

In conclusion, I would just like to say that Social Security is a good program for all Americans. The President's proposal to privatize the program is not. Social Security gives people with lower earning a greater return on what they paid. I just want to say to the American people to look very carefully and let us stand up for what is right; let us stand up for what is good about America. And what is right and what is good for America is to strengthen Social Security, not weaken it. And these private accounts will weaken it.

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#### JOINT BAPTIST BOARD MEETING POINTS OF AGREED ACTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. WATSON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, I think at the beginning of Negro History Month it is important to report on the Joint Baptist Board Meeting that was held January 24 to 27, 2005, where they jointly, through their presidents, affirmed the following points of agreed action that stem from the forum sessions presented during that meeting.

They said: we call for an end to the war in Iraq and withdrawal of U.S. military personnel. The war in Iraq, described by the Department of Defense as Operation Iraqi Freedom, is a costly and unnecessary military action begun on grossly inaccurate, misconstrued, or distorted intelligence against a nation that did not pose an immediate or realistic threat to the national security of our Nation. No weapons of mass destruction have been discovered in Iraq, despite intense efforts to locate them.

The brutal regime of Saddam Hussein and its terror on Iraqi society has been replaced by the brutality and chaos of an ongoing war, which has ravaged the land, ransacked cherished aspects of Iraqi history and culture, and threatened the prospect of what even U.S. intelligence analysts fear could be a civil war.

More than 1,400 U.S. military personnel have lost their lives, and more than 10,000 have been wounded in Operation Iraqi Freedom. Over 5,000 of the wounded casualties have been severe enough to prevent return to action. Quoting from a front page story in the January 26, 2005 issue of U.S. Today, it says: "The Baptists look upon the sorrow, suffering, and financial cost of the war in Iraq and remember the words of Martin Luther King, Jr., a black Baptist preacher who challenged the military engagement in Vietnam more than two generations ago.

King's call that we admit the wicked and tragic folly about our self-righteous choice for war rather than peace and nonviolent change reminds us that preference for war always reflects the wrong values. Unnecessary and unjust

war does not produce genuine peace, only death, suffering, more violence and more hate.

What King said in 1967 when he began his public outcry against the war in Vietnam is still true today. "A true," to quote him, "revolution of values will lay hands on the world order and say of war: 'This business of settling differences is not just.' This business of filling our Nation's homes with orphans and widows, of injecting poisonous drugs of hate into the veins of people normally humane, of sending men home from dark and bloody battlefields physically handicapped and psychologically deranged, cannot be reconciled with wisdom, justice, love or an election.

□ 1845

"A Nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death. There is nothing except a tragic death wish to prevent us from reordering our priorities so that the pursuit of peace will take precedence over the pursuit of war."

As religious leaders whose constituents have family members in the U.S. Armed Forces serving in Iraq and elsewhere around the world, we pray for the security of our Nation and the safety of our military personnel. We weep with families who mourn the deaths of their loved ones, and we share the anxiety of families concerning the well-being of those who press on in service.

Our call that our Nation end its military involvement in Iraq does not rise from a lack of support for our Armed Forces, disregard for national security, or lack of resolve concerning freedom and democracy. Rather, we are concerned about our troops and our military families whose loved ones have been ordered to fight and stay in a war that our leaders refuse to even send their own children and the children of the wealthy into.

Mr. Speaker, I implore the President to bring our troops home now.

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I am as deeply concerned about our troops there [Vietnam] as anything else. For it oc-

curs to me that what we are submitting them to in Vietnam is not simply the brutalizing process that goes on in any war where armies face each other and seek to destroy. We are adding cynicism to the process of death, for they must know after a short period there that none of the things we claim to be fighting for are really involved. Before long they must know that their government has sent them into a struggle among Vietnamese, and the more sophisticated surely realize that we are on the side of the wealthy and the secure while we create a hell for the poor.

The war in Iraq is not only creating a hell for the poor in Iraq. The grief and suffering it has wrought have been disproportionately forced onto the lives of poor and struggling families in our nation. These families, far more than those who are wealthy, send their loved ones to serve as members of the active force or as reservists and members of the National Guard. It is not just or patriotic for our leaders to thrust the sons and daughters of low income families into unnecessary military engagements.

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#### SOCIAL SECURITY REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SHAW) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the subject of my Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, President Bush has made it clear that the time has come for an honest, straightforward, realistic discussion about the future of our precious Social Security system. For today's generation of senior citizens, the system is strong and fiscally sound, but younger workers are concerned about whether Social Security will be around for them when they need it.

The problem is simple. With an aging population and a steadily falling ratio of workers to retirees, the system is on a course to eventual bankruptcy. Here is the problem, and this is best demonstrated on the graph next to me.

Social Security was designed in 1935 for a different world than the one we live in today. It is a pay-as-you-go system in which the benefits go to current retirees and they come directly from the payroll taxes of current workers. When the program was still new in the 1940s, there were 41 workers paying in for every retiree drawing benefits. By 1950, 16 workers paid in for every person drawing out. Today it is about three workers for every beneficiary. And by the time our youngest workers turn 65, the ratio will be down to two workers for each beneficiary.