

expenditures of over \$1.5 trillion, we are losing patience with Iraq. Americans feel justified, given the sacrifice of our military and the expenditure of so much money, to lecture Iraqis how they need to get their act together, forgetting they didn't attack us, we attacked them. And then, we proceeded to eliminate their security, all their police, border patrol and army after Saddam, to add insult to injury, had already let out of jail all the criminals throughout Iraq.

One U.S. politician after another berates the Maliki government and the Sunni, Shia and Kurds for their intransigence and failure to work out their differences and find common ground. I can't help but wonder, who are we to talk? When was the last time Republicans and Democrats, House and Senate, White House and Congress, worked together on any major piece of legislation facing our country? The Senate, once again, has only now begun to pass any of its 11 appropriations bills necessary to fund the government. And by the way, the new funding should be done, but won't be, by October 1. We can't even agree in this Chamber on what to do in Iraq. The irony of that is mind-boggling. We blame Iraqis for not agreeing. And we can't agree.

So what about us? When it comes to Iraq, the former Republican Congress was blatantly partisan. The new Democratic Congress has returned the favor. And a very opinionated press, rather than encouraging Republicans and Democrats, the White House and Congress to come together, has picked sides and marshaled the facts to fit their own conclusions.

It is hard to know, I might add, with a press that is accountable to absolutely no one, where you can go to get the unadulterated facts. The reality is we went into Iraq on a bipartisan basis with two-thirds of the House and three-quarters of the Senate supporting the resolution to use force. The only way we are going to successfully bring most of our troops home is if we come together, find common ground, and compromise.

But I don't think this is likely to happen in the near future since both sides of the aisle seem captive to their so-called party's base. The Republican religious right and the Democratic anti-war impeachment left leave most Americans wondering, who is speaking for us? In this highly intense, politically charged environment, the answer is, practically no one.

The largest number of Americans aren't on the right or the left. The bell curve is pretty much in the middle of the political spectrum. In the past Presidential election, 42 percent of the American people said they were neither red nor blue, Republican nor Democrat, but purple. This leaves Republicans and Democrats with just 29 percent support each. Why is this relevant? The majority of Americans are not being heard or represented.

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The extremes focus on ideology and berate the fact that, according to them, the Republicans and Democrats are no different from each other. So they keep pushing extreme positions. But the American people are still in the middle of the political spectrum. They want solutions, not ideology. They want problems solved, not ignored. And they are getting neither.

Our Constitution was created by men who knew the meaning of compromise. During their time together, they grew to trust and respect each other. In the process, they gave up hardened views. They allowed themselves to be drawn to the middle of the political spectrum. In the process, they created the United States of America where the people rule and have ruled for 218 years.

The question that confronts all of us today in Congress is, do we have this same capacity, like our Founding Fathers, to grow to trust and respect each other, give up hardened views and find solutions to the plethora of inconvenient truths that confront us? Of this we can be certain. Now is not the time for Congress and the White House to do nothing. There are so many inconvenient truths we must confront, but we won't successfully address any of them until we have honest debate and until compromise and coming to the middle becomes something Americans value again.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for spending your time with us, and I thank the staff for allowing Members to address this Chamber tonight.

I yield back the balance of my time.

#### LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois (at the request of Mr. HOYER) for today after 6 p.m.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas (at the request of Mr. HOYER) for today and until 6 p.m. on September 27.

#### SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

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

(The following Members (at the request of Ms. WOOLSEY) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. CUMMINGS, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. WOOLSEY, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. DEFAZIO, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. WATERS, for 5 minutes, today.

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. SPRATT, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at the request of Ms. FOXX) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. TIM MURPHY of Pennsylvania, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. POE, for 5 minutes, October 2.

Mr. JONES of North Carolina, for 5 minutes, October 2.

Ms. FOXX, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. CONAWAY, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Member (at her own request) to revise and extend her remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mrs. MALONEY of New York, for 5 minutes, today.

#### BILL PRESENTED TO THE PRESIDENT

Lorraine C. Miller, Clerk of the House reports that on September 24, 2007 she presented to the President of the United States, for his approval, the following bill:

H.R. 3528. To provide authority to the Peace Corps to provide separation pay for host country resident personal service contractors of the Peace Corps.

#### ADJOURNMENT

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 8 minutes p.m.), the House adjourned until tomorrow, Wednesday, September 26, 2007, at 10 a.m.

#### EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 8 of rule XII, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

3448. A letter from the Acting Director, Office of Management and Budget, transmitting a copy of proposed legislation that seeks to bring the funding structure for the Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC) into line with the funding of other Federal financial regulators by establishing a fee on the settlement of commodity futures and options contracts overseen by the CFTC; to the Committee on Agriculture.

3449. A letter from the Director, Defense Procurement and Acquisition Policy, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department's final rule — Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement; Limitations on Tiered Evaluation of Offers [DFARS Case 2006-D009] (RIN: 0750-AF36) received September 17, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Armed Services.

3450. A letter from the Director, Defense Procurement and Acquisition Policy, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department's final rule — Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement; Reports of Government Property [DFARS Case 2005-D015] (RIN: 0750-AF24) received September 12, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Armed Services.

3451. A letter from the Deputy Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department's Joint Improvised Explosive Device Defeat Organization second quarter report as required by section 1402 of the John Warner National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2007; to the Committee on Armed Services.

3452. A letter from the Chief Counsel, FEMA, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Changes in Flood Elevation Determinations — received September 17, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Financial Services.