

their jobs because of that massive tax increase?

But, Madam Speaker, there is a better way. And that better way is to do what the President has suggested, and that is to create personal Social Security accounts that take the best of traditional Social Security, our government guarantee, our inflation control, our social safety net, and add to it elements of the best of what company pension plans offer, and that is real assets that people own, giving workers and families a chance to start their own nest egg and pension grade investments that have proven over time to have a superior rate of return and be safe.

Madam Speaker, some say that this is risky. I say it is risky to leave one's retirement security in Washington. Already Congress has raided the Social Security trust fund over 59 times. They have cut benefits a half dozen times. They have raised taxes 20 times.

Madam Speaker, we need to move to personal Social Security accounts. Working together, Republicans and Democrats, we can save Social Security for my parents. We can save Social Security for my children. We can save Social Security forever.

SMART SECURITY AND THE UN-VARNISHED TRUTH ABOUT IRAQ

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. BIGGERT). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Madam Speaker, there are many truths about America's involvement in Iraq. My truth is that our policies there over the last 2 years have been both immoral and ineffective. With nearly 1,500 American troops killed since the fighting began and another 11,000 injured, the time has come for a drastic change in our role in Iraq.

Leave aside, if my colleagues possibly can, the fact that the President and his team misled us about weapons of mass destruction. Forget for a moment, if they can, that they invented out of whole cloth a link between Saddam Hussein and the 9/11 tragedy. Those lives were bad enough. But their policies, the administration's policies, have also failed to achieve one of their later stated objectives of securing Iraq. The Bush administration is not only dishonest; I believe they are incompetent.

Rather than liberating Iraq, the U.S. invasion and occupation has trapped the nation and its people in a cauldron of violent civil strife. Our presence there has not engendered gratitude but bred resentment in the form of vicious insurgency. It has emboldened Muslim extremists who hate America now more than ever. Neither Iraqis nor Americans nor anyone else in this world is safer because of this war in Iraq.

In fact, a report came from the CIA's National Intelligence Council that concluded Iraq has replaced Afghanistan as the most fertile breeding ground for terrorists. It turns out that the Bush administration was right in their projection that we cannot separate Iraq from the war on terrorism. What they did not tell us is that invading Iraq fulfilled those projections and strengthened the wrong side in the war on terrorism.

Even since the Iraqi election, violence is making democracy a real long shot; and our troops, charged with somehow bringing order to the chaotic situation, are sitting ducks. Perhaps the President should ask the Iraqi people how free they feel when they must dodge bullets just to go to the market or visit a neighbor, when they stand by and watch neighborhoods being destroyed. Even in Afghanistan, which is often cited as a Bush success, there is evidence that the country is being run by warlords and drug dealers.

To help the situation in Iraq, I have introduced H. Con. Res. 35, legislation that will help secure Iraq by withdrawing our troops, which will ensure that America's role in Iraq actually does make America safer. So far 27 of my House colleagues have joined me as co-sponsors of this important legislation.

My plan for Iraq is part of a larger strategy that I call SMART Security, which is a Sensible, Multilateral American Response to Terrorism that will ensure America's security by relying on smarter policies.

Madam Speaker, let me be clear. We would not abandon Iraq and we should not. There is still a critical role for the United States in providing the developmental aid that can help recreate a robust civil society, build schools and water processing plants, and ensure that Iraq's economic infrastructure becomes fully viable.

Instead of troops, we need to send scientists, educators, urban planners, and constitutional experts to help rebuild Iraq's fighting economic and physical infrastructure and help establish a robust and democratic civil society. We need to pursue a new approach, and we need to do that because it has become clear the military option is not working. That is not the ideological statement of someone who opposed the war on principle, though I am that. It is a sober assessment of the situation in Iraq that is now shared across the political spectrum. We must truly support our troops, and the right way to do this is by bringing them home.

THE FARM BILL

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CONAWAY). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. OSBORNE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. OSBORNE. Mr. Speaker, recently other members of the House Committee on Agriculture and I met with the Commissioner of Agriculture of the European Union. She was not very complimentary of our current farm bill. She knows it keeps our farm economy very competitive with the European Union. Unfortunately, this commissioner's sentiments mirror the sentiments of many Americans. Many believe that the farm bill is too expensive, and I believe as we write a new budget the farm bill will certainly be on the chopping block.

But I think it is important that we think about and remember a few things as we go into this process. First of all, in looking at the chart here, we can see that the current farm bill, which went into effect in 2002, actually was budgeted to cost \$14 billion that year and it cost \$13 billion. In 2003 it was budgeted to cost about 18.6 and it cost 12.1. In 2004, which we have just completed, the projected budgetary cost was \$17.5 billion, and it actually cost \$10.1 billion. So the net effect is that what was supposed to cost roughly \$50 billion has cost us \$35 billion. So the farm program is one of the few Federal programs that is way under budget and has certainly given the taxpayer a tremendous return on investment.

The other thing that we might want to remember is that during this period of time, we have had a tremendous drought in the western part of the United States. The drought map has looked something like this for about the last 5 years. So interestingly enough, the emergency payments for the drought have been included in these farm bill expenditures. In the past, in the previous farm bill, when we had a drought or we had emergency spending, it was always over and above. But in these cases, part of this 13.2 and part of that 10.1 was emergency spending for drought. So, again, this has been a very efficient and a very lean process, and we think that the farm bill has served a great purpose in that sense.

The other thing, Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out is that we really do not subsidize our farmers anywhere near what some other nations do. For instance, the average farm subsidy per acre in the United States, according to this farm program, is \$38 per acre. The European Union's is \$295 per acre. So the ratio is about \$7 European Union for \$1 in the United States. Japan subsidizes their agriculture \$3,655 per acre, a ratio of roughly 100 to one.

So why in the world would Japan and Europe subsidize agriculture to that degree? I think part of the reason is that 60 years ago during World War II, they realized how important a food supply was. Their food supply was decimated, and when their populace has been hungry, they begin to realize that

that is something they are going to protect no matter what.

So in summary, Mr. Speaker, I would just like to mention four things regarding the farm bill. First of all, farmers plan their operation based on the farm bill. They are operating loans. Their land payments they have is based on the farm program, and if we start tinkering with it, if we start changing the farm bill in mid-course, we really do not do them justice. We will write a new farm bill in 2007. If we want to make changes, that is certainly the time that we should do that. But we should not do it now when they have one set of assumptions and then have that changed.

Secondly, we currently spend only 9 percent of our income in the United States on food. This is by far the lowest amount of money that people spend, at least proportionate money, that any civilized nation or any developed nation in the country, or in the world, spends at the present time, only 9 percent.

And, thirdly, if we fail to protect our food supply, we may see that what happens to the food supply would be the same as what happened to our petroleum situation. We found suddenly one day that we could purchase oil from OPEC at \$10, \$11 a barrel. We began to quit exploring in this country, and we began to purchase oil from OPEC. Now we are really 60 percent dependent on overseas sources, and about every 2 or 3 weeks we have to wait to see what OPEC is going to do to see what is going to happen to our fuel prices at the pump. We do not want this to happen, certainly, to our food supply.

So the current farm bill is less expensive than Freedom to Farm. It is working well, and I think we should think long and hard before we make any mid-course changes.

INTRODUCTION OF THE WITNESS SECURITY AND PROTECTION ACT OF 2005

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of the countless communities across this Nation that live under a tyranny of fear due to witness intimidation.

Our criminal justice system relies on witnesses to provide essential evidence to law enforcement in the administration of justice. Unfortunately, drug dealers and other criminals employ brutal tactics to silence witnesses, including threats, vandalism, violence, and even murder.

When cases crumble due to witness intimidation, defendants that may be convicted for their crimes are free once again to violate the sanctity of our communities. A National Institute of

Justice study concluded: "Witness intimidation is a pervasive and insidious problem. No part of the country is spared and no witness can feel entirely free or safe."

A number of prosecutors interviewed for this study "suspect witness intimidation occurs in up to 75 to 100 percent of the violent crimes committed in some gang-dominated neighborhoods."

With that said, we must acknowledge that witness intimidation is a menacing cancer in our society that, if left untreated, will continue to spread and intensify, undermining the very foundation of our criminal justice system.

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Mr. Speaker, witness intimidation is eroding public trust in the government's ability to protect witnesses and demoralizing needed community cooperation to enforce the law.

Around the country, from urban centers to the heartland, reporting crimes can be extremely dangerous and even deadly. On February 4 of this year, WGAL, Channel 8 reported a 10-year-old named Katie Collman was found dead in an Indiana creek. A suspect in her killing confessed he wanted to intimidate little Katie after she witnessed him producing or consuming methamphetamine.

In the city that I call my home, Baltimore City, our State's Attorney reports that at least 25 percent of the nonfatal shooting cases are dismissed due to witness intimidation issues and most murder cases are affected in one way or another. Since September 2004, five witnesses have been shot or murdered.

Mr. Speaker, perhaps nowhere is there an example more clear in illustrating the realities of witness intimidation than in the tragedy that claimed the lives of the Dawson family from my district in East Baltimore City.

In response to Mrs. Dawson's heroic efforts to report intense drug distribution activity in her neighborhood, the Dawson family home was firebombed in the middle of the night on October 16, 2002. This insidious act not only stole the lives of Mr. Dawson and Mrs. Dawson, but also those of their five young children.

Unfortunately, this was not the only serious incident of witness intimidation to surface in Baltimore City. Baltimore Police Detective Thomas Newman was murdered 2 years ago after his testimony in a trial concerning a shooting.

On December 2, 2004 a DVD produced by criminals entitled "Stop the Snitching" surfaced in Baltimore. It graphically illustrates the violent drug culture and the code of silence on the streets that can paralyze entire communities seeking to abide by the law.

"Stop the Snitching" goes so far as to depict grotesque images of three

bullet ridden bloody corpses accompanied by the phrase "snitch prevention."

On January 15, 2004, in the North Baltimore community of Harwood, Edna McAbier had her home firebombed in apparent retaliation for her work to purge her community of criminal activity.

I am sure many of my colleagues could recount many other such incidents in their districts.

Regrettably, these examples are representative of a growing problem of bold intimidation that send a clear message to the Nation that cannot be overstated. Those who would cooperate with police in the pursuit of justice face serious retaliation and possibly execution.

Witness protection programs provide an indispensable tool to law enforcement to combat crime and address witness intimidation. The Witness Security Program established in 1970 and administered by the Department of Justice has successfully carried out its charge to protect witnesses testifying in extremely serious Federal cases.

The United States Marshals Service has done an outstanding job of providing witnesses and their family who have been placed in their custody with long-term protection, relocation, new identities, housing, employment, medical treatment and funds to cover the most essential of needs.

In over 30 years, not a single witness has been harmed that followed security procedures while being actively protected by the United States Marshals Service. More to the point, cases involving the testimony of the WSP participants have an 89 percent conviction rate.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of the countless communities across this nation that live under a tyranny of fear due to witness intimidation.

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With that said, we must acknowledge that witness intimidation is a menacing cancer in our society that, if left untreated, will continue to spread and intensify—undermining the very foundation of our criminal justice system.