

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

NO EXPRESSION OF SUPPORT IN CONGRESS FOR WAR IN IRAQ

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

Mr. FRANK. Mr. Speaker, along with a large majority of the House, I voted for a resolution that reiterated our opposition to the acquisition by Saddam Hussein of Iraq of weapons of mass destruction. But I am concerned that some might try, quite inaccurately, to take that large vote repeating our condemnation of Saddam Hussein and our insistence he comply with U.N. resolutions regarding these weapons, that some might mistake this as an expression of support for a war in Iraq.

First of all, we should be very clear: there is no legislation, no resolution that has passed this House, that expresses support for war in Iraq. The post-September 11 resolution was explicitly limited to involvement in the attack on the World Trade Center. And to date, no one has produced evidence, as reprehensible as Saddam Hussein is, as despicable as his regime, that he was in any significant way involved in that.

Many of us, in fact many of us who voted for the resolution, signed a letter to the President reiterating we do not believe it would be appropriate to commit America to a major military action in Iraq or anywhere else in the world without a congressional vote. And I would be, at this point, voting against that.

We did a very good job in Afghanistan. The American military made us proud. And, by the way, that is the American military that President Bush inherited from President Clinton. All during the campaign of 2000 candidates Bush and CHENEY denigrated the American military, claimed inaccurately that Clinton had somehow left it impotent. All of a sudden it got very good in a hurry, because that very military that President Bush inherited from President Clinton showed a great capacity in Afghanistan.

But as good as they were and as careful as they were, innocent lives were lost, property was destroyed, the economy, already in tough shape, was disrupted, food distribution was inhibited. We had a moral right and a moral obligation to go into Afghanistan. But having done that, having unleashed significant military power in that poor country, for good moral reasons, I think it is now an equal moral obligation to show that we can work just as hard to help rebuild the country, to help feed people, and to help reconstruct it.

In the first place, I would say this: until we have shown an equal ability

and commitment and dedication to giving the people of Afghanistan a better life, as we should, to helping them get rid of that terrible regime, then I do not think we have earned the right to go do that somewhere else.

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I do not think that we can simply go from country and oppose destruction, even when it is morally justified to go after some bad people, without living up to the second part that of commitment.

Secondly, an attack on Iraq, unlike the war in Afghanistan, would be almost universally opposed by a variety of others. The Bush administration has learned that going it alone is not the best strategy. I am glad the Bush administration has abandoned the kind of unilateralism that unfortunately marked its early months. But if we now attack Iraq, we would be back in that situation. In fact, any hope of further cooperation with Arab regimes in getting intelligence, in prosecuting terrorists and continuing to go after al Qaeda would be discouraged.

Mr. Speaker, I am no fan of the regime in Saudi Arabia which is lacking in so many respects; I have become increasingly disenchanted with Mubarak in Egypt, but they, at this point, seem to me better than what we would get as an alternative if we were to launch an attack on Iraq that could destabilize those countries. And as King Abdullah, the King of Jordan, in the tradition of his father, seems to be a responsible individual trying to do well, I do not want to see those efforts undercut.

So it would be counterproductive in the war against terrorism to go after Iraq. I would love to see Saddam Hussein out of power. He is a vicious and brutal man, but to attack him militarily at this point, engendering the opposition this would engender in the Muslim world, would be counterproductive to our fight against terrorism.

Indeed, as a strong supporter of the legitimate right of Israel for self defense, which is now under attack from the most irresponsible elements in the Arab world, people should understand, President Bush never said that he was for a Palestinian state until after September 11. The political need to show some connection to the Muslim world moved him in that direction. I fear greatly that an attack on Iraq, with all of the negative consequences that would have in the Muslim world would, in fact, lessen rather than strengthen America's support for Israel's legitimate needs. I fear there would be a tendency to trade-off a little bit of that support for Israel at a time of great crisis because of this.

Finally, they are not analogous. Not only do we not have Saddam Hussein not having attacked us the way the Afghan-supported Taliban allowed al Qaeda to do it, we do not have the same situation. There is no Northern Alliance. One of the things that helps

morally vindicate our effort in Afghanistan was the obvious joy of so many people in Afghanistan that we helped rid them of this barbarous repressive regime.

Saddam Hussein is not a lot better than the Taliban, but I do not see in Iraq the kind of opposition that would allow us to do the same thing. So while to continue to support the sanctions and I continue to say we should work with opposition within Iran, if possible, to launch a military assault on Iraq comparable to what we do in Afghanistan would be counterproductive. I hope it will not be done. Clearly, the resolution we voted offers no support for that.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from American Samoa (Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

MORATORIUM CALLED FOR ON VETERAN PRESCRIPTION DRUG CO-PAYS

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

Mr. STRICKLAND. Mr. Speaker, I may be the last speaker in this Chamber of this particular session of the House of Representatives. I rise today to say when it comes to the way we treat our veterans in this country, talk is cheap, but actions speak louder than words. Why do I say that?

Mr. Speaker, I have in my hands this afternoon a document from the Department of Veterans Affairs entitled, "Implementation of Medication Co-payment Changes." It is a document that details the changes that will take place in the level of co-payment made available to veterans who get their prescription medications at the VA hospitals. What we are proposing is outrageous in my judgment.

Currently, most veterans who go to VA hospitals and receive their medications as an outpatient pay a \$2 co-pay per prescription. On February 4, according to this document, that co-pay will be increased from \$2 a prescription to \$7 a prescription, a whopping 250 percent increase. An unacceptable increase. Why is this so outrageous? It is outrageous because this House has recently passed a \$15 billion bailout for the huge airline companies, \$15 billion. This House has recently passed a bill that would have provided \$24 billion in tax rebates going all of the way back to 1986, giving profitable companies a give-back of all of the taxes they had paid under the alternative minimum tax since 1986, estimated to be a \$24 billion give-back. And yet at the same time, we are in the process of increasing the co-pay for veterans' medicines from \$2 to \$7.