

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

(Mr. PALLONE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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

(Mr. DEFAZIO addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

FOOD AID FOR AFGHANS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Georgia (Ms. MCKINNEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. MCKINNEY. Mr. Speaker, I know the American people want to help the suffering people of Afghanistan. And I am sorry to say that we already stand condemned by *Medecins Sans Frontieres* for conducting nothing more than a propaganda campaign regarding our food drops.

Our brave young men and women are risking their lives to deliver this food, and how will we be judged, however, by this latest blunder?

I ask my colleagues to take a look at this object and this object. To more than just a casual observer, they might even get mistaken for the same thing. And that is what has got the U.S. military quaking in their boots. Can one imagine the horror if this object, a cluster bomb, gets mistaken for this object, a food packet? One is life and the other one is death. The squarish one is the food. The roundish one is a cluster bomb. That is what the poor starving people of Afghanistan must now contend with.

The U.S. military is dropping little notes to inform people not to pick up this one, the cluster bomb, thinking it is food because if they pick up this one, which is the wrong one, they will get blown to smithereens.

Is it not bad enough that our military is dropping cluster bombs on Afghanistan anyway? Well, it is really bad because in the war in Kosovo, then-Major General Ryan refused to allow cluster bombs to be dropped because of the civilian deaths associated with cluster bombs, especially the children. But now our Air Force Chief of Staff Ryan refuses to issue such a directive, it appears, as the U.S. comes under fire from humanitarian organizations around the world for dropping cluster bombs on the people of Afghanistan.

I have written a letter to our President asking that we please refrain from using cluster bombs. But a funny thing about cluster bombs. They have little bomblets that look like things; and so when kids see them, they think they are a toy or something.

Now, Afghanistan already has 10 million landmines, and the unexploded

bomblets from the cluster bombs add to that number. So now if the food looks like this object, what will hungry children do? But if the food looks like this object and the bombs look like this object, what would any hungry person do? The military bets that they are going to try to find something to eat. And so the Pentagon is concerned that people who are hungry for food that looks like this object will confuse it with bomblets that look like this object. The Pentagon is now worried that hungry Afghan people will try to eat the bombs thinking that it is American food.

So the Pentagon has sent messages to the Afghan people. One message says, "As you may have heard, the Partnership of Nations is dropping yellow humanitarian daily rations. Although it is unlikely, it is possible that not every bomb will explode on impact. These bombs are a yellow color and are can-shaped."

Another Pentagon message is more to the point. It says, "Please, please exercise caution when approaching yellow unidentified objects in areas that have been recently bombed."

Mr. Speaker, not only do innocent Afghans have to worry about the Taliban, not only do they have to worry about landmines left over from the last war, not only do they have to worry about starving to death and the approaching winter, now they have to worry about bombs that look like food. I think I have heard it all now, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. NORTON addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

BIOTERRORIST ATTACKS AND ANTIBIOTICS

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

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, we in Congress cannot go home to our districts and say we have taken the steps necessary to prepare for future bioterrorist attacks unless and until we confront the issue of antibiotic resistance. The links between antibiotic resistance and bioterrorism are clear. Antibiotic resistant strains of anthrax and other microbes are among the most lethal of biological weapons, and they are a reality. There are published reports of an anthrax strain engineered by Russian scientists to resist the penicillin and tetracycline classes of antibiotics. We can only assume that anthrax and other lethal agents will be engineered to resist new antibiotics like Cipro.

Antibiotic resistance is significant in other important ways. Overuse and

misuse of antibiotics will render most microbes resistant to our current stockpile of drugs, potentially leaving the Nation poorly prepared in the event of biological attacks. To some extent this is a vicious cycle. Bioterrorist threats can lead to overuse of current antibiotics, which in turn render these antibiotics less effective against the lethal agents used in bioterrorism.

□ 1915

Look at Cipro, for example. Widespread use of Cipro, a broad-spectrum antibiotic, would kill bacteria that are susceptible to Cipro. The bacteria that are not killed will be those that evolve resistance to Cipro. Those Cipro resistant bacteria then flourish unchecked unless an even stronger antibiotic is available to kill them.

Many bacteria that cause severe human illness are already resistant to older antibiotics like penicillin. That is one reason the drug of choice is often one of the newer antibiotics like Cipro. If the U.S. and the rest of the world begin using Cipro indiscriminately, then Cipro, that antibiotic, will lose its effectiveness also.

To adequately prepare for a terrorist attack, State and local health departments must be equipped to rapidly identify and respond to antibiotic resistant strains of anthrax and other lethal agents. And to ensure the continued efficacy of our antibiotic stockpile, we must isolate emerging antibiotic resistant pathogens, track antibiotic overuse and misuse, and monitor the effectiveness of existing treatments over time.

Surveillance provides the data needed to prioritize the research and the development of new antibiotic treatments. Drug resistant pathogens are a growing threat to each of us as Americans. Examples of important microbes that are rapidly developing resistance to available antimicrobials include the bacteria that cause ear infections, that cause pneumonia, that cause meningitis, and skin and bone and lung and blood stream infections. Importantly, this list also includes food borne infections like salmonella.

The Nation's food supply has been identified as a potential vehicle for future bioterrorist attacks. Experts across the public health spectrum have testified to the seriousness of antibiotic resistance. Congress should respond appropriately and quickly to these warnings before the threat of what could become what is.

Under last year's Public Health Threats and Emergencies Act sponsored by my colleagues, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. BURR) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. STUPAK), Congress authorized a grant program that equips State and local health departments to identify and to track antibiotic resistance. My friend, the gentleman from New York (Mr. BOEHLERT), and I are requesting that the Committee on Appropriations include at least \$50 million for this grant

program in the Homeland Security supplemental appropriations bill, which this body will take up later this week.

I urge Members on both sides of the aisle to weigh in on this issue. Let the appropriators know that funding this is absolutely critical to our Nation. We must help State and local health authorities and State and local health agencies combat antibiotic resistance. Our ability to fight bioterrorism absolutely depends on it.

AIRLINE SECURITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PLATTS). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. INSLEE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, some of us have come to the House floor tonight on the subject we have been speaking on for several weeks now, which is the importance of passing not just a sham airline security bill but a real solid, responsible, certain airline security bill that will accomplish what the American people need, which is to have full confidence that their airlines are safe.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, the bill that is going to be introduced tomorrow or the next day falls short in several very, very important respects. We have had a long history in the last several decades of having failures in airline security which manifested themselves on September 11. We think the U.S. House cannot miss this opportunity tomorrow or Thursday to in fact plug not just some, and not just the easy holes to plug in airline security, but the ones that are meaningful, and to, in fact, plug all the holes in the net we have in order to catch terrorist activity. And we want to talk about some of those tonight.

Let me start with one that in my view is the most glaring hole in our airline security system today, and that is the stunning fact that I learned about 3 weeks ago. When I heard this I just about fell out of my chair. I was receiving a security briefing at a major airport in the western United States and we were talking about all the recent efforts and changes to try to make sure passengers do not bring sharp objects into the passenger compartment of the airplanes. I started asking questions about the checked baggage that goes into the belly of an airplane, and I asked where the equipment was to screen the baggage that goes into the belly of an airplane to make sure nobody put a bomb on it. The people I was talking to had this kind of sheepish look on their faces and they said, well, we do not do that all the time. I thought they were sort of joking. But it turns out they were not.

What I came to find out is that in airports across this country 90 to 95 percent of all the bags that go into the belly of an airplane have zero screening for explosive devices, and I mean zero screening. So nine out of 10 bags that

go in the belly of an airplane that we are flying on with our loved ones are not screened for any explosive devices. That is a sad, pathetic state of affairs that this House needs to change this week with no ifs, ands or buts.

Now, the problem, Mr. Speaker, is that although we have technology to do this, and the good news is we have technology that screens for explosive devices very thoroughly, the fact of the matter is that the bill that the majority party is proposing for this week does not have a certain requirement in it that these bags be checked by a certain date. That is sad, and that needs to change.

We believe that the U.S. House needs to pass a law that requires 100 percent of all the bags that go into the belly of an airplane be screened for an explosive device with the best technology that we have. And we have some darned good technology. We have machines today that have been in use for several years, if the airline companies will turn them on anyway, that can find explosives with a high degree of probability. We need to make sure more of those machines are purchased. We need to require those to be turned on and put them in series so we can get in our airplanes in a timely fashion without bombs being in the baggage compartments.

Tomorrow, Mr. Speaker, we will be offering amendments, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. STRICKLAND), myself, and the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS), a Republican, who has been working on legislation to require that 100 percent of these bags be screened. We are very hopeful that the majority party will allow our amendment to be considered on the floor of the House. It would be a shame if politics keeps this amendment from being considered. We are very hopeful that we can have a solid bipartisan vote in this Chamber to make sure all these bags get checked.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. STRICKLAND), who has been a great leader in advancing this issue.

Mr. STRICKLAND. I thank the gentleman from Washington State for yielding to me.

I think it is important for people to understand why we have not been able to bring a bill to the floor thus far, and why it may be that our amendment to require that all bags be checked will not even get a vote on this floor. I think the American people sometimes do not fully understand that there are certain rules and procedures that govern what happens in this House, and those rules and procedures are dominated by the majority party. And especially in terms of the amendment that we are trying to get brought to this floor, that is determined really by the Committee on Rules.

We were just upstairs not more than 10 minutes ago asking the Committee on Rules if we could bring our amendment to the floor so that here in this

Chamber, comprised of all the representatives of the people, 435 of us from across this great United States, that at least we would have an opportunity to cast a vote and to make a decision regarding this vital public safety matter.

It is, I think, true that most Americans, in the past at least, when they have gone and purchased a ticket for air travel and placed themselves and perhaps their families, their children even on an airplane were assuming that all the luggage that went into the belly of that plane had been properly screened for explosives. We now know that that just simply does not happen.

We found out many years ago, about 13 years ago, when the plane exploded over Lockerbie, Scotland, that a simple explosive device, perhaps placed in a suitcase, if it is loaded into the belly of an airplane, can literally destroy that airplane. So many lives were lost there. And the gentleman and I had an opportunity just 2 or 3 weeks ago to meet with two fathers who lost sons in that Lockerbie explosion. So this is something that is a matter of life and death.

As I just said to the Committee on Rules, what we decide on this issue may determine whether or not at some point in the future Americans will lose their lives. The American traveling public has a right to travel in conditions that are as safe as we can make them. And if we pass an airline security bill this week that omits this vital loophole, then the American public will not be as safe as they have a right to be.

I would like to share just a few words from an editorial that appeared in the Columbus Dispatch, the major newspaper in Columbus, Ohio, which is the capital of the great State of Ohio, and this editorial pointed out the fact that the Department of Transportation's Inspector General recently reported that at 7 of the Nation's 20 highest risk airports there was no scanning of checked baggage.

The editorial goes ahead to point out that some time ago \$441 million were used to buy 164 of these high-tech bomb detection machines that were to be used in 50 of the most busy airports in our country. The editorial then points out that after this huge expenditure of millions and millions of dollars, and the actual purchasing of these machines, that they were not used. They were just left in warehouses gathering dust.

So what our amendment does, it has a specific time line that will require that this be done. And unless there is a legislative requirement that it be done in a reasonable period of time, a date certain, I fear that it will never happen, and that at some point in the future we will lose an airplane needlessly because we have failed to take this action.

□ 1930

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, I think that it is a necessity of the U.S. House