for Washington to offer serious solutions to the problems facing the country. One look at the polls shows Americans are taking notice and they aren't pleased.

But where the majority is failing to lead, Republicans are stepping up. While Democrats broke their promise to operate the House floor in an open, fair, and bipartisan manner, Republicans have found ways to strengthen and expose flaws in Democratic bills. While Democrats broke their promise to lead the most open, honest, and ethical Congress in history, Republicans are pushing for commonsense ethics rules that hold lawmakers to a higher standard. While Democrats broke their promise to deliver transparency in spending taxpayer dollars, Republicans have forced the majority to restore GOP earmark reforms that bring greater transparency and accountability to Federal spending. While Democrats broke their promise to enact legislation that makes America energy independent, Republicans believe we can lower gas prices and reduce our dependence on foreign energy by increasing domestic energy supplies, conserving more, and investing in the technologies of tomorrow. While Democrats broke their promise to be fiscally responsible increasing taxes and spending in tandem, Republicans put forth a plan that balances the Federal budget without raising taxes. And while Democrats broke their promise to make national and homeland security a priority, House Republicans have stood united to provide our troops the resources they need to defeat al Qaeda and radical jihadists and are determined to secure our borders and enforce our immigration laws.

While Republicans are working to earn back the majority, Democrats are acting like the entrenched majority they led before, saying one thing to Americans outside of Washington and doing something different inside the Capitol building.

Over the next few weeks, every House Democrat must answer this key question: Why haven't you kept your promises?

I don't have a Web site available like some of the other groups do. But I can tell you that this publication, ''House Democrats' Top 100 Broken Promises,'' will be available from any Republican Member of this Congress, and I am sure that we can make it available. I am sure it is on a Web site, probably on the Web sites of all of the leadership: Republican Leader JOHN BOEHNER, Republican Whip ROY BLUNT, Conference Chair ADAM PUTNAM, Policy Chairman THADDEUS MCCOTTER, Conference Vice Chair KAY GRANGER, Conference Secretary JOHN CARTER, Chief Deputy Whip ERIC CANTOR, Rules Committee Ranking Republican DAVID DREIER. My guess is that it can be found on any of their Web sites. I am going to make sure that it is on my Web site in the next few days.

But I think, again, it is important that we hold people to the promises that they have made and make sure that the American people don't continue to have this very negative opinion of the Congress of the United States. We want this House to be respected. We want the Senate to be respected. And we need to live up to our promises so that we can get on with the important work that the American people have sent us here to do.

This is the people's House, and I am extraordinarily proud to be a Member of this House. And I know I join with other Republicans in saying that we want to bring back respect and integrity to this House so it is not called a House of hypocrisy.

□ 2045

AMERICA, MISSISSIPPI THANKS YOU

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HALL of New York). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. TAYLOR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. TAYLOR. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleagues for yielding me the time.

Mr. Speaker, as you know, about 22 months ago the Mississippi Gulf Coast was hit with the worst hurricane in our Nation's history. It was followed up by a disaster made by man, which was the insurance industry almost uniformly denying the claims of people who had paid their premiums for decades. So people who thought they were covered woke up the next day or the next week to discover that their house was gone, and that their insurance company that said they were in ''good hands'' or that might have been their ''good neighbor'' or were ''on their side'' weren't going to pay.

It has led to several problems, one of which will be addressed, we hope, in July with a promise by the Speaker PELOSI, Chairman FRANK, Chairwoman WATERS for a hearing in the Financial Services Committee to amend the National Flood Insurance Program to allow people to buy all-perils insurance through their Nation, something that will prevent the fight in the future in other areas of America where 52 percent of Americans live. So if they go through the same sort of tragedy that the people of Mississippi went through, that they will be paid. Because the only people who did pay their claims last time, uniformly, was our Nation through the National Flood Insurance Program.

One of the ways that the American people responded to that, Mr. Speaker, is that by the thousands, all the way from kindergartners to grandparents, volunteers that have come to south Mississippi, they volunteered their time, they have given of their own personal treasure to help the people of south Mississippi rebuild who should have been paid by the insurance industry but won't. We've had so many groups. And I wish I could name them all and I wish I could have thanked them all.

But one of the groups I did get a chance to visit with just recently was the St. Elizabeth Seton Catholic Church of Naperville, Illinois, again, one of the thousands of groups that have been to south Mississippi and continue to go to south Mississippi to help people rebuild their lives.

We want to thank them and all the groups, but I also want to recognize a letter that they sent to my office. And it's strange that they should even be thanking someone from my office, it is my office that should be thanking them. But I want to read their letter in gratitude for them, and thank them as a way of thanking all the people that helped.

''We are eternally grateful to you for sharing with us one of Mississippi's finest natural resources, Chris LaGarde.'' Chris is an employee in my office.

Since we first met Chris a year ago, we've come to know him as a dear friend, a counselor, a leader, a chef, a mentor and a pack rat. He is a great big energizer bunny in a bright orange jumpsuit, not only because he never stops, but because his presence energizes all of us. Chris is a man of compassion and passion. He is caring, loving, generous and the most humble man you could ever meet. He's an excellent chef and host.

Through all of the trials and tribulations of finding work for our 60 volunteers all week and feeding us twice this week, he always kept his composure, his sense of humor and his love for all of us. He is a role model not only for young adults, but for us older adults as well. He lends perspective to what is really important in all of our lives, not our iPods, TVs, cell phones, cars and homes, but our friends, family and fellow human beings.

Chris is the epitome of the face of Christ, of service, of love for his fellow man.

To the folks of St. Elizabeth Seton, know what you've said is really about yourselves and about the other people who've come to south Mississippi to help us out. And on behalf of the people of south Mississippi, I want to thank all of those volunteers for what they have done and what they continue to do. And on behalf of not only the people of south Mississippi, but all of our fellow Americans, I think our fellow Americans have truly risen to the occasion. And I, for one, am eternally grateful for their help.

ACCOUNTABILITY IN THE WHITE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from New Hampshire (Mr. HODES) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. HODES. Mr. Speaker, I'm here tonight with my distinguished colleague from Florida (Mr. KLEIN) to talk

in this Chamber about accountability, and to talk about our security in the Middle East, our strategy for the war in Iraq, the problems the American people face with the leadership of this country, which does not seem, at the very top echelon, the President and the Vice President, to be able to respond to the clearly expressed will of the American people, the facts on the ground in Iraq, the advice from esteemed military commanders and generals who understand the situation in Iraq.

And, really, it all comes down to accountability. Because Mr. KLINE and I came to this body as a result of the elections of November 2006. And in those elections, the American people spoke loudly and clearly. In my home State of New Hampshire, they said we need a new direction in Iraq; our strategy is not working.

The war in Iraq has not made us safer. The war in Iraq is not enhancing American security. The war in Iraq is not stabilizing the Middle East and advancing our true national security interests. The war in Iraq is costing billions and billions and billions of dollars, sapping our military strength and readiness, and leaving us, as a Nation, poorer and unable to respond to conflicts around the globe and the urgent need of domestic priorities at home, the needs of working families here in America who need the kinds of funds that are being diverted into a war that is not working, that need to be used at home to help take care of Americans.

Now I'd like to yield to Mr. KLEIN.

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. I thank the gentleman from New Hampshire (Mr. HODES).

I appreciate the opportunity to be here tonight as members of our freshman class. We try to get together about once a week to speak to each other and to speak to the Members on the floor here about the importance of what we were elected to do, along with every other Member, Democrat and Republican, in this Chamber.

Certainly this last election had a lot to do with the war and the strategy of the war and whether waging the war in the way it was being waged was successful. And of course success, at least in my view and the people that I have spoken to, is what can we do to enhance and protect the American people? All of us, in our homes, our cities, our country, and certainly our friends abroad.

At this time, it seems pretty clear, and I think it's been pretty clear to the American people for a long time who have been ahead of the President and ahead of the Congress in their thinking about this, that the national security of our country, of course coming first, is not being enhanced by having our fighting men and women, our brave men and women fighting a war that by and large is the participation of a civil war, a civil war among groups of people that unfortunately have been fighting each other for a long, long time; that by us dropping in our own form of democracy in that region, it just doesn't necessarily work that way. Although we would like to believe as Americans, and we know that we have the best system in the world, it just can't be planted in some other part of the world and just accepted as it is.

So the reality is, what can we do? What are the choices? And I have not been one who said immediate withdrawal. There are some in this Chamber that believe in immediate withdrawal, there are some that say we should be there for 10, 20, 30, 50 years, as long as it takes.

I think the reality is, there has to be a better way. And I think that we've heard from many of our military experts. When President Bush says, let's listen to the military experts, I agree. But it's not just the military experts that are telling you what you want to hear, it's the military experts that have been our generals, people that have served in that region, continue to serve in that region, and not just as soon replace them if they don't agree with the present administration.

There are answers, just like anything else. It doesn't matter if it's health care or energy, there are answers to all these things. People solve problems all day long. Americans are very innovative, energetic people. There are answers to this one as well. They may not be the answers we're looking for that are the ultimate best answers, but there are ways that we can best protect our interests in the Middle East, our support of the State of Israel and other friends in that region, and then most importantly, the people that live in our country. And those may be redeployment, moving our troops out of harm's way and into areas where maybe the borders are secured; or maybe, as we know now, the major mistake was that the entire Iraqi leadership of its armed forces was basically eviscerated, they're gone and moved away. And so the result is you have an Iraqi Army that by and large is leaderless. And they've been trying to make amends on that and trying to deal with that, but they're still way behind their curve. We can probably provide some support in that area.

But we do also know at the same time, in terms of our national security interests, if we think about what brought us to this point so far and why we have this threat of terrorism, is because we were attacked on 9/11, nothing to do with Iraq, but Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda. That issue has to do with Afghanistan and maybe other areas of Pakistan. That's where our military might, our strength, our troops, our ability to build coalitions around the world, which we've lost along the way here, that's where we can have the most impact.

So Mr. HODES, I would just like to open with those thoughts. I know we're going to have a little bit of discussion on that. But I want the American people to know and I want our Members here in the Chamber to understand, there are choices; there are good choices, there are better choices, and there are choices to move forward. To stand still, to say the surge and all those things, we need to move forward and best protect our troops and best protect Americans.

Mr. HODES. Mr. KLEIN, one of the things I think about is the change in the dialogue that has occurred since the Democrats became the majority party here in the House of Representatives as a result of the elections of November 2006.

And I know that there are many people in this country who are extremely frustrated. More than 70 percent of the people in this country, the statistics now tell us, are committed to changing course in Iraq, despite the intransigence, the stubbornness, the refusal of the President to face reality, despite the refusal of the Vice President of this country to meet his own obligations to the people of this country. But the dialogue has changed.

It's very important, I think, to take stock of what has happened, where we are now and how we are moving forward, and also to talk about the accountability of the administration and the Republicans, our colleagues on the other side of the aisle, who have stood foursquare up until now with the failed policies of this President.

The picture that I have put up here is a picture of President Bush with virtually the entire Republican delegation standing with him when he rejected the Democrats' attempt to set reasonable guidelines for troop readiness, for benchmarks, for Iraqi accountability, and a timeline for the responsible, strategic redeployment of American troops to protect our security.

We've heard a lot in the past few days, in the past few months from our colleagues on the other side of the aisle who keep blasting Democrats. They say, well, we're not getting anything done. But Democrats have stood up time and time again to help push a new direction in Iraq. And frankly, and unfortunately, it's been our Republican colleagues on the other side of the aisle who have not helped move this along, who have not stood up to their President and said to our President, this is an American issue. We must all work together for a responsible strategy that protects American security.

Now, after 6 months in the majority, House and Senate Democrats really are changing the debate on the war. We're insisting that the Bush administration and the Iraqi Government be held accountable. We need benchmarks to measure progress, or the lack thereof. We need to challenge the stay-the-course strategy, and we will continue to challenge this President's stay-the-course strategy.

And what is not too surprising to me now, as we sit here today ready for the July 4th recess and about 6 months into the 110th Congress, under pressure from responsible Democrats and the American public, an increasing number

of Senate Republicans are now distancing themselves from the President's policy, even as our colleagues on the other side of the aisle, our House Republicans, continue to cling to it. The question is, when will the rubber-stamp House Republicans face the reality, join the Democrats, together with the American people, in demanding a real change and a responsible, strategic redeployment of our forces from Iraq? That, as you said, doesn't necessarily mean and shouldn't mean, in my view, that we bring everybody home in a precipitous fashion. That's what the Republicans continue to claim Democrats are talking about, but nothing could be further from the truth. Because the Democratic Caucus and the American people understand that what is needed is a responsible, strategic redeployment to protect American security.

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. And Mr. HODES, I would absolutely agree with you. And I think the proof is in the pudding back home. When I go back home and I speak to folks in town hall meetings in Palm Beach County and Broward County in south Florida where I live, I've heard from Democrats, Republicans and independents. And nobody wears their party on their sleeve, you just hear from them and they explain how they feel. And they feel very strongly that, as former military, there are a lot of senior citizen veterans in my area, they fought so hard for our country and the values and the strength that they have for the belief in the military and the strength that they have for the belief in our country and doing the right thing as we did in World War II and as we've done so many times since then. And they feel that what is going on right now is weakening the military, weakening America, as a standard bearer for truth and strength in the world, and this hurts. This hurts them, as people who fought so hard for our country.

□ 2100

I am not 70 years old. I am not 80 years old. But I have so many people that have expressed that to me as they wear their hats, as they wear their uniform, as they come and talk about their own personal experiences. We certainly have that generation.

Then we have the generation of parents whose kids may enlist or are already in the military. Some believe that what the military is doing is just right. Some feel very bad and feel like, not that their sons and daughters aren't doing the right thing on behalf of the country, they just feel like the strategy is not what they have made that representation, that commitment about.

I also feel like you do, that I am beginning to see, and I know in some of the committee hearings we have had in the House of Representatives we have heard expressions by both Democrats and Republicans. We are starting to hear from Republicans, too, about questions raised and looking for that accountability.

The bottom line is this: This is the Iraqis' war. This is the Iraqis' responsibility to take their own country and build it back up. That is their civilian ability, their ability to put the electricity back on, build hospitals and create jobs for themselves and put down the terror and the people that are harassing them in the cities and the explosives going on. They have got to take their own bull by the horns and do something about themselves. We can't do that. They have to do that. So there is this responsibility that they have to stand up to themselves and recognize.

We did what we said we were going to do. We took out Saddam Hussein and gave them a fresh opportunity. Saddam Hussein was a tyrant. He was a bad guy. But let's now look to the next level. The next responsibility is for the Iraqi people to stand up for themselves. We can't fight their war for them. We can't fight that for them. We have our own responsibilities.

We have to deal with Iran right now. Iran is a serious threat to Israel and our interests around the world, North Korea, obviously, and Afghanistan. These are places where the United States military needs to be able to be strong and exert itself when needed.

Mr. HODES. Mr. KLEIN, I want to pick up on a few points you made, because as I have traveled around New Hampshire, I have met with numerous veterans and lots of folks in the active military. The people in New Hampshire are not especially liberal, left-wing people. They are Americans.

This issue is really an issue of what it means to be a patriot. Because we all want the best outcome we can possibly make for this country, for our troops, for our veterans, for our wounded warriors. We want to do the best we can for America. On whatever side of this debate about the proper policy, I think we all need to respect each other's views on that.

I find that in New Hampshire. But what I find is a deep yearning that this country is accountable to the American people, that our government is accountable to the American people in a way that sets us on a course for being number one.

Now, I don't mean that in any big, bullying way, but number one because, up until recently, in my years—I have been around for 56 years—this country stood on its values. We stood on the principles of truth, justice, fairness, equality, and opportunity for all. That is what the American people expect from their government. That is where they want our country to go. They see that the war in Iraq has diverted us from being as great as we can be, from fulfilling the true promise of America both in the blood and treasure of our brave soldiers lost in the sands of Iraq.

They also are very concerned. I speak to people about some of what happened and the mistakes that were made that produced the issues that we are in today. They are very concerned, for instance, that while 9/11 was caused by al Qaeda terrorists in Afghanistan with the Taliban, that the Bush administration not only implied but said that somehow, Saddam Hussein and Iraq were tied in with al Qaeda at the time of that attack. It just wasn't so.

We have made some serious mistakes that they see. They see that the object of going in, occupying Baghdad and immediately firing the civil service, de-Baathification, firing the Army, simply provided fuel for the insurgency, provided people and weapons to fight against stability in Iraq. They see those questions.

Now the question they are asking is, where to? Where do we go from here? The good news is that some of the Republican Senators have begun to see the light. I just want to quote one of our distinguished colleagues who is in the Senate Chamber, Senator RICHARD LUGAR, the distinguished Republican from Indiana, the ranking member on the Foreign Relations Committee, who said, ''In my judgment, the costs and risks of continuing down the current path outweigh the potential benefits that might be achieved. Persisting indefinitely with the surge strategy will delay policy adjustments that have a better chance of protecting our vital interests over the long term. Our security interests call for a downsizing and redeployment of U.S. military forces to a more sustainable position.'' That was a speech by Senator LUGAR, a Republican from Indiana, on the Senate floor on June 25 of this year. He is beginning to face the reality and getting ready for a new direction in Iraq.

We have now been joined by our distinguished colleague, JASON ALTMIRE from Pennsylvania. We are delighted to have you with us. He often speaks with the 30-Something Group. It is a real treat to have him with the New Member Caucus tonight. The Class of 2006 welcomes you, JASON.

Mr. ALTMIRE. Thank you, Mr. HODES. It is an honor to see you here tonight, as well as Mr. KLEIN from Florida.

We are at our 6-month point. We have one of our freshman colleagues in the Chair tonight. Mr. HALL from New York is serving as the Speaker pro tempore this evening. We are in the Chamber here tonight; we are talking about the first 6 months. We are talking about what is certainly the most important issue facing the country, as anyone would agree, which is the war in Iraq. We are talking about accountability. As the gentleman pointed out, we have a President that seems to be struggling with accountability right now.

If you look at what has happened in Iraq, we talk about the surge. We are going to have this report in September on whether the surge has worked. We all pray that we get good news in September, that General Petraeus is going

to come in and give us an accurate assessment and, hopefully, that assessment will be that things are turning around.

But it does not appear at this point that that is the case. In fact, as you well know, Mr. HODES, the last 3 months where the surge has been fully in effect and we have been over there, have been the bloodiest 3 months in the 4½ years we have been in Iraq. The last 3 months have been the worst 3 months. That does not bode well for the effectiveness of the surge.

As you said, we are over 3,500 now that have been killed and 25,000 injured, wounded and that is just a tragic situation.

I was able to tour Walter Reed soon after that incident came to light with the Washington Post, and perhaps you gentlemen did as well. What strikes you when you meet these men and women, they are the bravest and the brightest and the best this country has to offer. To think that we have a situation where we were giving them substandard care in a military hospital, and in the Department of Defense, we chronically underfund our VA health care systems all across the country. So you have the Defense health care system that Walter Reed was a part of, and that was a disgraceful situation; then on the other hand, for the past several years, we have chronic underfunding of the VA health care system.

So when we talk about this administration's record with regard to accountability and what happens after these brave men and women come home, we have the issue of multiple deployments where the Guard and Reserve families have to struggle with multiple deployments and extended deployments going from 1 year to 18 months. Some of these veterans are small business owners or work in small firms where they have to go to their employer and say, I have to go over to Iraq, I have to serve this country. Of course, the employer says, that is wonderful, you have my support. Then they have to go back a second time, maybe a third.

Again, for the ones that own their own business and are the person that is running the business, how are they going to keep that business afloat? It affects the family. It affects the children. This has so many repercussions. Every segment of our society is impacted by it. But we have a President that has been given the views of the American people—we are going to talk about that tonight—but they have been disregarded.

Sixty-nine percent of the American people think we are heading down the wrong road in Iraq and that we need to change course. Instead, we get more of the same. We have an administration that was given a blueprint for success by the Iraq Study Group 6 months ago now, 7 months ago. Instead of following it, or at least looking at it, it was promptly discarded.

We have an administration that has ignored the advice of his generals on the ground. Whenever they tell him something he doesn't want to hear, they have resigned or they are fired. So I lack the confidence that this administration is going to be able to view the Iraq situation as anything more than ''stay the current course.'' We all know that we need a different course.

We were talking about accountability. I did just want to tell one story that is related to the way this administration views our men and women and the families that are serving this country. I had a constituent in town today. She is an 84-year-old Gold Star mother. Her son was killed in 1969 in Vietnam. She has not been to Washington, D.C. She has not seen the Wall with her son's name on it, the Vietnam War Memorial. She called our office 2 weeks ago and explained her situation. She said, ''I am bringing my two daughters, who are obviously grown now. They are the sisters of the serviceman that was killed in 1969. They are going to come down together as a family for the first time.'' Her goal, her life-long dream, was to tour the White House. So we called the White House. As you certainly know, there is a 6-month waiting list. But there is an exception in special circumstances. One of those circumstances, we were told, you were probably told, were for Gold Star families.

□ 2115

They can get in and take that tour of the White House.

So we were told, sure, they are welcome. We sent the information over, and then we promptly got a phone call saying, well, no, no, that exception only works for Iraq and Afghanistan Gold Star families, not for Vietnam era families.

So we had to call back this 84-year-old woman who wanted to see the Vietnam War Memorial and her son's name on the wall for the first time, and wanted to tour the White House, it was her lifelong dream, and we had to tell her well, I am sorry, we are not going to be able to do that, because the White House does not allow that.

Then it came to my attention that we as Members of Congress in very rare circumstances are allowed to take groups down and put them in the line if we appear with them. So I called her and I said, you know, I am going to just do this myself.

So today we took her down and we put her in the line and she got her tour of the White House.

So I sent a letter to President Bush and I said, there is two issues here. One is this policy is ridiculous. How can you justify putting one group of families who have suffered the greatest loss imaginable in the service of our country ahead of another group of families? How can you put one generation of military Gold Star families ahead of another?

The second issue is, what is the policy? Can you explain it? What is the justification for it? And please change it. That was the situation. I was fortunate as a Member of Congress, I was able to get Ms. Boyer in. But, unfortunately, you wonder how many people around the country have made a similar effort and were unable to get in on this tour.

So, I really thought this was a disgraceful situation, and I did want to bring it to the attention of my freshmen colleagues, because this is something that just happened today. And I think it is indicative of the treatment that our military families are getting from this administration.

I talked about the fact that we have had 6 consecutive years prior to this one of chronic underfunding of our VA healthcare system. You see the result at Walter Reed, what happens when you don't provide enough funding for these institutions. Unfortunately, we as a nation were doing that over the last several years.

But this Congress took a step in the right direction to resolve that by providing the largest increase in the history, 77-year history of the VA health care system, and in the 6 months we have been here, we have voted for $13 billion in increased funding for the VA healthcare system.

We have also voted to increase screenings and treatment for traumatic brain injury, which is now the signature issue for the Iraq war veterans. Many of the people who would have perished in previous wars, because of increased technology and military equipment, we have a lot of amputees and we have a lot of head injuries. So the issues we face are different from issues we faced in previous wars with regard to treating the men and women that come home.

So we are going to screen them and we are going to treat them for traumatic brain injury and we are going to make that part of what we are doing in the VA healthcare system.

So this Congress has taken a step in the direction of honoring our Nation's veterans, and I am proud at our 6-month point of our first term in Congress that we can go home over the July 4th recess and talk about the fact that no Congress in the history of the Congress has ever done more for our Nation's veterans than we have, in just 6 months. So I am proud to talk about that.

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. Thank you. I appreciate your observing those things that we did, because I think every one of us believes it is the right thing to do. I know, just to share for a moment, the experience that all of us had at Walter Reed Hospital and the experiences that we have all had in visiting our veterans and our folks who have fought for you us so bravely back home.

The point you made is that many of these men and women back in Vietnam, back in other wars, would have died based on the injuries they have received. But instead, because of modern science, they are alive today, some of

them. But the injuries are so substantial, loss of both legs, loss of arms, loss of major functions that they have, they are going to require a lifetime of care. And every American needs to understand that is a responsibility we have. When we ask our men and women to fight for us, we better be prepared to make sure they have all the necessary cares, and their families get that same level of care. Because it is that support, that when we ask people to fight for the values and strength of our country, that needs to be there.

But that is a cost of this war. And the problem, of course, is that if in fact, as we started this conversation tonight, we are not achieving our national security interests, we are not making Americans safer at home or our friends overseas more secure, if we are not accomplishing any of that, and we are going to wait until September now, and unfortunately there may be another 300 or 400 of our brave men and women losing their lives for something that again is not accomplishing those goals, and we are spending another $40 billion or $50 billion, I think a lot of Americans are saying, what could we do with that amount of money? What could we do with those lost lives back here at home, those lost lives, the lost opportunities for the families and men and women fighting for us?

I know when I think about Florida where I am from, they already have 139 men and women killed. We have had 1,196 severely injured. These are our neighbors. These are our friends.

We had just tragically this past week, a young man, 25 years old, Daniel Agami, who, unfortunately, was killed recently by, of course, an IED. I know that every one of us in this Chamber, and I think out there in the country, they have been through this loss. They understand what that neighbor, that nephew, that son, that daughter, what it means.

A lot of Americans haven't been really affected by this war because maybe the numbers are not as significant as they were during Vietnam or during World War II. But it is an American. Every loss of life is an American, and I think we all share that sense of feeling and, of course, that empathy for the families.

The question we are raising now, of course, the national commitment we have to fight wars is there. The strength and understanding our military always has to be at the ready. But we should also understand that when we do fight wars, that we need to win, succeed, do whatever is necessary, but, at the same time, be smart about it. Accomplish the goals that we have and recognize that in this dangerous world that we live in today, in this present strategy that President Bush has executed and is unwilling to change to this point in time, we have made ourselves weaker in other theaters, in other places around the world. That is unacceptable to me. It is unacceptable to every person I would imagine who is concerned about the future of our country.

We are prepared to change that. I am very happy that Democrats have changed, as you said, Mr. HODES, the discussion in Washington, taking the discussion back in our streets at home, our main streets back at home up here, finding even Republicans now who I know believe and, of course, they want to do the right thing as well, but just a blind loyalty to the President's policy at this point is not the right thing to do. We need to think, use common sense, figure out the right way to redeploy, protect our men and women over there, do the right thing so the Middle East can be stabilized and we can fight our real battles and deal with Iran and Afghanistan and other places.

Mr. HODES. Mr. KLINE, thank you very much for those thoughts. I expect that over this July 4th recess, a number of our colleagues, especially those on the other side of the aisle, will probably be hearing from their constituents about their concerns about the current course in Iraq, the failure of this administration's strategy, with the surge and the way things have been handled, the numerous mistakes, both strategic and implementation and in conception have deeply, deeply hurt us.

I know the American people, as we are here in Congress, especially in discussions with Democratic Members on the Armed Services Committee, are deeply concerned that American readiness, that our readiness to deal with other conflicts that may arise, not be jeopardized, and we are going to take important steps and have taken important steps to improve the readiness that has been hurt by these deployments in Iraq.

At some point we are going to talk a little bit more about what it has meant for our veterans, but we have been joined by another distinguished colleague who I would like to introduce. JOE SESTAK, a member of the class of 2006 from Pennsylvania, came to this Congress with an extraordinarily distinguished career, serving our country in the military in the Navy.

He is a gentleman who understands military, military matters, military operations. He is deeply committed to American strategic interests and is in the forefront of those in the Democratic Caucus who are intent on seeing a new direction in Iraq.

I would like to now turn it over to you, JOE SESTAK.

Mr. SESTAK. I appreciate that from my colleague from New Hampshire.

I want to comment upon what all three of you brought out, and I thought brought out well. I would like to speak about it from my experience.

I remember being on the ground in Afghanistan 2 months after that war began. I had the opportunity during a very short period of time to see what needed to be done. I left, brought back an aircraft carrier battle group for that war. Then we brought that battle group into the Persian Gulf for what we thought would be the starting run of the Iraqi conflict, and thinking what a tragic misadventure this would be.

Those words were brought back to me as I thought about them 18 months later when I returned on the ground in Afghanistan and saw what had not been accomplished when I had known what had to be done. Because we diverted our attention and our resources, our Psychological Operations Forces, our Special Operations Forces, our Civil Affairs Forces and the attention of this Nation from Afghanistan to Iraq.

To me, Afghanistan is prey to terrorists now once again as the Taliban regain control in parts of the southern provinces. And as we look inserting more forces back into Afghanistan, it is a poster child for what Iraq is really about.

Iraq is a conflict, a civil war that has hurt our strategic security, and Afghanistan is merely a poster child for how the rest of our global security, as well as our homeland security, has suffered.

There is not one army unit here at home, not one, Army, Guard, Active Guard or Reserve, that is in a state of readiness, that is committed to deploy anyplace in the world, as was said earlier, to any contingency elsewhere, from Korea to the Western Pacific, to help our other forces. Nor are we engaged in this world where the true center of gravity, strategic gravity for the United States is over the next decade, the Western Pacific, nor in Southeast Asia, nor in the Middle East.

We have walked away from a strategy of engagement in this world as we have narrowed down to a conflict that is a civil war in one country. We need to step back and look at Iraq. Not as itself alone, but as a piece in our strategic template of how we look at the security environment across this world. Therefore, we need a change in this strategy.

It is not about getting out of Iraq, as you well said. It is not just about returning our troops home. It is about a proper redeployment of our forces in order to enhance the security of America.

I am not anti-war. I am pro-security. And the Democratic approach to this is one that recognizes and should recognize with the Republicans, because we need them and they need us, to define the end of what President Bush said on 10 January would not be an open-ended commitment.

We need to define that end as a certain date, a specific date, approximately a year, that says to everyone in that region that behavior now has the incentive to change, because we will no longer be in Iraq providing the political and military cover for this civil war to continue to simmer as the politicians in Iraq, failing to step up to the plate because they are pursuing their personal fiefdoms, their personal ambitions in the 32 ministries that they run, as we provide their security.

And of great importance is Iran. When I was there with Senator HAGEL

a few months ago, everyone talked about the undue influence of Iran. Why not? We are in there bleeding, and that country wants us to bleed profusely. But if we were to set a date certain and to lead with confidence and engage Iran and Syria, to bring them to the table, our most senior political leader, U.S. political leader in Iraq said in response to a question, Iran does not want a failed state if we redeploy.

It may not want the government we want, but it does not want a failed state. It doesn't want the 2 million Iraqi refugees there that have not already overflowed Iraq's borders to continue to flow over Iran's. Nor does it want a proxy war between it, the Shi'as in Iran supporting the Shia in Iraq, and the Sunnis in Syria supporting the Sunnis in Iraq. Once we are out, they don't want that war to ensue.

So, what this future plan is to be about is a redeployment to enhance America's security by focusing where we need to in this world, beginning with Afghanistan, and a readiness here at home to bring it back up, to remain in that region on bases we already have and had before the conflict with troops there in Qatar, Oman, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, with a carrier battle group and amphibious ready group, and then deal with strength as we safely redeploy over a year's period, approximately. Because it took 6 months to redeploy out of Somalia with approximately 8,000 troops.

We have got 160,000 in Iraq and over 100,000 U.S. civilian contractors to safely redeploy. As we do this with a date certain and incentive to change the behavior of the Iraqis so they step up to the plate, knowing they must assume responsibilities, it brings the Iranians and Syrians together, with us remaining in the region, to have a strategy that leads to diplomacy, so that there is an accommodation for a non-failed state. A region we have our interests in, we will remain there, and a state that has brought the parties together under the incentive of a date certain to work towards stability.

I appreciate being able to make these comments which tonight's discussion I believe have really pointed us towards a strategic approach to a date to redeploy.

Mr. HODES. I thank you for those comments. Coming from someone with the kind of military experience you have, they ring especially true.

You know, often on the floor of the House of Representatives, what we have experienced in our first 6 months is political rhetoric that masks some of the deeper, more complex and nuanced issues that really are worthy of discussion in deciding as a nation how to move forward.

It is really what the American people have been asking, not only of us here in Congress, but especially of their President, their Vice President, the leaders in the White House, who have been responsible for this unfortunate failed policy. And what the American people, who are a generous, compassionate and patient people, have been deeply yearning for, is a real discussion of the kind we are having now, that points the way towards American security. Because, as you point out, we have created, unfortunately, more instability in the Middle East.

□ 2130

And now, however we got into it, we have to make the best of a bad situation because we are all in this together. That is the spirit with which we as Democrats are trying to talk to our Republican colleagues.

There has been a lot of name-calling on the floor. They call us cut-and-run and say this and that and the other thing. But as you have so well put, we are talking about a strategy. Strategy is the key word. It means a strategic redeployment to protect American security.

If we just step back for a moment, I want to share some of the thoughts of a very esteemed retired general, General William Odom, who addressed us recently about the situation there. He said, Look at the situation we are in. Our troops are in a sea of hostile people, approximately 7 million in number, and growing in hostility every day. Fully 80 percent of the Iraqis want the occupation to end. Fifty percent of them think badly enough about us that they would sanction violence against Americans.

We are surrounded in Iraq by unfriendly nations, Iran and Syria. We have problems with Hezbollah in Lebanon; Hamas and new issues for Israel. Israel's security has been threatened by the instability in the Middle East because, unfortunately, our misadventure in Iraq has emboldened Islamic jihadists in the region. It has not made us more safe, but has grown the Islam jihad movement. It has been the best recruiting device they have had.

So he understands the importance of what to do when American troops find themselves caught in the middle of not one civil war, as he put it, but in the middle of multiple civil wars. He addressed the concern, which is a valid concern on the part of all of us, of what will happen in Iraq when we redeploy in a planned strategic way. People are concerned. What will we leave?

We have a government at this point which is essentially not working. It is hardly a unity government. They can't get themselves together to have their army stand up or get the ministers to work together. They seem to have fallen into tribal allegiances.

But what General Odom pointed out in recent discussions with experts in the region, including generals of countries whom we have worked with, they have pointed out that it is highly likely that when we leave Iraq, when the American troop presence, which is the cause, in their view, of much instability, is gone, that Iraq—it is not going to be great, but the kind of cataclysmic events that people are predicting, in their view, won't occur because the Iraqis have had a long history of tribal conflict even within the Saddam Hussein regime. And remembering that Iraq was forged in 1916 out of separate tribal entities by the British and French in a grand deal, there has been an undercurrent of these tensions, which the tribal leaders, they believe, are going to work out.

Personally, I believe ultimately there will be a political solution in Iraq that the Iraqis must determine for themselves. Our military presence cannot impose a political solution; only they can. In my view, based on the research that I have done and based on discussions with experts in the region, I think it is highly likely that Iraq will devolve into some kind of autonomous regions, perhaps three autonomous regions. In Kurdistan, one representing the Sunnis, one representing the Shia, who then use the central government for certain federal purposes, but one which recognizes, as their constitution wants to go to, that a political solution, trying to hold together this government which isn't working, won't work for them, and they will find once we are gone and they no longer have us as a crutch, they will find the political solution they need to carry their country forward.

And if we, as a true world leader, redeploy strategically and wisely and then use our diplomatic resources to bring neighbors, allies, friends, reunite a real coalition in the world to help, we may be able to have the kind of result of a stable state that will help us not only in the region but around the world. And it is what the American people want.

It is this kind of discussion and this kind of thinking that the President ought to be having with his generals. I hope that as we sit here tonight talking about Iraq, and as we prepare to return home for July 4, I hope that President Bush is in the White House and I hope he is talking to his generals about what the plan ought to be for a strategic redeployment. But I fear that he is not doing that at this point.

Mr. ALTMIRE, why don't I throw it over to you.

Mr. ALTMIRE. I was struck in hearing my Pennsylvania colleague, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. SESTAK), I believe the highest ranking military officer ever elected to Congress; and so much of the rhetoric that revolved around the discussion that this House had on Iraq was, you guys don't have any experience, you don't know what you are talking about. All you want to do is tie the hands of the generals on the ground, and you need to leave this up to the experts.

What we have heard tonight is an expert, one of the military's foremost military experts that we are fortunate to have not only in this House of Representatives, but in our freshman class with us.

We heard a strategy for success, and we heard someone who has been there

and seen it firsthand. What struck me was the fact that the President has probably had these discussions, and he has probably had people come to him and offer solutions. Maybe not the identical solutions that Admiral Sestak has, but differences of opinion. And the problem is, this administration has not shown a willingness to listen to differences of opinion.

I talked about it earlier. Generals are reassigned if they come in with a difference of opinion. Public opinion certainly doesn't matter. The facts on the ground certainly don't matter.

I was watching earlier, and I don't know if you had the opportunity to walk through some of the facts of what is going on on the ground in Iraq right now. We hear a lot of things on TV about, is the surge working, is it not working. I will let my colleagues decide.

In November of 2003, the number of insurgents in Iraq was 5,000. That is a pretty high number. In March of 2007, the most recent month for which data is available, there were 70,000 insurgents in Iraq as estimated by the Brookings Institution. So 5,000, 4 years ago; 70,000, today.

The number of multifatality bombings in May of 2004 was 9; in May of 2007, last month, it was 42. To me that does not indicate that we are making progress or there is a light at the end of the tunnel. And the numbers of people killed, both civilian and American servicemen, we talked about that earlier, it is exponentially more now.

Clearly, we need a new direction, and we need people like Admiral Sestak, like anyone who is willing to take a hard look at this and offer an alternative solution, like the Iraq Study Group. This is a group of experts who got together, spent a great deal of time studying this issue, making very thoughtful recommendations to the American people, to the White House, and they were promptly disregarded.

Not only were they disregarded, but the course of action that they recommended, diplomacy with the other actors in the region, a training force rather than an offensive force, these are things that we are going in the exact opposite direction. We didn't just discard it, we have gone opposite to what they recommended.

I would say once again that this discussion is healthy. We have four of us here that have opinions, and there are a lot of opinions, and that is the way it should be. I would agree with the gentleman from New Hampshire (Mr. HODES) that I hope the same type of discussion is taking place on the other end of Pennsylvania Avenue. Unfortunately, that does not seem to be the case.

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. I agree with you, Mr. ALTMIRE. Just the title ''admiral'' speaks of such respect that we have for Representative SESTAK. Those of us who did not have the privilege of serving in the military, as you can imagine, there are 435 of us on the floor, we look to each other for advice. We learn from each other.

I know I have spoken to you on a number of occasions to get your advice, to be an informed Member of Congress, and I do appreciate that because I think you not only have that lifetime of experience serving in the military, but as a leader, an admiral in the military, you have the high level of understanding of all the issues we are discussing right now. Of course, it is not the end-all, be-all, but it is a tremendous resource for all of us.

One of the committees that I serve on is Foreign Affairs, and that committee is responsible for working with the President and the State Department on our foreign policy, whether it is in the Western Hemisphere, Hugo Chavez in Venezuela, or in the Middle East or Russia or China.

Our country has been consumed with terrorism since we were attacked on our shores by Osama bin Laden. One of the biggest frustrations we have as Americans, the most powerful nation in the world with the highest level of information and intelligence and reach around the world, the fact that Osama bin Laden is still on the loose is beyond imagination. Every American should demand that that should have been and should continue to be a top priority.

I am pointing that out for a reason. That reason is, we took our eye off the ball when we got involved in this in the first place. That has been discussed and we understand that. But that doesn't mean that today we shouldn't still be focusing on where the real threat is. The threat relates to al Qaeda and Osama bin Laden and his henchmen. The threat relates to nuclear weapons. These are the significant challenges of our day. They are challenges as it relates to Russia and loose nuclear weapons. They are challenges as it relates to North Korea and containing North Korea.

There was an interesting story that Reuters produced. It talked about the estimated number of nuclear weapons that were likely to have been produced by North Korea during the last 6 years of the Bush administration. This is a rogue country by many discussions, by the United Nations and countries around the world, that has a nuclear weapon, possibly seven nuclear weapons that we know of, all within the last 6 years, which tells us once again that we took our eye off the ball of dealing with the true threats.

This is not a question of whether North Korea is going to shoot off an ICBM towards the United States. This is not a stable country and may provide that nuclear weapon to other groups, organizations, countries. That is a threat. That is where our focus should be. Iraq is a different situation.

We take a look at Iran and what we know about Iran at this moment. There are an estimated number of centrifuges in Iran, in their main nuclear facility producing reactor-grade uranium. There may be 1,300 of these spread out in Iran. Iran is a threat, in having a nuclear weapon, to Israel and to other countries in the Middle East, and for the same reason, to the United States.

This is a serious issue. This is where our foreign policy and military strength and the sharing of intelligence and confidence with other allies around the world, where we have always historically, American Presidents have always led, and we made sure that we had that authority. And it was in our country's best interests.

But today we find ourselves in a place because we are mired in Iraq where many countries around the world are not prepared to share that goal of nuclear containment. This is something that we need to focus on. This is another reason why we have to extricate ourselves in a responsible way from a war that is not achieving our national security interests, and refocus our attention on nuclear weapons that may be developed in Iran, and make sure that we are doing the right thing to protect the American people.

Mr. HODES. Thank you.

Admiral SESTAK, we have a few moments left. I turn it over to you for some of your closing thoughts and then I will wrap up.

Mr. SESTAK. If I may add onto comments made by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. KLEIN), the lack of a strategy of engagement by this administration where it became focused and stuck in Iraq has hurt our security tremendously. We outsourced our leadership during that period of time to others.

North Korea went to China. We gave Iran to the European Union. And I can't tell you who we gave the Middle East to.

Let's step back and look at what has occurred. A conflict in the Middle East where our Secretary of State stopped by for a photo-op and continued down, in the midst of that conflict, to Southeast Asia for a conference.

Iran, bent now upon a nuclear weapon. And North Korea, as you referenced, during that period of time as they called General Powell back, who tried to continue the negotiations that the Clinton administration had left the Bush administration with an agreed framework not to have a nuclear reactor continue to produce fissile material. And a missile moratorium. They now at least have seven more nuclear weapons, if they care to build them.

□ 2145

And they've exploded one of them. And they've broken the missile moratorium and only belatedly have they actually gone back now and agreed to the same agreement that the Clinton administration had.

Iraq is such a tragedy. Iran, when General Ikenberry was leaving, our three-star general from Afghanistan, he was asked, does Iran work toward our interest there? The answer was yes. You want stability in Afghanistan. It doesn't want the Taliban there or al

Qaeda. So we step back and say engage, engage with consequences Iran, Syria, give them a date that we won't be in that state of Iraq and they with Iraqis and Saudis and Jordan must step up so we can be about this world and ensure our security elsewhere. That's what this debate is about.

Mr. HODES. I thank all my colleagues, Mr. SESTAK and Mr. ALTMIRE from Pennsylvania, Mr. KLEIN from Florida. It has been a truly interesting discussion tonight focusing on strategy, the complexity of a world that has changed but which Democrats are facing with boldness and leadership to help take our country and the world in a new direction, to reverse the damage that's been done by the administration and reassert our role as a leader in this world on our principles and our values, not merely our military might but only using our military might in service of the good judgment our leaders exercise in the pursuit of peace.

As we leave for our July 4 recess, I want to leave us with this thought. The Army says that it will leave no soldier behind. And as we discussed here tonight, the Democrats in Congress have committed to leaving no veteran behind. We have voted and passed the biggest increase in Veterans' Administration spending for health care and needed services in this country's history.

The chart I have here shows in dramatic form what has happened over the past few years. From 2003 to 2008, the VA is treating many, many more Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans. We've been in a conflict where our soldiers have been deployed, redeployed, redeployed and redeployed again, two times, three times, four times. Whereas compared to World War II, when their active duty tours were 180 days, they're now seeing 15 months, wreaking havoc on the soldiers and their families at the same time. As General Odom put it today, they're experiencing cataclysmic events every day, new kinds of injuries, polytrauma, traumatic brain injuries, PTSD have created great complexity in our VA system.

So as we go out on July 4, I would ask us all to think about what supporting our troops really means. In my view, supporting our troops means employing and following a course that is a real, smart, strategic effort to protect American security by redeploying our troops from the middle of a civil war in which they don't belong, number one. That is truly supporting our troops, because they are owed the policy that the civilian leaders should be following. That is what our troops are owed and our veterans are owed when they come home, the best that we can give them. No more broken promises from the White House. No more broken promises from the Republicans who have cut the budgets time and time again, who have cut health care in the VA, who have imposed fee increases on our veterans. No more. We will leave no veteran behind. The Democrats promise that. We have followed through on our commitment.

And I am so proud to stand with you all as Members of the 110th Congress to help lead this country in a new direction and be the kind of world leader that the American people expect and deserve.

Thank you very much and good night.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. ABERCROMBIE (at the request of Mr. HOYER) for today after noon.

Mr. MCNULTY (at the request of Mr. HOYER) for today on account of a funeral of a war casualty from the district.

Mr. POE (at the request of Mr. BOEHNER) for today after 6:45 p.m. on account of official business.

Mr. GILCHREST (at the request of Mr. BOEHNER) for June 25 and 26.

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 Mr. YARMUTH) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. MCDERMOTT, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. WATERS, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. HINCHEY, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. DEFAZIO, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. KAPTUR, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. WOOLSEY, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. SARBANES, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. ELLISON, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. YARMUTH, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. SESTAK, for 5 minutes, today.

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

Mr. REICHERT, for 5 minutes, today.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. ALTMIRE. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Concurrent Resolution 179, 110th Congress, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 50 minutes p.m.), pursuant to House Concurrent Resolution 179, 110th Congress, the House adjourned until Tuesday, July 10, 2007, at 2 p.m.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

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

2339. A letter from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Lactofen; Pesticide Tolerance [EPA-HQ-OPP-2006-0178; FRL-8132-9] received June 19, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

2340. A letter from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Imidacloprid; Pesticide Tolerance [EPA-HQ-OPP-2006-0968; FRL-8135-5] received June 19, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

2341. A letter from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants for Area Sources: Acrylic and Modacrylic Fibers Production, Carbon Black Production, Chemical Manufacturing: Chromium Compounds, Flexible Polyurethane Foam Production and Fabrication, Lead Acid Battery Manufacturing, and Wood Preserving [EPA-HQ-AR-2006-0897; FRL-8330-1] (RIN: 2060-AN44) received June 19, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

2342. A letter from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Approval and Promulgation of Implementation Plans; North Carolina: Charlotte, Raleigh-Durham, and Winston-Salem Areas Second 10-Year Maintenance Plan for the Carbon Monoxide National Ambient Air Quality Standard; Clarification [EPA-R04-OAR-2005-NC-0002-200538C; FRL-8328-6] received June 19, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

2343. A letter from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's report on Audit Policy: Frequently Asked Questions for 2007; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

2344. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting a copy of D.C. ACT 17-61, ''Cigarette Stamp Clarification Temporary Act of 2007,'' pursuant to D.C. Code section 1-233(c)(1); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

2345. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting a copy of D.C. ACT 17-62, ''District of Columbia School Reform Property Disposition Clarification Temporary Amendment Act of 2007,'' pursuant to D.C. Code section 1-233(c)(1); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

2346. A letter from the Clerk of the House of Representatives, transmitting the annual compilation of personal financial disclosure statements and amendments thereto filed with the Clerk of the House of Representatives, pursuant to rule XXVI, clause 1, of the House Rules; (H. Doc. No. —43); to the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct and ordered to be printed.

2347. A letter from the Fiscal Assistant Secretary, Department of the Treasury, transmitting the Department's March 2007 ''Treasury Bulletin,'' pursuant to 26 U.S.C. 9602(a); jointly to the Committees on Ways and Means, Transportation and Infrastructure, Natural Resources, Energy and Commerce, Education and Labor, and Agriculture.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XIII, reports of committees were delivered to the Clerk for printing and reference to the proper calendar, as follows:

Mr. LANTOS: Committee on Foreign Affairs. H.R. 2420. A bill to declare United States policy on international climate cooperation, to authorize assistance to promote clean and efficient energy technologies