

that the occupation is still going. As proof of that, nearly 300 American and Iraqi soldiers and Iraqi civilians have been killed or wounded so far this month alone. Yes, the bloodshed continues.

And after nearly 5 years of occupation, our leaders still have no exit strategy. They have even stopped pretending that they have one. Last year they told us we couldn't get out of Iraq because things on the ground were going badly. This year they're telling us we can't get out because things are going well; and if we get out, they'll go badly again.

So if you follow the administration's argument to its logical conclusion, this is what you get: We can't leave when things are good; we can't leave when things are bad. Which means we can never leave. The result is permanent occupation, which is precisely what the administration appears to want.

Forgetting about the bloodshed in Iraq is bad enough. But it's dangerous for many, many other reasons. It gives the administration a free hand to ratchet up the threats against Iran. It takes the pressure off the Iraqi Government to make progress toward national political reconciliation. It means our military will continue to be overstretched and less capable of meeting real challenges to our national security that may and will arise elsewhere. It continues to make America appear to be a lawless and arrogant Western occupier of the Middle East. And it allows our budget to be plundered at a time when our economy is more than shaky. People are in danger of losing their jobs here at home; but thanks to the administration's policies, the boys at Blackwater will always have their high-paying military contractor jobs in Iraq where they can continue to terrify the Iraqi people.

We are spending over \$300 million every day in Iraq, Madam Speaker. We couldn't afford that when the economy was good, and we certainly can't afford it as the economy goes into recession.

But thankfully, thankfully, the American people are too smart to fall into the trap of believing that everything is just swell. According to a recent CBS News poll, nearly 60 percent of Americans continue to believe the occupation is going badly, and 58 percent believe the U.S. should never have gotten into Iraq in the first place.

Madam Speaker, we cannot stick our heads in the sand and pretend that Iraq isn't a problem anymore. The only way to change course is to hold the administration accountable, and the only way to do that is to keep the pressure on the administration every single day. That's why I'll continue to raise my voice against the madness of this occupation, and why I will continue to urge the House to use its power of the purse to end it.

Iraq is not a television show that got canceled because of the writers' strike.

Iraq is a real place where real people continue to die. We must redeploy our troops. We must give the Iraqi people back their sovereignty, and we must give them their hope for a brighter future.

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FREE TRADE AGREEMENT WITH INDIA

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

Mr. DREIER. Madam Speaker, today my very good friend Mr. CROWLEY of New York, in a bipartisan way, and I joined together, and we now have, I'm happy to say, our good friend from north Dallas, a great Member of the Rules Committee, PETE SESSIONS as a cosponsor of legislation, a resolution actually calling for free trade negotiations to begin between the United States and India. We introduced this resolution to highlight the tremendous benefits of deeper economic engagement between the world's two largest democracies.

While bilateral trade has spurred growth in both of our countries, we have not yet come close to realizing the full benefits of complete access to each other's markets and full liberalization of the Indian economy.

Madam Speaker, the American people are very focused on the economy right now, understandably. While growth remains strong and unemployment remains low, and we just this morning got the report of the drop in unemployment claims, the prevailing economic stories, however, in the news stir up a great deal of fear and concern among working families. The subprime mortgage crisis has dominated the headlines for months. The housing slump in many communities makes homeowners feel like their financial security is threatened. And as always, Madam Speaker, there is the natural anxiety that comes from the highly dynamic and fast-paced environment of the global economy.

At a time of economic anxiety, the most important thing is to ensure that growth remains strong, so that opportunities can be creative. If we look at what has been our biggest source of strength in recent months, it has been export-led growth. Over the last year, there have been dire predictions for GDP growth, and every single quarter the numbers have come out much stronger than has been anticipated because exports have made up for softer areas within our own economy.

At the same time, Madam Speaker, imports have ensured that working families have access to the goods they need at prices that they can afford. We are weathering these economic challenges because we are engaging in the worldwide marketplace.

India has been a very important component of that engagement. Our exports to India have doubled in the last 5 years. We are India's largest trading partner and largest investment partner. Trading with India has opened up new doors for American producers, service providers, workers and consumers as well.

But India still has miles to go in its reform process. Tariffs in many sectors are prohibitively high. The regulatory environment is absolutely Byzantine. American investors looking for opportunity in an otherwise ripe environment still confront significant roadblocks to successful investment.

If we are to maximize the benefits of trade with the world's second-largest consumer market, there must be broad, comprehensive reform. Free trade negotiations would provide maximum leverage for encouraging this kind of reform. Whether it's slashing exorbitant tariffs, which average 20 percent and range as high as 210 percent, Madam Speaker, that's a 210 percent tariff, protecting intellectual property, and another thing they have done is ensuring transparency in governance, a free trade agreement would provide the necessary impetus for comprehensive liberalization of their economy.

Many of our FTAs are negotiated with foreign policy concerns chiefly in mind. Our pending FTA with Colombia, for example, will solidify strong democratic institutions for a key ally in a key region, in addition to the economic benefits to both countries.

There are certainly foreign policy concerns associated with a U.S.-India free trade agreement as well. It would provide an opportunity to deepen and broaden our ties with a strong, stable Asian democracy that shares our fundamental values in a challenging region.

But Madam Speaker, the commercial benefits to such an FTA would be considerable. It would open up a tremendous opportunity to build upon our export-led growth and ensure that Americans can take full advantage of the more than 1 billion consumers in the world's second-largest emerging market. With all eyes on the economy, now is the time for the U.S. and India to begin to pursue comprehensive economic engagement with a free trade agreement.

THE TRAGIC MISADVENTURE IN IRAQ

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

Mr. SESTAK. Madam Speaker, in the wake of the 9/11 attacks against the United States, I was sent on the ground for a short period of time to Afghanistan. As a Navy admiral, I saw what needed to be accomplished. Eighteen

months later, I returned on the ground and saw what had not been done because we tragically changed the focus of our attention and our resources to Iraq.

Now, Afghanistan has become once again prey to terrorists and the Taliban have moved back into the southern ungoverned regions and the provinces.

Because of this failure to have our legal or political or security structures there that we were trying to support be established, we were unable to have economic activity, the education take root so that we would be able to harness the efforts to have livelihoods established and an infrastructure in place, to overcome what General Eikenberry, our U.S. commander who was the NATO commander earlier last year said, "Where the road ends, the Taliban begin."

Secretary of Defense Gates has recently said that we will place 3,000 troops into Afghanistan because of the possible spring offensive of the Taliban. That is too little and way too late.

We have to be able to bring the infrastructure into those ungoverned regions so the Taliban once again cannot provide a safe haven for al Qaeda, that is presently in a safe haven because of this tragic misadventure in Iraq, within Pakistan.

But more to my point today, I do not understand the criticism of a very good Secretary of Defense, Secretary Gates, that the United States wants to point at NATO and say you have not met your commitment in Afghanistan when, in fact, potentially a little known fact is that the United States itself has not met its own requirement for trainers and mentors of the Afghanistan National Army and the Afghanistan National Police. In fact, we are 63 percent short of our goal. That's 2,400 troops.

It all began in Afghanistan. And if we are to look back there 2 years from now and another tragedy would have been planned by the al Qaeda in another safe haven, whether Pakistan or Afghanistan, how can we say, as a senior commander said, "In Iraq we do what we must; in Afghanistan we do what we can?"

The right strategic template is as Winston Churchill said, "Sometimes it's not enough to do your best; sometimes you have to do what is required."

It is required to ensure that the education, the economic activity, the wells, the reconstruction can be accomplished, but you can only do that in a secure enough environment. That, again, is one of the tragedies of this misadventure of Iraq.

FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE SURVEILLANCE ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of Jan-

uary 18, 2007, the gentleman from California (Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California. Madam Speaker, this afternoon we find ourselves in what only can be described as ominous circumstances.

In 2 weeks, our Nation will no longer be able to conduct critical surveillance of foreign terrorists located outside the United States. We face this situation because, in order to close what the Director of National Intelligence described as critical intelligence gaps, he had to agree with the Congress the necessary reforms embodied in the Protect America Act would expire in 180 days.

Although this body did adopt follow-on legislation, the majority party's so-called RESTORE Act in November of last year, this legislation imposed additional burdens on the intelligence community which, in my judgment, undermined the essential nature of the compromise reached with Admiral McConnell.

Furthermore, it punted on the critical question of whether retroactive protection would be extended to those communication providers who responded to the call for help from their government in the wake of 9/11. If press reports are accurate, similar ideological currents in the other body threaten to dominate the outcome of this critical issue and potentially the eventual resolution of the larger FISA issue itself, that is, the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act issue itself.

There is no issue of greater importance to those of us who serve in this body than the protection of the American people from another catastrophic attack like that we received on 9/11. In fact, this responsibility goes to the very heart of the purpose for which government exists. The very preamble to our Nation's Constitution spells out this obligation to provide for the common defense.

It was for this very reason that on August 5 last year we passed the Protect America Act, which responded to the minimum requirements presented to this body by the Director of National Intelligence, Admiral McConnell.

At the same time, Admiral McConnell described this legislation as necessary in order to "close critical intelligence gaps." He defined the concept of a gap to mean "foreign intelligence information that we should have been collecting."

Admiral McConnell testified before the House Judiciary Committee that prior to the enactment of the Protect America Act this past August we were not collecting somewhere between one-half and two-thirds of the foreign intelligence information which would have been collected were it not for the recent legal interpretations of FISA which required the government to ob-

tain FISA warrants for overseas surveillance.

This is very serious business, because if you look at our challenge from those who would kill us in the name of some sort of distorted view of Islam, we basically have to assess that risk by way of threat, by way of vulnerability and by way of consequence.

With respect to consequence and vulnerability, we have within our property of information, within our store of information, the ability to make those judgments. In other words, when we look at vulnerability for a particular site, a potential target, we have the information about that target because it is either American owned, privately or governmentally, and we can analyze that and determine what vulnerabilities exist.

Similarly, with respect to the question of consequence, we have that information available as well, because we can make calculations as to a type of attack which might take place, the damage it would do and, therefore, the consequences that would flow from that.

But there is one area of the analysis of risk that is not totally within our information base, and that is the area of the threat. What is the threat? The threat is that which is in the mind of those who would do us harm. It is within the planning of those who would do us harm, and it is within the orders of those who would carry out those attacks on us to do us harm.

That is where intelligence comes into play. Intelligence means gathering information that otherwise is within the authority of those who would do us harm. That means essentially listening in wherever we can on the conversations or communications they may have.

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That is the essence of intelligence. That's why it is so important. It is that part of the three-part analysis of risk which is not totally within our information base and therefore that which we have to go out and extract. That's why it's so important.

I am sure that most Americans would agree with Admiral McConnell, a distinguished public servant who headed the National Security Agency in the Clinton administration for 4 years and now serves as our Director of National Intelligence, that the changes contained in the Protect America Act were necessary. Regardless of how one interprets the most recent National Intelligence Estimate concerning Iran, any attempt to attack Admiral McConnell as a tool of the Bush administration would appear to be lacking in any credibility whatsoever.

I would say it is somewhat interesting that when he appeared before our committee, one of the questions asked of him was whether he had it in