

this month to Iraq, saying he was touched by the northern city of Halabja.

Powell said he spoke with Iraqis whose family members were killed in that town in March 1988, when Hussein's regime used chemicals to kill an estimated 5,000 people.

He urged the American public to be patient with Iraq, reminding reporters that it took the United States more than 12 years—from 1776 to 1789—to draft a constitution.

"It isn't easy" to draft a governing document, he said.

Besides Iraq, Powell addressed the conflict between the Israelis and Palestinians. He said Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat "is not a partner for peace."

Powell said he has made it clear to Arafat that he must change his leadership approach.

Powell also questioned Israeli settlements and the way Israel is constructing a new security fence near its border.

Powell tried to quell concerns about how Arabs traveling to the United States will be treated at airports and by the government. He conceded there has to be balance between liberty and security in admitting new visitors and immigrants.

Said Powell: "We want to be a welcoming society."

JUMP-STARTING IRAQI ECONOMY

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

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Madam Speaker, in the next few weeks Congress will be shaping and hopefully passing legislation aimed at jump-starting the Iraqi economy, hopefully laying the foundation for prosperity and democracy in that troubled land. The administration is proposing a \$23 billion package out of an \$87 billion program; and the question now is, what form will our support take in this first \$23 billion assistance package to Iraq? Will it be given to Iraq in the form of a loan or will it be given in the form of an investment or will it be given in the form of a grant?

We are being told in Congress that it must be given in the form of a grant. We are being told that the people of the United States must give to Iraq \$23 billion because if we try to give it in the form of a loan instead of a grant that it will hurt the Iraqi economy and they will not be able to prosper.

This is so much nonsense, State Department nonsense which is not taking into consideration the well-being of the people of the United States of America and taking the easy way out. Yes, let us just shovel money over there. That would not be good for the people of Iraq or the people of the United States.

□ 1700

The objection the State Department has is based on the idea that if we have any more debt accumulated on the people of Iraq, they will not prosper because they already have so much debt. In fact, their debt is estimated at \$120 billion. That is no reason for us to just give away \$23 billion of the money of the people of the United States. No. What we should be doing is saying, who loaned that money to Iraq? And, in fact, what we are talking about here is

\$120 billion given not to the people of Iraq but to Saddam Hussein, to Saddam Hussein's regime by our supposed allies, by big international banks.

Our position should not be that the Iraqi people have to repay that debt. We should be encouraging the new democracy in Iraq to repudiate the debt of countries that gave money to Saddam Hussein which he then used to buy weapons to repress and oppress his own people. Repudiation of that debt will permit the Iraqi people to prosper and permit us rather than to penalize our own people in order to repay, yes, the money is not going directly back to those big international banks, but it will be going back to them if we simply shovel our money into Iraq right now.

No, we should help Iraq establish the foundation for prosperity by insisting that the loans that were given to Saddam Hussein are not the responsibility of the people of Iraq who want a democratic government. If those big bankers in France and Germany want their loans back which they gave to Saddam Hussein, let them find Saddam Hussein and collect those loans from Saddam Hussein, not the people of Iraq. Our assistance should be based not on giving money to the people of Iraq because we have no choice because Iraq already owes so much money. What we should do is help them get out of that debt situation by repudiating that illegal debt and, instead, structure our support as loans when we can, or even investments.

Much of what is being suggested for Iraq is upgrading their post office, their water system, their oil production, their electric system. All of those things are based on services that are provided to the Iraqi people which they will pay for. Let us structure the \$23 billion we give to Iraq as an investment in those things rather than just giving them the money and expecting no repayment for the American people in return. This would be actually more efficient in the end because it would put a profit-type of incentive into the mix when people are setting up the post office and the water system and the oil production and the electric system in Iraq. No, let us reconfirm to the world by supporting the repudiation of Saddam Hussein's debt; let us reconfirm the principle that anyone who loans money or does business with dictators does so at their own risk and the American people should never bail them out if that dictatorship is overthrown. We should be on the side of the democratic forces and give them an incentive to get rid of the dictator and by doing so, get rid of their debt rather than have to bear the burden of their own oppressor.

SUPPORT OUR TROOPS: \$1,500 BONUS BILL

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. MILLER of Michigan). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. STUPAK) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. STUPAK. Madam Speaker, this week as the other body takes up the President's request for an \$87 billion supplemental appropriation bill for Iraq, we must do more for our troops and their families who are under increasing duress. Specifically, Congress should grant a \$1,500 bonus to all those who serve in Iraq and Afghanistan. Not since Vietnam have such a large number of troops been deployed for so long. The pressure this puts on our troops and their families is tremendous. This summer, the Department of Defense increased deployments for troops serving in Iraq and Afghanistan to 1 year, and not until last week did the Department of Defense offer these troops who are living under highly primitive and stressful conditions a 2-week leave for rest and recuperation. And tragically this month, our U.S. casualties in Iraq surpassed the number of those killed in the first Gulf war. We now have lost more than 300 soldiers, sailors and airmen.

Recognizing the increasing gravity of U.S. military involvement abroad, I introduced H.R. 3051 to qualify all active duty military personnel deployed for any length of time in Iraq and Afghanistan for a \$1,500 bonus. This bonus proposal should be made part of the supplemental appropriation bill. As Members of Congress, we may have different ideas about the U.S. policy in Iraq, but we can all agree our service men and women deserve our sincere recognition for their courageous efforts. \$1,500 will not only help boost morale but will send a strong bipartisan message to our troops that Congress is unified behind them.

The Bush administration is lobbying Congress for \$21 billion in direct grants to support infrastructure developments in Iraq in this \$87 billion supplemental appropriations bill. First of all, I see no reason why we cannot separate this \$87 billion into two separate bills: one, the \$66 billion defense portion, which I think we all support, and \$21 billion for the reconstruction portion and then let us as a Congress require Iraqi oil to be used as collateral for international loans to finance Iraqi infrastructure projects and ensure that Iraq construction contracts are competitively bid. Either way, U.S. citizens should not be expected to support Iraqi development while many Americans are facing shortfalls in funding here at home, in health care, prescription drug coverage, schools, road construction, and other critical infrastructure improvements. Congress must continue to work to restore Iraq to a stable and self-governing state, but not at the expense of Americans here at home and our troops abroad.

I also question several items contained in the administration's supplemental bill for Iraq, like the \$4 million to develop a set of telephone numbers and \$150 million for a national 911 system; \$100 million to build seven planned communities with 3,258 houses;