifications to the recommendations contained therein are advisable in the interest of navigation, streambank stabilization, flood damage reduction, floodplain management, water quality, sediment control, environmental preservation and restoration, and other related purposes in Hashamomuck Cove and Tributaries, New York.

RESOLUTION—DOCKET 2774—MANHATTAN
BEACH AND SHEEPSHEAD BAY, CONEY ISLAND,
NEW YORK

Resolved by the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the United States House of Representatives, That the Secretary of the Army review the report of the Chief of Engineers on the Atlantic Coast of New York City from Rockaway Inlet to Norton Point, published in House Document 96-23 and other pertinent reports, to determine whether modifications to the recommendations contained therein are advisable at the present time, in the interest of storm damage reduction, floodplain management environmental preservation and restoration, and other allied purposes at Manhattan Beach and Sheepshead Bay, New York.

RESOLUTION—DOCKET 2775—PECONIC BAY
WATERSHED, SUFFOLK COUNTY, NEW YORK

Resolved by the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the United States House of Representatives, That the Secretary of the Army review the report of the Chief of Engineers on the Long Island Intracoastal Waterway from East Rockaway Inlet to Great Peconic Bay, published as House Document 181, 75th Congress, 1st Session, and other pertinent reports, to determine whether modifications to the recommendations contained therein are advisable in the interest of environmental restoration and preservation, streambank stabilization, flood damage reduction, floodplain management, water quality, and other related purposes in the Peconic Bay Watershed, New York.

RESOLUTION—DOCKET 2776—RONDOUT WATER-
SHED, SULLIVAN AND ULSTER COUNTIES, NEW
YORK,

Resolved by the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the United States House of Representatives, That the Secretary of the Army review the report of the Chief of Engineers on the New York and New Jersey Channels, published as House Document 133, 74th Congress, 1st Session; the New York and New Jersey Harbor Entrance Channels and Anchorage Areas, published as Senate Document 45, 84th Congress, 1st Session; and the New York Harbor, NY Anchorage Channel, published as House Document 18, 71st Congress, 2nd Session, and other pertinent reports, to determine whether modifications to the recommendations contained therein are advisable in the interest of navigation, streambank stabilization, flood damage reduction, floodplain management, water quality, sediment control, environmental preservation and restoration, and other related purposes in Rondout Watershed, New York.

RESOLUTION—DOCKET 2777—KEY WEST
HARBOR, FLORIDA

Resolved by the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the United States House of Representatives, That the Secretary of the Army review the report of the Chief of Engineers on Key West Harbor, Florida, published in Senate Document 106, 87th Congress, 2nd Session, and other pertinent reports, to determine whether modifications to the recommendations contained therein are advisable with particular reference to widening the navigation project at the present time at Key West Harbor.

RESOLUTION—DOCKET 2778—CHOWAN RIVER
BASIN, VIRGINIA AND NORTH CAROLINA

Resolved by the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the United States House of Representatives, That the

Secretary of the Army review the report of the Chief of Engineers on Chowan River, North Carolina, and Blackwater River, Virginia, published as House Document 101, 76th Congress, 1st Session, and other pertinent reports, to determine whether modifications to the recommendations contained therein are advisable at the present time with particular references toward flood damage reduction, environmental restoration, navigation, erosion control, and associated water resources issues in the Chowan River basin, Virginia and North Carolina.

RESOLUTION—DOCKET 2779—WESTCHESTER
COUNTY STREAMS, WESTCHESTER COUNTY,
NEW YORK

Resolved by the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the United States House of Representatives, That the Secretary of the Army review the report of the Chief of Engineers on the Streams in Westchester County, New York, and the Mamaroneck and Sheldrake Rivers Basin and Byram River Basin, New York and Connecticut published as House Document 98-112, and other pertinent reports on the Hutchinson, Mamaroneck and Sheldrake Rivers to determine whether modifications to the recommendations contained therein are advisable at the present time in the interest of water resources development, including flood damage reduction, storm damage reduction, environmental restoration, navigation, watershed management, water supply, and other allied purposes.

RESOLUTION—DOCKET 2780—ROARING FORK
RIVER, BASALT, COLORADO

Resolved by the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the United States House of Representatives, in accordance with the Flood Control Act of 1938, That the Secretary of the Army study the feasibility of and alternatives for Roaring Fork River, in the vicinity of the Town of Basalt, Eagle and Pitkin Counties, Colorado, to determine whether modifications to the recommendations contained therein are advisable at the present time in the interest of flood damage reduction, environmental restoration, recreational, and other related purposes along the Roaring Fork River, Colorado.

There was no objection.

REPUBLICAN STUDY COMMITTEE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. NEUGEBAUER) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. Mr. Speaker, I was listening with interest this evening about all of the things that are going, supposedly, not well in Iraq. So I hope to spend the next hour with some of my colleagues talking about the things that are going well. I thought it was interesting as the other side was talking about how they support our troops, and are thankful for the wonderful job they are doing, yet they have made them wait 107 days for much-needed resources to do the job that we have asked them to do.

We are going to talk about that later on this evening, of all of the things that our young men and women have

had to wait for as we have been playing a political game, or the other side, I would say, has been playing the political game, and our young men and women have been doing and continue to do the professional job that they have been doing for so many times.

I have been to Iraq three times myself, and tonight I am joined by some of my colleagues that have also been over there. We are going to talk about this war, because it's a real war. I think some people try to minimize what is going on in this global war on terrorism, but, in fact, it is a real war. We will talk about where this war is being fought. It's not just being fought in Iraq and Afghanistan. We are also going to talk about the fact that Iraq is a central front for the war on terrorism.

Finally, we are also going to talk a lot about the progress that's being made over there. General Pace was in Congress today briefing Members on what's going on in Iraq and brought forth a very positive report in many ways.

I look forward to this time. I am certainly glad that some of my friends on the other side weren't around when we fought the Revolutionary War, because it might have been too expensive, or we might have lost too many lives. What we do know is freedom and democracy has never come cheap. It comes with a price.

We enjoy the freedoms. In fact, we enjoy the freedom to be on the floor tonight with our colleagues because of price that many have paid that have gone before us. I am very proud of them. Every time that I have had the opportunity to travel and be with our soldiers, it makes me proud to be an American.

I would like to recognize my good friend from New Mexico, my neighbor Mr. PEARCE. Mr. PEARCE has also been to Iraq on three different occasions. He has seen many of the things that I have been alluding to. I would ask him to talk about his perspective of what is going on in the global war on terrorism.

Mr. PEARCE. I would just remind the Members of the Chamber that we are a part of the Republican Study Committee, that's the RSC here. We have the Web site, www.house.gov/hensarling/rsc. So take a look at the things that we are talking about, the things that we all believe in. It's the conservative arm of the Republican Party.

I think the first thing that we would want to talk about is basically what is happening in Iraq. If the gentleman doesn't mind, I would like to use one of the charts here. If we take a look at the charts, these are reconstruction projects, but also they mirror very closely the conflict, the different fights that are going on.

If you look at this whole part of the country, this entire section is actually pretty secure. This al-Anbar province out in the west has been the subject of

a lot of discussion. Baghdad, of course, is very near the center part. You can see where we are spending more money on reconstruction there and up north. We can see, also, that if we have the reports of firefights, the reports of IEDs, we would see the same sort of clustering there.

People ask, well, why did the British leave? The British were serving in the southern section here. The British actually had secured their area that had been turned over to the Iraqis.

I think all of our troop commanders are telling us that when we have Iraq secure, that when the Iraqi forces are in charge of their own security, both police and then the army, then we are going to see troops start coming home. That's exactly what happened.

Now, the risk that we run, I would cover that just briefly, Iran touches on the eastern side of the country. If we pull out, Iran will take over these massive oil fields in the southern part of Iraq. That's going to destabilize even more the price of gasoline. Our colleagues were just talking about it. Really, the price of gasoline is quite simple. I majored in economics in college, and I did so because economics is very easy. It's just got two moving parts: supply and demand.

□ 2115

If you will consider the demand for our product, the demand for gasoline, we have 300 million people today. That is significantly more than what we had in the 1950s when the price of gas was low. So our demand is increasingly higher, but also our supply is becoming more restricted.

Then we look at the worldwide picture, and you understand that the Chinese, if you overlay the price of oil, the price of natural gas, the price of gasoline with the demand in China for the last 20 years, you would see that the demand of the Chinese is almost exactly mirroring, is exactly causing our high price of gasoline right now.

There is a compelling fact today; we heard the same statistics that just a couple years ago the price of gasoline was actually \$2.47, today it is about \$3.29. And, again, the law of supply and demand, the Middle East, that OPEC group is actually cutting their exports. They are trimming back their exports. They are cutting the supply. It is driving the price up. It is actually quite simple. Our friends on the other side of the aisle in charge of governing the Nation really should stop and consider these two moving parts, supply and demand. They have got two hands, maybe they could write one on one hand and write one on the other hand and try to keep them organized, because they make this far more complex than what it actually is.

So what we are doing in Iraq is trying to stabilize the Middle East, because I would guarantee everyone in the Chamber that if Iraq fails, if we leave Iraq, Iraq falls. We were just in Israel about 2 months ago, and the

Israelis said that you are going to lose Saudi Arabia. That is, the terrorists are going to go in and topple that regime, they are going to go in and take over that government. Now, Saudi Arabia has about 60 percent of the world's known reserves; that is the reserves of normal petroleum. So that would destabilize between losing the production in Iraq, losing the production in Saudi Arabia. And, don't forget Kuwait, because the general assumption is that Kuwait and Jordan would fall. Then you see a picture where the worldwide oil market would destabilize.

At that point I think that we would really have to worry about the security of the entire world economy. And if you worry about the security of the world economy, you also have to worry about social stability, because the terrorists know they are not going to beat us militarily. That has never been their attempt. Their attempt is to destabilize us economically. That was the reason they hit the World Trade Center in 1993. They came back and hit it in 2001. And they knew that if they could strike at that vibrant nerve center of the U.S. economy, they would destabilize us economically. If they destabilize us economically, they destabilize us politically.

So right now we are finding that actually our surge of troops, those troops are mostly in the Baghdad area, because how goes Baghdad, that is how goes Iraq. The governing structure is in Baghdad. If we secure Baghdad, then we secure Iraq. If we do not secure Baghdad, we do not secure Iraq.

We put about 110,000, 120,000 troops into Baghdad. We are also joining those up with about 100,000 Iraqi troops that are there already. Both of those numbers are increasing, and I will tell you that we are hearing already that the violence in Baghdad itself is beginning to diminish significantly. Again, we can take some of the instability that is moving out to the outlying provinces if we first secure the capital, if we can have those essential government functions that cause the people to believe that their society is intact, and that even though there are difficulties that they can get their garbage service, they can get their water service or whatever. Those are the underlying factors that we are seeing playing right now in the troop surge.

I think that everyone believes by September or October, we are going to know the outcome of the surge. It doesn't mean we will know the outcome of the battle, it doesn't mean we will know the outcome of the war. But I think that it is essential that we fund our troops, that we quit playing games.

We have consistently asked our leaders, the majority leaders, if you do not like the war, that is a credible position. Just come to the floor, have the vote about withdrawing the troops. Do not play games with the funding. Do not play games with our troops in harm's way.

But they refuse to have that vote. Instead, what they do is they put the money here and they put conditions.

Now, I know that college football coaches and pro football coaches get fired every day. It is because they become too predictable. Their offense is too well known. When an offense is well known, the defense knows exactly where to play. Now, our friends on the other side of the aisle want us to give our playbook; they want us to put into legislation the benchmarks that will determine if we go or leave, if we come home from Iraq or if we stay in Iraq. And we will tell you, that simply tells our opponents where to go to defeat us. If the benchmarks are in writing, then that is going to give our playbook to the opposition.

We as the American Congress, we as the United States Congress, owe it to the men and women in uniform, who are in harm's way, to support our troops or to please bring them home.

I was in Vietnam at a period of time when the Nation began to turn its back on its troops. I was in Vietnam at a time when they began to play games with the funding. I was in Vietnam during the time that Jane Fonda went to the North and gave aid and comfort to the enemy. I will tell you that I have personal experience that this is not the way that we want to treat our young men and women who are in harm's way.

So we owe it to our troops to have the vote on the supplemental budget that we are discussing tonight, because the future of our country depends on it. But more than that, the lives of our young men and women rest today, today, on what we do.

So I yield back to the gentleman from Texas. I have other comments, but I see we have a lot of people here tonight. I thank him for the opportunity to speak and thank him for taking his leadership and giving leadership to this great subject, because it is the right thing for us to do. It is the right thing for America to do. It is the right and honorable thing for this Congress to do, to give the funding to our troops or bring them home. Those are the two choices we have in Congress. And I thank the gentleman.

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. I thank the gentleman from New Mexico. He brought a lot of insight to this discussion tonight. There is nothing better than, if you want to see what's going on, to go to the battlefield yourself.

What I was wondering with some of my colleagues this evening is the Democrats have made our troops sit and wait for 107 days to see if, in fact, they are going to fund the very resources that they need. And I have got to wonder how demoralizing that has to be when you get up every morning and you are putting yourself in harm's way for this great Nation of America, keeping America safe, and also helping liberate and begin to bring peace and democracy to another country, and how that must feel to know that your

own home country is sitting over here and playing political games while you are doing the heavy lifting.

So I have to say to the young men and women that are in harm's way tonight that I am hopeful that this Democratic leadership will finally step up and do what they should do.

Before I yield to the next gentleman, I wanted to let the American people know what our young men and women have been waiting on. In this bill that we hopefully can pass this week is \$8 billion for body armor, armored vehicles, and base security surveillance. In other words, these are the things that would help to keep them safe. Yet we have to wait 108 days for the Democrats to decide that they want to keep our troops safe. That just isn't right; \$2.4 billion to help use some new technology and some things that we are learning about IEDs, which is one of the things over there that has caused so much damage and death and destruction in that country and harmed and injured, severely, many of our young men and women. And yet they have had to wait 108 days for these resources, for this Democratic Congress, this Democratic leadership, to give them the resources that they need.

Another important piece of this supplemental is the fact that \$2.7 billion is allocated for updating our security and our surveillance and our intelligence. Let me tell you, today in Iraq and Afghanistan and all around the world, knowing where the bad guys are is a very important piece of how we defend this country and we prosecute the war on terrorism. Yet we have had to wait 108 days and counting for this leadership to do the right thing by our young men and women.

It is my honor and privilege now to recognize a fellow Texan, a former judge, a good friend, Congressman CARTER from Texas, who has also been to Iraq. I believe the gentleman has been three times, if I am correct.

Mr. CARTER. That is correct. And I thank the gentleman for yielding. As it turns out, we have got a whole room full of folks here that want to address this issue. But we talked earlier between you and our neighbor from New Mexico, and we have each been three times.

But let me point out that as Congressman PEARCE pointed out, the men and women that are in Iraq today, most of them are on their fourth rotation over there. Many of those people have been there four times, four times for a year, sometimes, or better, each time they've been. When we go, we are very blessed to be able to go over there, but generally time is very short and if we spend 3 or 4 days in country, we have been there a long time. These soldiers have gone over there voluntarily.

You know, one of the things that I think is a misconception that seems to be played out both in our coverage in the media and in the comments that we hear from our colleagues across the aisle is that they think that we are

dealing with people who are being forced to go over there. These people volunteered. These men and women are true American heroes, and they know what their mission is, and they will tell you they know they are accomplishing that mission. They wonder why what they are accomplishing is not what they are viewing on American television. They wonder that a lot, and they say that to you a lot when you go over there to visit them.

And so it has been said here tonight already, but I think it is very important that the American people think about this. The Democratic Party in this House and in the Senate is in the majority. They have a responsibility now to govern this Nation. They ran on a campaign that promised what they were going to do when they got here to govern this Nation. And as we heard in the early hour, we do have three distinctive parts of the government. The President is one, but this is a coequal branch of government with the authority to take charge and be responsible for what you promise. And if it means to the American people what they think it means to the American people, that we have to get out immediately of Iraq, they have the authority and the ability to vote to bring our troops home.

But you see, it is easy to talk about wanting the responsibility, but taking the responsibility becomes very difficult. In fact, the real story of this debate that we are having on what should happen is they don't want to take the responsibility because they really, I would hope, in their heart of hearts, realize that the consequences are dramatic.

My friend Congressman PEARCE mentioned to you, and I think it is everybody's opinion that looks at that map of Iraq, that should the American troops strike their colors and march home tomorrow, that the southern part of Iraq falls almost immediately into the hands of the Iranians, because they fought a whole war over that issue; and only because the Iraqis stood up their Armed Forces and fought to a standstill that the Iranians didn't take those southern oil fields. But the Iraqi Army, which we are in the process of building up, would not be able to do that in today's life. They are too busy straightening out their own country.

We hear so much about the American soldier. And God bless the American soldier. The American troops are doing an outstanding job, but so are the Iraqi troops. And that is the news item that is not out there these days. The Iraqi troops are dying actually at much greater numbers than the American troops, side by side with the American soldier, learning as they go how to fight the kind of war that professional soldiers fight. And they are doing a good job. And we have to give them the opportunity to finish the job and stand up their military and stand up their police force.

And that is what our soldiers tell us when they go over there, and they tell

us that from the corporal or the private all the way up to the four-star general.

And the surge has a purpose. It is more than just feeding in troops. It is clearing a neighborhood, and then having the Iraqi troops, along with Americans, to hold those neighborhoods until we are able to get this thing done.

□ 2130

And you know, al-Anbar Province, when I was over there the second time, that was the Wild West. That was the worst province in Iraq, al-Anbar Province. Now the Marines report to us on a daily basis that because the sheiks who are the tribal leaders of that area, and particularly one sheik who's got the vast majority of the tribes in that area, have joined the fight, told their people, when you shoot at an American, you shoot at one of us; join us in getting rid of this al-Qaeda that's trying to come in here and turn all sides against each other to create turmoil in our country. And we are having outstanding success in that area, because the indigenous population is joining in the fight.

When an Iraqi hears a pounding on his door and calls the local policeman, this war is won. But they have lived for a long time under a dictatorship where the local policeman was the bad guy. We have changed that.

Ask a soldier, what was your mission, and he will tell you, sir, we've accomplished a whole lot of our mission. Our first mission was to go in and take out Saddam Hussein, and, sir, we did that. And I'm proud to say that the 4th Infantry Division from Fort Hood, Texas, which is in my district, pulled that tyrant out of that hole and started him in a lawful judicial process established by a government that the 1st Cavalry Division, which is also from my district, helped to defend as they voted, and in a properly impaneled judicial process we took care of Saddam Hussein. That's part of our mission. Mission accomplished.

The second mission was to help rebuild the Iraqi people. And if you look at that map at the number of projects that we're working on currently, and then you have a young soldier say, you know, sir, they reported last week that they killed an American soldier, what they didn't report is that we got water for the first time almost in the history of this country to a village of 400 people that never had water, because that's not a big fancy news item for The New York Times and the Washington Post. But that is a very, very important news item for the 300 people who had to pack their water in small jugs to have drinking water, that we got water, drinkable water, usable water to those people in the desert community. This is the kind of thing that changes the future of Iraq. If we pull out of Iraq, we create disaster.

Now, as I pointed out, the Democrats have an opportunity to do what they promised everybody to do and stop this

war, but they don't have the will, and they don't have the courage to be responsible for their actions. So instead, they have prevented necessary supplies to keep our men and women in combat safe now, for 100 and what days?

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. Soon to be 108 days.

Mr. CARTER. For 108 days.

I got a phone call last night from Fort Hood, actually from a newspaper in Fort Hood, asking about the fact they a bad rain out on Nolan Creek, and some people got stranded out there. And, of course, when you are next to the largest military facility on Earth, the helicopters went out and started pulling people off of the roofs.

And this reporter called and was worried that she had heard that maybe the resources were not as available as they had been before or wouldn't be as available because there were cuts going on on the post. We had already checked that out with Fort Hood, and that actually was not true of this event.

But I told her, you know, you are from a military community, so we who have a military community know what happens when the Congress doesn't do its duty to the military when they have troops in harm's way, like in Iraq and in Afghanistan.

The Army doesn't leave, or the military doesn't leave their soldiers without the gear. What they do is tighten their belt back home. And that's happening now, and it's going to get worse and worse as this delay continues over and over.

It means training missions could be in jeopardy. It clearly means that operations on these large military posts around our country have to be reduced. Expenses have to be cut so that we keep the people in harm's way supplied, because we don't leave our dead or wounded on the battlefield, and we certainly don't leave our fighting soldiers on the battlefield without the equipment it takes to do the fight.

And so the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, the Marines and the Coast Guard will all be contributing from home to the war zone until this Congress does its duty. And I think it brings shame to know that those folks back home just came back from their fourth rotation, and their resources they are counting on for their year back home are being cut back. They're doing it willingly, but they are being cut back so they can supply their fellow men and women in arms over in Iraq, in Afghanistan.

This is a crisis that people don't realize the strain we're putting on our soldiers. And then to constantly tell them, like the leader, the Democrat leader in the Senate, this war is lost; and those soldiers are looking around and saying, what war is he talking about? Where's he see the loss? We haven't lost. We're winning this war. That's what the people who are there are saying. Give those folks a chance.

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. Well, I thank the gentleman. And you alluded to some-

thing that I want to point out, and several of our previous speakers have talked about this chart. And basically, people say, well, what's going on in Iraq? And I think what we hear is the news media portrays, well, there's a lot of fighting going on. But really what's been going on in Iraq at the same time is some nation building. And what you see on this chart is over 14,000 projects that have either been completed or are underway, and as the gentleman referred to, as some of these provinces for the first time have water. Some of them, for the first time in a long time, have electricity.

But let's get down to really talking about what's making a difference in the lives of the Iraqi people. And for the first time, young men and women are back in school again, and commerce is going on in these communities, and people are being able to live a life that's less fearful of this tyranny that Saddam Hussein would reign over his people. And so 14,000 projects, either completed or underway. And all of those green dots, and I know that it doesn't show up on the C-SPAN that well, but this map is dotted with projects.

The other thing that the gentleman brought up, and I think you're going to hear from some of the other speakers tonight, is that most of the time when we go to Iraq, we spend some time with the troops. I have meals, almost with every chance we always say to the military, we want to eat with the troops. We want to hear from the young men and women that are out there with boots on the ground what's going on.

And my most recent trip to Iraq, I was sitting with a young man, and it was one of the last, I think we were in Baghdad, and he looked over at me, and he looked me right in the eye and he said, Congressman, this is my third trip to Iraq. He said, nobody has more invested in this effort than me. Would I like to be home with my family? Absolutely. But, Congressman, go back and tell your colleagues, please let us finish this job. We are winning. We are making a difference. And it would be a true shame for us to leave this job undone and to let the Iraqi people down.

The other thing, and the gentleman alluded to, was the fact that now we've been hearing that tens of thousands of calls are coming in now to the security forces of people in the neighborhoods saying, there's some bad folks roaming in our neighborhood. They're trying to do bad things; they're trying to harm us. And so they're turning in the bad people. So the Iraqi people are buying into the fact that this is their country. They have a responsibility. They're standing up the troops.

One of the interesting things the gentleman talked about the fact that we're standing up an Iraqi Army. Every once in a while, and we know it's unfortunately, but our suicide bombers will bomb a recruitment area. And the next day, what shows up at that same

site but more recruits because they went their country back.

They've had a number of elections, and so the fact that now that the sheiks, and not just the sheiks but the people in the communities are getting engaged in this process, and what we're hearing is that now these leads are turning into being able to not only get the bad guys, but get their weapons. And hundreds of thousands of pounds of ammunition has been seized because of these tips that we're not getting from our soldiers, but from the people in Iraq.

I believe the gentleman from New Mexico wanted to make a comment about that.

Mr. PEARCE. I would. And I thank the gentleman. As he's talking about this new willingness of Iraqis to report suspicious behavior, I would remind my colleagues that it was our bill, my bill that was introduced, that simply said that you cannot be sued in American courts for reporting suspicious behavior, that you cannot be terrorized in our own courts of law for reporting the same sort of behavior that you're talking about being reported in Iraq creating stable responses, stability in the country.

And yet, we had 121 of our Democrat colleagues vote against that legislation. They voted with the terrorists to say, you can sue Americans in court for reporting suspicious behavior. I think that shows the difference between the Republicans in this Congress. All Republicans voted with the American citizens to limit those capabilities. But the difference between the Republicans and Democrats is that the Democrats are still soft on security. They're soft on terrorism, and they're soft on funding the troops who are fighting the battle.

And I just wanted to, your comments about the Iraqis now turning in evidence, bringing those actions to our attention, caused me to remember that bill on the floor of the House where we actually had a vote here, and the Democrats voted, 121 of them, to let terrorists sue us in our own courts.

I'd yield back to the gentleman.

Mr. CARTER. If the gentleman would yield just a moment.

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. I would yield to the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. CARTER. Hearing my colleague from New Mexico reminds me of another vote that was taken on the floor of this House that had to do with our intelligence for our United States military. And in the bill, the Democrat Party had diverted millions of dollars to take our Intelligence Community and have them study global warming. I have this vision of one of our spy satellites being relocated over the North Pole to check on the polar bears that was sitting over Baghdad checking on the terrorists.

I think the American people want our American soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines and coastguardsmen to have on the ground intelligence, which they

cut, and in-the-air intelligence, which they want to move to study global warming, so that we can make sure that our soldiers, our American citizens in harm's way, have the security of good intelligence. But there's a vote that we took. We tried to fix that, and that fix was voted down. And so now we have an intelligence bill that has a big chunk of it set aside for global warming.

Meanwhile, it was discovered when we had the debate that there are 13 agencies in this government studying global warming right now. And why does our Intelligence Community have to study global warming at this point in time when American soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines and coastguardsmen are at war? That's a question that the American people ought to ask themselves.

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. And the gentleman's correct. In fact, the money that was taken out to fund the studying of global warming and intelligence was taken out of some of our more crucial intelligence areas, the intelligence that's used to help our young men and women in the battlefield know where the bad guys are before the bad guys know where they are. So that just doesn't make sense.

We're joined by some additional colleagues this evening, and certainly my good friend from Georgia, Congressman GINGREY, he's another Member that's been to Iraq three times. That seems to be the theme tonight. And I'm pleased to yield to the gentleman from Georgia.

Mr. GINGREY. I thank my friend and classmate from Texas, Representative NEUGEBAUER, and, of course, Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to be here on the floor this evening with our colleagues and my classmate, Representative PEARCE of New Mexico and Judge JOHN CARTER from Texas. And you'll hear soon from another classmate of ours from Iowa, Representative STEVE KING, and, of course, a new Member, but a very experienced one, TIM WALBERG from Michigan.

It's an honor to be with them, Mr. Speaker, tonight, because this is a time really of victory for our men and women who are the patriots fighting this war in the Middle East. It's not a time for bragging, and we're not here to stick our finger in the eye of the Democrats and say, you know, you were wrong, you were wrong all along, and finally, after 107 days, you have admitted you were wrong, and we have won this argument.

Actually, Mr. Speaker, it's been a tremendous loss for the country to go 107 days, or whatever it is, from the time the President asked for the money that the Department of Defense has requested to continue to conduct this war for the rest of this fiscal year, 2007, the \$100 billion with no strings attached, Mr. Speaker.

The Commander in Chief and the combatant commanders in the field and General Petraeus brought us a new

way forward. It's what the American people wanted. It's what the Congress wanted. And our combatant commanders responded to that. And we put in place the highest-ranking four-star general on the ground in Iraq, General David Petraeus, who wrote the manual 6 months before on counterterrorism and knew and knows.

□ 2145

And it wasn't just his plan, but it was a plan that was worked out in combination with the Iraqi Government, with Prime Minister Maliki, and it called for essentially all of the things that the Iraq Study Group asked for. That report, Mr. Speaker, was a bipartisan report chaired by two very distinguished political public servants, the Honorable Jim Baker, Republican, the Honorable Lee Hamilton, a long-term member from Indiana, a Democrat, and this is exactly what the President tried to do. And yet the Democratic new majority wanted to insist on these benchmarks that weren't really performance benchmarks but they included a timetable, a timeline, for giving up no matter what the circumstances on the ground were. And the worst and most egregious of those, my colleagues, was to say that in August of 2008, just a little more than a year from now, that no matter what was happening in Iraq, even if it got like when Andrew Jackson had the British running down the Mississippi to the Gulf of Mexico, as the song goes, even if we were in that situation, winning this battle, in August of 2008, this Democratic majority wanted to blow the whistle and bring the troops home.

And I am telling you at this particular time, as we approach the Memorial Day weekend, what kind of message does that send to those who have given the last full measure of devotion in this war, and in any war, while the Democratic majority tries to get the last full ounce of political blood on the floor of this House? It is shameful, Mr. Speaker and my colleagues.

Every one of us have gone to some funerals in our districts. And I stand here tonight and I think about the Saylor family, Paul, their son, 22 years old from Bremen, Georgia. I think about young Justine Johnson, another 22-year-old from Armuchee, Georgia, up in Floyd County. I think about the former president of my student body at my alma mater, the Georgia Institute of Technology, who 2 years after serving as student body president at that great institution, that first lieutenant gave his life in Iraq, shot down by a sniper while leading his troops. I think about Command Master Sergeant Eric Cooke, who served 30 years in the military, multiple deployments at the tip of the spear, and on Christmas Eve, 2003, my first trip to Iraq, one day after I met him and gave him some books and school supplies for the Iraqi children; he promised to deliver them, but, unfortunately, he took that right seat in a Humvee so that one of his troops

could stay home and call his wife and his family and talk to his loved ones on Christmas Eve. And Command Master Sergeant Eric Cooke gave his life one evening when that Humvee went over an improvised explosive device.

In the history of this country, we are about to honor those who have given their lives on Memorial Day, the last Monday in May. And at that time I think about and I want my colleagues to think back to World War I when Dr. McCrae wrote that poem "In Flanders Fields." I am not going to try to quote the poem, although it is a very short poem, but the last stanza basically says don't forget it us. Just don't forget us. We fought the battle. Whatever the cause, you may not agree with it, but don't forget us.

And I think that is why we felt so strong. I commend this President for vetoing bad bills that would forget the troops and would let them die in vain.

So it is an honor to be here tonight to say thank you maybe to the Democratic majority for finally coming to your senses and letting the combatant commanders and the Commander in Chief fight the war. Certainly we could talk about policy and we can talk about funding but not with strings attached. Let's give victory a chance. And I think we have an absolute chance, as my colleagues pointed out, and some of the progress is being made. The news media, of course, doesn't report good news. Good news is an oxymoron, isn't it? So they don't talk about that. But thank you, colleagues, for letting me come tonight and talk about this.

I know if the troops are watching over in Iraq and Afghanistan, I think they are very proud that the Congress is supporting them and we are not going to pull the rug out from under them.

With that, I want to yield back to my colleague from Texas, Mr. NEUGEBAUER. I know there are a couple of other speakers and I thank the gentleman for giving me the time.

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman.

And he brings a point that many of us have had to experience, and that is to make that call of condolence to a mom or a dad or to a wife.

And I thought it was interesting, one of the previous speakers talked about being in the majority means you lead. And, in fact, we have gone 107 days without the much-needed resources for our young men and women, and it took the Republicans having to write to the Speaker of the House and saying it is going to be hard for us to go back home and talk about memorializing the sacrifice our young men and women have made in the past when we aren't even funding the troops of today. So we said we are not willing to go back on a recess for Memorial Day without taking care of the business of supporting our troops.

And I am hopeful that tomorrow, and certainly before we adjourn, that the

Democrats do begin to deliver to our young men and women the resources they need so that when we do go home for this Memorial Day, we can celebrate the sacrifices of the many that have gone before, that we can do it with our heads held high that we have taken care of our part of the business.

I am pleased to be joined by a new Member of Congress from Michigan, someone who has a number of military bases in his district, who also has taken a keen interest in the Walter Reed issue and making sure that when our young men and women get injured that they get 21st century care. So I am pleased to yield to the gentleman from Michigan, Congressman WALBERG.

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Texas for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege to stand with men here who have served with distinction and consistency on this issue and the most important issue, as I understand it, as a new Member of Congress, taking that oath of office for the first time on January 4 to uphold the Constitution of the United States, which gives us the primary responsibility, number one responsibility, for security and defense of this great Nation not only for its people but for the impact that this Nation has given and continues to give worldwide.

We are the greatest bastion of hope for liberty, for individualism, for opportunity. And for us to be now in an arena that, frankly, with my colleagues I can't say that I have been there yet. I look forward to being over in the arena of this war and having the opportunity to sit with our heroes, our warriors over there who understand the process. I look forward to that experience to be able to hear directly from them in the field. But until that time, I have to resort to memories, including a memory my wife and I will never forget in sitting on the parade grounds in Fort Knox, Kentucky, watching my son graduate with the rest of the young recruits, troops that volunteered, all volunteers to serve their country, all of whom understood that in signing up for this austere and wonderful choice of patriotism, yet also put their lives on the line potentially.

And I will never forget watching my son, who had changed before my eyes during the course of the past number of weeks at Fort Knox, and had become a man with an understanding, as he was preparing to be a combat medic. That was unique. And meeting with his fellow soldiers and understanding that they had a purpose in mind, what an encouraging thing that was.

And now to look back on that and realize that not only have numerous of his fellow comrades gone to the arena, some who have come home with the impact of that time on their life never to leave them. Others have not come home alive and have given the supreme sacrifice. We would do well to honor them not only by our words but by our actions.

I have stood at Walter Reed Hospital on numerous occasions now, with my

wife alongside several times, and I have met these troops, these fallen warrior heroes. I have prayed at their bedside. I have thanked them. I have had the opportunity to hear from them: Mr. Congressman, don't thank us. It was a privilege to serve. Don't thank me, though I appreciate your being here, but I want you to go back and tell your colleagues that we would appreciate their unquestioning support, that they would stand with us, that they would encourage us, that they would support us with the necessary resources, both armaments and financial resources, to complete this passion that we have, to stand for the defense not only of Iraq and its citizens who long to be free, but stand for our fellow citizens at home so we don't have to fight this war on our home turf as well. They understand this.

I don't understand why many of my colleagues, whom I respect highly, yet don't seem to understand, on the other side of the aisle, that we are fighting so it doesn't come home here as well.

I have also had, and I call it a distinct honor, though difficult as well, to speak to families who are now dealing with the impact of the war. I think of Travis Webb from Adrian, Michigan, who is still at Walter Reed, who came home missing two legs but not missing his heart, and still with a passion for his comrades back in the field and expressing the desire that we stand firm with them, thanking him and hearing him say "I wish I could go back."

Just a week ago, I called the mother of Daniel Courneya of Vermontville, Michigan, and expressed my sincere sympathy to her. Her son has not come home alive. He along with three other of his fellow troops were killed with an IED explosion, and three of his troops are still missing. We have read about them in the media. And we pray for their safe return. We know also that they have given their service for a cause. And I will be at the funeral of Daniel Courneya this coming Friday, in fact 2 days from now, and will stand proudly and yet humbly, recognizing the sacrifice that they have given for a cause greater than all of us even on this floor tonight.

Mr. Speaker, 108 days ago, on February 5, President Bush requested from Congress funding for our troops in Iraq. And even though current funding for our troops is set to expire at the end of May, and I say this as a new Member and I guess I say it as a Member that doubts until I actually see the bill in front of me to vote on, this funding is set to expire at the end of May. The new leadership in the House of Representatives has yet to put in front of me a bill that even comes close to properly financing the troops. And I say that saying until proven otherwise, it hasn't been in front of me to vote yet, and that is a shame.

Our American commanders need an opportunity to implement the new strategy. We are handcuffing our generals on the front line. That is not the

way it ought to be. New House leadership first introduced a bill in March that not only micromanaged the troops but also contained millions of dollars of unrelated pork-barrel projects to buy a few votes for bad legislation. That is not what I understood that I signed up for in supporting our troops and protecting and defending this great country.

□ 2200

The bill was a salad bar of egregious earmarks: \$25 million for payments to spinach producers; \$120 million to shrimp industries, \$74 million for peanut storage; \$5 million for shellfish, oyster and clam producers are just a few examples. And again, as a new Member of Congress, I couldn't believe that, that we were dealing with that type of funding with a war going on.

This bill was rightfully vetoed. In response, House leadership scrambled, and now we see supposedly that there is a bill before us.

I heard my colleague, the gentleman from Georgia, express appreciation that we have a bill now that we can vote on that will fund our troops. But again, I haven't voted on it yet. And so I say, let it come before us. No wonder this body, this Congress, this great symbol of American freedom has a 29 percent approval rating, when we mess around with the lives of our troops and the freedom of our citizens.

House leadership seems to have finally relented, and hopefully has decided to provide the necessary funding for our brave men and women. I am glad to hear that we will put aside any plans to go on break until a clean funding bill will pass, and I trust that that will take place tomorrow, to support our men and women in combat. Our troops deserve this respect.

Recently, the Iraqi Government, after complaints from myself and other Members of Congress, decided to forego its plans for a 2-month summer recess so important decisions such as the development and distribution of Iraq's oil and how to deal properly with sectarian violence can be made and laws can be passed.

This Congress similarly has decided not to go home for more than a week and leave our troops in limbo until we finish this job. We have to stay here and finish our job so our brave troops, our men and women in uniform, can finish theirs.

House leadership needs to allow Members to vote as early as possible tomorrow on a clean bill, devoid of wasteful, nonmilitary spending. We need a bill that doesn't handcuff our generals, but instead gives our troops the resources they need. Setting timelines on American involvement in Iraq is good policy, but not publicly in front of our enemies. Our military commanders need to have control of the situation, and not the terrorists.

The Congress needs to give General David Petraeus, the new Commander in Iraq, who was confirmed unanimously

by the Senate, a chance to fully implement the new strategy instead of telegraphing surrender to terrorists.

In the Anbar Province, one of the most dangerous areas in Iraq, violent crime is dropping, and 20 of 22 tribal leaders of that area now support the U.S. and Iraqi forces against al Qaeda. Granted, the level of violence remains high, and the hot spots are numerous, and many challenges persist. But the wounded soldiers I've met at Walter Reed and Bethesda deserve our support. They have indicated that our Armed Forces can secure Iraq enough so that an Iraqi Government and a security force there can take over.

Time is running out. Congress needs to move past political posturing and partisanship and allow the men and women serving in Iraq the opportunity to crush the terrorists in the Middle East so our families will have a more secure future here at home.

I want us to win this war. There are only two options, as we mentioned tonight already, only two options: One, victory; and the other, defeat. I do not believe that Americans countenance, by and large, the option of defeat.

I am asking my fellow Members of Congress, those that I am proud to stand with here on the floor tonight, as well as those who have wavered and waffled at times, to buck up. FDR called our America to a strength of sacrifice together, to win a war as brave people that sustain this great world as well. We, as well, have the privilege tonight, as Members of Congress, to call our Nation by first standing together, calling them to sacrifice in support of our troops, calling them to bravery and courage in standing for this country, calling them to one decision, and that being the decision for victory.

Memorial Day is upon us. I will experience this Memorial Day like I have experienced no other Memorial Day, because I have stood next to these wounded heroes. I have defended these brave troops. I have spoken with them. I have had family members, including my son, sign up to do that brave duty. And I will say to the troops who may hear us tonight, God bless you. We stand with you, and we will support you.

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. I thank the gentleman. And as the gentleman has said, he has been to Walter Reed with his wife; I have, also. And I think about one time I went and I was there with a soldier that had gotten a new prosthesis. He had lost part of his leg. And he said he was so proud of it. He said, Congressman, this is state-of-the-art, and I'm going to be able to walk again, and do you know what I want to do? I said, what do you want to do? He said, I want to go back and be with my buddies and finish the job that I went to do.

Those are the kind of men and women that I'm going to be celebrating during this Memorial Day weekend.

I am proud to see that a great Member of Congress from Iowa, the gen-

tleman from Iowa Mr. KING, who I know has been to Iraq on a number of occasions, and I am pleased that he has joined us this evening and would yield to the gentleman.

Mr. KING of Iowa. I thank the gentleman from Texas for organizing this Special Order and each of the Members of Congress who came down here to the floor to stand up for our brave men and women who defend our freedom. And I know you will be there when they need you.

I just would add a few pieces to this, as I have listened to the dialogue that has gone on here tonight, and one of them is that we all have constitutional responsibilities. And 435 of us come down here to this floor, and we take an oath together to uphold this Constitution of the United States. Now, you would think that would mean something to everyone, "So help us God."

And by the way, I bring my Bible here to make sure that I am swearing on a Bible at the time. But I also carry with me this Constitution. And you don't have to be a constitutional scholar to read this, you can read it pretty well with a sixth- or eighth-grade education. But what it says in here is Congress has three responsibilities when it comes to war. One of them is to declare war, which we haven't done since World War II. The second one is to raise an Army and a Navy and, by implication, an Air Force. And the third one is to fund it.

And, yes, there are conditions in there that allow us to regulate some things that go on within the military, like how they're going to run their military courts and how we are going to do promotions and things of that nature, but there is no provision in this Constitution for micromanaging a war or for being a general if you're in the United States Congress. In fact, the experience that our Founding Fathers had with the Continental Congress and the Continental Army brought them to draft into this Constitution the office of Commander in Chief because they wanted to avoid the very circumstances that we are fighting off here in this Congress.

So if anyone thinks they ought to be a general, they ought to be in the military to do so. You can't be a general here from Congress. Your job is to be a generalist, someone who stands up for this Constitution, and someone who adheres to your oath to uphold this Constitution. That means maybe on a very sad day we may someday be obligated to declare a war.

Let's keep raising the Army and the Navy and the Air Force, and let's keep funding our military men and women that are out there in harm's way with their lives on the line for our freedom. That is the constitutional responsibility.

As I look back through the history of this country, I find no place where we have come to a constitutional challenge where the President had to make a decision to veto a funding bill and

have to face a veto override, which everyone knew was not going to pass, and now held the line. And I am really glad that it isn't coming down to the line where we are mothballing some of the development of our military equipment just so we can play this political game out here. That's not our job.

Even if you go back to the Vietnam War, the President signed the appropriation bills that took the military out of North and South Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, out of the skies over them and out of the seas around them and said not 1 dollar will be spent in support of the military effort of the South Vietnamese and defending them themselves. And there are 3 million lives that paid in the aftermath of our lack of keeping our promise with the South Vietnamese.

That is on the conscience of the people of this Congress that didn't adhere to this Constitution. We don't need that on our conscience, and we don't need the enemy of Iran with a nuclear weapon in their hands on the control of the valve at the Straits of Hormuz, where they control the economy of the world as well as the development of the military within themselves. They can buy as many nuclear scientists as they want if they can just put their hands on the valve of the oil that goes to the world.

So that is where the problem is. We must succeed. There is far more at stake than the people on the other side of the aisle understand or will admit.

I will yield back to the gentleman who organized this Special Order, Mr. NEUGEBAUER of Texas, and thank him for organizing this meeting.

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. I am also pleased that another colleague and a fellow Texan has joined us this evening, Congressman BURGESS.

PRICE OF GASOLINE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. COURTNEY). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. KLEIN) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure and an honor to be here tonight with the Members of the freshman class. All of us were elected this past November with great ideas brought to us by the people that we represent; lots of good suggestions on how to solve some of the problems that our country, of course some of them are overseas and some of them are home, but the great news is all of them are solvable. Every problem that we have in this country is something that there is a solution to. And it typically requires good faith, working together, Democrats and Republicans, Independents, people of good minds and good faith, to solve the problems.

Tonight we are going to start out our conversation as the freshman class with something that all of us came to this Congress to talk about and to work on and to solve. And it has unfor-

tunately risen up as another significant problem that I think that we are very unhappy about right now, and that, of course, as everyone who has filled up their tank lately knows, is gas prices.

I am from Florida, the 22nd District, which is parts of Broward and Palm Beach Counties in southeast Florida. It is fascinating to me because I have watched gas go up and down and up and down over the years, and Congress has never seemed to have the backbone, if you will, the President and this administration hasn't shown much interest in dealing with gas prices. Maybe it's because of the backbone of some of the people of the administration, or maybe not; but the bottom line is that we have a situation now where gas prices in my area are at about an average of \$3.25 a gallon, and as much as \$3.59 a gallon.

We understand what this means. This is a real problem for our consumers, it is a real problem for our businesses. Whether you have transportation, whether your personal transportation to and from work or the shipping of goods to and from a location, this is something that is beginning to affect our economy.

And I think I am going to throw it over to my colleagues here, but I just want to throw out a few rhetorical questions, because every time we go through this and the price spikes, we hear excuses. You know, last time the excuse was we had a hurricane called Katrina, and it shut down refineries. No hurricane this time. Last time we heard there is a disruption in the oil deliveries out of the Middle East. No disruption. Last time we heard, well, there is a summer spike because of demand during the summertime. It's May, no summertime. What is the excuse? What is the bottom line?

What I am so pleased about is the fact that our freshman class, along with a more senior Member, Mr. STUPAK, took on this issue this year and passed today, out of this Congress, in a bipartisan way, I am very proud to say that all the Democrats and I think 70 or 80 Republicans, I think, joined us and passed something called the Federal Price Gouging Prevention Act. The purpose of this act is to allow the FTC, the Federal Trade Commission, to go in with some teeth and enforcement authority, to go in and investigate what's wrong. If the price of oil per barrel is the same or even less than it was last year at this time, how could gas prices be so much higher? And all the commonsense things that we know.

What I am going to do is I am going to introduce each one of you, and I am going to ask you all, I know you all have your own perspectives and some thoughts on this. I am going to start out with Congressman PERLMUTTER from Colorado. Please give us your thoughts.

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Thank you, Mr. KLEIN.

Every other Saturday I have a "government at the grocery." I visit dif-

ferent grocery stores throughout my district. This past week I was at a grocery store in Edgewater, Colorado, and the number one topic was the price of gas. Usually it has been Iraq, and we certainly are going to talk about Iraq tonight, but the number one conversation was about the price of gas. And people were saying, look, we understand that on a per-barrel basis, it's down, the cost is down, the price is down. Why is the cost at the pump up?

And, you know, we have excuses. The excuses this time, Mr. KLEIN, have been, well, we just needed to clean the refineries. They clean the refineries right at the beginning of the summer travel season because by restricting the supply, you drive up the price, and we can't have that anymore. We can't have our people being gouged in this country by manipulation of the market in that fashion.

□ 2215

What we are seeing is too few companies controlling too critical an item, a commodity, like gasoline, and that is what that price gouging bill was all about today. So I can assure you in Colorado, it is a major topic of conversation, and people want to see a change, and we are bringing that change to them by the bill we passed today and the direction we are taking this Congress.

With that, Mr. KLINE, I would like to turn it over to my friend from Vermont, who always has something to say on any topic, but particularly I know he has something to say today on this gasoline price gouging.

Mr. WELCH of Vermont. Thank you, Mr. PERLMUTTER. The gas issue, obviously the price going way up is hitting people pretty hard. But it is a real metaphor in my view for the two economies we are seeing emerge in this country. We are at a time now where the stock market has never been higher. People who have significant assets have never been doing better. Large corporations are making record profits. Executives, CEOs at large corporations, have never gotten better and sweeter pay packages.

But the vast majority of Americans are finding that their wages are stagnant, and the prices of things that they need, daycare, gasoline to get to and from work, to and from daycare, groceries, those things are going up and concealing this so-called "tame" inflation.

So what we are having in this country is the emergence of two economies, and our goal here in Congress is to start having a Congress that stands up and represents the needs and aspirations of average folks. We give them a leg up.

Every time the price of gasoline goes up about 10 cents, that is like a \$16 billion hit on the consumer in this country. So you think about it. We have got a chart over here that shows gas prices going up, really doubling during the presidency of George Bush. But just