

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

of Representatives to have a date certain to do this by. It is made obvious by a couple of facts. The gentleman made reference to the Lockerbie bombing where there were hundreds of young people who were on that plane, and their families have now been working for 13 years to get the Federal Aviation Administration to move to require screening of checked baggage. Despite 13 years of advocacy with this agency, this agency has done nothing except give wish lists which they may do some day. Some day is just not good enough.

It would be a sad failure if this House passed something without some timeline when we have this kind of experience of agency failure over this long period of time.

Another example, the majority party's bill has language, and it is good rhetoric that rhetorically says these bags will be screened, I guess someday, we do not know when. But look what happened when we did similar language in 1995 when this House essentially directed the FAA to adopt regulations that would improve the screening and certification of the people who do the passenger screening. Six years later, the FAA had still not improved the certification and training of the folks who are supposed to keep weapons off airplanes.

If the FAA takes 6 years to try to figure out a regulation to try to figure how to keep people from bringing knives or box cutters on airplanes, do we think that this language in this bill is going to get them to get these machines in airports? We do not think so. I do not have confidence in that. The American people will not have confidence in that.

I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. STRICKLAND. Mr. Speaker, there are those who say we cannot do that in a timely manner. But the fact is that we can do what we choose to do. If we think that it is important enough to do, we will see that it is done. This country is a technological giant. There is practically nothing we cannot do once we set our minds to it. To imply that we cannot build machines fast enough or modify the airports in a timely manner is simply underestimating the ability of the American people.

This is a puzzling issue because it is something that nearly everyone says we need to do. Yet there is a lack of will to actually proceed to do it.

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, I disagree a little bit with the gentleman who says we are technological giants. I have a door knob on my house that I cannot get to work; but there are others who have developed this equipment which is incredibly accurate. We do not have a war mobilization plan from the U.S. Congress. When the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor and President Roosevelt gave his speech from this Chamber, we immediately went on a wartime industrial mobilization process. Nobody said

we cannot build the Pentagon in 12 months, we cannot do that. The Pentagon was built from conception to completion in 12 months.

When they needed big bombers, they built 12,000, maybe 14,000, I would need to check the numbers, B-24 complex bombers, 4-engine bombers, because they said we are going to do it.

Now the House has to get up on its hind legs and say we are going to build 2,000 of those machines by a time certain. If we give an agency language as soon as we get around to it, I am not sure that it is going to be in this millennium.

Mr. STRICKLAND. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will yield, we are going to pass a bill this week, and it is going to have this fairly meaningless language in it; and then we are going to tell people that we have solved the problem. The American people are going to be led to believe that we have done everything we can to make their traveling on airplanes as safe as possible, and it simply will not be true. We need to be specific. We need to have a mandate and a time certain.

If I can share a few other thoughts from this Columbus Dispatch editorial, it points out that the security procedures commonly in place have focused nearly entirely on the contents of carry-on baggage, and the screening for checked luggage is through a series of questions designed to reveal whether people had packed their own bags and kept them in sight and planned to board the plane for which they were ticketed.

These measures were imposed after the Lockerbie explosion, and they were based on the theory that no one would board a plane that was going to blow up because the theory was a person would be highly unlikely to blow up a plane and kill themselves. But on September 11 we learned something. We learned that there are terrorists, fanatical terrorists, who not only are willing to die, but seemingly are anxious to die for what they believe in.

We can no longer use this casual method of asking have you packed your own bag and has it been in your sight. We need to have the technology that will make it possible to screen for explosives. Some of these explosives are so powerful that a portion the size of a bar of soap can do incredible damage. We cannot afford to allow this to continue as it has.

As I said to my colleague from Washington State, we are going to be debating these matters here in the House of Representatives, and there are going to be some who are going to contend that this language, almost meaningless language, is going to provide protection to the American people. If that is all we get in this bill, it is going to be a real failure, in my judgment.

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, if the majority party does not allow a vote on this amendment, we will have spent all of this energy debating who the employees will be doing the screening, and

there will be substantial debate. There is a difference between the parties largely on that issue. Democrats believe there should be Federal responsibility like border guards, FBI agents, marshals, that these ought to be Federal employees because that is the safest way to go.

The majority has an ideological hang-up, and there will be debate. To not have a debate on who will take nail clippers away from passengers, and not have a specific promise to the American people that by a date certain the bags are screened to determine that the bags are not packed with 30 pounds of C-4 high explosives, would be a criminally negligent act by this House.

We are concerned and do not think that this ideological inhibition that my friends in the majority leadership have against Federal employees should stymie our ability to make a commitment to the American people that their bags are not going to have bombs in them.

I have good friends on the Republican side of the aisle who back this provision. The gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS) has been a leader on campaign reform issues and has supported this. We have quite a number of other Republicans who are supporting this. We believe if we have a vote on this floor, we will have good bipartisan support for this provision.

Mr. Speaker, the problem is if the majority leadership has a stranglehold on the rules and does not allow a vote, we are not going to have this bipartisan solution adopted. We urge all Members to see that the majority party allows this to the floor for a vote. Then we can have the other vote about who these parties should be.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. STRICKLAND. Mr. Speaker, I was in Athens, Ohio, this past weekend; and I had a discussion with a young man who told me he had planned a trip to Florida for himself, his wife and children; and he said I am not flying. I have gone to the airlines and asked for my ticket money back. They will not return my ticket money, but they have told him that he can use his ticket during the next 12 months. He said, I hope after a few months I will feel safe enough to use those tickets.

We want the airlines to survive and prosper, and we hear talk encouraging the American people to go back to normal living and carry on their lives as they did prior to September 11, to buy goods, to enjoy themselves in social settings and the like. We also want them to fly.

Congress gave the airline industry a \$15 billion bailout less than a month ago because we were afraid the airline industry would not survive in this country without that kind of governmental assistance. I opposed that bill at the time; but many, many of my friends in this Chamber thought it was the right thing to do and voted for it.

My feeling is the best way to get airlines healthy in an economic sense is

to encourage people to fly. How can we encourage people to fly if flying is not as safe as it ought to be or could be? I want to be able to say to that young man in Athens, Ohio, and to all of my constituents, we have taken action in the House of Representatives that will keep you as safe as it is possible for you to be when you choose to use air travel.

Once we do that, then I think the American people will return to the airports and they will take their vacations and business trips.

I talked to another individual today who was in Florida, and he was coming back to Washington and I asked him how he was getting back here and he said, I am driving. Ordinarily this individual would fly, but he still does not feel comfortable in flying. We need to take this action. If we do, I believe the American people will return to life as they normally lived it prior to September 11.

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comment about confidence in the American people. The reason this has not happened to date is some folks have not wanted to make the investment to buy these machines or to take the trouble to install them. I cannot think of a more penny-wise and pound-foolish approach when it comes to safety. If we lose another plane, nobody is going to be getting on these airplanes. We are already down significantly.

As a person who represents thousands of Boeing workers in the Seattle area, we have had 12,000 people laid off this year because of the drop of people getting on airplanes. The U.S. economy cannot withstand the devastation that will occur if we lose another airplane. As far as the expenses, it will cost about \$2 billion to install these measures. If we put it in context, it is \$2 per ticket for 1 year. I am convinced that people think it is worth \$2 a ticket to make sure there is not a bomb in the airplane. That is for 1 year. It is a one-time investment.

Our proposal has suggested that we simply appropriate funds from the general fund to make this investment. The other Chamber has made a proposal with a surcharge of \$2 per ticket to assist in security. We think that it is just as well to take it out of the general fund. However it is financed, people who get on airplanes, if we poll them, do passengers want this \$2 spent by somebody, they are going to say "yes" even if it is them. It is worth \$2 to get over this known threat.

I am hopeful that the majority party will hear our request to allow a bipartisan consensus to develop; but I think we need to describe why this has not happened to date. The reason it has not happened to date is that there has been this ideological resistance to the idea of having the Federal Government act to take care of the citizens it is supposed to protect.

The first duty of government is to protect the physical security and safety of its citizens. That is the first duty

of government. Frankly, government has not done as good a job as it should in this regard. Our government has engaged in an experiment in airline safety in the last 10 years. That experiment involved letting out to the low bidder the contracting out of the employees to screen passengers before they get on airplanes.

□ 1945

We had that experiment and it was a grand failure on September 11, because we had multiple known failures of that system. We had these companies hiring ex-felons. We had these companies hiring people that had been fired at other places. We would have companies that did not screen their own employees for who their identity is. We have had test after test after test where we had these employees that were so poorly paid and so poorly trained and totally noncertified that at Dulles International Airport when they tried to get 20 weapons through out of 20, they got seven weapons through this alleged screening-porous system. So that was an experiment that failed.

We should not be having this theoretical argument because that experiment failed. Having private contractors with government supervision is a known recipe for disaster. We need to have a federalized system of Federal employees who the Federal Government certifies, trains and employs to give passengers what they deserve which is a high level of confidence. To me, I have to tell you, if you ask people who is more important to your personal security, whose eyes and ears and judgment is more important to your personal security, a border guard or a screener at an airport check-in counter, I have got to believe the check-in counter is at least and I think more important to our physical personal safety. We make sure that the people who do the border guards are Federal employees so we can make sure that they hew to the standards that we set. But we do not do that for the people who your personal safety is in their hands when you get onto an airplane.

I heard a flight attendant sort of ask a good question. She says Members of Congress have Federal employees protect their personal security, our police force here in the U.S. Capitol. We insist that we have government employees protect our personal security. But for the flying public, we let the lowest-priced, minimum wage, untrained, uncertified ex-felon get that job as long as a contractor can swing some low-ball deal. That is not the way we can do business anymore. So we are going to insist on having Federal employees do this work.

Mr. STRICKLAND. I would like to share an incident that happened with me at Dulles International Airport just within the last 2 weeks. I think it illustrates the fact that our current procedures are woefully inadequate and even dangerous. I went to the airport early

one morning, I had a 7:20 flight so I arrived well before that time. I asked to have my bag checked. The person there at the ticket counter gave me my seat assignment and handed the ticket back to me. Then she said, Sir, you've been selected at random to have your bags further screened. They were screening them for possible explosive devices. Then she said to me, I would like for you to take your bag, walk down the corridor here until you come to the crossover, turn to the left, go to the next major corridor, turn to the left and you will see the machine where they are doing the screening over at your right.

I said to her, With all due respect to whoever is responsible for this process, what makes you think that if I've got an explosive device in that bag that I am going to voluntarily, without being escorted or without being observed, carry it over there and ask someone to screen it for explosives? It just does not make sense.

The fact is that if I had had an explosive device in that bag, I could have just simply left the airport and come back later in the day at a time when it was highly unlikely that I would be selected a second time at random to have that bag checked. But I think it points out a larger problem. I have been told that at Dulles, for example, 80 percent of the people who provide the screening are low-paid individuals with minimal training and some 80 percent are non-citizens. It is difficult to do adequate background checks and the like when you have those circumstances prevail.

I would like to share something that was written in the Dallas Morning News just a few days ago regarding this matter. I quote from this Dallas Morning News story:

We normally favor private sector responses, but it was troubling to hear from the Justice Department last week that a major handler of security in the U.S. airports had hired screeners who had criminal backgrounds and drug problems and who had lied about their histories. That record does not bode well for a dual system of private employees and Federal standards. It's better to think of airline screeners as important as border guards or custom agents, all of whom work for the government. There is a time for ideological arguments, but there is also a time when legislators need to compromise. We have reached that moment. The Nation needs better airport security and the House should not stand in its way.

That, I think, is a very powerful statement from the Dallas newspaper, indicating that we need to move to have a system of screeners and employees that are answerable to Uncle Sam. My friend from Washington State said that we would not tolerate private employees guarding this wonderful Capitol building or providing security for those of us who are Members of the House of Representatives or the Senate of the United States. We want professional law enforcement, public law enforcement officials doing that. There should be no less concern for the traveling American public. They also deserve to have security personnel who

are answerable to Uncle Sam, who are sworn, who are well-trained, who are dedicated to the public protection. Anything less than that will continue to put the traveling public at risk.

Mr. INSLEE. I appreciate that. I think you have to ask why there is such resistance to this idea. It is actually surprising to me. You have to ask, do the folks in the majority party who refuse to accept this idea, is it because they distrust the Capitol Police because they are employees of Uncle Sam? Is it because they distrust our border guards because they are employees of Uncle Sam rather than working for a private contractor? Do they distrust firefighters because they are governmental employees rather than working for private enterprise? I think the answer is no. My friends in the majority party would say, No, we trust firefighters. We trust our border guards. We trust our FBI agents. We trust our Capitol Police who work for Uncle Sam. It is not a lack of trust. And if you ask them what is it, then, they would say, I believe, in all sincerity, we just don't like government doing things. I think that is the bottom line. There is an ideological inhibition of some of our friends across the aisle who have refused to accept the proposition that there are times when Uncle Sam has to come to the aid of its citizens. And when you are under a threat from terrorists who are running airplanes into large buildings and somebody who is putting anthrax in our mail, it is time to accept the proposition that Uncle Sam needs to come to the physical assistance of its citizens. We hope that enough of our friends across the aisle forget the ideological debating points. This is not a Harvard debate. This is an issue of life and death, whether we are going to save people or not. And so we hope that this practical, common-sense attitude allows us to develop a bipartisan consensus here and for a moment we can put away these ideological, theoretical things, arguments we used to have in college at midnight. This is real life.

Mr. STRICKLAND. I have heard some of the leaders on the other side of the aisle say that they did not want the federalization of these employees because they would join unions. But I think it is appropriate for us to recall that the young firefighters who gave their lives in the trade towers in New York City were, by and large, members of a union, that the police officers that sacrificed their lives in service on that terrible day of September 11, they were members of unions. I do not think we should fight this battle on the basis of whether or not the employees would be able to join a union or not join a union. What we want are people who are responsible to the government, to the Federal Government, to provide the kind of protection that the American people need and deserve. I doubt very seriously that if the firemen and the police officers in New York City were paid little more than minimum wage,

were private contractors, that they would have been willing to do what those brave men and women did on September 11 in New York City. We do not privatize our FBI, we do not privatize our customs agents, we do not privatize our border patrol folks. We do not privatize the Capitol Police that protect this wonderful Capitol and provide protections for Members of the U.S. Senate and Members of the United States House of Representatives. They are not privatized. Why should the people who provide the protection for our citizens who go to airports and get on airplanes have to suffer under the protection of lowly paid individuals who are poorly trained and who cannot, even though they try, under those circumstances, they cannot provide the depth and the quality of protection that the traveling public deserves?

Mr. INSLEE. I think that is a very good point, that the people who are working at these gates now, we are not blaming them. They are working hard. But they are given maybe minimum wage. They are given maybe a few hours of instruction. As a result of their poor treatment, some of these airports have a 300 to 400 percent turnover rate. And as long as you are having a low bid situation, you can expect those conditions to prevail.

Now, I think we should talk a little bit about why this system has failed. Why has this experiment of having private contractors provide this service failed? We had FAA supervision of them. This is what our friends across the aisle are proposing. Private contractors hire the people, the FAA has supervision. That is exactly what we had in the last 10 years. The FAA has drawn up these rules for these contractors to follow. So you have to ask yourself, why has this been such a miserable failure? The sad fact is, because the contractors and the airlines they serve have been successful with their armies of lobbyists who do a good job who have come up here and have blocked, in Congress and in the FAA, any rules or statutes to significantly increase the professionalism of this workforce, because it would cost another dollar. And they have been successful in strangling any progress in our political system to do this. It is clear to me that until that stranglehold is broken, we are not going to get to a professional law enforcement oriented screening system in this country. That is why it is important to us to move in this direction.

I would like to now yield if I could to my good friend the gentlewoman from Ohio (Mrs. JONES), the great prosecutor who knows something about law enforcement.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. I would like to thank my colleague the gentleman from Washington (Mr. INSLEE), the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. STRICKLAND), and I see seated here with me also the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR).

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the federalization of airline security per-

sonnel. Yesterday in the City of Cleveland, I joined with many other unions who represent the workers at the airport in support of airline security and a safety net for the workers of the airlines. I have a personal interest in this in light of the fact that my father, Andrew Tubbs, worked for United Airlines some 38 years as a sky cap. My sister, Mattie Still, worked for United Airlines some 30 years as a CTR operator. My brother-in-law, Robert Still, worked as a sky cap in California for some 30 years. And currently my niece, Lorri Still, is a flight attendant with United Airlines. So the workers of the airlines industry are very, very important and personal to me.

Yesterday, in the City of Cleveland we stood and said to the Congress, hurry up. Time is a-wasting. We need to enact legislation that will federalize the airline security personnel. We need to elevate the position of airline security to the level of those of law enforcement, to the firefighters, to the Cleveland police officers, police officers across this country, to the Federal marshals, to the Capitol Hill police. That way they will get the type of training and professionalism that they need in the job.

I want to say to the American public, get back on the airplanes like we are required to do. I want to say, have trust in what happens. But until we federalize airline security, that in fact is not going to happen.

□ 2000

I heard others say that they are worried about people joining unions. I wish my father had had a union. He used to tell me stories about the skycaps: no unions, no dollars for health care, no dollars for sick leave. And what they used to do, these guys used to pass the hat, so when they got tips on any evening, they used to divide those tips up among the folks that were there and put money in for those who were not there, so that those guys still had tips, as though they were working every day.

Why should workers have to do that? The company should provide that type of security. Why should we think that this job is any less honorable than any other job?

As I go back through the airport every weekend into the city of Cleveland, those skycaps walk up and say, "Stephanie, are you trying to get money for me?" The people working at the desk say, "Stephanie, are you trying to get money for us? Are you trying to secure and make sure the jobs we do on a daily basis are secure?"

I have friends, and I think about these guys. My father is 81 years old, and I think about all the guys that used to work with him who are still around and they say, "What a great group of men we had." So if skycaps right now make \$2.88 an hour, imagine what they made back in the 1940s per hour to work and do the job.

So I am just standing here with my colleagues, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. INSLEE), the gentlewoman

from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR), the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. STRICKLAND), and all of us who believe in the importance of airline security, that it is time out to the Congress. Step up to the plate. Say to the American public that we are going to secure you. We are going to make sure when you get on that plane, things are safe. Maybe even in the legislation that we pass, we will require that every piece of luggage that gets on a plane has been screened in some fashion.

But if we can elevate the position of airline security to an honorable position, a professional position, all of us will be better off. I am so happy to join the gentleman from Washington (Mr. INSLEE) and all of the Members this evening as we talk about this important issue that is important to the security and safety of all of us here in the United States and those traveling through the United States.

Mr. INSLEE. I hope the gentlewoman will report to your former skycap father that he has got something to be proud about, sending you to us.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. I called him up and said, "Dad, turn it on. I am talking about you tonight."

Mr. INSLEE. I thank the gentlewoman very much.

I want to yield to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. STRICKLAND) for some closing comments. I intend to yield to the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) to finish the hour.

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

I would just like to close my remarks this evening by once again referring to the editorial in the Columbus Dispatch of October 16. The editorial ends with this question: Will there be no end to the revelations of how poorly the Federal Government, airport security workers and airlines have handled the job of protecting passengers? How many other rules are not being enforced, and how much evidence do House Republicans need to convince them that only a top-notch security force, paid by the taxpayers and not hired by the low bid contractors, will make the airways as safe as possible? A bill passed by the Senate and pending in the House would federalize airport security. The House should stop playing politics with this essential legislation and pass it.

I would just like to point out in closing that in the Senate, they voted 100 to zero to pass this vital legislation. We need to bring it to this floor, and we need to pass it this week. If we do not, the American people should hold us accountable.

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman.

I would like to yield to a person who is always a voice for common sense, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR).

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Washington (Mr. INSLEE) and the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. STRICKLAND) for bringing up

this very important subject at a time when the American people are expecting to hear from us, their representatives, and also our beloved colleague, the gentlewoman from Cleveland, Ohio (Mrs. JONES), whose family obviously has enormous experience in this area, merely to say thank you to all of you for highlighting this important issue to the American public, the issue of safety in the airline industry and how important it is and what common sense it makes to have a Federal position at our various airports around the country, Federal positions, Federal responsibilities, Federal training and a program of instruction and of career advancement, so we can get the very best type of training and trained individuals to serve in these critical positions now and into the future.

It would be so very easy for us to merely take the Senate bill and to pass it here; yet it has been held in abeyance now for several weeks. So there is not a commitment by the leadership of this institution to federalize these security positions.

All of us flew back here over the last 2 days. We know the people out there at the airports are doing the very best that they can. But, honestly, we need to have the same kind of professionalism that we have in our security services around this country at different levels.

I just wanted to thank these gentlemen for telling the American people that it is high time we took up the Senate bill and passed it here.

I know that the gentleman has time remaining, and I want to give him a chance to close.

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, just to make a closing comment, then I am going to yield to the Chair so the Chair can yield back to the gentlewoman for another subject. I wanted to thank the Members who have joined me this evening. This is the crunch time for the U.S. House. It has a duty. I certainly hope that we do our duty, which is to set a time-line to get every bag checked for explosive devices, that we have a professional force to do it. Heaven help us if we do not discharge that duty. I hope bipartisanship will actually blossom this week to get this job done.

Mr. Speaker, I yield the balance of my time to the Chair.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Mr. Monahan, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed with an amendment in which the concurrence of the House is requested, a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 2330. An act making appropriations for Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies programs for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2002, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the Senate insists upon its amendment to the bill (H.R. 2330) "An Act making ap-

propriations for Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies programs for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2002, and for other purposes," requests a conference with the House on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses thereon, and appoints Mr. KOHL, Mr. HARKIN, Mr. DORGAN, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. JOHNSON, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. BYRD, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. SPECTER, Mr. BOND, Mr. MCCONNELL, Mr. BURNS, Mr. CRAIG, and Mr. STEVENS, to be the conferees on the part of the Senate.

EXPLAINING THE CONTEXT FOR AMERICA'S CONFLICT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. OSBORNE). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 15 minutes as a further designee of the minority leader.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, as one Member, I feel a particular obligation at this time in our country's history to help provide information and insight to the American people, and indeed to the people around the world, who are looking to us for leadership and for an explanation of enduring freedom, the roots of the engagement in which we now find ourselves involved with a growing coalition around the world. From time to time I will be coming to the floor, as I did last week and now again, to talk about some of the events in past years that have created the context for the conflict in which we as a Nation have now been placed in dead center.

Last week we talked a bit about the economics of the Middle East and America's over-reliance on imported oil and the fact that each of the economies of the larger region in which this conflict is occurring make money primarily from oil, with Saudi Arabia being the largest supplier of petroleum to the United States.

In Toledo today, where I just flew from, gas prices are down to 99 cents to \$1.01 a gallon. Do not tell me there is no relationship between the desire of the oil-producing countries to have America win this battle and therefore to manipulate a bit on the spot market and the price of petroleum. I am sure Americans in the short term think that is probably a good thing, but in the long run what it does is it connects us to a very unstable part of the world.

Indeed, 52 percent of the petroleum that we consume is imported from Saudi Arabia, from Nigeria, from Venezuela, from Mexico. America now consumes three times more in imported petroleum than she did 20 years ago. Oil and our inability to make ourselves energy self-sufficient here at home, simply because we have not had the will, is our major strategic vulnerability; and again we are faced with major unrest in the Middle East, this time some of that being brought to our own shores.

I wanted to talk a bit tonight about a wonderful book that I read 15 years