

Finally, Mr. Speaker, talk about waste, we have spent hundreds of billions, with a B, on our intelligence agencies over the last 10 or 15 years. We spend more on intelligence than all the rest of the world combined. We will vote to authorize even more spending on intelligence tomorrow. Yet during this time our intelligence agencies missed the coming down of the Berlin Wall; they missed, failed to predict, the breakup of the Soviet Union; they missed on 9/11. Worst of all, they missed or exaggerated on Iraq. Even the *Weekly Standard*, probably the most pro-war publication in America today said, "The failure to discover stocks of WMD material in post-Saddam Iraq raises legitimate questions about the quality of U.S. and allied intelligence."

Columnist Josh Marshall, writing in *The Hill* newspaper asked: "Did we have bad intelligence? Did political appointees dismiss good, but less threatening intelligence? Or was damning intelligence actually cooked up for political purposes? Those are all legitimate questions. But when Congress starts trying to get at the answers, we should be open to the more complex but in its own way no less disturbing possibility that at least some of the main proponents of this war were so consumed by their goal to crush Saddam and so driven by ideology that they fooled themselves as much as anyone else."

These are good, legitimate and very important questions. Another good question: Why did the National Security Agency find out "about the attacks of 9/11 by watching CNN," as reported by intelligence expert and author James Bamford?

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This is an agency that we built a plush supertechnical \$320 million building for a few years ago at a cost of \$320 a square foot. Probably the most important question of all, why are we getting so little and so much of that for all these hundreds of billions of taxpayer money?

The standard response of all Federal departments and agencies when they are criticized is that they were underfunded. If they had just been given more money, this or that problem would not have occurred. These agencies, if anything, are overfunded, far more money than any company in the private sector. Our intelligence committees are filled with good people; but no one seeks to serve, much less is appointed, to the intelligence committees unless they are strong supporters of the intelligence community. Once they are on the committee, they are heavily courted by the intelligence agencies. So it will be very difficult for a member of these committees in either body to ask the really tough questions that need to be asked. But, Mr. Speaker, I hope for the sake of our own taxpayers and for the future of national security of this Nation that someone on one of the intelligence committees will start

asking the hard questions and demanding the truthful answers that our citizens deserve.

#### MEDICARE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. CAPPs) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. CAPPs. Mr. Speaker, I stand here this evening on the east coast. It is 10 o'clock, and our schedule is such that in the House of Representatives tomorrow we should be debating on this floor a bill to provide a more modernized Medicare delivery system which will focus on the needs of those receiving Medicare, mostly seniors, senior citizens, and also those with disabilities, their needs for medication. And as I am speaking, one of the last to speak this evening, remarking on the particular needs that women have, women my age because I am in that category who live longer and perhaps have worked out of the home less because of the needs of caring for both children and sometimes elders, and, therefore, pensions and other means of having security and retirement are not quite as readily available. So this burden weighs heavily on me. As I speak this moment, deliberations are under way for the rules for which we will debate this legislation tomorrow, and we will see what comes out of our time together on the floor of the House tomorrow.

It is a momentous occasion because in my time of being a Member of Congress, having come to this place out of the health care field, having been a public health nurse for quite a few years in my community on the central coast of California, I have listened to my constituents in this new role of being their representative in the House of Representatives, the people's House, which by its very definition connects us to the citizens for whom we have this great opportunity and responsibility of being their voice here in the Federal Government to make sure that their needs and their inspiration and their motivations are heard.

So I take seriously when many folks in my congressional district tell me that they are the ones who are buying these medications because their heart ailment or their arthritis or their different chronic conditions are requiring them to take medications, that they really cannot afford these if they are retired or living on a fixed income because of Social Security requirements and also maybe their pension.

These are not exorbitant amounts usually. They do not consider themselves poor. They have worked all their life, done well really, the Greatest Generation is what many have called them; and yet they find themselves struggling at a time when they had looked to their government with the promise of Medicare, which they had seen there for their parents, this program that

was instituted in the 1960's, and they say why is it that I cannot pay for my medications? They are so expensive. I go one month and it is a particular cost, sometimes \$100 or several hundred; go another month and it has been practically doubled in price. It is terrifying for seniors who face perhaps hospital stays if they do not take their medication. The blood pressure shooting up, consequences and side effects to conditions that they want to control so that they can live independent lives, not to be dependent on their children or on others or on society, God forbid, having lived independent lives.

So I carry this burden to Congress, and I am proud of being part of a country that had the wherewithal and the mindset, first of all, to start the Social Security system so that we recognize that we really do want to respect the security needs of our seniors; and then when we recognized that health care was beyond the reach of many of them in the 1960's, we devised a plan. I was not here then, of course; but I saw that it made such an impact on citizens that I was working with and dealing with living amongst my own family members to see that Medicare could be there because the private sector, the insurance companies found that this population was hard to insure. These are the years when people need their medical doctors and their sometimes hospital stays and often medications to stay alive and to stay healthy, and Medicare has been a blessing because people are living longer. I think there is a direct connection.

Now we face this crisis. I commend this administration and this Congress foreseeing that this is a time that we must do something about this. But we now must do it in the right way. We have seen that a public provision is what is needed for Medicare. We must also make sure that we do not go off that track and try to privatize this one aspect of it. We have had that option, and that itself was rather an experiment to offer Medicare+Choice. A few years ago that became very popular. That has not worked in my area on the central coast of California, and it is rural.

I will wrap this up by saying that the decisions that we will make tomorrow will have tremendous ramifications, and we need to learn from the people we represent and listen to them and do what they have asked us to do, which is to keep this plan a public plan as it has been, provide the prescription medication in the way that we know that will serve their needs best.

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

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