

So I urge people, regardless of their party affiliation, to look at the benefits that are available to you in your State, in your area. Look at it with your loved ones. Look at it with your children or grandchildren because there may be some significant savings, some significant benefit to you.

There is also a benefit to the program at large. If you treat your disease more effectively, if you prevent disease effectively overall, that disease process is going to cost less, and that is good for the country as a whole.

I have to tell the gentleman from Georgia that I just cannot let this hour go by without asking one additional time for some type of sane liability reform in this country. We have had good liability reform in Texas, so why does it matter to me with the rest of the country? Why do I even care, since Texas is taken care of? The reason I care is because the cost of defensive medicine in this country in the Medicare program alone probably approaches \$30 billion a year. That is almost the cost of this prescription drug program.

If we could reform our liability system, this program costs us nothing. It is the right thing to do and we should do that this year. And I yield back to the gentleman.

Mr. GINGREY. I thank the gentleman from Texas for his leadership not only on the Medicare Modernization and Prescription Drug Act, but also on medical liability. He has been a stalwart supporter of the Health Act that we have passed in this body so many times over the last few years.

Mr. Speaker, in the remaining time that we have I wanted to make a couple of additional comments. We got some good news here recently in regard to the COLA, the Social Security COLA, which is about a 4.6 percent increase next year because of the Consumer Price Index. That is good news for our seniors. That is about a \$40 per month, typically, increase in that Social Security paycheck.

Now, it is true that the premium for Medicare part B, even though that premium only covers 25 percent of the true cost, will also have an increase next year of about \$10. That \$10 from \$40 leaves \$30 still remaining in that COLA. And even for the seniors who get no supplemental help, that \$30 will pretty much cover the premiums for Medicare part B. In fact, it may more than cover them, because, as I said earlier, because of the marketplace, because of competitiveness, pharmacy benefit managers and companies that are going to offer the Medicare prescription drug discount program, we are hearing premiums as low as \$20 a month.

And another thing, Mr. Speaker, that we need to say before we conclude the hour, because we have heard so much negative rhetoric about this tremendous gap in coverage, the hole in the donut and the program not being nearly good enough, is that we will have an

opportunity to reduce those costs by some companies now with a slightly increased premium, maybe as much as \$40, possibly \$50 a month, so that there will be no gap in coverage. It will close that hole in the donut completely. So people will have the option of paying a little bit more and having coverage without any gap.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, I want to again remind our seniors and ask our colleagues to remind their constituents that beginning November 15 through May 15, 2006, a 6-month window of opportunity will be the time to sign up for the Medicare part D prescription drug benefit. Look at the program and compare. If you have something else, make a comparison, and then make a decision. And make that decision early. Because if you do, then that coverage starts January 1. If you wait until after the program starts there may be a month gap before that coverage kicks in. And if you wait beyond May 15, then there will be a surcharge. So it is very important to do it in a timely fashion.

I thank my colleagues for their attention, and I thank the leadership for giving me this opportunity to discuss something as vitally important as this Medicare prescription drug benefit for our needy seniors.

IRAQ WATCH

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. JINDAL). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. MCDERMOTT) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. MCDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, I come to the well tonight as part of our continuing Iraq watch to talk with the Members and the folks who are watching about the issues that face us in Iraq.

During the last few months, we have had everything sort of arranged so that we should not pay any attention to the chaos and the deaths and everything else. We were told again and again that the democracy train was on the track and it was going down the track. And a big date was on Sunday, this past weekend, when the Iraqis would vote on a referendum adopting a constitution.

Now, that constitution appears to have been ratified by the Iraqi people. But when I came to this House many years ago, there was an old Texan here who I came to know and respect a great deal. He was the ranking member and then was the second and then finally the chairman of the Committee on Banking and Financial Services. He once handled a very contentious committee of the House in a way that was very respectful and very understanding and gave everybody, Republicans and Democrats, a chance to say whatever they wanted. And, boy, it took forever, but he was always in control.

At the end of it, I congratulated him. I told him I thought I had never seen a committee handled more masterfully.

The Committee on Banking and Financial Services at that point was the largest committee of the Congress. There were 50 Members. This man's name was Henry Gonzalez. He was from San Antonio. His son now serves here. Well, Mr. Gonzalez said to me, Jim, I learned two things from an old guy in San Antonio. One of them is, never try and lasso a cow running downhill. Let him run out until he is tired. And the second one is, it is always too soon to congratulate yourself.

I think it is useful for us tonight to think a little bit about that old Texas aphorism as we consider what happened in Iraq in the referendum for the new constitution. This is a constitution that was voted on by people and was created by people who were selected by us, basically. We put them together, molded them and talked to them and kept shaping what was going on inside the organization.

There are three groups of people basically in Iraq, although there are some others, but there are the Shi'a and the Sunnis. Those are two sects of the Muslim faith. And then there are the Kurds, who also happen to be Sunni believers in Mohammed. Now, those three groups of people have all different interests.

The Sunnis have been in charge of Iraq for many, many years. Going back to the end of the First World War, Sunnis have generally been the leadership. In fact they have been the leadership in the country during that entire period. And the Shi'a, although more numerous, have never been in charge because it has not been a democracy. It is very obvious that a minority people, the Sunnis, were running the country. And it was obviously something that was a real irritant to the Shi'a. And in the midst of this, the Kurds got totally forgotten. The Kurds simply were pushed aside.

So when it came time to write a constitution, the United States did something which I think you can understand the thinking that might have gone into it, and that is that if you want to control Iraq, pick the largest group. They are not a majority, but pick the largest group and add one of these other groups to them and that will give you a majority. And if you can get them to see things the way the United States wanted them to see it, we could then drive a constitution which would be acceptable and be voted on by the 18 provinces.

Now, they did that. The Shi'a and the Kurds together wrote a constitution, and it is an interesting constitution because it sets up this kind of a situation. It says that the Sunnis can make their own state and the Kurds can make their own state and the Shi'a can make their own state and they will be loosely connected at the center, in Baghdad, by a federation. So there will be a federal style of government like we have, except for the fact that states will have way more power than the federal government does. Each state can

go its own way. If they want to use Muslim law, sharia law, in the Shi'a area, they can put that into place. If they do not want to use that in the Sunni area, then they do not have to put it in place. And if the Kurds want to do something entirely different, they can do something entirely different. So it is a very, very weak bringing together of this country.

Now, one of the issues that is a contentious issue, of course, is the control of their natural resources. Iraq is a very wealthy country. It has oil. One of our diplomats said, Iraq is important because it swims on a sea of oil. The oil is under the area where the Kurds live and where the Shi'a live, so they can pump the oil in their little area and have money to make a nice country. And the Kurds can pump oil and make a nice little country for themselves. But the Sunnis are left out in the cold, because there is no bringing all the money to Baghdad and deciding it should be distributed equally among the three. There is no requirement that that happen. They do not have to give anything to the federal government. They can make their own way.

So now you can begin to see why the Sunnis might be a little bit reluctant to get involved in this new Iraqi government, why they opposed the issue of the constitution, because there was no protection for the minority.

One of the things about our Constitution is that it is designed to protect the minority. That is why we have a Bill of Rights. The government, the President, the Speaker, the Senate cannot run over people in this country because every citizen has a Constitution with a Bill of Rights which says what they are entitled to.

□ 2100

If you do not feel like you are getting it, you can go to court and exercise it in the courts and have the courts enforce your rights to free speech or ability to live without search and seizure, or your right to bear arms. All of these are rights in our Constitution.

This Iraqi Constitution has none of those rights for the minority. So there is nothing guaranteed to the Sunni or to the Shia or to the Kurds. In fact, the Constitution was written so that the 19 provinces in Iraq, if any three of them have a two-thirds "no" vote, the Constitution would have failed. It would not have been ratified. They would have had to have gone back and come up with another Constitution that made better sense or had more public support.

Now, in an election like this you would say, well, this is a free and fair election. We are going to let everybody vote. And we basically walled off the whole country. They walled off each province. They put a curfew on. They simply restricted the movement of people throughout the entire period and had some very interesting results.

Now, when Saddam Hussein was president of Iraq, he won with 100 per-

cent of the vote and everybody kind of laughed; that is interesting. That must have been some election. Nobody believes 100 percent of the vote. In the Soviet Union when there was 100 percent, you knew the fix was in. There was no real opposition.

What has happened is now that the vote is over and we now look at this election through the eyes of some analysts, the first one is in Time magazine of October 18, today, and there are allegations of ballot stuffing that make this election tainted in the eyes of the Sunni. More than 90 percent of the voters in many Shiite and Kurdish provinces were reported to have voted for the proposed Constitution. In Anbar, a Sunni area, the numbers were equally high. In the swing provinces, the numbers simply look implausible. When you look at the number of votes that they say are there and how many people are supposed to be there, it does not look like things were as they might seem.

So from the eyes of the Sunnis, this is an illegitimate election. It did not ratify the Constitution as far as they are concerned. It is stolen.

Now, what do you think is going to be the reaction to that? What do you think the reaction will be to that? Well, one does not need to be a political analyst or read the New York Times or Washington Post to realize if people think the election has been stolen, they are not going to respect the results and they are very likely going to continue the insurrection.

I think everybody who looks at this situation from the very start said that if this passes, given the way it was put together and given the way the vote came out, there was no way a victory could be declared by the passage of this Constitution.

Now, I am sure the White House and others will come down and it will be in the press tomorrow about how wonderful it is, they have taken another step down the road toward democracy. Well, they have taken another step. I do not know if it is toward democracy. Other papers suggest what is coming is chaos. If you look at the San Francisco Chronicle of today, this says the government is facing a big challenge. Many questions are still to be resolved. Now why is that?

Well, this Constitution was a kind of a moving target. It was not like they wrote it and then they printed up a million or 5 million or 10 million copies and sent them out all over the country to people. They never got it finally written, so most people voted for something today that they had never had a chance to read. They might have heard about it in the mosque or in the street or somewhere, but they never saw and read a copy of it.

One of the things that was happening, one of the groups of Sunni people or politicians, they decided they would go with the Constitution. They were going to support it, but they had a meeting and they talked about some

amendments. They needed six or eight or 12 or 14 amendments. Who knows what they wanted. Nobody knows. I do not know. Nobody knew in Iraq. Certainly the average person in the street who voted on this never knew what it was about. And so what this says is the Constitution, they put an amendment in at the last without meeting in body. They just stuck it in there that says they can have major changes in this Constitution before the next election, which is supposed to occur in December. This Constitution was supposed to set up the procedures for them to elect a real constitutional body, a real parliament in December. The one that they have now is called the interim. That is the one we kind of appointed. The fact is that no one knows what is going on.

Now, for PR purposes, our government will say we have taken a further step, we have now moved forward. No one should be surprised. No one in the United States should be surprised if we continue to have our young men and women die. Five of them died the day after the election. Almost 2,000 Americans have died already. We have spent somewhere in excess of \$200 billion on this war.

When you think about it, and probably some Members have forgotten, remember when we were told we would not have to pay for this war. When they start pumping oil, the Iraqis will have enough money that they can do all of their own reconstruction. They do not have enough oil pumping to keep the lights on. Most cities do not have lights on but about 2 hours a day. Many do not have fresh water. This is after the United States, with all of our military power and all of our political clout and everything else, has been unable to bring order to this country.

Now, the President will tell you, and I can almost make the speech for him, Well, this election went off very well, and it is because the Iraqis that we trained as policemen and soldiers were out in the streets and things were quiet.

Mr. Speaker, there were Americans standing with machine guns standing prepared to back them up in every situation. This was not an Iraqi-run election; this was an American-run election.

The analysts do not see an end to this. There has been an average of 570 attacks per day, despite the apparent approval on Sunday. Think about it, is that country at peace? Are these people satisfied with what is going on if there are 570 attacks per day?

If we had one attack, we would think the sky was falling, much less having a bomb going off here and there and everywhere all over the place, 570 a day. If we had that going on in this country, we would probably be doing a whole lot different in this body than we are.

We had the mayor of New York who apparently did not want to go to a debate, and suddenly there is a big terror alert in New York and they are searching people's bags. And then it comes

out people are not even sure about this information and where the information came from. You realize the use of fear continues in this country on a daily basis. That is what is going on in Iraq. They are creating fear everywhere.

I was over in Amman, Jordan, a few weeks ago. You come there and you realize that there are no hotel rooms. There are a million Iraqis living in Amman, the capital of Jordan. Anybody with money and the ability to get out of Iraq gets out because it is so unsafe. It is so unstable. It is hard to live there with no electricity, no water. It does not make any difference if you have money. If there is no water in the pipes, you do not have water. It does not make any difference if you have money, if there is no electricity. You may have your own generator, but that is a tough way to live with a generator; and then you have to worry about getting gasoline for it. They have a shortage of gasoline. They are importing gasoline into Iraq because their own refining capacity is not sufficient to meet the needs of the country.

When you look at that situation and say, we are going to have another election in 3 months and then we will have a duly elected parliament and then we can go away, folks, what is happening here is the American people are being taken along 1 week at a time. Wait one more week; I can see a light at the end of the tunnel. You are going to see and hear from people that somehow if we just last a little longer, we are going to make it. Some people have accused me of having a certain bias, and perhaps I do.

There are columnists, and this is in *The Washington Post*. This is George Will's column. George Will and I have one thing in common: we are both Cubs fans; otherwise I do not think we agree on very much. But George Will wrote a very interesting article today. His title is "Standing Up a Constitution." Like you bring in an 18-wheeler with a constitution on the back of it and you push it off and stand it up, now it is in place, we have had elections, and so we must now have a constitution.

He says the first civilian leader of the U.S. occupation, retired Army General Jay Garner, and you may remember General Garner only lasted a couple of months. Well, the reason was he laid out his timetable, reconstruct the utilities, stand up the ministries, appoint an interim government, write and ratify a constitution and hold elections. He said there would be a functioning government in Iraq within 90 days. Ninety days. This was just after Baghdad had fallen. He was the governor, and he was going to run the place. He made this prediction we would get out of there in 90 days.

That was never going to happen. We knew it was not going to happen. The people in the White House did not want it to happen that way. They immediately pulled him and put Bremer in there. The first thing that Bremer did was to disband the army. Think about

this for a minute. You have 500,000 people in the army. Are all of those people evil? Are they all bad? Are they all members of the Baath Party? Probably not. The sergeants and the privates and the lieutenants. Yes, the generals and the colonels perhaps. But what Bremer did with one swipe of the pen, he wiped out the entire army so there is no pay. Everybody has to go home to their village disgraced. They cannot take care of their families, cannot pay their bills. What he did was put 500,000 Iraqis underground with a rifle and a grudge. This insurgency that we are seeing, this civil war that we are watching, actually, and it is going to get worse, is one that is simply being driven by decisions made by the United States.

Now what George Will says in this article is that we should not get too excited about a big turnout. He said the fact that people voted in tribal factions enmeshes them in the democratic process and its civilities. They voted, and so now they are stuck with it. Perhaps, but he says in 1929 through 1933, the turnout in German elections was especially high because so were the stakes. In Germany's turmoil, the issues included which mobs would control the streets and which groups would be persecuted. In Iraq's turmoil, the issues are exactly the same.

□ 2115

What followed that period when Hitler came to power was the same chaos that he came out of and put a hold on Germany.

What is going to happen here? We think this constitution is going to stand up? We think that somehow they are going to sit down there when members of the parliament are being killed, when members of the parliament cannot leave the country because they do not dare to leave because they do not know if they will be able to get back in? They simply are a nonfunctional government. This is a failed state.

And Mr. Will finishes by saying: "When America's Constitution was ratified in 1789, federalism was an unfinished fact. It still is but today's adjustments of States rights and responsibilities are" usually "minor matters" that are handled out here in the floor. We basically know what the Federal Government does and we know what the State Government, and it has taken us 200 years to work all that out.

"If the Federal Government of 1789 had not grown in strength," and it did not start strong but it gradually got stronger and stronger, "relative to the States, far more than most ratifiers of the Constitution anticipated or desired . . ." They never thought the Federal Government would be as strong in this country as it was when we started. But they had a mechanism by which that could happen. This constitution that we gave the Iraqis prevents that from happening. What we have done is basically we have divided the country up on a religious basis or ethnic basis. We have not done anything to create na-

tionhood in Iraq. We say we have, but the acts, the things that we have forced down their throat as a constitution basically have not worked.

"So," he says, "the question today, which will be answered in coming years by the political process framed by Iraq's new constitution, is whether the constitution 'stands up' a Nation or presages the partitioning of it, perhaps by the serrated blade of civil war."

He is really saying this question is not over by any stretch of the imagination. There are many analysts, when we read the newspapers worldwide, particularly in the Middle East, who believe that we are going to have 18 separate states. All these states will have their own power, and they will fight war among themselves, and they will always be weak. Some people say that is exactly what the United States wanted. They did not want a strong Iraq. That is why we had to take out Saddam Hussein. We had to take out this strongman who had this country and he controlled it.

Nobody controls Iraq today. I do not care how many soldiers we put there now. We do not control it. We go and control this area, and then we walk and we go over to this area, and suddenly the place that we controlled a couple weeks ago is back right where it was when we went there in the first place. So what is now developing in this country is continued chaos.

Now, there are other articles in today's paper. Many of my colleagues are responsible for all kinds of things in this country, and it is not easy to have a full chance to read all the newspapers, so that is why I am coming out here to talk about this, to talk about what is in the newspaper.

This is a column written by a doctor who is the chief executive of the Iraqi National Movement, which is a Sunni political party. This is a Sunni political leader, in the *New York Times* in today's editorial page, and his name is Hatem Mukhlis. And the title of his article is that we are "Voting 'Yes' to Chaos." From the point of view of the Iraqi Sunni, this vote that happened a couple days ago, what he says is, "The Iraqi constitution, if it passes, will break the country apart." That is not it might break the country apart or I am fearful that it will break the country apart. It will break the country apart.

Now, when people are of this level of political understanding, we are not talking about a taxicab driver that somebody stopped and asked him. This guy is a political leader in the country, and he does not say that is what he wants. That is not what he wants. But what he is implying is that this is a situation that we have created, and he says, "Anyone who thinks that such a constitution would calm the insurgency has probably been spending more time than he should have reading Alice in Wonderland." The guy obviously knows a little bit about America. He probably was educated here. One would

be surprised how many Iraqi leaders were educated in United States universities.

When I went to dinner in Amman, I was at a table with 12 people, of which seven had been educated in the United States and four had been educated in Great Britain. These people are not uneducated or unaware of the ways of the world. They simply know the place in which they live and the people with whom they live. They know the history. They know the way Iraqis think. They know Arab customs. They know what can happen, how people will think about a given situation, and they know that if we put this thing together and say, well, anybody can go off and run their own state, that some are going to go off and run their own state. There is just not any question about it.

And when the country starts coming apart, what is the United States going to do? Are we are going to stand back and say, well, okay, they can have Shi'a country over here and a Sunni country over here and a Kurdish country over here, it is all right with us? Is that what we set out to do when we went in there?

We certainly have not gotten what we thought we were going to get, although we now have passed a constitution. It got so bad, there was so much fear in our government that we were not going to be able to pass this constitution that they went in in the last couple of weeks trying to change the way the votes were going to be counted. They said it has to be two-thirds of those registered to vote. Not two-thirds of those who voted, but it has to be two-thirds of those registered. If they have got 100 people registered, two-thirds is 66. But if 54 of them vote, how do they get 66 against even if everybody voted no? It has to be two-thirds of those 54 who vote. And there was so much uproar over this change that we put through in the days just before the election, the United Nations came in and said if they do that that is not going to be a fair election. We were worried up to the very last minute whether or not we could control what was going on there and have it come out the way we wanted to have it come out.

Now, this Iraqi says: "Rather than unifying Iraqis, this constitution would only increase the rift between our ethnic and religious groups. It could also lead to the Balkanization of the nation, as the 18 states coalesce into three superstates, with the Sunnis trapped between the Shiites to the south and Kurds to the north. Hatred toward those Iraqis who return to Iraq on the backs of American tanks will be nurtured. Inevitably this would lead to more hatred towards the United States, since even though it is the American troops that are preserving Iraq's unity, it was the invasion that has led to this chaos."

We are in a no-win situation at this point. The President cannot win this. Unfortunately, and I think it is unfor-

tunate for all of us, not just Democrats, it is unfortunate for Republicans, the President has said we are going to stay the course. This course has led into more and more and more problems. And it is almost impossible to imagine that the President is going to let this happen right on through the next election.

Images of the Americans leaving off the roof of a hotel in Saigon in 1975 are not out of the realm of believability for this particular situation in Iraq today because the American people want to have their own security taken care of. What they saw with all this money wasted in Iraq was that there was not enough money to take care of the problems of people of Louisiana, Alabama, and Mississippi.

Somebody said that the loans that they give in Iraq are free but the ones that are given in Mississippi for reconstruction have interest. So somebody down there said, What I am going to do, I am going to go over to Iraq and try to pay it off, get my money in Iraq and bring it home. The point being that the American people have realized that the wasting of our resources abroad is not what we elected the President to do. He promised us in 2004 he would protect us, and yet when a hurricane comes FEMA does not exist. He is reduced to telling some guy, when there is a mess everywhere, Gee, Brownie, you did a good job. Brownie did a terrible job. He did no job really. And this war is sapping our energy as well as sapping the goodwill that we have in the world. In fact, it is building more and more hatred out there.

Now, the solution, at least if people have been reading the newspapers, there are two other things the President can do to make things look better. One of them is to distract us. I mean anybody who has ever seen a magician operate knows that they put their fingers up here and snap their fingers so people will pay attention to what they are doing up there, but with this right hand they are doing something else somewhere. They are pulling something from someplace. The distraction in the political process that this government has used has been a very common one.

Last night I was watching a DVD about the Vietnam era, and one of the things that happened during the Vietnam era when things were not going well in this country, there began to be a message from the White House that this was not being caused by Vietnamese. This was being caused by fighters coming from outside. They were coming from the Ho Chi Minh Trail, and we had to attack Laos and we had to attack Cambodia because if we did not, the fighters would be coming from the outside.

When I was watching this DVD last night, I thought to myself we could take those lines and pick them up and put them into the mouths of the President and his advisers today around the issue of foreign fighters. Iraq, they tell

us, is not caused by Iraqis. It is caused by those people who were coming from outside. They are the ones. If we could just stop them. Why do the Syrians not close their border?

I am sorry? They mean that if the Syrians would close the border, suddenly this would be all over? Is that what they are telling us? His own generals say that not more than 10 percent of the people fighting in Iraq are from outside. It may be as low as 4 or 5 percent. It is a very small number of people. This is not being caused from the outside. However, if we could start some kind of border fight, they had one, a short one, last weekend up on the border with Iraq, then maybe if we could get something going on on the border there, we could get people thinking that must be what it is. The President is right, there are too many people coming in from the outside.

It is not true. It is not true. There is no evidence of that. The people who really know and who tell us the truth say it is not happening.

□ 2130

They produced a letter the other day. They said we have got a letter from Osama bin Laden's second in command to the guy running al Qaeda in Iraq. If you read today's newspaper, there is all kind of doubts about whether that letter is even legitimate. It was picked up about 3 or 4 months ago. Certain parts of it do not make any sense. It is simply very, very unlikely that that is a legitimate letter from Osama bin Laden. He is asking for 100,000 American dollars in that letter. I mean, come on.

What are we talking about here? I mean, none of that holds together, but it did happen that that letter came up just at the time of the election. Days before the election, here comes a letter.

Every Member of the United States Congress who has been in a campaign in their life at any time has had the sort of Thursday surprise of election before Tuesday. It always happens. They come out with something about that you killed your favorite billy goat in the backyard with an axe or something. Then, after the election's over, it turns out it was not true. Well, here is another one of these things that is coming, and people have to say I wonder if we can believe anything that comes out of this administration.

They will not let us have hearings here. They will not let us get anybody in here to find out what is going on in Abu Ghraib prison. They will not let us have hearings on the issues that threaten our image in the world. We say that we care about human rights, but then you look at what we do at Guantanamo and what we do at Abu Ghraib, and you have to ask yourself why would the President even go to the point of saying we cannot see the caskets coming home? Some young man or some young woman goes out and dies for our country, and they come home and the parents would like to be

there at Dover when the casket comes home. Is that too much to ask? I mean, is it really? Would it be that much trouble to make it possible for a family to go when their loved one's coming home? The President said we cannot have any pictures and it will just confuse the public; the public cannot handle it.

The United States population does not need to be hidden from the truth, and the truth is that the foreign fighter argument from Syria is phony, and they are going to use that. If they do not go into Syria or create some kind of a coup or something in the next few weeks, I will be very surprised.

On the other side of Iraq, you have Iran. I think I talked out here on the floor before, but Iran is primarily a Shiite country. It is not all Shiite, but it is primarily Shiite, as is the southern part of Iraq, which has been a back and forth flow of people for a long time. Many of the issues that arise out of this whole confederation idea are troublesome because the Arabs who live in Iraq say you are going to give the control of this country to the Persians, Iraqis and Persians.

We do not think in those terms. We do not know about that kind of stuff. We are such a hodgepodge in this country. We look at somebody and we think, well, maybe I can figure out if that person is Irish or Polish. If there is an African American, I do not know if they came from Africa or the West Indies. If we hear a Hispanic voice, we do not know where they came from. We have no idea. But in these countries, where for 1,000 years they have lived in the same place, they know where everybody is from, and they know who has responsibility for what and so forth.

We now have manufactured this business about nuclear weapons. This is the United States. We have more nuclear weapons than the whole world put together by a factor of 10, and we suddenly get up on our high horse and say you cannot have any nuclear power, because we know if you get nuclear power, you are going to go and make weapons. We have talked about that, and why do we not let the United Nations inspectors go in?

The United Nations inspector Mr. Al Baredi, he won the Nobel Peace Prize. He is the guy who went into Iraq and said I cannot find any weapons. We said we are going to have to go to war anyway. We would not accept the judgment of the United Nations that there were not weapons of mass destruction. The President had decided that the best way to confuse and scare the American people was with the threat that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction and was going to be an imminent danger to us within 24 hours. So he was going to drive that idea, whether the inspectors found it or not. In fact, he was not going to let the inspectors there long enough so that they could at some point give a clean bill of health on that particular issue. He simply would not allow it.

What we are facing now today is that we now have the possibility of going into Iran because we say they are developing nuclear power. We have nuclear power plants all over this country, all over this country. Why can they not make electricity out of nuclear power?

We do not want weapons. Sure, we can deal with the weapons part, but how about having a nuclear power industry? We are not saying people have to close down here in this country or that somehow the British cannot have it or the French and the German. Everybody else has nuclear power. Why can the Iranians not have it? Because we say they are going to use it to make weapons. Well, that may be true, but we have a mechanism by which we can monitor that, through the United Nations. Through the International Atomic Energy Agency, it can be monitored.

Where we stand today is that we have a situation, and I say this in summary, we have a situation where we have rammed through a Constitution in Iraq that both Iraqis and American conservatives are being convinced absolutely it will not work, to being very dubious about whether it will work. If that is where we are and we read in the newspaper, I bring this up because I want people to be thinking about when they read about Syria, why is Syria coming up? Why is Iran coming up? Why are we widening the war rather than pulling out and bringing our troops home?

I happen to be one of those who believes that we could be out of there by Christmas. There is no reason we could not. People say, oh, it will get worse. Get worse than what? Get worse than what is going on right now, where we are losing five Marines at a crack? I do not know how much worse you think it could be if we brought them home and let the Iraqis work it out themselves. They will find a way. They do not enjoy killing each other. That is not the Arab way.

The Arab way is to sit down and figure out a way that they can live in peace. They call it atwa. It is an arrangement that they establish between peoples, and they find ways to resolve these kinds of conflicts. It is foreign to us. We go to court. We are always going after somebody or we go militarily. The idea of sitting down and working it out, having a cease-fire and having a big peace conference in Iraq or in Jordan for that matter, with all the countries around, the Saudis do not want there to be a war. The Egyptians do not want a war. The Lebanese, the Syrians, the Turks, Iranians, none of the people around Iraq want this thing to continue to fester because the possibility of it boiling over into their people is very likely, and they are worried about that.

There is really a lot of cultural interests in bringing this thing to an end if the United States were to allow that to happen, but what is required? It is for the President to listen to what is going on in the world, and I take some hope.

The President has got one of his very trusted folks out. He has given her a new job at the State department, Ms. Karen Hughes. She went out on, I think they thought it was going to be a PR goodwill trip, and got an earful of what was going on out there. She came back with a wholly different view. She had been sitting in Washington, listening to all that goes on in the White House. Everybody's telling everybody, everything that is going is fine; everything's going wonderful; do not worry about a thing. Everything is going to get better tomorrow. She went out and find out how really bad it was.

When she came back, she brought a group of Arab negotiating women into the White House to meet with the President. That is how much things had changed. Imagine the President sitting down with a bunch of Arab women, talking about peace, about what is really going on out there?

This is not a situation that is going to be resolved with guns and military might. We have the best Armed Forces in the world. The people are the best. They are the best trained. They have the best equipment in most cases, if our military people pay attention and order stuff. We have the best and most powerful, but we cannot control the world that way. It will have to have a diplomatic aspect to it, which up to this point has not been there, and it is going to have to be there.

We cannot run Iraq as though it was a colony of the United States. There are 16 bases, which we have built, various sizes of installation. Why are we building permanent bases in Iraq if we want to get out?

It makes you wonder exactly what our plan for Iraq was. I do not think we have ever been told the truth about that, and I think that there are a lot of issues that will continue to come up and will lead us to have this Iraq Watch once a week on the Democratic side because we do not think that people on the other side really want to talk about the chaos and the problems it is causing us, both internally in the United States and externally, and the death and the cost. All of that needs to be discussed.

IRAQ

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GOHMERT). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Speaker, I am motivated to come because of the comments made by the previous speaker, by an incident that happened today in my committee, and listening on TV to a previous speaker on Iraq.

All three of them, to the best of my knowledge, have not been to Iraq since the war, and yet, they profess to know so much about what is going on in Iraq. I have not quite understood why our colleague would go and meet with Saddam Hussein before the war and not