

head of the Federal Reserve, and he has such a great reputation in terms of his economic model, he made a rather prophetic statement back in 2001. This is just when we finished a couple of years of surplus. He was testifying before Congress.

He said, "With today's euphoria surrounding the surpluses, it is not difficult to imagine the hard-earned fiscal restraint developed in recent years rapidly dissipating. We need to resist those policies that would readily resurrect the deficits of the past and the fiscal imbalances that followed in their wake."

He sure was right, because by November of 2005 he came back before Congress, and in testimony he said, "Our budget position is unlikely to improve substantially further until we restore constraints similar to the Budget Enforcement Act of 1990, which were allowed to lapse in 2002." That was the pay-as-you-go provision that existed before.

So we have proof. We have a track record that shows that these rules worked. Without these rules, we have seen us spin into tremendous fiscal imbalance. It is another one of the Blue Dog points. There are 12 points. I thankfully may not go through all 12 of the points tonight, but I wanted to highlight some of the ones that we have talked about tonight, and ones that I think anyone in this country, regardless of political party understands, and they know it is the right thing to do.

I encourage, again, any colleague in the House of Representatives should know the Blue Dogs want to engage them on this issue.

If these 12 points that we have come up with aren't the perfect solution, and somebody has a better idea, we welcome the chance to have a dialogue with them. Because these are not easy issues, and we have got to work together to work this one out. But I think the 12-point plan represents a thoughtful process and a good start for setting up a structure that will force this institution to put us back on the path to fiscal responsibility, and so we can avoid increasing, and I will close with coming back to the comments I started with.

That is not increasing the problem of that birth tax, that we called it, that was employed on the son I had just 3½ weeks ago, that my wife had actually, my new son, came into this world owing \$27,000. That is not right, it is not fair, and we have got to do something to make sure we do not grow that anymore.

Mr. TANNER. Now you have got a part of another \$36 million that we have borrowed since we started talking, and 90 percent of that is coming to us from overseas.

Mr. MATHESON. I appreciate my Blue Dog colleagues joining me tonight. This is an issue we feel strongly about, and we are sincere when we ask our colleagues on both sides of the

aisle to work with us on this because we think it so important to the future of this country.

NATIONAL SECURITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DENT). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentlewoman from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to come before this body this evening and to talk for a few minutes about some things that are very important to us here in the House.

You know, we stand here many times, many evenings, and we debate the role of government here in this body. We certainly have heard it here tonight, as our colleagues across the aisle have talked about their desire to see things done differently as we look at our budget process.

Certainly there are those of us like me who think that government is overgrown. While there are others in this body that think that government cannot do enough, there are those of us who want to prioritize and reduce the budget, and there are those who do not want to prioritize or reduce the budget. They feel like something to do is to keep the status quo and raise taxes and approach our responsibilities in that way.

A couple of points I did want to touch on, as they have talked about the budget and talked about the deficit and talked about the concerns that we have for that, is we look at the overall economic security of this great Nation.

One of the things that we did when we passed the Deficit Reduction Act, which was a plan brought forward by the majority in this House that would reduce what the Federal government spends and yield a savings for the American people, what happened with that Deficit Reduction Act was, yes, we did achieve a reduction in what the Federal Government spends. This is the first time in about 20 years that this has happened. We had a reduction in our discretionary spending.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is noteworthy that we received not one Democrat vote for that bill for reducing spending. While it is easy to say, and certainly makes for great discussion and conversation, that the deficit is too big, and that we are spending too much, the proof is in the pudding.

The proof is, when it comes time to vote, are you going to vote to raise taxes and spend more and keep the status quo, or are you going to vote to make some reductions, to get in there and prioritize that budget and decide what is going to be the best way to allocate the resources of the Federal Government, because we have to bear in mind it is not our money, it is not this government's money. It is the taxpayers' money.

The taxpayers are overtaxed. They are paying too much. They want Uncle Sam to get his fingers out of their pocket, off their paycheck, and leave that paycheck to them.

I will remind my colleagues across the aisle also, they talk about we have to raise taxes to pay for this. Well, 2004, 2005, the U.S. Treasury received \$274 billion more than they had estimated in revenues.

Mr. Speaker, there is a reason for that, and it is because tax reductions work. We know that they work. You lower those rates, and the economy, this great, wonderful engine of the U.S. economy, works. It works. We certainly have seen that happen. The reductions that were passed in 2003 have certainly paid off.

There is another point I would like to address that did come up. A couple of the colleagues said, we need to have some honesty as we look at this budget process. I am not going to disagree with that. I certainly think as we get ready for Presidents' Day and thinking about President Lincoln and the moniker Honest Abe that he carried with him, we certainly need to remember that and have honesty. But part of that honesty is looking at this and reminding the American people one of the reasons we are faced with the budget we have is because of this huge, enormous bureaucracy, huge bureaucracy that grew out of 40 years of Democrat control of this body, a bureaucracy that basically is a monument to them.

It is so difficult and people have such a tough time working through the bureaucracy, whether it is paying your income tax, figuring out that process, figuring out that Tax Code; whether it is the local university, trying to get over here and get the bureaucracy to help them with some program that is needed for that university; whether it is our local community and county governments trying to figure out how to work with different agencies and comply with different regulations.

It is a cumbersome, overgrown, bloated bureaucracy; and certainly as we address the issues of oversight through the ratings tools, through the President's management initiative, through the CFO act, those are all accountability measures that have come into play since Republican control of this body took place in 1994.

So there is plenty that we can discuss and we will look forward to discussing over the next month as we look at the budget, look at the process, look at the need to put those parameters in place that will help us get the budget under control and still address the areas of responsibility that we have.

One of those areas of responsibility that I think we all can agree on and certainly should be agreeing on is that of national security. There is truly a reason that our founders included the words "provide for the common defense" in the preamble to the Constitution. They knew that national security was an imperative in order for this Nation to be able to survive. They knew

that in order for children to dream big dreams, in order for small businesspeople to be able to go out and take that idea that they have and grow it into something that is wonderful, that creates jobs for their community, that yields back and gives back to that community, that security was an imperative. It is an imperative.

Tonight, several of my colleagues and I are going to take a few moments and talk about guarding this Nation and talk about the issue of national security, because we as a party, we as a majority, are focused, first and foremost, on that issue. Mr. Speaker, I cannot think of a single better time to do this than on Valentine's Day, because there is nothing more important or caring that we can do for our children, our grandchildren, our neighbors and those we love than to fight to be certain that every child has the opportunity to grow up in a safe, a free and a secure world. It is one of those foundational building blocks. And we Americans are free today because of the sacrifices that our parents and our grandparents chose to make for them, for us, and on our behalf. Until this world is a far different place, it is very clear that we must continue our support for a strong military and defense presence. That is the only way that we are going to be able to be certain that our kids inherit the America that we know today.

Mr. Speaker, we are going to look at some issues, as I said, of national security. We are going to look at the border security issue; we are going to look at the war on terror and how important it is for us to win in this war on terror and how important it is for us to realize that it is going to be a long war, that it is about freedom, and it exists not only in faraway lands like Iraq and Afghanistan but it is something that we have to address on our border, our Nation's border, as we look at the issue of border security.

The first Member who is joining me tonight, Mr. KELLER from Florida, has just returned from spending several days down on our southern border working with some of the border guards and the security agents that are there. Mr. KELLER is going to talk with us about some of the activity that is taking place on our Nation's southern border.

□ 2115

Mr. KELLER. Mr. Speaker, if you would have told me when I was in college that one day my idea of a romantic Valentine's Day evening would be standing around giving a speech on border security, I would have probably drank a cup of hemlock back then. But here we are, and I am happy to drink this cup of water beside me.

Mr. Speaker, I have just returned from the Mexican border, and I am here to report my findings.

We were 5,000 feet up in the mountains along the border California shares with Mexico at 2:00 A.M., freez-

ing in 30-degree weather, with the wind howling in our faces. Eight shivering young men, illegal aliens in their late teens and early 20s, sat on the cold ground in handcuffs, grateful to be caught. One of them pleaded with a border patrol agent to find his girlfriend, Maria, who was still stuck out on one of the cliffs.

Illegal aliens like the ones I saw in handcuffs continue to enter the United States from Mexico at the rate of 8,000 per day. Today, we have 11 million illegal aliens in the United States. Illegal immigration presents a huge problem. That is why I decided to spend a week along the southern border to see firsthand how bad the problem is and, more importantly, what Congress can do to fix it.

Last year, our Border Patrol agents arrested 1.2 million illegal aliens attempting to enter the United States from Mexico. Significantly, 155,000 of those arrested were from countries other than Mexico. They included illegal immigrants from Iran, Iraq, and Afghanistan. This poses a very serious national security problem according to CIA director Porter Goss. I spoke with Border Patrol agents who had apprehended suspects on the terrorist watchlist.

One night, while I was riding along with the Border Patrol, two illegals from Pakistan were captured. One convicted sexual predator was caught trying to cross. So were wanted murder suspects, drug dealers and smugglers.

If the job of a Border Patrol agent sounds dangerous, imagine the risk to people who actually live along the border. I sat down in the living rooms of four different families who own ranches along the border. One couple, Ed and Donna Tisdale, documented on home video 13,000 illegal aliens crossing their property in 1 year alone. The Tisdales had their barbed wire fences cut by illegals running off the family's cattle. When their dogs barked to scare off intruders, the dogs were poisoned.

Another rancher told me about numerous break-ins at his home while his family slept as illegal aliens searched for food and clothing. One morning his daughters had gone out to feed their pet bunnies, only to find them skinned and taken for food by illegal aliens trying to escape to a nearby highway.

The economic impact of these illegal crossers who are successful is catastrophic. Illegal immigration costs taxpayers \$45 billion a year in health care, education and incarceration expenses. The cost of the estimated 630,000 illegal aliens in my home State of Florida is about \$2 billion a year, meaning every family in my congressional district pays a hidden tax of \$315 each year and yet still faces artificially depressed wages because of illegal immigration.

So how do we fix the problem? Well, first, we need to crack down on employers who knowingly hire illegal workers. Jobs are the magnet attracting illegal aliens across the border, and the U.S. House has acted to make it

mandatory for employers to check the paperwork of new hires or else face stiff penalties. Now it is time for the Senate to act.

Second, we complete construction of a double fence for 700 miles along the border near highly populated urban areas. For example, San Diego saw a steep reduction in crossings from 500,000 down to 130,000 when their double fence was completed.

Third, where mountains and rugged terrain make completion of a double fence impossible, we need to have a virtual fence. That is, Congress needs to appropriate money for infrared cameras that allow agents to see the entire border in day and nighttime.

Finally, we need more Border Patrol agents. Although Congress has already tripled the number of Border Patrol agents since the late 1980s, more are still needed.

Mr. Speaker, one million immigrants come to America legally each year; and my staff members spend the majority of their time helping those who want to come to our country to work hard and play by the rules.

We are protected from dangerous people entering the country at our airports. IDs are checked against the terrorist watchlist, and baggage is screened. Who is doing checks on the 8,000 people who arrive here illegally each day? Who is our last line of defense? It is a Border Patrol agent in a green uniform working alone.

At 2:00 a.m. tonight, after all of us are asleep, he will be once again working somewhere near the top of a cold 5,000-foot mountain along the California-Mexican border. He will get a radio call telling him to approach a group of illegals who have been spotted by an infrared scope and are located near the top of that mountain. He will track their footprints in the dirt and make his way toward them. As he approaches, there is something he does not know. Are these illegal aliens a group of harmless teenagers who are scared and freezing, or are they heavily armed, dangerous drug traffickers like the ones who have killed so many of his colleagues? Either way, he will approach them because it is just another day on the job.

Mr. Speaker, I have a message for that Border Patrol agent. The United States Congress knows you are there. We appreciate your service, and help is on the way.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. I thank the gentleman from Florida; and I thank him for reminding us of the importance of protecting that border so that we do provide for the common defense, we do have a secure Nation, and we are alert and watching. As he has mentioned so well, his State of Florida, the area that he represents, their estimated cost of dealing with illegal entry into this country is \$2 billion a year, and that is for those that choose to enter this country illegally.

The gentleman mentioned some of the things that we have done, employer

verification, looking at continuing to secure the border, whether you are looking at a wall or whether you are looking at technology, but putting that surveillance into place.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I am going to yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE), who is on the International Relations Committee and the Terrorism Subcommittee. Judge POE likes to remind us that it is just the way it is time and again as he comes to this floor and reminds us of the importance of viewing immigration and appropriate and proper immigration, abiding by those laws and what an important component that is to this Nation's security and how important it is that we abide by those immigration laws as we are right now battling in this war on terror.

With that, I yield to the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. POE. I thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

We have spent much time in these halls discussing many purposes of government. Tonight we have heard much about the budget, how to spend taxpayer money, how the money should be spent, how it should not be spent, discussed projects big and small.

And many Americans consistently ask themselves the question, what is the purpose of government? Why do we have government at all? That is certainly a valid question to be asked, especially of our Federal Government.

And you said it well when you mentioned the preamble of our U.S. Constitution, that one purpose of government is to provide for the common defense. It is the first duty of government to protect us, to protect its citizens. Building roads and bridges, having commissions, maybe that is important. Well, maybe it is not. But the first duty of government is to protect the people that live within our borders, the U.S. citizens. Government does a pretty good job of that, especially locally, from our local police to our Federal officers, capturing outlaws, sending them to jail where they need to be. And we do a pretty good job on the international basis. We are fighting the war on terror in Iraq and Afghanistan and other parts of the world. Our military is the best military that has ever existed. And so the government does a fairly good job of that duty of protecting us.

I spent all my life basically in the criminal justice system. I started out as a prosecutor in Houston, and then I spent over 20 years on the bench trying criminal cases, just as Judge CARTER, who is here tonight. He has tried his share of outlaws.

And the rule of law is something that we all believe in in this country, that the law is the standard of conduct. And the law in this country is you do not come into the United States of America illegally, regardless of your purpose. And we know people are doing that anyway. We know, of course, that those narcoterrorists come across the

southern border, especially the southern border of Texas, bringing in that cancer to sell. They make a lot of money doing that.

We know that people come here illegally, over 5,000 a day across the Texas border, illegally coming into the United States for various purposes. And we suspect that probably the next terrorist attack that occurs in the United States is not going to be because somebody flies into Reagan National down the street here, gets off the airplane, looks around and decides, I wonder what damage I can do to the American population. That is probably not going to happen.

That next terrorist is going to come across the open porous border, South Texas and Mexico, because those borders are open. And every country in the world knows that we have an open border, and that is why so many people are coming in.

Give you one example: 2005, in Maverick County, Texas, they had about 8,000 people illegally come in from Mexico that were captured. They had over 20,000 people illegally come in from Mexico from other countries other than Mexico, almost four times as many coming into the United States from other countries other than Mexico. They were from Korea. They were from China. They were from Brazil. They were from countries all over the world coming here. Every country knows we do not protect our borders to keep people illegally, that wish to come here illegally from coming into the country.

So the duty of government is to protect us, protect the sovereignty and the dignity of this country. Everybody wants to live in the United States. I do not blame them. I mean, this is the greatest place on earth to live. But everybody cannot live here, so we have got to have some rules, and those rules have to be followed, and it is the duty of our government to enforce the rule of law and make sure that people respect the dignity of this country. So we have a lot of concerns about that.

And maybe we should refocus the purpose of government. Maybe we should ask the question profoundly, what is the duty of government? And then we should expect the answer to be, to protect us, to protect our borders, to protect our national security, because that is the duty of government. And that is just the way it is.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. The gentleman from Texas is correct. That is the way it is. That is the duty of government. And as the gentleman stated so well and so eloquently, the business of government is protecting this country, as well as that being a duty.

And one of the things, Mr. Speaker, that we have altered is the way that we do business here in America by tightening some of our immigration rules. Looking at drivers' licenses, tightening our drivers' license requirements to prevent those documents from being used in ways that they are not sup-

posed to be used. The Judiciary Committee has led on that issue, and Chairman SENSENBRENNER has done a tremendous amount of work on strengthening our border, taking steps to strengthen that.

Certainly our party as a whole is focused on the national security issue as one of the central issues that we must address. That is one of the reasons that we as a party fought to get the PATRIOT Act passed. We know that on 9/11 our security net had significant holes in it and it had to be fixed and addressed, and we now hope that our colleagues across the aisle will join us in supporting the reauthorization of the bill. It has been successful, and there are things we need to do to continue that focus on this issue.

A gentleman who is spending a good deal of time working on our homeland security issues and looking at the global war on terror and America's response there is the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CARTER), or Judge CARTER as we do like to refer to him. He is on the Homeland Security subcommittee, on the Appropriations Committee, and he is going to speak with us for just a few moments about what is being done to address some of our homeland security issues.

Mr. CARTER. I thank the gentlewoman from Tennessee and all those who gather here today to talk about our national security.

One of the things that has been bothering me here recently, there was a movie that just came out called *War of the Worlds*, and in that movie they were flipping cars around and the space invaders were coming around, and you saw the fear and panic on the faces of the people on the streets as this made up story of the invasion of our country from outer space.

And I could not help but be struck by the fact that we saw exactly that same live and in color fear on 9/11 when those people were watching those buildings burn, and all of a sudden the first one came crashing down. And we saw films on television of that absolute panic of American citizens as they ran in abject fear from the falling of those buildings, the attack on our Nation.

□ 2130

We saw films of people leaping from windows.

This is what our national security is all about. As Judge POE said, it is about protecting the American citizen. While this is the subject of such conversation all over our Nation today, let us do not forget we have got to protect ourselves.

Now, I, like Judge POE, have been dealing with law enforcement most of my adult life. I have tried a substantial number of felony criminal cases. One of the things that we always would do that we worked into law enforcement is we wanted to have interagency cooperation. We wanted to be able to let the DEA and in Texas the Texas Highway Patrol work together on a drug

case, work in cooperation, share information. But as we approached a view of how we were going to secure this Nation, we discovered that we had a lot of agencies in this Federal Government and in the State governments that really were not coordinating, working together. Tools that we have used for years in criminal justice were not being used for securing our Nation. So some brave folks got together here in the Congress, and they wrote the PATRIOT Act.

This PATRIOT Act, because of partisan politics, in my opinion, and the fact that this is a world where everybody likes to criticize everybody else, we forgot about those people panicking in the streets of New York now, and we are starting to tear up a document that makes sense. And I think it makes sense to the American people. I think it makes sense to say I would sure like to know that every agency that is involved with somebody who might want to attack me or my family in this country talks to each other, shares information, does not have bureaucratic boundaries set up which prevent them from doing this.

The FBI should share information with the CIA. The CIA should share information with the DEA. And all other codes for the various groups that are up here, they should get together and share that information. The PATRIOT Act set up those procedures to do that. Does anybody have a problem with that? I cannot imagine an American citizen having a problem with that.

Do you not want your FBI agents and your prosecutors, the people who work on this stuff, to talk? Do you not want them to be able to communicate, share what they have got?

Now, if I think somebody is planning on blowing up a building, just like I am really concerned about somebody who might be worried about smuggling drugs into this country and I want to have a surveillance on that facility where I think this illegal activity or this terrorist activity is taking place, I do not see anything wrong with being able to have procedures set up, which we have used in fighting the war on drugs for years where you go in and take a look and then you back off until the perpetrators get there and then you go in and make your raid.

But you can put a title on that, a sneak and peak warrant, and it sounds horrible. It sounds terrible. It sounds like the government is sneaking around peaking on private citizens. No. Why should you let them know when you are not there that you have been there? Go get them when they are there. We are here to stop these people. Why should we have to conduct investigations and tip off the people we are investigating? Does that make sense? So we have proper legal proceedings that have gone on in this country for a decade or so in fighting the war on drugs and the war on crime. We are using this in the war on terror. That is part of the PATRIOT Act. I do not see

why the American public would feel like they were intruded upon at all. Law-abiding American citizens are not intruded upon at all by this.

Some people are just shocked that the PATRIOT Act actually looks into business records. How do you think you finance people to come over here, train to fly a 747 or a 727, and crash into a building without some money? If that money is being done for terrorist activities, why would you not want the investigating agencies to have the ability to go into business records and find out about these things? It certainly makes common sense to me, and it is something we have used. In fact, many of you may recognize now in your life there was a time you could come into this country and deposit money or you could go down to the bank and deposit any amount of money you wanted to in the bank. But there were people coming from other sources with huge sums of money that they were laundering through our banking system for the drug business.

So what did we do? You have to report every \$10,000 deposit and every \$10,000 withdrawal. Nobody got all upset about that in the United States. That is dealing with people's business records. But it helped us find out where the drug dealers were, and it helped to keep their dirty money out of our legitimate system. Now we want to know where the terrorists' money is, and I think it is appropriate that we look at those records.

Now, does it make sense to you that you have to hunt for somebody to issue a warrant when there is a criminal procedure, a criminal procedure that is going on all over the entire United States, that you have to go to just one particular jurisdiction to get it when it affects all jurisdictions? No, it does not make sense. You should be able to seek a warrant anywhere there is jurisdiction. The PATRIOT Act allows that to happen on terrorist activities.

This is a good law enforcement tool. The warrant still has the same checks and balances and protections and probable causes that are there for anybody. But why do you have to hunt down a judge in Arizona when you can find one in California when it all affects the same territory?

The PATRIOT Act increased penalties on these terrorist crimes. Now, I personally am a penalty guy. I believe in penalties. I have sentenced a person to 20 years in prison for one rock of crack cocaine because I believe punishment works. That is my personal philosophy, and some Americans might not agree with it. Our county happens to have the lowest crime rate in the United States, but that is my argument. But the point is the terrorist penalties have been enhanced by the PATRIOT Act. That is good. That helps us use another tool to keep people who want to harm our wives, our children, our husbands, our communities, give them extra punishment for what they do. Those who harbor those who would harm us we also have tools to go after.

This is the goal of the PATRIOT Act. That is what it was established for. It is a good tool. It is a tool that is effectively helping us. One of the major reasons that all those who deal with these issues talk about them right now, today, is because we have been able to protect this Nation since 9/11. Nobody is sitting here telling you that everything is perfect; but if you throw away your tools and you put up the things that help you solve the problems, in my opinion, for political reasons, it concerns me greatly that the real purpose of homeland security is lost, and that is protecting our families and our way of life.

The USA PATRIOT Act should be renewed. We should continue this tool for the American agencies that deal with terrorism and law breakers and making sure that when our kids go to bed at night, they feel a little bit safer.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Texas for his comments. He is so correct in talking about the importance of the PATRIOT Act and being able to protect our families.

And I appreciate so much that he and the other speakers tonight have talked about the implications of what happens here on our homeland and the importance of keeping that homeland safe, keeping that homeland secure, and have talked about the great work that is done by our first responders, by our local law enforcement members, that community that works so diligently; the work that is done by our border guards and those who are patrolling our borders. Because, yes, indeed, national security means that we secure this great Nation. Because this is a war on terrorism; it is going to be a long difficult war. And it is the reason, Mr. Speaker, that we have taken military action in Afghanistan and in Iraq, and it is the reason that we are working to reshape that region of this world. And we are making progress. And I know it is frustrating sometimes when we feel like we are taking two steps forward and one step back. But, indeed, there is a mighty work that is being done, a very good, consistent and productive work that is being done by the members of this great Nation's military.

And tonight we are joined by the gentlewoman from Virginia (Mrs. DRAKE). The thing that is so wonderful about Mrs. DRAKE's district is the presence of the military that is there, whether it is our men and women of the naval forces that are out there working or those in the Air Force who are flying.

So from land to air to sea, you have it all covered, and we appreciate your constituents. And, Mrs. DRAKE, I join you in wishing the families of all of those men and women who are deployed a wonderful Valentine's Day. And I join you in standing here tonight to say "thank you" that they are working to be certain that these children grow up in a safe, free, and secure America.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Virginia.

Mrs. DRAKE. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the gentlewoman from Tennessee for yielding to me.

I am very proud to join her tonight on Valentine's Day to wish all our men and women of the service a happy Valentine's Day, but especially those and their families who are separated today and not celebrating Valentine's Day together because they have put duty and the defense of our Nation first.

We live, as we know, in a completely different time; and we face a totally different threat. Our enemies do not wear a uniform. They do not represent a nation. They do not own tanks and aircraft. What they are is a global terrorist network that represents a violent extremist philosophy, one that places no value on life. What they seek to destroy is our way of life, the very fabric of our civilization.

We realize that they have established goals. Their short-term goal is to take Iraq. Their mid-term goal is to take the Middle East. And their long-term goal is to take the world. They seek and they have vowed to use nuclear, biological, and chemical warfare.

Our brave fighting men and women understand this threat. They have volunteered to defend this Nation. Recently, I met a member of our military, a young man. He looked at me and he made a very simple statement. He said, Think about this war on terror as if it were a football game. And the question that I want to ask you is would you rather play the game at home or away? Our goal is that we must fight this war, or play this game, as an away game.

I met another young man on my trip to Iraq and had a brief conversation with him. He looked at me and he said, Ma'am, I understand the threat. I know why I am here, and if I have anything to do with it, we will never have another attack on our soil. With that he asked me not to worry about him but to pray for him, and in a moment he was gone.

We as Americans do not fully understand this threat. Unless we have loved ones who are serving, our lives have not changed. We have not been asked to sacrifice for a war cause nor should we change our way of life because terrorists would like to do that for us. So it is hard to realize that we truly are a Nation at war.

We question why we bother with a small country that is so far away from us when we perceive that they have lived in constant turmoil and they have constantly fought with other people. But America is committed to winning this war. We have watched liberty and democracy spring in the Middle East, and we know in our hearts that all people yearn for freedom to raise their children, to be able to live without fear, without torture, and without tyranny.

I would like to share with America that this fall the House Armed Services Committee, under the chairmanship of Chairman HUNTER, conducted a bipartisan comprehensive review to prepare

our members on the committee for the QDR, that is, the Quadrennial Defense Review. This is a review that is done every 4 years by the Department of Defense to assess our national security posture.

□ 2145

Very importantly, this is the very first review that has been done post-9/11. This review is designed to ensure that the Department of Defense has a plan to transform itself to meet the threats we face in the 21st century.

The QDR seeks to achieve the following objectives: Defeating the terrorist network; defending the homeland; shaping the choices of countries who are at a strategic crossroad; and preventing hostile states and non-state actors from acquiring or using weapons of mass destruction.

Our goal is to develop a military that is more effective, more able to strike quickly. In the coming weeks, members of the House Armed Services Committee will be reviewing and assessing how to reshape our military to meet these present and emerging threats.

Our military and the people of Iraq have accomplished great successes. In less than 3 years, they toppled Saddam, they created their government, and they passed their own constitution. I think that is quite a feat. It took us 13 years to develop our Constitution. We amended it 27 times. It took us 120 years to give women the right to vote. I think we should be very, very proud of their successes.

So far, we have rehabbed over 2,800 schools; trained over 4,700 teachers; electricity, water and sewer are working in Iraq; as well as setting up independent TV stations, radio stations and newspapers. We have captured and killed many of their leaders, not all; we are shutting down as much of their money as we can; and our fighting men and women have engaged the enemy so that they do not have the time to wage war here on our soil and hopefully will continue to prevent an attack within our Nation.

I believe the first function of government is to defend our Nation, and I think the greatest gift that we give to our children and our grandchildren is freedom. On Valentine's Day I am very happy to thank the men and women of our military who give us those gifts.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. I thank the gentlelady from Virginia. I appreciate her comments about the QDR and the review that the Armed Services Committee, a committee on which she serves, is conducting.

I would think for those who are watching tonight, if they want to follow that process and learn a little bit more, they could go to the House.Gov website and then go to the Armed Services Committee and could get a bit more information about that process.

Mrs. DRAKE. That will be ongoing.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. I thank the gentlelady for her comments and for mentioning the good work that is tak-

ing place over in Afghanistan and in Iraq.

One of the things, Mr. Speaker, that we are learning more and more about every day is the fact that, as the military raises up over there, at the same time we are raising up and working to raise up the economic underpinning of that nation, the governmental underpinning of that nation, the educational underpinning of that nation, and working to be certain that they are indeed ready to take the reins and ready to succeed as they step toward democracy.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to yield to the gentlewoman from North Carolina, Ms. FOXX. She does such a wonderful job as she works with her constituents and works with us. Education is her forte, and I love listening to her stories about how she educates and works with her grandchildren and how special and how important they are and the lessons that she teaches them and how privileged they are to grow up in a safe, free land and their responsibility to be good stewards of that citizenship and that opportunity that is presented toward them.

I yield to the gentlewoman from North Carolina for some comments on addressing the global war on terror.

Ms. FOXX. Thank you, Congresswoman BLACKBURN, for your leadership and for providing these opportunities for us to share some of our thoughts.

Our colleague, Mrs. DRAKE from Virginia, does such a wonderful job in recognizing our military and serving on the Armed Services Committee.

Today, when I was coming into the Cannon Building, there were two gentlemen in uniform standing at the door taking some pictures, and I stopped to thank them for their service. I do that every time I see anyone in our military. I thank them for their willingness to serve. They were so pleasant and so excited. They had come home from Iraq for a few days, and they were spending some time here in Washington. One of them said that his mother came from Mt. Airy, which is in my district. They gave me their cards, and we are going to maintain e-mail correspondence.

You mentioned my grandchildren. I mentioned to them that, without any prompting whatsoever, about a year-and-a-half or 2 years ago my now 6½-year-old granddaughter and 9-year-old grandson, at night when I heard their prayers as they were going to sleep, began praying for our military people. It really touched my heart and the heart of their parents, because we didn't tell them to do that, they did it completely on their own. I hope that all of our military folks know, as I told these two gentlemen today, that there are millions of people in this country praying for them regularly.

I want to tie that into what President Bush says all the time. He believes, as I believe and I think most people in this country believe, that freedom is a gift of God and that we are

blessed in this country with the most freedom of any people and the most prosperity of any people and that part of our responsibility is to help spread that freedom.

I also was thinking that February is not only the month for Valentine's Day, but it is Abraham Lincoln's birthday, and pretty soon we are going to be celebrating George Washington's birthday, and Ronald Reagan's birthday was in this month. We have so much to think about in this month of what those men meant to helping to live up to the ideals of freedom and the values of this country and what they risked in their lives, particularly Washington and Lincoln but also President Reagan, who risked saying to the world the truth, as President Bush has done.

I want to bring us back to talking about the fact that we are at war and that it is appalling that many of our colleagues cannot seem to understand that, as Congresswoman DRAKE mentioned, and a part of that war is being able to gather intelligence so that we can fight it effectively. We do want to fight that war on their turf, not on our turf, and we want to keep them from attacking us again.

I have been very distressed in the last few weeks about the way the revelation about the National Security Agency's terrorist surveillance program, the hysterics that have been created from the other side of the aisle. I think that it is time that we talk about the myth that has been created about that program.

The allegations about that program, that it is illegal, are a myth. It is a legal program. The reality is that the President's authority to authorize this program is firmly based in both his constitutional authority as commander-in-chief and in the authorization for the use of military force which passed Congress after 9/11.

The allegations that the NSA program is a domestic eavesdropping program used to spy on innocent Americans are a myth. The reality is that this program is narrowly focused aimed only at international calls and targeted at al Qaeda and related groups. There are safeguards in place to protect the civil liberties of Americans. Allegations that the NSA activities violate the fourth amendment are a myth. The reality is this program is consistent with the Constitution's protections of civil liberties, including fourth amendment protections.

There are people who want you to believe this program is targeting average Americans, but nothing could be further from the truth. We need this program to help protect us and this country and to help protect our men and women who are fighting to keep this country a free country, and we need to do everything that we can that is legal, and I am convinced that the President is doing what is legal to protect us.

I think, again, that we want to call attention to the men and women who are fighting for us and remember them

in our prayers constantly and thank them for the sacrifices that they are making to keep this country free.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlelady from North Carolina, and thank her for reminding us that this is a global war on terrorism.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CONAWAY) for some additional thoughts on the global war on terror.

Mr. CONAWAY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding this time. I will be brief, as we have one more speaker.

Several of our colleagues tonight have talked about the war in Iraq and the global war on terror. I just want to add a little meat to that bone that says when we have a free Iraq, a democratic Iraq that is at peace with its neighbors, is no longer a haven for terrorists, that the war on terror will go on.

I would like to beef up that argument by a brief historical review of some of the things that our enemies have done outside of Iraq over the last several years.

In October 2000, the USS *Cole* was in Aden, Yemen, refueling, when a small rubber boat ran up beside it, set off a charge that blew a 40 foot by 40 foot gash in the side of the USS *Cole*, killed 17 young sailors and injured 39. Without provocation, without warning, these terrorists struck.

In Saudi Arabia, in 2003 and 2004, on May 12, 2003, suicide bombers killed 34 people, including 8 Americans, when they blew up a housing compound that housed westerners.

In May of the following year, 22 people were killed when terrorists attacked a Saudi oil company in Khobar, taking foreign oil operators hostage and leaving 22 dead, including one American.

June 11, the next month, in Riyadh, terrorists kidnapped and executed Paul Johnson, an American in Riyadh. Two other Americans and a BBC cameraman were killed by gun attacks.

Then in December of 2004, in Jeddah, terrorists killed five consulate employees at the U.S. consulate there in Saudi Arabia.

In Madrid, March 11, 2004, just before the elections in Madrid, in an attempt to affect the elections, which as history shows us this bombing did affect it, 13 rucksacks went off at a train station on four commuter trains almost simultaneously at the height of rush hour, killing 191 civilians and injuring over 1,800 people. The Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group has claimed responsibility for this tragic killing; again, an unexpected, unannounced, unprovoked attack on civilians.

Then in July of this year, this past year, July 7, I was actually in Kuwait on my way to Iraq when a suicide bomber struck again, this time in trains in London. Three different underground trains were blown up, killing some 56 people, injuring 700, again in an unprovoked, unannounced sneak attack using suicide bombers.

Finally, on November 9, 2005, in Amman, Jordan, at a wedding ceremony in the three hotels there in Amman, again suicide bombers blew up, killing 57 people and injuring 115 others in an attempt to create terror among those who oppose the violent Islamic Jihadist movement.

I remind my colleagues and others that we are in a global war on terror, no place in this world is safe, and while it is counterintuitive to talk about playing an away game, it is clearly in our best interests that we continue to fight this war in Iraq and around the world so that we don't fight it in the streets of America.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Texas for reminding us this is an elusive enemy. It is not an enemy that is located in one place or an enemy that is stationary. It is an enemy that you will find spread out all across the globe.

As he mentioned, several of the attacks, whether you are talking about the *Cole* or the Saudi bombings or Khobar Towers or the World Trade Center, both of the bombings there, this is a very vicious enemy, and the global war on terror is a war that is being fought around the globe. The activity is centered in Afghanistan, it is centered in Iraq, and it is important that we keep our Nation safe.

Our final speaker this evening is the gentleman from Georgia, Dr. PRICE, who has certainly put a tremendous amount of attention on what it takes to keep this Nation safe and having the tools. Being a physician, he knows the tools of the trade are important, and it is important that our men and women in uniform, our men and women in our intelligence services, our first responders, having the tools they need to fight this war and be successful in this war. I yield to the gentleman from Georgia.

□ 2200

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I am so pleased to stand with so many of my colleagues this evening and to talk about an issue that really is one of the central planks of our side of the aisle and the national campaign that we put forward before the American people. I thank you so much for your leadership.

I was going to talk at length about the National Security Agency and the issue that has come before us. I look forward to doing that at some point in the future. But I do just want to share a few comments about what we have heard tonight.

When I was young, I was a member of an organization, a group, that used to sing a song called Freedom Is Not Free, and the words were something like: freedom is not free, freedom is not free, you have got to pay a price, you have got to sacrifice for your liberty.

And I had the privilege of being with the American Legion Post 140 last night, just last night in my district, and met with these men and women. And they went around the room and each of them identified themselves and

their branch of service and the conflict and the war in which they served.

And I was so humbled to be in the company of such heroes. It just brings to the fore the incredible sacrifices that we as Americans have made over the past number of years for our liberty, for our freedom. I am so pleased with the leadership in the House, the Members who stood up this evening and talked about the difficulty that Americans have comprehending this war on terror; and we do, as you well know, because we do not think like terrorists.

We do not understand that mind. We do not understand the mind that would murder innocent individuals. We do not understand the mind that would chop the heads off of innocent individuals. That is just incomprehensible to us. So it does not come easily to us to comprehend the fact that we are in a war.

I was so pleased to hear Congressman CONAWAY talk about Iraq not being the end of this war. There are so many aspects to all of this war. So I am pleased with the leadership in the House, and I am pleased with the leadership of my colleague, the gentlewoman from Tennessee, who is willing to stand up and discuss these issues.

I also understood that this is not a Republican issue, it is not a Democrat issue. It is an American issue; it is an American challenge. And so my hope and prayer over the coming year is that all of the Members of the House of Representatives and all of the members of the Senate will embrace the challenge and the battle truly that we have to work together in this war on terror. I yield back to you, and commend you for your wonderful leadership in this area.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. I thank the gentleman from Georgia. I too remember singing that song: freedom is not free, you have to sacrifice for your liberty. I think that we all have sung that at camps as we were growing up. And how true and how meaningful it is as we talk about the men and women, whether they are working here domestically as first responders, as local law enforcement, as border security guards, protecting this homeland that we have, or whether they are fighting in Iraq, Afghanistan, around the globe. Whether they are deployed and away from their families, we know that they are doing this because they want to be certain that future generations grow up in a world that is free, is safe, is secure.

And we thank them for loving all of us enough to make that sacrifice and be willing to put their lives on the line. And we wish each of them a happy Valentine's Day. We wish their families a happy Valentine's Day, and we hope that they all know that we love them too.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

30-SOMETHING WORKING GROUP

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GOHMERT). Under the Speaker's an-

nounced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MEEK) is recognized for half the time until midnight.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to be here on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives again.

As you know, we have our 30-something Working Group that Leader PELOSI has formed over 3 years ago. And we meet constantly on issues that are facing the American people, and we ask the U.S. House of Representatives to address those issues in many cases. And there is an awful lot, Mr. Speaker, that is going on here in Washington, D.C.

I must say that I am really, really pleased at the innovation workshop we had earlier today that allowed Americans to be able to get a view of what the Democratic side has to offer in the area of innovation. And we are going to talk a little bit about that tonight.

But we are also going to talk about the ongoing costs of corruption and cronyism and incompetence in this institution that has brought about bad policies for the American people and affects the very lives of the American people that we are trying to serve.

As we work to try to better ourselves here in this Congress, we continue to point out the fact that we are not working in a bipartisan way to be able to get the best results for Americans. And we are going to talk about that also, Mr. Speaker.

I think it is important to point out the fact that we want to wish everyone here, not only in the U.S. House of Representatives but throughout our Nation, a happy Valentine's Day. And Mr. DELAHUNT is here, one of our esteemed colleagues. We are so glad tonight, Mr. DELAHUNT, that you can join the 30-something Working Group on this Valentine's night.

I know a nice man like you had to call a couple of folks and wish them happy Valentine's Day, including your family members, and it is a good day.

Mr. DELAHUNT. It was a long process all day, Mr. MEEK. But I just about accounted for everybody that it was appropriate. And a happy Valentine's Day to you and to your family. I had an opportunity to meet your family recently, and they are great folks. They really are.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Well, without family where would we be?

Mr. DELAHUNT. That is right. That is what this is all about.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Do you know what is interesting, Mr. DELAHUNT, is the fact that we have the issues that are floating here in Washington, D.C., and it is just kind of hard to keep up with them. There are so many things that are going on, and so many things that are happening to the American people. It is important that we get our house in order, and this House and the Chamber across the hall, including the executive branch, of getting back to the business of the people of this country.

We have families in the gulf that had visited the Capitol last week, coming with demands for their government: do not forget about us; do not leave us out; do not leave us behind. And reports are being released, but not only a summary report from the partisan House committee that was formed here about some of the mistakes that the administration made and where this Federal Government failed Americans.

Another report that Secretary Chertoff is talking about, he was supposed to come before the Senate today of the Homeland Security Committee, and they canceled the committee meeting because of Senate votes, to get down to the bottom of why we still have not prioritized the emergency management response.

I also think it is important that we point out the fact that the partisan commission here in this House that is charged, Mr. Speaker, with getting to the bottom of what happened and what did not happen in the case of the response and preparedness for Hurricane Katrina fell short of its duty to be able to make sure that we had sound, concrete recommendations to be able to move forward.

We still ask, Mr. Speaker, here on this side of the aisle, for an independent Katrina commission so that we can really get down to the nuts and bolts of what happened in this natural disaster and the disaster that followed that was the Federal Government's response.

I think it is also important that we talk about our fiscal situation, and some of tonight and tomorrow we will talk about what has happened with the reconciliation, budget recommendations that passed through this House and through the Senate, and where we are falling short there and being straight with the American people as it relates to the Republican majority.

Mr. DELAHUNT, I think it is important to point out the fact that so many Americans under this administration and under this White House have found themselves left behind economically and also socially.

The President talked about his health care plan here in this Chamber, a health savings plan that is already not working, and the way it should work and could work for Americans because it is not the right prescription for coverage for families.

To set aside money, to ask Americans to set aside money that they do not have in the first place is an oversight in itself. So many American families are living from paycheck to paycheck. It is not because they were so unfortunate to have a job and a family that they could not afford some of the high prices they are paying for fuel at this time and heating costs and other energy-related costs, but to say that we will allow you to put money aside for a rainy day for when a family member gets sick, that is not insurance.