on this issue because our veterans should be special and should be very important to all of the Members of Congress and to public policymakers in general.

Our veterans have been so loyal, not just to our country because of their service but they are always loyal to the Commander in Chief. They have allowed themselves to be misused, to be ignored, and to be marginalized too much, and particularly by this administration. We find ourselves fighting and the veterans are scratching and clawing trying to just get the kind of benefits that they deserve.

They are in these veterans hospitals across the Nation waiting in line for service, cannot get appointments. We do not have enough beds for them in nursing care homes. And now we hear about this particular issue on the floor tonight, and it seems to me that the President of the United States would put an end to this. This is a Commander in Chief that is now saying that he needs $87 billion more to continue the war in Iraq? We are going to have more veterans who will be disabled, who will come home, who will have to suffer this great injustice.

This is the President who has already spent $79 billion and who is coming back for more. And this is the President, along with others in the administration, who is talking about we all have to make sacrifices. Our soldiers are dying, our soldiers are being crippled and disabled. They are losing their limbs. How long do we have to beg? How long do we have to plead with this President?

I am here tonight, along with my colleagues, to ask my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to please sign that discharge petition. Please send a message to the veterans that during this time when we are at war, at a time when many of those who watch us on television who are fighting in Iraq, who may be the victim of some sniper's bullet any time, any day, let them know that should something happen, should they be crippled, should they lose a limb that they can depend on their government to see to it that they get both their retirement and the disability benefits that they deserve. I do not think that is too much to ask, Mr. Speaker.

I certainly feel a little bit ashamed this evening that we have to carry this debate this far. I served on the Committee on Veterans' Affairs when I first came to the Congress of the United States. I interacted with all of the service organizations. I made a lot of friends, and I discovered at that time that there are many in the Congress who will wave the red, white, and blue flag and they will talk the talk; but they will not walk the walk. They will not stand up and ask for the dollars. They will not defend the services. They will not even take the time to help the veterans fight through the bureaucracy of veterans affairs to get the benefits that are coming to them.

My office makes this its number one priority. Not only do we work for the veterans, we have had to organize a whole chapter of the Vietnam-era veterans in my district because they were being ignored and they were not being serviced. We think that that is the least that a Member of Congress can do, to service the veterans, to fight for them, to make sure that they get justice. And on this issue, this should be the highest priority of our veterans agenda.

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of eliminating the tax on disabled veterans, and thank my colleague MAXINE WATERS for organizing the time to discuss this important matter.

Those who spend their career serving our nation in the military deserve our respect and gratitude; yet, military retirees remain the only group of federal employees who must waive retirement pay in order to receive VA disability compensation. Our nation is stronger and more secure because of their service and dedication, and fulfilling our obligations to those who fought for our freedom must always be a national priority.

It is time to stop penalizing the more than 700,000 disabled veterans who are military retirees. Attempts to redefine who qualifies as a disabled veteran are unnecessary, and achieve nothing more than providing benefits to one group of veterans at the expense of others.

The solution is obvious, yet resolution has been difficult, I was disappointed last year when a threatened presidential veto caused the elimination of the veterans tax to be scaled back in the Defense Authorization bill and, again this year when the House Defense Authorization failed to include language to repeal the tax.

At a time when our Nation is asking more men and women to risk their lives and security on behalf of our country, we should make every effort to fulfill our promise to them upon their return. The strength of a nation is measured not only in the might of its military, but also the compassion shown by and to its members.

It is time to put a permanent end to the disabled veterans tax; their commitment to excellence in service to our country should not be answered with deficient services from that country.

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues, the gentlewoman from California, Ms. WATERS and the gentleman from Illinois, Ranking Member EVANS for their work on this important issue.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today outraged by the Majority Leadership's continual short-changing of American veterans. I appreciate Members' from both sides of the aisle, who work to support our retired soldiers. I find great irony in the support that this body gives in creating veterans in Afghanistan and Iraq, but the lack of assistance in sustaining these and previous veterans upon their return.

Mr. Speaker, I would appreciate the Republicans and this Administration responding to an outraged constituent who asked me earlier this year if, "We are just going to reward our fighting men with medals and praise, then let them fend for themselves after they have suffered the insults and injuries of war?". How do I respond to this person and others, when I know that I voted against the VA–HUD appropriations bill which under-funded the Department of Veteran Affairs by an embarrassing $1.8 billion.

I know that I co-sponsored H.R. 2569, which would authorize concurrent receipt of military retirement pay and VA compensation benefits, make health care for veterans more accessible and affordable, allow veterans' surviving spouses to receive adequate benefits, and expand educational opportunities for reservists. H.R. 2569 further enhances benefits for the families of those killed while on active duty, and gives an essential "thank you" to our troops now returning from Iraq and Afghanistan.

Mr. Speaker, I am a co-sponsor of H.R. 303. This legislation would permit retired members of the armed forces with service-connected disabilities to be paid both military retired pay and veterans' disability compensation. H.R. 303 would rectify the injustice which has penalized those who sacrifice to serve our country for over 100 years. Additionally, I joined my colleagues to sign the discharge petition to bring this legislation to the floor.

As a veteran's daughter, I, along with 365 Members of this body, am frustrated by our constant attempts to support those who sacrificed for this nation. I find it morally reprehensible that this President continues his reckless policy of cutting taxes for the richest 1 percent of this country, yet refuses to guarantee our veterans basic benefits. And I ask: how much longer is this body willing to punish those who sacrifice and suffer for serving and defending this nation?

SECURING THE PEACE IN IRAQ

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. SHADEGG) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. SHADEGG. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate this opportunity to open an important discussion before the Congress on the topic of securing the peace in Iraq.

I am going to be brief in my opening remarks, Mr. Speaker, because we have some colleagues here who want to participate in this debate and who have other obligations. But let me simply start by saying that I believe it is absolutely essential for this Nation, now that we have deposed Saddam Hussein, to rebuild that country and to secure for them the peace. And what I mean by that is that it is simply not adequate in this world we live in today to get rid of a dictator like Saddam Hussein and then walk away. Tragically, America has done that all too often in its foreign policy, with disastrous consequences.

There will be discussion on the floor here tonight in the course of this debate of how we did that after World War I. We not only walked away, but we demanded reparations. The result was the rise of an atrocious dictatorship in Germany and another world war.

I want to point to another example just briefly here at the outset of this

debate. When we helped the people of Afghanistan fight off the Russian invaders, the Soviet invaders in their country, we did the right thing. But sadly, tragically, when that effort ended, and the Soviet Union retreated from Afghanistan and turned it back over to the people of Afghanistan, we simply walked away and we did not help them rebuild their nation. We did not help them set up an economy. The result was absolutely disastrous. It was the Taliban regime that we have now deposed.

I know firsthand the situation in Afghanistan today. I was there a year ago August. I know firsthand the situation in Iraq, because I spent 3 days inside Iraq just this last August, and I learned a great deal. I went to several different parts of the country. And it is absolutely critical that we not just depose Saddam Hussein but that we help the people of Iraq to structure a functioning government. That will pay dividends for years to come.

□ 1845

I want to not only talk in this hour about the importance of having deposed Saddam Hussein and now securing the peace by aiding the people of Iraq, but why it is a bad idea to demand that this be repaid out of oil proceeds or to demand that this be a loan from the American Government.

There may be times when we need to make loans. I think right now the aid that the President has asked for should be given as a grant, because I think it is critical for us to demonstrate not just to the people of Iraq, but to all of the people of the Middle East, indeed the Muslim world, that when the United States injects itself as we did in Iraq and deposes a terrible leader like Saddam Hussein, the United States then follows through with its commitment and keeps its word.

Mr. Speaker, with that as kind of an introduction, I yield to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCHROCK).

Mr. SCHROCK. Mr. Speaker, I recently joined 10 other Members of Congress to visit our troops and those working to restore peace to Iraq. What I saw there was absolutely amazing. There are many good and positive changes occurring in Iraq almost daily. The most remarkable and appreciated fact is the fact that Saddam Hussein is no longer in power. He clearly made the Iraqi people live in horrible fear.

Five miles from the historic city of Babylon we visited one of the 59 mass graves which has been discovered, which contained the remains of 3,000 Iraqis. To date, 2,100 have been identified and returned to their families for burial. There are still 900 unclaimed bodies in clear view of where we stood which await identification and a proper burial by their families.

There are a total of 300,000 missing Iraqis. With each new discovery of another mass grave, that number shrinks, bringing closure to many families.

The bright spot in this bleak description are the men and women in our military who not only liberated Iraq, but work every single day to bring peace and prosperity to this deserving country. Our men and women have repaired the power system so now light and air conditioning abound throughout Iraq. The sanitation and water systems that were in total disarray just 3 months ago are becoming more and more operational each and every day. Our men and women in uniform are reopening schools so all Iraqi children can attend school. Our troops have rebuilt and reopened the police academy in Baghdad so the Iraqis can be trained to provide for their own safety and their own security.

Everyone in America should be proud of what our troops are doing there. They are the best, and there are none better anywhere in the world. They do their jobs in intense heat under the most difficult circumstances, and they do it because it is the right thing to do; and they will tell you that as well. Every Iraqi we talked to thanked us and told us to thank President Bush when we saw him next. To a person, they all begged us not to leave their country too early. That is their greatest fear, the fear that we will cut and run.

This $87 billion supplemental is a tremendous investment in our future security. It will sustain our military forces in the war on terrorism and invest in the future of Iraq and, consequently, the future stability of the entire Middle East. The stakes are too high for us to fail.

Remember, only $20.3 billion of the supplemental spending request is for Iraq. It seems that the 10 Democratic Presidential nominees have either failed to look at the details of the President's proposal, or they are purposely misleading the American people into thinking all $87 billion is for the reconstruction in Iraq. Only $20.3 billion is for Iraq. The rest is to support our military in the war on terrorism.

The Vice President has said that in no way, shape or form will funds provided by the United States be used to pay foreign debts from the Saddam Hussein era in Iraq. The Iraqi Governing Council has asked the World Bank to assist in developing a proper accounting of their foreign debt. It is estimated to be about $120 billion. The Governing Council feels strongly that governments that knowingly lend money to a sadistic dictator such as Saddam Hussein to buy weapons and oppress his people do not deserve to have that money paid back.

There are key members of the Iraqi Governing Council who propose to repudiate all foreign debt from that era since that money was used to buy weapons and oppress the Iraqi people, and we should strongly support that policy.

We must continue to encourage the development of functioning local institutions in Iraq, not dependency on foreign administrators. This will take time and persistence. To transfer power before governmental institutions have properly developed would be reckless and dangerous. What matters most in developing states such as Iraq is leaders and law, not aid. The Iraqi Governing Council is committed to developing a constitution that creates a secular, democratic, strong federal government which embodies principles of equality for all Iraqis. They have already passed some of the most progressive laws in the Middle East in terms of encouraging foreign investment, allowing for dual citizenship, and establishing income and corporate tax structures, but it is too early to turn over control completely to the Iraqis.

In the short term, we must continue to increase the level of involvement of the Iraqi people in three key areas: security, control of money raised by oil revenues, and empowering them to represent themselves in world forums, such as OPEC and the United Nations. We will retain control of the funding that is provided in the supplemental. We have made unprecedented progress, and we must continue to be patient and stay the course.

There are many examples of our success to date. Approximately 5,000 small businesses have opened in Iraq since May 1, and an Iraqi central bank has been established. This took 3 years in postwar Germany. Almost all major hospitals and universities have been reopened, and hundreds of secondary schools will start school this fall.

An Iraqi Governing Council has been formed and appointed a cabinet of ministers. This took 14 months in postwar Germany. A 56,000 person security force has been armed and trained, and is contributing to Iraqi security. This took 14 months in postwar Germany.

There is still a tremendous security challenge, but more troops are not the answer. The Iraqis are eager to be responsible for their own security. Once the coalition trains Iraqis to be responsible for the governance and security of their own country, then we will be able to leave.

Mr. Speaker, I want to commend the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. MARSHALL) on a fantastic op-ed piece that he wrote, which ran in today's Washington Post. The gentleman emphasized that the version of events that we see each day on the news is distorted and heavily skewed towards destruction and death and not the birth of a new nation that is taking place.

I want to quote from JIM's op-ed. ''We not only need Iraqi tips and intelligence, we need Iraqis fighting by our side and eventually assuming full responsibility for their internal security.'' He says, ''Many in Washington view the contest for the Presidency and control of Congress as a sum-zero game without external costs and benefits. Politicians and activists from both parties reflexively embellish news that is bad for the opposition, but to do that with regard to Iraq harms our troops and our efforts. Concerning Iraq, this normal political tripe can impose a heavy external cost.''

I agree with the gentleman from Georgia and commend him for his vision and candor. American journalists in Iraq have freely admitted that their editors are not interested in printing good news from Iraq, but only reporting on death and destruction. Those editors are doing a tremendous disservice not only to their readers, but to every American serving in Iraq, to the Iraqi people and to our country. We must tell the story of the successes as well as the setbacks.

There is still a long way to go in Iraq, but there are thousands of dedicated, intelligent and educated Iraqis eager to assume leadership roles and be responsible for the future of their country. They desperately need our help.

Our credibility, our security and the security of the Middle East are tightly linked to their success. We must stay the course and provide the support needed. The return on our investment is stability, democracy and partnership. The failure of our efforts is too frightening to contemplate.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly urge my colleagues to support the President's requests for additional funding for Iraq. It is absolutely essential.

Mr. SHADEGG. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his thoughtful comments and I appreciate the gentleman participating in this discussion tonight. I know that the gentleman has family obligations, but his attendance here speaks to how important he thinks this topic is.

I also thank the gentleman for pointing out that only $20.3 billion, not the entire $87 billion, is dedicated to reconstructing Iraq. And I also think it is important that we listen to his comments about the Interim Governing Council and the fact that they are making progress, but this money is going to be spent by Americans right now, and I think to assert that although Americans are spending this money, the Iraqis ought to repay it seems unfair.

I also commend the gentleman about Iraqi involvement and responsibility. At the end of the day, this is an Iraqi responsibility and ultimately we have to get those people involved in recreating their nation, and I very much appreciate the gentleman's comments. I also appreciate him pointing out that this is a bipartisan discussion; and our colleague, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. MARSHALL) has written and spoken on this topic, and I think he will join us in this discussion.

Mr. Speaker, I went to Iraq this August and spent time there. Interesting in this debate, people who have been to Iraq and seen what is on the ground tend to support the President's position. Those who are critical tend to be those who have not been there.

Ambassador Bremer, I think, laid the groundwork by these remarks in a hearing just last month. He said the $20.3 billion in grants to Iraq the President is seeking as part of this $57 billion supplemental speed the grandeur of vision equal to the one which created the free world at the end of World War II. What he is referring to is the Marshall Plan, and I think for Americans to understand this discussion, they need to understand this aid, put in perspective.

As I mentioned earlier, at the end of World War I, we walked away. Indeed, we demanded reparations. We did not help Europe rebuild. That resulted in Hitler and another world war following that. But following World War II, we changed our policy rather dramatically, and we understood that rebuilding Europe was critically important. That was the Marshall Plan.

This second graph shows in current dollars that the Marshall Plan was dramatically more expensive than we are talking about in the President's request here. I think it is vitally important for the people of America to understand that if we are being asked to put up this money to rebuild Iraq, how does that compare to our prior experiences.

And with that, Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. HOEKSTRA).

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for doing this special order, and maybe we can have a dialogue.

The gentleman, myself, along with a couple of our other colleagues had the opportunity to spend 3 days in Iraq in August. I had an opportunity to go back in September to complement that trip and see some things we were not able to see in August; and in coming back, there are some things we agreed on.

Number one, we agreed on the quality of our troops. We have very, very talented young men and women who fought a war in Iraq and now are providing the security zone to allow this country to restructure itself.

Mr. SHADEGG. Not just their quality, their enthusiasm. They are committed to this task. They can see in the faces of the Iraqi people that they are trying to help every day what it is doing for that country and for their people.

Quite frankly, I think if every Member of Congress were to go to Iraq, and for that matter, I urge the administration to take business leaders, take average Americans over there, let them see when we help the Iraqis by fixing a well that is no longer working or by opening a school that is no longer functioning, and we will discuss education later in this Special Order, when we do that, the faces of those people light up. And these are people embracing the concept of freedom and democracy for the first time.

When we look into the eyes of our troops and soldiers, they know we are enabling these people to be free for the first time and to understand prosperity for the first time. I could not agree more with the gentleman's comments.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Mr. Speaker, the media is portraying a very different story regarding what is going on in Iraq than what we saw. There is no doubt that Iraq is still a dangerous place. At least it was in August, it was in September, and it probably still is today. But as we flew over the city of Baghdad there were cars, buses and trucks on the streets. There was commerce. Much of the city of Baghdad was functioning.

We met with a couple of divisional military commanders who talked about the thousands of projects that they had going on, rebuilding schools, cleaning irrigation ditches, working on clinics, and they talked about the progress that they were making. We met with a number of talented people.

The second trip I had over there I met with Peter McPherson, who is the president of Michigan State. He is now back at Michigan State. He was kind of the shadow finance minister. I asked him, what about the plans? You guys did not have a plan for reconstruction.

He said, What do you mean we did not have a plan? Did you see our currency collapse? No.

He said there was a debate about whether Iraq should keep this currency that had Saddam Hussein's picture on it. He said, we made a conscious decision, we planned to keep that currency because we did not want the currency to collapse, we did not want a run on the banks. Commerce continued in Iraq after the war.

□ 1900

The plan is in place. They now have a tax code, 15 percent top rate. They have a tariff structure, and they also now have one of the most progressive foreign investment laws in the Middle East. They have thought through all those things. Now they are working with the Iraqi Governing Council to implement it.

Another individual from Michigan who was kind of their shadow health care minister, he said, ''What do you mean, no plan? Did you see a breakout of malaria? Did you see a breakout of cholera or diarrheal diseases after the war? That is very typical after you have had a military conflict.

''Those things did not happen. We had plans in place to try to prevent that, and we were successful in preventing those things from happening. We kept the clinics open. We kept the hospitals open. The doctors kept coming to work. We were able to treat the people. There were plans in place. We have got talented people who have run major universities, major businesses, major sectors of this country who are now helping put Iraq together.''

Does that mean everything has worked perfectly? Absolutely not. But these folks have a plan, they are implementing the plan and as they get new information they are adjusting it.

Mr. SHADEGG. I could not agree with the gentleman more. Certainly I think it is helpful to hear those kinds of comments. And understand when I said at the outset of this special order

that we want to discuss securing the peace, maybe that confuses people, but for the average American what I mean is, we are in a war, a war on terrorism; and the battleground of that war is a war to win the hearts and minds right now, first and foremost, of the Iraqi people.

We cannot win their hearts and minds if, for example, they do not have electricity to cool or air-condition their homes and it is 140 degrees out. We cannot win their hearts and minds and tell them we have a better system for them if, for example, they cannot get gasoline to run their cars.

There has been some complaining about the President wanting to send refined fuels into Iraq. Why do we need to do that? They do not have gasoline to run their automobiles to conduct their business lives. We saw that great progress has been made, but the aid the President is seeking now is so that more progress can be made. I commend the gentleman for his thoughts.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Let me add one thing. I do have another commitment. A lot of our colleagues are here tonight. That is great to see.

Mr. SHADEGG. I am thrilled to see so many of them here. I have got to get them all on.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. We talked about the horrors of Saddam. I will give you one of the ones that I have not seen published anywhere, but that I heard on my last trip.

I had the opportunity to go through the Ministry of Health. Then I had the opportunity to go through a hospital. We have heard about the mass graves, the slaughter of the Kurds and all of these types of folks. The one anecdote that somebody asked if I had heard about, they said, have you heard about our cornea transplant policy in Iraq? I said, no. He said, all the cornea transplants were done on Monday and Thursday. Executions were done Sunday night and Wednesday night.

Just one other example and these are stories that come from the Iraqis.

These folks are thankful that this man is gone. They are thankful that we are there, and they want us to stay because they trust us a whole lot more than they trust the U.N. We put together a good coalition in a very difficult situation, and as demonstrated by our colleagues here tonight, there are a whole lot of folks who have a lot more to add to this because we are going out and we are getting a complete picture by having this many Members participating in the debate, but also spending the time over in Iraq and everybody picking up their own little gems of information to give us a complete picture.

Mr. SHADEGG. I thank the gentleman. Without further ado, because we do have so many Members who want to participate, let me yield to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. WILSON).

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. I appreciate so much the opportunity to be here tonight. I want to thank the gentleman for his efforts because he cares about the people of Iraq. He cares about the people of America, because that is what we are talking about, the security of the people of the United States.

We are in a war against terrorism. It began, not of our own making, on September 11, 2001. We are responding to a very vicious enemy, being the terrorists who have determined that the targets of their attack are the people of the United States. And so I thank you for doing this.

I additionally want to point out that the people who are here tonight, this is the largest outpouring I have ever seen of people who are genuinely concerned about our country, about the war on terrorism. I also want to point out that I particularly appreciate your pointing out the situation of how we assisted in the redevelopment of Germany after World War II. That is exactly what we are doing right now.

The reason that we redeveloped Germany was not to show any appreciation of the war that they brought upon the world during World War II, but it was to redevelop Germany so it would not be a breeding ground for Communists because that is where we were. We were getting ready, as we all knew, to go into the Cold War. And we were able to redevelop Germany, and then we were able to defeat the Communists.

The exact same principle is at hand here. We are trying to redevelop Iraq so that we can avoid Iraq continuing, it already has been, now we need to stop it, as a breeding ground, a country that supported or harbored terrorists, because we are in a war against terrorism. We defeated communism. We can defeat terrorism thanks to the efforts of the people who are here tonight.

It is really very heartwarming that the opportunity I had, I returned 2 weeks ago from the visit to Iraq. This was a trip put together, a congressional delegation, by the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON), the ranking Democrat on the Committee on Armed Services, and one of the very fine persons with us was the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. MARSHALL).

I want to congratulate him on his courage. He has been very outspoken in what he saw in Iraq. He saw the progress that the American forces and the coalition forces from all over the world, from 32 countries that are serving in Iraq.

In fact, in today's Washington Post, I would like to commend him, and he will be appearing apparently in a few minutes, on an op-ed which appeared in today's Washington Post. He had an excellent op-ed in the Atlanta Constitution. I just want to read one part. I do not mean to preempt his ability to speak this evening, but the gentleman from Georgia indicated, ''I went to Iraq a couple of weeks ago to resolve for myself the recent contrast between gloomy news coverage and optimistic Pentagon reports of our progress. My trip left no doubt that the Pentagon's version is far closer to reality.''

Mr. Speaker, the text of the op-ed is as follows:

[From the Washington Post, Oct. 1, 2003]

DON'T PLAY POLITICS ON IRAQ

(By Jim Marshall)

My first trip to a combat zone occurred in 1969. I was a 21-year-old staff sergeant, naive as hell, a freshly trained Army Ranger who had left Princeton University to volunteer for ground combat in Vietnam. I vividly recall feeling way out of step with my Ivy League colleagues.

Well, that same out-of-step feeling is back. But this time it's about Iraq and involves some of my professional colleagues, political leaders and activists who carelessly using words, and phrases such as ''quagmire,'' ''our failure in Iraq,'' ''this is just another Vietnam,'' or the ''Bush administration has no plan.''

I went to Iraq a couple of weeks ago to resolve for myself the recent contrast between gloomy news coverage and optimistic Pentagon reports of our progress. My trip left no doubt that the Pentagon's version is far closer to reality. Our news coverage disproportionately dwells on the deaths, mistakes and setbacks suffered by coalition forces. Some will attribute this to a grand left-wing conspiracy, but a more plausible explanation is simply the tendency of our new media to focus on bad news. It sells. Few Americans think local news coverage fairly captures the essence of daily life and progress in their hometowns. Coverage from Iraq is no different.

Falsely bleak Iraq news circulating in the United States is a serious problem for coalition forces because it discourages Iraqi cooperation, the key to our ultimate success or failure, a daily determinant of life or death for American soldiers. As one example, coalition forces are now discovering nearly 50 percent of the improvised explosive devices through tips. Guess how they discover the rest.

We not only need Iraqi tips and intelligence, we need Iraqis fighting by our side and eventually assuming full responsibility for their internal security. But Iraqis have not forgotten the 1991 Gulf War. America encouraged the Shiites to rebel, then abandoned them to be slaughtered. I visited one of the mass graves, mute testimony to the wisdom of being cautious about relying on American politicians to live up to their commitments.

For Iraqis, news of America's resolve is critical to any decision to cooperate with coalition forces, a decision that can lead to death. Newspaper start-up ventures and sales of satellite dishes absolutely exploded following the collapse of Saddam Hussein's regime. With this on top of the Internet, Iraqis do get the picture from America—literally.

Many in Washington view the contest for the presidency and control of Congress as a zero-sum game without external costs or benefits. Politicians and activists in each party reflexively celebrate, spread and embellish news that is bad for the opposition. But to do that now with regard to Iraq harms our troops and our effort. Concerning Iraq, this normal political tripe can impose a heavy external cost.

It is too soon to determine whether Iraqis will step forward to secure their own freedom. For now, responsible Democrats should carefully avoid using the language of failure. It is false. It endangers our troops and our effort. It can be unforgivably self-fulfilling.

Democratic candidates for the presidency should repeatedly hammer home their support, if elected, for helping the Iraqi people

secure their own freedom. It is fine for each to contend that he or she is a better choice for securing victory in Iraq. But in making this argument, care should be taken not to dwell on perceived failures of the current team or plan. Americans, with help from commentators and others, will decide this for themselves.

Instead of being negative about Iraq, Democratic presidential candidates should emphasize the positive aspects of their own plans for Iraq. Save the negative attacks for the issues of jobs and the economy. Iraqis are far less likely to support the coalition effort if they think America might withdraw following the 2004 election.

Finally, no better signal of our commitment to this effort could currently be provided than for Congress to quickly approve, with little dissent or dithering, the president's request for an additional $87 billion for Iraq and Afghanistan. Of course no one wants to spend such a sum. But it is well worth it if it leads to a stable, secular representative government in Iraq, something that could immeasurably improve our future national security.

I minored in journalism at Washington & Lee University, and I served as a reporter for the Post and Courier in Charleston, South Carolina. What I have seen in Iraq is really sad, and that is that the level of news reporting has been of the police blotter, and that is that in lieu of covering what is going on in a community, a country, a State or a capital, what has occurred is that the reporters have gone to the police station, gotten the very negative reporting of incidents of violence, level of violence, and then reported that as the news. That is inappropriate. I would hope that they would cover the positive.

I brought some indications, I feel like show and tell tonight, but I brought several items that I want to show that I believe indicate the progress.

First of all, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. KIRK) has been so good in bringing to our attention earlier today on the floor of Congress that the schools have reopened today, October 1, 2003, in Iraq. This is very significant. Many of the schools were closed, particularly in communities that did not support Saddam Hussein. Thanks to the work, the civil action projects of the American military, the schools have reopened.

By American standards, we would be appalled. These are one-room schoolhouses that have been repainted; we are not talking about elegant schoolhouses, but they reopened today. When they did reopen, the teachers and the students were given tablets so they could write on them what they learned and what they were having the ability to learn.

For the first time, they were in classrooms where they were not given propaganda. The propaganda in subliminal messages on the mathematics were how evil the Western world is, how evil the American people were. Now they know that there is an open society in the United States and in the Western democracies, and it is one that can be positive for the people of Iraq.

I am excited. Today is a big day for the people of Iraq. Over 1.5 million students have received the new textbooks and the new book bags to carry and go to school.

Another indication of progress is the money itself of Iraq. Those of us in South Carolina are very proud that George Wolfe, who is the general counsel of the U.S. Department of Treasury, is serving with the Coalition Provisional Authority in Iraq in one of Saddam's palaces. What they are doing is that on October 15, 2 weeks from today, they will be turning in the money which is currently in Iraq and they will be, first of all, deleting the dictator Saddam Hussein's picture, and the new money will be issued.

It will be dinars. It will be from what we have learned from prior experience, and that is, it will not be currency manipulation; the people will receive dinar per dinar. It will be of the new money. It is being done at 150 locations in a very large country, 26 million people throughout the country to turn in the money, and Saddam Hussein will be gone in terms of the money. That is very important.

A final point in my show and tell tonight, it was very exciting for me to be with the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON), the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. FORBES) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MILLER) to visit the reopening of the Kisik Oil Refinery. This is very significant. It is in the northern part of the country. The person who really coordinated this is General David Petraeus of the 101st Airborne Division.

They had the opportunity, again just 2 weeks ago, of reopening this refinery. It had closed 4 years ago; under the dictatorship of Saddam Hussein, the refinery had closed. But it was reopened. Now we have production of gasoline and kerosene which will be used by the people of northern Iraq, it will be traded to the country of Syria. Syria was so confident of all things, and that had not been identified as one of the countries that has been favorable to us, but Syria actually provided, by way of barter, electricity several weeks ago, anticipating the opening of the refinery so that this electricity could be forwarded into northern Iraq, which is already democratically operating and operating fully, and it will be sent to Baghdad.

And so we saw firsthand tremendous progress. I want the American people to know the progress that has been made, how much we appreciate the sacrifices of the Armed Forces that are serving there, the competence of their leadership and themselves; and for the family members who have young people serving in Iraq, the equipment that is there, the technology to protect our troops. And I say that as a parent of three people in the military, as a retiree 2 months ago yesterday of 31 years in the Army National Guard.

Again, I want to thank the gentleman from Arizona for his leadership as we bring this. It should not be, but it seems to be new news to the people of the United States.

Mr. SHADEGG. I thank the gentleman for his comments in support of this effort. I know that he believes deeply, as I do, that we have an obligation, having thrown out Saddam, as was needed to be done, a terrible dictator, to now help the Iraqi people. I think his illustrations of what we have done have helped.

Quite frankly, when I do these special orders, I like to have them be a discussion between several people, back and forth. Stunningly, we have so many people here tonight that it is almost not possible to follow that form.

One of our colleagues is the gentleman from Florida (Mr. WELDON). He is here, and I know he feels passionately that we need to rebuild Iraq, that the President is going in the right direction and that it is indeed a mandate in history, that this has lifelong consequences for our war against terror.

I yield to the gentleman from Florida.

Mr. WELDON of Florida. I thank the gentleman for yielding. I will be brief because I know there are several people who have been to Iraq.

I believe my physician colleague, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BURGESS), may get up in a little while and talk about the medical situation over there, which was really abominable under Saddam Hussein.

I just want to state that I support the President's request to make this grant to Iraq. It is the right thing to do from a military strategy, it is the right thing to do from a political strategy and I am very, very pleased that this is going to be a bipartisan special order.

I just want to make one comment. I was so glad that you put this poster up here, because this $100 billion that we spent rebuilding Europe after World War II was somewhat in our own interests in that Europe was in such disarray that Communist forces were beginning to take over.

□ 1915

And those funds that were spent helped stabilize Europe, helped the democracies in Europe to emerge, and we essentially got a tremendous dividend from this investment in that there was a tremendous decade of peace and free trade, and ultimately in the end our economy benefitted from that.

And the situation here today is very similar. We have a unique opportunity to create a Western, U.S.-friendly, democratic beachhead in the middle of what has been a very problematic area in the Middle East that could have tremendous positive implications in decades and decades to come. And if we fail, the results could be absolutely horrible, not only in terms of dollars spent but as well in human lives. So I think the President's approach is right. All the military leaders say that this is desperately needed. All of the Members, and they are going to be speaking

more tonight like the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. HOEKSTRA), say it is very much needed. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. SHADEGG. Mr. Speaker, in the dialogue format, I just want to make one point. The gentleman points out the consequences in human lives, and I think he has spoken eloquently upon that topic. I just want to throw it back to him. I think he has made the point very clear that if we back away from Iraq right now, all those people in the country who are helping us right now, their lives will not be worth a penny, and I would like the gentleman to make a quick comment on that.

Mr. WELDON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I mentioned that at the House Republican conference last week, and it is a point that I do not think has been emphasized enough. If we fail, what is likely to happen? One of the scenarios is that another brutal, vicious, murderous dictatorship regime could come back. The worst case scenario, of course, is that Saddam himself could crawl out from under a rock and regain the reins of power. And we all know what he did in Basra after the first Gulf War. He executed 10,000 people. I think the bloodshed this time around would be much worse. So we really need to follow through on this, and we really need to make sure it is a success.

I think the President's proposal is very much the right thing to do, and I think all of us in the House and in the Senate should be backing him. This is money, I believe, that will be very well-spent in the long-term. This war on terror, I believe very strongly, it could end up resembling the Cold War. It may take decades or generations, and this is a very critical moment for us. If we succeed, it could have huge positive implications for the future. If we fail, it could be disastrous. And I yield back.

Mr. SHADEGG. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his comments.

One of the most eloquent spokesman who has gotten a lot of national coverage for his courage in speaking out, who makes this discussion tonight bipartisan and who makes this debate bipartisan, though there will be many, many Democrats who will vote with the President next week when we take up this legislation, is the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. MARSHALL). I yield to him on this topic.

Mr. MARSHALL. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding. And I guess I would say that had I had a little bit more notice and appreciated the attempt to have a bipartisan effort here, I could have had plenty of Democrats on this side. There is no question about it. What we are going to find is that on the Democratic side, also on the Republican side, and I do not know how publicly on the gentleman's side, but certainly on the Democratic side, there will be questions concerning exactly how the money is planned to be spent. Is this appropriate? Is that appropriate? And there may be some who say this is inappropriate and that is inappropriate. But, in general, I think what we will find, and to a person this is what I have heard, Democrats are certainly in support of this effort to help the Iraqi people create a secular, representative government.

I do not want to take too much time because there are a number of people, and that might have caused a problem with my bringing a whole bunch of Democrats; so I do not want to steal the gentleman's thunder here. Let me say this. I appreciate the comments about my op-ed in the Post this morning.

Mr. SHADEGG. Two of our colleagues have already commented on it.

Mr. MARSHALL. And those who are viewing, if they wanted to get a more complete version of how I analyze our current situation, that would be a good place to go, and I would encourage people to do that.

I was a recon platoon sergeant in Vietnam. Vietnam is similar to the Iraqi situation and very dissimilar in other respects. In Vietnam, Russia and China were supporting the insurgency. So we had North Vietnam, Russia, and China. It made it very difficult for us to stamp the insurgency out, an insurgency that had been there for decades, was very well-organized. Iraq is very different from that. We do not have an external government with an awful lot of oomph, as China and Russia did at that time, and a great deal of commitment, as China and Russia had at that time, backing this insurgency. The insurgency is not something that is well-developed, but it could become so.

Here is the similarity: My job was to go out, find, engage the enemy. It was hard as heck to do. Iraqis, Iraqi troops, have a comparative advantage over any alien force, including Americans, that we simply cannot match. They speak the language. They read the street signs. They understand the culture. They can sort out friend from foe. Having their cooperation is critical to this endeavor. And, in part, I think one can understand why it is critical to the endeavor, because what we are trying to do is establish a representative government for the Iraqi people. One can force a dictatorship on folks, but one cannot force them to have a democracy. One cannot force people to be free. They have got to take it for themselves.

I think, as a country, we need to recognize that, that we have tremendous capabilities militarily, but there are some things that we just simply cannot do, and we cannot force freedom on people. They need to be coming forward and take it for themselves.

What does that involve? It involves Iraqis taking help from us. At least at this point they cannot do it on their own. They have got to step forward and be willing to cooperate with Americans. That involves taking risk. It is a tremendous benefit to us, and I think everybody here knows that. Right now, we are discovering about 50 percent of what they are calling IEDs now, improvised explosive devices. When I was in Nam, it was booby traps. We are discovering about 50 percent of those things, a little less than 50 percent, because people give us tips. They tell us where they are. Guess how we discover the rest of them? It is when our soldiers get hit by them, pretty much. More cooperation makes it safer for our soldiers. We find out where the ambushes are, where the booby traps are. We identify who the bad guys are. We are able to get them before they get us. But, very importantly, cooperation leads to people stepping forward, Iraqis stepping forward, taking up arms and going after the guerillas enthusiastically themselves. Simply having a police force, simply having an army, I do not care how many thousands of people, is not going to do it. They are going to have to be enthusiastic.

If I am an Iraqi, after 1991 when we encouraged the Shiites to rebel, then we withdrew and they were slaughtered, and some of my colleagues have been to the mass graves, as I have been, I am not going to step forward if I do not think the United States is committed.

So I encourage all of us to speak words of commitment, speak positively about the future of Iraq. We can differ on how we are going to get there, what is the best plan, when to bring in, how to bring in international folks, whether we can entice international folks, how we made mistakes in the past; but all of us should be talking about that. And, in addition, I think it is a good idea to go ahead and approve the President's request. It is a clear signal to Iraqis that we are committed. That is a big number, $20 billion for reconstruction.

The troops in Iraq told me repeatedly money is ammo, and what they meant by that was not that they did not have enough bullets or shells. What they meant by that is money enables them to do these reconstruction projects. These reconstruction projects build relationships and commitments with the Iraqis, lead to intelligence, lead to assistance, and ultimately lead to the commitment that we need from them if we are going to be successful here.

I have already spoken too long. The gentleman can tell I am passionate about this. I appreciate the gentleman's giving me an opportunity to speak, and I can tell my colleagues we would have tons of Democrats up here doing the same thing if we had just a little bit more notice.

Mr. SHADEGG. Mr. Speaker, I think the gentleman points out this is not partisan. This is largely a divide on who has been there and who has not been there, but I want to compliment the gentleman on one particular point, and that is I have been saying now for lo these many weeks that this has been on the discussion table, America, that the $20.3 billion for so-called reconstruction is as important to our military's success as the $60-some billion

for the military side, but the gentleman said it so eloquently. The real reason is, as the gentleman explained, and it certainly comes from his background having been in Vietnam. People, and that is if the Iraqi people are on our side, if they believe in us, if they want to help us, they are a resource that is absolutely invaluable. It is a resource that is worth ten times, in my opinion, $20 billion, if they come forward and say, ''There is an improvised explosive device right over here, and you need to go get it and get it out of there before it kills an American.''

Mr. MARSHALL. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman would yield, in fact, what would be better is if they just take care of it themselves.

Mr. SHADEGG. Absolutely.

Mr. MARSHALL. They do not come to us and say, ''There it is. Would you take care of it?'' They go take care of it themselves. Ultimately, they have to be responsible for the security of their country. We do not need to be doing that. We will be able to tell in the next 6 months or a year or something like that, I cannot put a time frame on it, whether or not we are actually going to be able to entice them to come forward, and by gosh, we ought not to shrink from that effort right now, not after what we have spent, not given the opportunity that we have got as a country to make an immeasurable improvement in our future security.

Mr. SHADEGG. And this reconstruction aid is a way for us to illustrate that we are on their side, and for them to come to realize we are on their side, and for them to decide they need to be on our side and not on the side of the terrorists who want to destroy that country and bring Saddam back or some other regime that would be anti-American and be in line with the rest of the countries in that part of the world where terrorism is brewing against it.

So I think the gentleman's comments are eloquent, and I thank him for his participation and for all of his remarks on the topic.

I now yield to the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. FLAKE). I think he feels passionately about this issue as well.

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Arizona for arranging this special order and for all of those who have spoken. The most important part about this tonight, I think, is to hear from so many who have been there, and given what we hear in the news, I think that is particularly important because just watching the news channels, we simply do not get a good picture of what is going on there. We get a much better feel from those who have just returned. So I have appreciated this opportunity to hear that.

And I appreciated the concern that was raised before that not only do we make sure that we do not impose more debt on the Iraqi people, but that we ensure that the other debt that is held already is forgiven. It is extremely important. When we look, estimates vary anywhere from $60 billion to $150 billion and some more as far as outstanding debt. A lot of it is held by countries that are friendly with us and are on our side here, most of them, in fact. And I would hope that the administration, and I know they will, would exert all the pressure they can on these countries to make sure that we are not the only ones who are leaving Iraq debt-free and with an opportunity to grow and progress, that they have a responsibility to do so as well. I think if we want the support of Americans in this endeavor, we have to make sure that our partners around the world participate in this regard as well.

I would also encourage the administration to do what it can to exercise with us in Congress, and I think we need to remind our colleagues continually here to exercise fiscal restraint domestically. The primary function of the Federal Government, we all know, is national security. That is our first and primary function. This is important, what we are doing here. And we need, because of the situation we are in with a large deficit and a big debt, to make sure that we husband our resources properly and spend them where we need to and where the Federal Government has priority, and that is in our national defense. Again, I just want to thank my colleague from Arizona and all of the others who have appeared so far, and I just appreciate learning more myself and also to lend my support to this effort.

Mr. SHADEGG. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his input.

In the light of the fact that I want to get all of the remaining Members here who want to speak, a chance to speak, let me yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. TOOMEY).

Mr. TOOMEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Arizona for yielding but also for organizing this special order.

I think this is extremely important. Others have said it more eloquently than I will. I think the fundamental reality here is we have an opportunity as well as a responsibility to win the peace just as we won the war, and the President's proposal is about winning the peace. The $20.3 billion that will go towards rebuilding Iraq is about one winning the peace in Iraq. It is about helping the Iraqi people build a viable society that will not be a threat to its neighbors and to us anymore.

The President's determined that this money is needed soon after the decades during which Saddam Hussein's tyranny and the wars that he has brought on the Iraqi people has made this need urgent, and I hope we will all fully support this President's request.

I do, however, want to introduce an idea that I think is perfectly consistent with funding this request, and that is an idea that goes to the heart of what we ought to be doing here in Congress, and I think that is establishing our priorities, funding our priorities, and tightening our belts and living with some fiscal discipline throughout our budgeting process.

Today just happens to mark the first day of a new fiscal year for the Federal Government, and, unfortunately, it is a fiscal year in which we are going to undoubtedly run a several hundred billion dollar deficit. Given that situation, I think it is all the more important that we exercise the fiscal discipline and identify the priorities that we need to.

□ 1930

This is a priority. So I have proposed, together with our colleague, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HENSARLING), that we fund this, and we fund this fully but, at the same time, over the next several years, we find offsetting spending reductions in other foreign aid proposals, programs, areas that are not as high a priority, frankly, as rebuilding Iraq; and we reduce that spending by an amount that will, over time, add up to the amount we are spending in Iraq so that at the end of the day, the American taxpayer is not paying any additional net new sum of money to do this vital function. I think it is about priorities.

There are a number of areas that I would not suggest that we reduce funding in our foreign aid budget. For instance, our aid to Israel and Egypt is fundamental and very important. For other reasons, diplomatic and embassy security. There are a number of programs we should not touch. But frankly, if we were to trim by about 15 percent a year for the next 4 years, the next 5 years, I correct myself, for the next 5 years, we could fully offset this critical $20.3 billion expenditure that we need to make for our own security and for the security of our troops in Iraq and for the sake of the security of that region.

So I appreciate the opportunity to speak tonight. Again, I am very supportive of the President's request, but I would urge my colleagues to join me in an effort to find the appropriate offsets over the next several years so that this vital priority gets funded and some less important foreign aid programs wait until we have the resources to do it.

Mr. SHADEGG. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his participation, and I want to express my appreciation for his thoughtful analysis of this issue. We do have to prioritize, and the suggestion he makes is a good one. As was mentioned earlier, today was the first day of school in Iraq; and in my visit there, we learned that America has done a great deal to rebuild the schools, although Americans will say, well, why are we rebuilding their schools and not ours. As I explained earlier, what we are doing is going in and painting existing school buildings.

But helping the people of Iraq educate their children is a critically important role for America. Again, it helps us to win over their hearts and minds and to do what our colleague, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. MARSHALL), said, and that is have the Iraqi

people side with us in this struggle. For example, for them to help our troops find an explosive device that is planted and intended to kill an American, they are the best ones who can do that. Education is a big part of that effort; and to discuss education in Iraq further, I yield to our colleague, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. KIRK).

Mr. KIRK. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Arizona. People have asked me what the trend is in Iraq, for better or for worse. I just returned from Iraq and the trend is for the better. The last time I was in Iraq, I was in uniform flying at 20,000 feet and the Iraqi Air Defense network was shooting at us. That force is now gone.

Now that the allies have won, I think we should follow several key principles. One, the war on terror must be fought overseas and not in America's cities. I come from Chicago, home to America's tallest building. The Sears Tower is still standing, and we want to keep it that way.

Second, we must finish the job in Iraq; otherwise, we condemn a future generation of young Americans to refight this war. If Desert Storm had a key lesson, it is that unfinished work ensures a new Middle East war. I think we should make sure that no future generation of Americans has to fight again, and that is why we need to finish what we are doing in Iraq.

Our goals must match the best ideals of Americans: an Iraq that does not invade another member of the U.N. each decade; an Iraq that governs by the consent of Iraqis; and an Iraq that cooperates with the United Nations, not confronts it. These are worthy missions and if we accept these missions, we must accept that we need to give our troops the tools they need to complete this job.

This is a difficult job. Let us look at Iraq under Saddam. Life expectancy in Iraq totaled just 58 years. Forty-seven percent of children did not attend school. Half of Baghdad's phones did not work. Iraq had the highest infant mortality rate in the Middle East. Seventy of 90 city water systems did not work. Saddam's health budget totaled 75 cents per person per year. There was only one newspaper, Uday Hussein's newspaper.

Under the allies now, the situation has changed. Ninety percent of Iraqi school kids started class today. Power generation is up 100 percent from 1,200 megawatts to 3,700. Five million school books were delivered, but these school books did not have the anti-U.S., anti-Semitic rhetoric. Now there are several dozen newspapers. I brought them back with me. These are newspapers that did not exist before May 1, like Azzaman, al-Balad, Al Mutamar, Ashraa, and even an English language newspaper, Iraq Today.

When I was in Iraq, I learned that 90 percent of Western reporters have left Iraq and for those young reporters who remain, their editors have told them that they are only interested in one story: injuries to Americans. We are not allowed to know about anything else happening in Iraq, but there are many developments in Iraq that we should know about.

I want to tell one last story. As my colleague from Arizona said, today is the first day of school in Iraq. And we, the United States Government, have prepared a school kit with the U.S. emblem on the front. This school kit is a book bag with pens, a calculator, school supplies, all intended for Iraqi children. The U.S. Government delivered 1.5 million of these school kits to the children of Iraq to ensure a good start with the school year. This was a start of the school year which did not include half of Iraqi children; it included 90 percent. They got a good start. Each day, Iraqi children, when they open their book bag, will see the U.S. emblem on the front. And that is a powerful message that they will remember: who helped them in their earliest years in class.

I think this represents some of the best ideals of America. It is showing that we are part of the future of this country. The situation is changing and changing for the better, and I thank my colleague for having this Special Order.

Mr. SHADEGG. Mr. Speaker, the gentleman illustrates how exactly we are going about winning the hearts and minds of the people of Iraq, and I thank him.

I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BURGESS).

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for putting on this Special Order, and I really feel privileged to be a part of this story tonight.

I too traveled to Iraq the last week in August. I came back to this country and turned on the national network news one night and the lead story was about Iraq. But honestly, I did not recognize the country that they were talking about, the country I had just left a few hours before. Perhaps General James Conway of the First Marine Expeditionary Force summed it up best when he said, ''Iraq is a vivid success story.'' Iraqis are concerned not that we will stay too long, but that we will leave too soon.

Let me talk for just a minute about health care in Iraq. Put this in the context that there was no health care infrastructure improvement in over 30 years. A member of the 385th Civil Affairs Brigade, Lieutenant Colonel Michael Keller, a good west Texas boy, had been to the medical library in Baghdad. He reported to me that within the medical library he could not find a medical text that had a copyright date later than 1984. Pharmaceutical agents that were manufactured in Iraq were useless; and, in fact, after the end of the combat phase, we relied heavily upon donations of medicine from the Kuwaitis. Saddam's per capita medical expenditures were 50 cent a person, compared now to $45 a person in the last 6 months.

Perhaps the most searing comparison was the opulence of the palaces compared with the dreadful poverty of the hospitals in Iraq, palaces that had marble veneers on every wall, two-story-high fireplaces, and hospitals that did not even have linoleum on the floors, hospitals that did not even have medical gases piped in.

Mr. Speaker, one of the points that was brought up earlier was the humanitarian disaster that did not occur in Iraq. Let me point out that if there had been 15,000 heat-related deaths in Iraq this summer, we would have been blistered in this country because of that. The 15,000 heat-related deaths occurred in France. We barely heard a word about it from our news media.

I know time is tight, so I yield back to the gentleman from Arizona.

Mr. SHADEGG. I thank the gentleman who brings a great perspective. I yield to the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. COLE).

Mr. COLE. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my colleague yielding to me.

I rise in very strong support of the supplemental appropriation that the President has requested. In doing so, I do not take the position, and I am sure my colleagues do not, that this supplemental appropriation will be free of scrutiny. We will look it over; and, frankly, we will check it out, and I have no doubt in the legislative process we will improve it greatly.

But I think as to the big question, the President has it right, and I think he has it right for three reasons. First, as has been alluded to several times by a number of speakers tonight, our own history gives us the lessons that we should be drawing in this particular case. In the First World War, we won the war, we participated with our allies, but we did not do anything to rebuild a shattered Europe afterwards. Less than a generation later, young Americans were dying again in the same fields, in the same countries, for the same cause. In the Second World War, we took a different approach and it was extraordinarily successful. We not only won the war, we won the peace, we secured Europe; and, in doing so, we set up a powerful example in Europe that saved that continent from the awful tyranny of Communism.

There is even a more recent example and, frankly, a less happy one that I think as Americans we ought to reflect upon. We were engaged indirectly and, to some extent, directly in the struggle in Afghanistan to push out the old Soviet Union, and we were successful in that. We walked away from the problem. And in walking away, we left a country that was destroyed, that was devastated, that was divided; and in less than a generation, frankly, in a matter of a few years, terrorists set in, took over and planned and launched a deadly attack on the United States that we have lived with the consequences of. We should learn from our own history.

The second reason I support this supplemental is, quite frankly, the situation in Iraq. There is no question Iraq is a potentially rich country, but it is not rich today. The oil revenues, the revenues that the people of Iraq generate from their hard labor and work need to be reinvested in Iraq and will be reinvested in Iraq. The reality is there is simply not enough wealth to be created to get the job done and to get the job done in a timely, expeditious way, a way that is good for Iraq and, frankly, in a time frame that makes it possible for our own people to leave as quickly as possible, which is what we want and what they want.

Finally, and most powerfully, I think I favor this resolution simply because I support our American troops that are on the ground there. We have asked a generation of young Americans to perform a dangerous and difficult task.

I serve on the Committee on Armed Services, Mr. Speaker; and every single military person that has come to visit with us has told us this is an important part of winning the war, securing the peace, and that these dollars, particularly spent on civilian projects and rebuilding and reconstruction in Iraq, enhance the security of American forces that are deployed. I want American troops to be looked upon as what they are: liberators and benefactors. I do not want them to be regarded as conquerors, occupiers, and exploiters; and I think the latter will be the case.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think this is a historic opportunity. All of us have a responsibility, I think, to do what previous generations of Americans have done: rise up, meet this challenge.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I just want to thank the gentleman for his leadership. He has not only spoken eloquently tonight, but I too heard the gentleman repeatedly in groups, caucuses, and organizations; and the gentleman is doing a fantastic job.

Mr. SHADEGG. Mr. Speaker, rather than closing, my colleague, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. CHOCOLA), is here. I know he feels passionately about this. I guess we have 15 seconds left. The gentleman led his own Special Order on this issue last night, and I yield to the gentleman to close.

Mr. CHOCOLA. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman very much, and I think the fact that we only have 15 seconds left, we have had so many Members here tonight to tell the real story.

Mr. SHADEGG. Mr. Speaker, I do not think I have ever seen a Special Order with this many speakers.

Mr. CHOCOLA. Mr. Speaker, the fact that we have so many Members who want to share the real story of Iraq I think speaks well, for the facts are that there is great hope, there is great optimism. Supporting the President's request is the right thing to do. We have one chance to get it right.

I thank the gentleman very much for hosting this evening's discussion.

Mr. SHADEGG. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman. It is clear to me that we need to win over the hearts and minds of the Iraqi people. As our colleague, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. MARSHALL), said from the other side of the aisle here tonight, we absolutely must have them on our side. This is the way to do it. I urge my colleagues to join us in supporting the President's full request.

COMMEMORATION OF THE 43RD ANNIVERSARY OF THE INDEPENDENCE OF CYPRUS

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

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I actually did not come tonight to discuss Iraq or to respond to what my colleagues said on the Republican side, but I could not help but when one of my colleagues got up and showed that book bag and I think suggested that there were over a million Iraqi children that were going to receive that very nice book bag, I just could not help but think, well, what about all of the American children that went to school; I do not remember any of them getting a free book bag.

So part of the problem is that when the Republicans talk about all of these wonderful things that are going to be given to the Iraqis, they seem to forget that many of these things, whether it is education or health care needs, are not provided to our own citizens here in the United States.

But in any case, Mr. Speaker, this evening I want to mark the 43rd anniversary of the independence of the Republic of Cyprus. Since the end of 80 years of British rule in 1960, this remarkable island of Cyprus and its people have endured great hardships and great triumphs. Despite being divided for the past 29 years, Cypriots have not given up hope to one day see the end of the Turkish occupation and the reunification of the island. I recently traveled to Cyprus in August; and I firmly believe that all people, Greek, Turkish, Armenian and all of the inhabitants of the island, want to see the end of the intransigence of the Turkish leaders and greet each other as fellow citizens once again.

As we all know, Mr. Speaker, on July 20 of 1974, Turkey unilaterally invaded the sovereign nation of Cyprus, resulting in the ethnic cleansing of the northern third of the island of Greek Cypriots.

□ 1945

This action was, and continues to be, widely condemned by the international community. And dozens of U.N. resolutions have been passed about this illegal occupation. And the European Union has made it clear that Turkey's entrance into the European Union eventually will be based in part by its ability and willingness to settle the situation in Cyprus.

Now, I have to say many of us know that this past year there seems to have been an opportunity to reunify the island and even the Turkish occupation of the northern part of Cyprus because Cyprus, it was finally agreed, would enter the European Union on its own. In fact, the accession to the European Union is scheduled to take place next May in 2004. In April of this year the decision was finally made by the European Union to accept Cyprus as a member.

The United Nations under Secretary General Annan put together a plan for the reunification of Cyprus. And back in the early part of this year, there were negotiations between the Turkish occupied government in the northern part of Cyprus and the government in Nicosia, the Greek government which represent the entire island as well as the Turkish government. And we were hopeful that there would be some agreement on a reunification plan before the decision was made in April that Cyprus would join the European Union. It certainly made sense to have Cyprus join the European Union as a unified island. But unfortunately because of the intransigence by the Turkish-Cypriot leader, Ralph Denktash, those talks led to nowhere. And everyone agreed, not only the Secretary General of the U.N. but also our government agreed and specifically stated that the reason why the talks broke down and no unification plan under the auspices of the U.N. was adopted was because the leader of the Turkish Cypriots, Mr. Denktash, refused to budge and refused to effectuate any real negotiation according to the U.N. plan.

Mr. Speaker, I wanted to share my outrage over a statement made by Mr. Denktash yesterday. Frustrated by the unity of the international community identifying him as the obstacle to reunification, he compared Secretary General Kofi Annan's plan for the reunification of Cyprus with the genocide committed by President Milosevic of Yugoslavia. Now, that is an outrage in itself. Here is the U.N. under the Secretary General trying to bring peace to a divided island, trying to reunify the island for all its people, and that is compared to the genocide by the President of Yugoslavia?

For Mr. Denktash, a man that has repeatedly flouted the will of the U.N. and his own citizenry, this ridiculous claim is, I think, the most egregious action that he has taken so far. It is not enough for him, it seems, to operate outside international norms; he must now accuse the U.N. of committing the worst of crimes against humanity.

Mr. Speaker, I sent a letter to Mr. Denktash today which I would insert into the RECORD.

OCTOBER 1, 2003.

Mr. RAUF DENKTASH,
Washington, DC.

Mr. DENKTASH: I was shocked to learn of your comments yesterday in an interview with the Anadolu Agency that compared United Nations Secretary General Kofi