

rebuild. We are not talking about war damage. That is a tiny fraction of the cost. This is a guide to the gold-plated construction and war profiteering that the administration has put forward for Iraq.

There is no sum too great. Six billion dollars, not to repair the damage to their electrical grid but to update their 1950s and 1960s boilers and generators to 2003 standards and all the other disinvestments. Six billion dollars the American taxpayers will be asked to borrow to give them the state-of-the-art energy grid when lights are blinking out in this country and our rates are going up.

No idea is too tangential. The Bush Administration wishes the Iraqis to have wireless Internet. They did not have it before the war. I do not think they even had laptops. Maybe a few of the elite did. But they are going to have it after the war. They are going to have wireless Internet paid for, money borrowed, in the name of the American taxpayer.

And then, finally, nothing is too wasteful when it comes to this administration. Mr. Bremer, the pro-consul, signed a contract to feed the 25 members of the Iraqi Governing Council handpicked by Mr. Bremer and the President for a mere \$5,000 per day.

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Apparently the food was going to be flown in on an executive jet from some exclusive restaurant in Washington, DC or New York. I do not know how they could spend \$5,000 a day for 25 people. The Iraqi Council canceled that and generally said, "You know, when it comes to reconstruction or feeding ourselves or doing all these other things, help us do it, and we can do it for 10 cents on the dollar." They are aghast at what we are wasting.

The major point is when it comes to this administration, no sum is too much when it comes to war profiteering and gold-plated construction in Iraq. But it is too easy for them to neglect our troops.

We find out that 30,000 of our troops lack body armor. They have been issued flak vests from the Vietnam era. It will not stop an AK-47 bullet. It would cost \$15 million to equip those troops with vests, but the Pentagon, which got \$79 billion last spring to equip the troops in the war and had a budget of nearly \$400 billion last year, said it could not find within that budget, \$15 million to give our young men and women those vests. So now, in order to equip those young men and women with the vests they should have had before they went there, they are asking for \$300 million. What is this? Yes, \$15 million worth of vests are needed, and the Pentagon said they want a \$300 million appropriation to do that.

But it does not stop there. Some of our troops are over there in their jungle fatigues. Many of them are driving Humvees that have either canvas side

curtains or sheet metal doors, which do not do real well with AK-47 bullets or rocket-propelled grenades. Now, they finally came to the conclusion that we should buy some armored Humvees for those troops.

The boots, the substandard boots they purchased are wearing out. Some of the troops are wearing jungle fatigues. We cannot afford those desert fatigues for everybody. A \$400 billion budget, \$79 billion last spring, another \$79 billion now. Some of those people are going to have to go over there in their jungle fatigues, wear that Vietnam era flak jacket, drive around in Humvees with canvas side curtains.

But yesterday the Bush administration decided they are going to get this all right and fix it. So they appointed Condoleezza Rice to oversee Mr. Bremer, the pro-consul in Iraq, and see if they can do these things better in the future.

I have a suggestion for Pro-Consul Bremer and his overseer, Ms. Rice: Why do not they go over there, looking like a target, wearing jungle fatigues, and wear a Vietnam era flak jacket and drive a Humvee with canvas side curtains, instead of going around in their armor-plated Suburbans, surrounded by Bradley Fighting Vehicles with helicopters overhead, and they say they have been there and are doing what the troops need.

The troops are not getting what they need, and we are wasting billions to rebuild that country.

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### LETTERS FROM HOME REGARDING IRAQ

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

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, 165 years ago, conservatives in the House of Representatives passed a rule to pro-

hibit and ban the discussion of the debate of slavery in the House of Representatives. Then Congressman, former President, John Quincy Adams, strongly objecting to that policy passed by the conservatives that ran this House of Representatives, came to the floor night after night, week after week, disputing that rule and reading letters from his constituents, mostly women in Massachusetts, who could not vote, sharing letters from his constituents with the House of Representatives and with the American people protesting that prohibition on that debate.

Today, the Congress is considering other very important legislation, other legislation and investigations, something the House of Representatives conservative leadership does not want to allow, and that is debate on how this \$87 billion will be spent and accounted for, whether or not the Bush administration told the truth when leading this Congress and country into war with Iraq and how we are going to take care of the troops.

I am again tonight, as I have night after night since late July, reading letters from my constituents, because conservative Republican leadership in this House will not allow us to debate these issues and will not do the investigation that the country and so many of my constituents are demanding. I am reading letters from them tonight about the troops, about the lack of accountability on the \$87 billion and the \$1 billion a week we are already spending.

Jane from Akron, Ohio, writes, "Do not put good money after bad. I implore you to look at the U.S. servicemen and women in Iraq and Afghanistan and see that they are treated decently in terms of danger pay, education for their dependents and family support issues. The Bush administration is certainly not supporting the troops with decency and respect."

She is talking about some of the same things my friend the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) just talked about.

Evelyn from Akron, Ohio, writes, "This administration has bankrupted the country. Please vote against the \$87 billion unless the people responsible are held accountable."

She talks about, as many other letters have, the fact that we are spending \$1 billion a week in Iraq. One-third of that money has gone to private contractors, many of them unbid contracts. The largest contract has gone to the Halliburton company, which Vice President DICK CHENEY was CEO of until he was running for Vice President, and she and others talk about the fact that Mr. CHENEY is still receiving \$13,000 every month from Halliburton, as Halliburton is receiving hundreds of millions in unbid contracts, hundreds of millions of our tax dollars.

Wes of Strongsville, Ohio, writes, "It is beyond belief that this administration has gone so long, nearly 5 months