

The sad thing is that this debate is over religion in public life and has moved away from what the Founders intended. The Founders understood that religion, like all other ideas, should be thoroughly debated and considered as part of representative government. It should not be used to impose a lifestyle on anyone, but should play a role in our discussion. That is democracy.

Congress can and should take action, before this country is ruled by judicial fiat instead of the consent of the people.

NATIONAL DEBT CONTINUES TO INCREASE

(Mr. MOORE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MOORE. Mr. Speaker, it has been 867 days since the administration began implementation of their economic plan for our country. During that time our national debt has increased by \$1,159,358,743,968, according to the Bureau of the Public Debt at the Treasury Department. Yesterday at 4:30 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time, the Nation's outstanding debt, the total debt, was \$6,799,684,130,327. Further, in fiscal year 2003, the interest on our national debt, what I call the debt tax, D-E-B-T tax, is \$304,978,878,641 through August 31.

Mr. Speaker, our country, the administration and Congress needs to return to fiscal responsibility.

CONDEMNING OUTRAGEOUS STATEMENTS REGARDING U.S. POLICY IN IRAQ

(Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida. Mr. Speaker, as I am sure you know by now, last week the war in Iraq was called "a fraud made up in Texas to give Republicans a political boost."

I am sure that our military, who are putting their lives on the line for this war, do not appreciate this characterization of their mission.

Yesterday I visited Walter Reed Hospital. I spoke with our military who were wounded and with their family members. To a person, they support what we are doing in Iraq. They firmly believe that it is in the benefit of not only this country, but certainly the Iraqi people.

However, we should be outraged at what was said. We should be outraged that the statements were based not on facts, but on disinformation.

Mr. Speaker, misinformation is mistaken information. However, disinformation is just plain lying, and that is a shame.

It is for this reason that I stand before this body to condemn these outrageous statements. They remind us all

of the value that some people in this country place on political gain and the lengths that they are willing to go to to achieve it.

SUPPORTING ISRAEL IN ITS FIGHT AGAINST TERRORISM

(Mr. CROWLEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about my commitment to an Israel that can live in a safe and secure environment.

Over August I had the opportunity to travel to Israel with 28 of my colleagues. This trip was the largest congressional delegation ever to travel to the state of Israel. We had the opportunity to see the strength and resilience of the Israeli people as they face the threat of terrorism on a daily basis.

The United States must not stand in the way of Israel protecting its citizens from terrorists who threaten them. Israel did not ask us to restrain ourselves when we acted against the terrorists responsible for the 9/11 attacks, and we should not ask that from them.

For a true and lasting peace to come about, the Palestinian Authority must act against the terrorist groups like Hamas and Islamic Jihad. But before the Palestinian Authority can act against these terrorists, they must clean up their own acts. The first step is to remove Yasser Arafat from any position of power. Arafat has done enough to destroy the aspirations of the Palestinian people.

Recently we all read in the paper how the IMF discovered that Arafat diverted \$900 million of public funds to a special bank account under his control. Arafat is not a partner for peace. We know that. We need to convince our allies of that as well. The Palestinian Authority must rid itself of Yasser Arafat if it truly wants to bring about a peaceful coexistence with the state of Israel.

EXPRESSING HEARTFELT SUPPORT FOR ISRAEL

(Mrs. MALONEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. MALONEY. Mr. Speaker, I returned from Israel this summer inspired by its ability to resist terror. On September 11, Americans learned what it was like to lose friends and neighbors to fanatics on a suicide mission. Israel has been living with terror, and during this trip we got a glimpse of their daily reality.

A day after our visit to the border between Israel and Lebanon, a missile killed a 16-year-old boy near where we had been. When we toured Hadassah Hospital, we met with a doctor who had stayed up all night saving a woman's life. She had been struck by a

sniper's bullet. Both attacks came during the so-called cease-fire, a time no one was supposed to die.

We have a lot to learn from Israel about improving communication, coordination and intelligence. After 9/11 we were supposed to have a governmentwide database on terrorism. Two years later, there are nine Federal agencies maintaining 12 different lists of terrorist organizations.

Israel is our greatest ally in the Middle East. It deserves our heartfelt support.

STANDING SIDE-BY-SIDE WITH ISRAEL

(Mr. CARDOZA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CARDOZA. Mr. Speaker, I recently had the opportunity to travel to Israel with the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER), the gentleman from New York (Mr. CROWLEY) and over 20 of my Democratic colleagues.

As timing would have it, our visit preceded the departure of Palestinian Prime Minister Abu Mazen by 1 week. We met with the Prime Minister, who told us that he was trying to implement important reforms within the Palestinian Authority. But during the Prime Minister's 4-month tenure, Mr. Arafat consistently opposed his reform efforts and took steps to maintain his hold on power and erode support for Mr. Abbas among the Palestinian people.

As these events have demonstrated, measurable progress will not be realized as long as Mr. Arafat remains in power.

If the Palestinian Authority will not or cannot destroy Palestinian terrorist groups, the Israeli Government has every right to defend its citizens against further violence. The Israeli Government has started building a security fence for exactly that purpose. I believe the United States should support Israel's efforts, which is a reasonable measure of self-defense against suicide bombers.

Further, I believe it would be a terrible mistake for the U.S. to reduce its loan guarantees to the State of Israel. At this time of great peril, we must stand side by side with Israel and its citizens in the fight against terrorism.

EXPRESSING STRONG SUPPORT FOR ISRAEL

(Ms. BERKLEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. BERKLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my strong support for Israel, as well as my frustration and anger over the continued Palestinian terrorist attacks on innocent men, women and children.

I am especially angered over the action, or rather inaction, of the so-