

(Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

WHAT INFORMATION LED US INTO IRAQ?

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, not many weeks ago, we sent our sons and daughters into a war where many lost their lives, and in fact, our soldiers are currently under threat in Iraq, and just last week, others were killed.

There is a remaining question in the minds of many Americans as to exactly what information led us to make this decision to go into Iraq as we did, and in Sunday's edition of the Columbus, Ohio, Dispatch, there was a column written by Nicholas Kristof who writes for the New York Times, and the headline for his column is this: "U.S. Intelligence Officials Incensed Over Manipulating Their Data to Invade Iraq."

Mr. Kristof begins his column, "On Thursday, Day 71 of the hunt for Iraqi weapons of mass destruction, once again nothing turned up. Maybe we'll do better on Day 72 or 73 or 74. But we might have better luck searching for something just as alarming: the growing evidence that the administration grossly manipulated intelligence about those weapons of mass destruction in the run-up to the Iraq war."

Then Mr. Kristof says this, A column that he had written earlier in the month "drew a torrent of covert communications from indignant spooks who say that administration officials leaned on them to exaggerate the Iraqi threat and deceive the public."

He continues, "'The American people were manipulated,' bluntly declared one person from the Defense Intelligence Agency who says he was privy to all of the intelligence there on Iraq. These people are fiercely proud of the deepest ethic in the intelligence world—that it should be nonpolitical—and are disgusted at efforts to turn them into propagandists."

He quotes, "'The al Qaeda connection and nuclear weapons issue were the only two ways that you could link Iraq to an imminent security threat to the U.S.," said Greg Thielmann, who retired in September after 25 years in the State Department." The last four of those years he was in the Bureau of Intelligence and Research. He said, "The administration was grossly distorting the intelligence on both things.

"The outrage among the intelligence professionals is so widespread that they have formed a group, Veterans Intelligence Professionals for Sanity," and they wrote President Bush this month to protest what they called "a policy and intelligence fiasco of monumental proportions.

"While there have been occasions in the past when intelligence has been de-

liberately warped for political purposes,' the letter said, 'never before has such warping been used in such a systematic way to mislead our elected representatives into voting to authorize the launching of a war.'

"Some say," according to Mr. Kristof, "that top Pentagon officials cast about for the most sensational tidbits about Iraq and then used them to bludgeon Secretary of State Colin Powell and seduce the President. The Director of Central Intelligence, George Tenet, has been generally liked and respected within the agency ranks, but in the past year, particularly in the intelligence directorate, people say that he has kowtowed to Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld and compromised the integrity of his organization."

Now, Mr. Kristof emphasizes that "The CIA is examining its record, and that's welcome. But the atmosphere within the intelligence community is so poisonous, and the stakes are so high—for the credibility of America's word and the soundness of information on which we base American foreign policy—that an outside examination is essential."

Mr. Kristof concludes his column by saying, "Congress must provide greater oversight, and President Bush should invite Brent Scowcroft, the head of the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board and a man trusted by all sides, to lead an inquiry" in a public report so that we can restore confidence in America's intelligence agencies.

Mr. Speaker, this is an important issue. The American people are paying attention, and the President needs to provide us with some answers.

CHILD TAX CREDIT

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

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, politics in the making of public policy is about choices. Every day we are called upon to make a choice, but a horrible choice was made by the Republican majority when they wrote the most recent tax bill, a horrible choice that works against millions of families and the children in those families as the Republicans decided that they would not allow those families, families making between \$10,500 a year and \$26,000 a year, they would not allow them to have the increase in the child tax credit. A \$400 a year increase to offset the cost of raising children, that this Congress made a decision about over many years, was proper to do with families to help hold families together, to allow some people to stay home with their children if they chose to do so, the purpose of that credit.

Rather than spend the \$3 billion on those individuals, they chose to spend it on people making over \$1 million a year. People making over \$1 million a

year will now get \$93,000 a year in a tax cut. If we had chosen to take care of those 12 million children who will not get the tax cut because their families earn less than \$26,000 a year, those same millionaires would have gotten a tax cut of \$88,000.

The Republicans made a choice. They chose America's millionaires over America's children. Somehow they decided that the children in upper-income families and middle-class families are more important than those families who are working their tails off going to work every day, all year long and still coming home earning between \$10,000 and \$26,000. They made a decision that they were going to support the Bush-Cheney class in America over the working class in America. They made a decision that they were going to support millionaires over the children of America.

They said when they were caught at these shenanigans over the last few days, when the press discovered what was in the legislation, they said, well, we designed it only for those people who are paying income tax; they are the only ones who should benefit from that. It is rather interesting because they decided they were also going to give the tax benefits of this bill to a number of corporations who pay no income taxes, corporations that have fled America, changed their corporate citizenship for the sole purposes of not paying taxes, and yet we would give them additional tax breaks under this bill.

They wanted to say that they wanted to end the double taxation on dividends and that corporations that paid taxes could get a deduction for dividends. By the time the bill was done, corporations that have paid no taxes will get a deduction for dividends, but if someone were a poor family, if they were a poor family and they are working every day and they are making between \$10,000 and \$26,000 a year and they have children, they are not going to get the increase in that deduction. But these people do pay taxes.

The Republicans have it all wrong. They have it all wrong in fairness. They have it all wrong in greed. They have it all wrong in the value of our children and our families in this Nation. This is an incredibly harmful policy to those families who are struggling in and around these wages.

The Republicans will not increase the minimum wage to help them support their families. They will not give them the child tax credit to help them support their families. They will not increase the Earned Income Tax credit to help them support their families. Poor people just are not entitled to this. What they get to make is they get to make an increased sacrifice on behalf of the rich.

Somebody once said, one would think the Republicans think that the rich have too little money and the poor have too much. It is an incredible policy. The Republicans rail against class

warfare, and they declared war on the very survival of these families who are working at the margins. We see them every day. These are people who work hard in difficult jobs, in jobs that most people do not want. They get up and they ride transit, and they go to work and they work and they work and they come home, and at the end of the year they continue to be poor.

Past Congresses gave them the child tax credit, and this year when we decided we would give an increase in the child tax credit, we did not decide. The Republicans decided in the back rooms, they decided they would declare their own private war, their own private class warfare on these individuals. They decided to do it on the last night, in the back room, with the lights turned out and with Vice President CHENEY casting the deciding vote, who now declares he is ignorant on this. Then how did he vote for it? How did he vote for it?

Class warfare, the most mean-spirited, the most greedy action of class warfare we have seen was just committed by the Republican Party in the tax bill against struggling, working, lower-income families in this country.

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

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

RESTRICTION OF CIVIC PUBLIC ACCESS TO THE MEDIA

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

Mr. HINCHEY. Mr. Speaker, the Federal Communications Commission today struck a very hard and damaging blow against democracy. They did so in a very close four to three ruling that will allow media corporations to own more and more of the public information distribution system that we all rely upon for the information upon which we base our civic decisions, the information upon which we base our votes for Members of Congress and for other offices all across the country.

What is happening here? Why is it that the Republicans in the Federal Communications Commission are voting to restrict the voice of the American people while the Democrats are opposed to it? This is an issue that has been going on in this country now for almost three decades.

In 1987, the Federal Communications Commission of Ronald Reagan stripped the fairness doctrine or the equal access clause from the FCC rules. The fairness doctrine was a simple provision that was placed in the FCC rules early on in the 1930s. It stipulates that if someone who owns a broadcast station, then a radio station, but now radio or television, has a political opinion and they express it editorially they

have to provide for an alternative opinion by others in that community who may feel differently. That was stricken in 1987.

In 1996, the Telecommunications Act was passed, fashioned by the Republican majority in this House, which gave rise to the commission decision today to restrict civic public access to the media and allow it to be controlled by an increasingly smaller number of people, a handful of people.

This is damaging and dangerous to every democratic principle. It is damaging and dangerous to the future of this democratic republic.

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Countries and governments such as ours, free countries, rely upon the open, free exchange of information. If you have a handful of people controlling the way information is distributed, you are not going to have a free and open exchange. That is dangerous to our country.

What did the ruling do today? Under the new rules, a national television network may now acquire dozens of local broadcast stations and control up to 90 percent of the national television market. A single corporation may now acquire, in one city, up to three television stations, eight radio stations, the cable television system, numerous cable television stations, and the daily newspaper as well. No diversity. No contrary opinion. One voice speaking to the public in community after community after community across this country.

When the Federal Communications Commission was established by this Congress, it was established in order to require that there be diversity and that the American people have access to the airwaves, which they own. The airwaves are owned by all the American people; they are not owned by one corporation or several corporations. Those corporations only lease them for periods of time. We need to return to a system where the American people have access to the means of communication in our Nation.

If we are going to preserve this democratic Republic, if we are going to save the essence of American democracy, we are going to have to have the opportunity to discuss different opinions on important political social issues, whether they are foreign or domestic, in the open so that everybody has a chance to have their voice heard. Not just the elite, not just the big corporations, not just the people with all the money and the power.

What is going on here? Why is there this connection and relationship between the Republican Party establishment here in Washington and the media corporations across the country? Republicans out there do not want to see this happen, groups as diverse as the National Consumer Network, the National Rifle Association, the Catholic Bishops, and a host of others have come out against this recent Federal

Communication decision. The people of this country, whether they are Republicans or Democrats, are opposed to it; but the Republican establishment here in Washington is creating a situation where people do not have access to their own airwaves, do not have access to their own media.

We are introducing legislation that is going to put a stop to this and reverse what has been going on now since at least 1987; and the sooner that legislation is passed, the sooner the American democracy will be saved.

FCC'S VOTE ON MEDIA OWNERSHIP RULES

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CHOCOLA). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SOLIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, tonight I rise also to express my strong opposition to the recent vote that was taken today by the FCC. The three-two vote by the commission will allow for the concentration of media ownership in the hands of the very few and privileged and will reduce the diversity of viewpoints. This does not sound too American to me.

The decades-old rules that will be altered under today's vote were intended to provide for multiple media owners and voices in our market. Today's vote that was taken will reduce the assortment of voices and opinions that are essential to our healthy democracy. Allowing one company in a city to control the most popular newspaper and TV station will give the company excessive control over the local news and the information that the public sees and hears. It would also reduce the diversity of cultural and political disclosure in our communities.

Studies that I have seen indicate that, under these rules, mergers will be allowed in 140 local concentrated markets. In as many as 100 of these local markets, representing nearly half of the national population, there will probably be one dominant newspaper. A merger between a dominant newspaper and a large TV station would create a local news giant that would threaten alternative views and news.

Today's decision will have a detrimental impact on minority communities, including the Nation's fast-growing Latino population, the Spanish-language population. It will dramatically reduce competition in Spanish-language media and opportunities for Latino media ownership. Dominance in the Spanish-language media by one corporation can have the same negative effects for many Latinos as the dominance of English-language media can have for the general population.

Today's ruling by the FCC means less diverse programming, news sources, and smaller points of view. We need to look only at the radio industry to see the ill effects that today's vote will have on the diversity in media.