CONCERNING THE APPROPRIATE PLACEMENT OF RESPONSIBILITY REGARDING THE ATTACK ON KHOBAR BARRACKS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina [Mr. HEFNER] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HEFNER. Mr. Speaker, I have served on the Subcommittee on National Security of the Committee on Appropriations. We seem to have gotten in a mode here to where we want to take the House floor and we want to blame the President for everything that happens all across the country.

I just want to bring back something that happened a few years ago when Ronald Reagan was President of the United States, and we lost 240 men in their sleep in Lebanon. We were in real secret negotiations and hearings upstairs in this Capitol, it was so secret. We had Navy people there, and we had these people, they had been informed there were three pickup loads of explosives in the area, and nobody acted on that. We did not blame President Reagan for being derelict of duty in that, because that was in Lebanon. We lost 240 Marines in Lebanon.

Mr. Speaker, it just seems that everybody is in the mood here, anything that happens in the world is a problem of the President of the United States. Mr. Speaker, down here in the well yesterday, one day last week, the gentleman from Pennsylvania said if we lose one person, if we lose one person in Iraq, we are going to hold the President of the United States to blame for losing that one person. Mr. Speaker, to me this is going a little bit far.

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. HEFNER. I yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague.

First of all, we did not mention the President today. We mentioned a hearing with the Secretary of Defense, and the fact that we do want to find out, as the Secretary has said, who was responsible.

What we are saying is we do not just want to go from the middle down, we want everyone in the chain of command to be looked at. In terms of what happened with President Reagan, I was not here then, so I cannot speak about what you all did when President Reagan was President.

Mr. HEFNER. Let me tell my colleague what we did. When the hearings got real tight, heads were going to roll, guess what we did? We invaded Grenada. All the focus of the hearings went to the invasion of Grenada. We did not hear any more into the investigation of the people who were derelict in Lebanon.

It seems to me when we are kind of getting in the area of politics where elections are coming up, that it is in vogue here to blame the administration or the Secretary for everything that happens on somebody else's foreign soil. We cannot tell the Saudis, they tell us to some extent, because if you remember, when we were trying to keep the Persian Gulf open a few years ago they would not even let us fuel our ships and planes there. The same for Kuwait.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. HEFNER. I yield to the gentleman from California.

Mr. HUNTER. I thank the gentleman for yielding, Mr. Speaker.

Let me just tell my friend, as a guy who went over to Lebanon shortly before the bombing and who stayed to work with Colonel Garrity, because I thought there were security problems, our problem is this, and not in terms of assigning blame, but you have two bombings. We see that truck bombs are the weapon of choice in the Middle East for terrorists. We had the Riyahd bombing 6 months ago. That showed us where we had public areas, public drive areas near troop concentrations, we were in danger of being hurt.

If this hearing today made people upset, if we got after people and we embarrassed them or made them feel uneasy, if that results in the Pentagon going back and saying, we will not have a troop concentration in the Middle East that is within 85 feet of a public road, then that is good.

Mr. HEFNER. Mr. Speaker, I take back my time.

I am not questioning the fact we need to have hearings, but it seems to me we oversimplify when we say we are going to decide right here what is going to be the policy of the Saudis as far as allowing us to do things for the protection of our troops. To me this goes just beyond where foreign policy ought to end.

Everybody, I do not know of any person in this building that does not want to support our troops and see that they are not put in harm's way. But I just wanted to remind the Members that there was not a hue and outcry in this body when 240 of our fine Marines were killed in their sleep. And we did not personally hold President Reagan, as we should not have done, we did not personally hold him responsible for the deaths of these fine young men.

In this well the other day, the gentleman from Pennsylvania said, if we lose one person, we are going to hold the President of the United States, we are going to hold him personally to blame for losing these lives.

BIPARTISAN PROGRESS ON THE USE OF FIREARMS IN LAW ENFORCEMENT

AMERICA'S PRESENCE IN THE MIDDLE EAST

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Colorado [Mrs. SCHROEDER] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. SCHROEDER. Mr. Speaker, as we can see, nerves are taut here. One of the things I would just like to put that into context about is I have always thought it was a shame that we had not done more on energy independence so we did not have to be in the Gulf anyway.

One of the problems we have is we are not defending great democracies. I have been very upset about how the Saudis treat our women in the military. They cannot drive, they cannot do this, they cannot do that. I think it is kind of ridiculous that when you are there to protect them, they then make it very difficult and put all sorts of restrictions on. Exactly the same thing had happened in Lebanon. I remember visiting Lebanon as a young member of the Committee on Armed Services, and saying this is an absolute nightmare. They said, this is the only place they will let us be.

That is one of the reasons I get so frustrated about burden-sharing. I keep figuring if we are there to help, we ought to be able to use our best military judgment and not have them say, no, no, we want you just over the horizon. We want you here to help, but we do not want you to be seen, and we do not want women out, or we do not want this or that.

Really, Mr. Speaker, what I came to talk about was something that we did today, I did today with the gentleman from New Mexico, Mr. STEVE SCHIFF. Mr. SCHIFF and I are probably about as far apart as you can be when you come to the issues of firearms. Yet today we had a joint press conference, because we do agree on one thing. I wish we could see more bipartisan types of progress such as this.

The gentleman from New Mexico [Mr. SCHIFF] and I have been working for the last 3 years trying to get money from the Defense Department to transfer it over so we could use it to better the world of law enforcement, to bring that up to speed. Today we had the people from Colt Manufacturing showing a prototype safe gun that was absolutely exciting, because it went from being a glint in our eye to a real thing, a real gun that people could see.

What does this gun do? Guess what, it only works for the owner. When you look at the numbers of law enforcement officers every year that are killed by their own gun, not to mention people who are guards in jail or guarding prisoners or on our border, we have all sorts of people. One of the major fears is your gun is stolen and used to kill you.

This gun would end that fear once and for all, because, as we demonstrated today, it would only go off for the owner. The technology is here and the gun was there, and we could show it. I think that is the type of thing I would hope Republicans and Democrats would work together on, so we could fight crime not only by beating our chest and saying who is the toughest, who is the meanest, who is the gruffest, but also who is the smartest. We have not fought crime as smartly as we should.

When you look at this gun and you look at the very high percentage of

crimes committed with stolen weapons, all of that would go away, because if everybody had this type of weapon, you could steal it, but so what? It would be like a rock, it would not do you any good.

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The tremendous number of gun accidents in the home with children, or with despondent teens or whatever finding the family gun, again, those would go away, because it would only work for the family member who was the owner. And, of course, the law enforcement thing was what we really, really put all of our force into.

So Sandia Labs, the National Institute of Justice, and law enforcement officers across the country have all been working to make sure that this gun is every bit as workable as the gun they have today. It cannot be some fancy-schmantsy thing that only works in a perfect climate, in a perfect temperature, with or without gloves, whatever.

This works all the way across the board. It works with a tiny little chip. I got to be ring bearer at this event. It could work with a ring. It can work with something in the watch. It can work with a chip in the hand. It can work any number of ways that sets this off, so that it would work in a certain radius around the person but be absolutely not able to be reprogrammed or worked by someone else unless they had mega, megacomputers that could rewrite the codes.

So my dream would be that we see more of these types of actions. Because while maybe many of the people who support me would like to see a gun-free world, and while many of the people who support the gentleman from New Mexico [Mr. SCHIFF] would like to have no restrictions, we know that there are going to be guns around and that law enforcement is going to need them. So why do we not use whatever we have got to make them as safe, as accident-free and as valueless if anyone steals them as possible. That is today what we did in the safe gun. I would hope we would see that as a model for future action.

MEDICARE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MCINNIS). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida [Mr. SCARBOROUGH] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SCARBOROUGH. Mr. Speaker, Medicare is bleeding to death. It is losing more money than it ever has before. In 1995 the President's Medicare trustees said that Medicare would be bankrupt by 2002. This year we hear that it is bleeding to death even faster and it is going to be bankrupt by 2000.

In 1993 President Clinton understood that fact and so he proposed that Medicare spending's rate of increase go to 6.9 percent. In 1995 we understood that, so we proposed a 7.1-percent increase. We were absolutely savaged by a minority that was so desperate to get back into control that the truth meant absolutely nothing and they shamelessly demagogued on this issue.

In fact, let me give you a few quotes, not from Republican publications but from publications that have consistently supported the Democratic Party. The Washington Post accused the Democratic minority of shameless demagoguery. Those are their words, not mine.

Mrs. SCHROEDER. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield for a parliamentary inquiry?

Mr. SCARBOROUGH. I do not yield.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman will not yield for that purpose. The gentleman may proceed.

Mrs. SCHROEDER. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. SCARBOROUGH. I yield to the gentlewoman from Colorado

Mrs. SCHROEDER. I was concerned about the words ''shameless demagoguery.'' I think those are words we could have taken down, and I do not really want to do that. But I think that is a very strong word.

Mr. SCARBOROUGH. Reclaiming my time, they are not my words, they are the words of the Washington Post. If you wish to try to take them down, you can, but I am not addressing one person, I am addressing what the Washington Post accused Democrats of doing. They accused them of shameless demagoguery.

An adviser to the President, Matthew Miller, wrote in the Washington Post and in the New Republican, ''The President has taken the low road on Medicare in such a way that only political pundits could call it standing tall.''

The New Republican, a traditionally liberal publication, said that ''The Democrats' demagoguery on Medicare is even worse than we suspected.''

Mr. Speaker, why do I bring this up? Nobody has talked about Medicare in a year. It is because they have been cowed down because they are afraid of hearing more lies in this Chamber. I bring it up because everybody on the Democratic side of the aisle recognizes, like everybody on the Republican side of the aisle, that Medicare is going broke and nobody is doing anything about it. Nobody. When we tried to do something last year, when the President tried to do something in 1993, they were attacked.

Now, I give you the past as prolog. David Broder had a column in the Washington Post this weekend talking to future chairmen if the Democrats were to take power. Let us hear what one such chairman said on Medicare, the same chairman-to-be who called us Nazis. You want to talk about taking down words. Called us Nazis for trying to save Medicare. And this is what he said about Medicare. His committee, and I will not give his name, whose committee has main jurisdiction said, ''The people who have made out best in the last 20 years are the old folks. They have their pensions, Social Security and health care. The explosion in these programs has to be dramatically reduced.''

Mr. Speaker, I harken back to the McCarthy hearings, when at the end of the McCarthy hearings in the dramatic conclusion, the question was asked, ''Have you no shame, sir? Have you no shame?''

I would recommend to any Democrat that comes into the well and stands behind this podium and attacks any efforts to curb spending in Medicare, we suggested 7.1 percent last year and your chairman knows what is going to happen to Medicare next year regardless of who is elected. We are going to have to save it. We cannot afford demagoguery. I have got a 93-year-old grandmother, I have got two parents that are eligible for it, and we have got to put the political gamesmanship behind us. What we have done now by irresponsible actions last year is we have cowed politicians in this election year from talking about it. Bob Dole does not talk about it, Bill Clinton does not talk about it, while Rome is burning. We have got to grow up.

EDUCATION IS THE BRIDGE TO THE FUTURE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maryland [Mr. HOYER] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, we do have to be real when we deal with financial questions, with investment questions, and what America is going to be like in the future.

President Clinton talked about a bridge to the future. Every one of my constituents believes that the bridge to the future is education. Almost every American believes that one of the reasons we have opportunity in America is because we have educational access for every American.

This year, however, when we passed the Labor-HHS-Education appropriation bill out of the House, we cut education very substantially. Democrats wanted to add education funds at the subcommittee makeup. I offered an amendment to add $2.1 billion so that we would not lose Head Start slots, we would not lose Chapter 1 slots, we would not lose Goals 2000 dollars for investment in education.

Today there was an article in the Post written by David Broder, one of Washington's most respected columnists and political observers. It is entitled, ''Empower Qualified Teachers.'' His point is that we are not spending sufficient sums on education.

I want to quickly add that I do not believe that money is the only answer or particularly the answer to solving the educational problems that confront our Nation. Nor, however, do I delude myself—nor should we delude the public—that not spending money, not paying teachers properly, not having Head Start slots, not having Chapter 1 slots,