

where you have the distortion and the misinformation and the disinformation and the incredible personal attacks that are given. So it is a difficult thing to do.

But all last year what we tried to do is to work on what is called a deficit reduction act, which is spending less money. Ultimately, it took a little over a year, but in January when we came back, in early February we passed the Deficit Reduction Act that saved, that saved \$39.8 billion. That is a good thing. That is a positive thing.

I asked my staff to see if they could get me a poster of the number of folks on the other side of the aisle, the Democrats, that supported a decrease in spending, which is what they say they want to do all the time. How many folks on the other side of the aisle voted for that? And I have that chart here somewhere. I found it. I found the poster that has the name of every single Democrat that voted in favor of a \$39.89 billion decrease in spending.

There it is. Right there. Not a one. Not a one. I point up the other charts because, as I say, they are truthful. This is truthful. This is the slate of individuals on the other side of the aisle who are interested truly in stepping up to the plate and working hard together. Because these are not Republican problems, and they are not Democrat problems. But, Mr. Speaker, when only one party is interested in working positively, it gets pretty doggone hard to do something here. It really does.

So those are the folks willing to help us on the other side in terms of decreasing spending. So that is what the Official Truth Squad is all about, bringing appropriate, honest, truthful information to the American people. And we get terribly frustrated, as I mentioned, with what has been described as the politics of division. Many people practice it here in Washington. It is kind of tried-and-true; but, again, it does not get to the right answers. It does not help. It has been used for a long time, but it is not positive, it is not a productive activity, and it does not serve people well back home.

One gentleman who knew that well was Abraham Lincoln. Abraham Lincoln knew that the politics of division are destructive, and he talked about it in a way that I think is more eloquent than anybody has ever said. What he said was: "You cannot bring about prosperity by discouraging thrift. You cannot strengthen the weak by weakening the strong. You cannot help the wage earner by pulling down the wage payer. You cannot encourage the brotherhood of man by encouraging class hatred. You cannot help the poor by destroying the rich. You cannot build character and courage by taking away man's initiative and independence. And you cannot help men permanently by doing for them what they could do for themselves."

Remarkable words from one of the pillars in our Nation's history. It kind

of crystallizes the American philosophy. It puts it better than, frankly, I have ever heard it.

So what the Official Truth Squad is all about, Mr. Speaker, is bringing truth and enlightening information to the American people and trying to give them a little alternative to what they oftentimes hear coming out of Washington. We try to make sure there is a positive tilt to it, because we live in the greatest Nation on the face of the Earth. We live in a glorious and wondrous Nation. It is a Nation that still is seen by men and women around the world as a beacon of liberty and a repository of hope.

I am so honored and proud to serve in the United States House of Representatives and to have the opportunity to share a positive perspective and a positive vision with my colleagues and with the American people.

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MISSED OPPORTUNITIES IN AFGHANISTAN AND BEYOND

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DAVIS of Kentucky). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, President Bush's brief stopover in Afghanistan yesterday gives us an opportunity to take stock of the progress that has been made there. It also provides an opportunity to reflect on what the world might look like today if the United States had adopted a wiser foreign and national security policy after the terrible attacks on our country on September 11, 2001.

After that tragic day, the world united behind the United States and our determination to destroy Osama bin Laden, al Qaeda, and the terrorists responsible for those attacks. We sometimes forget here that within days of the attack the United Nation's General Assembly, friends and foe alike, unanimously adopted a resolution condemning the attacks on the United States. And NATO, for the first time in its history, invoked article 5 of the Washington Treaty stating an attack against one is an attack against all.

When the brutal Taliban regime refused to support action against al Qaeda, the United States took appropriate military action to force out the Taliban and attempt to destroy the al Qaeda terror network. That was the right action and had the strong backing of the American people. And Afghanistan is a much better place today.

However, while we succeeded in driving out the Taliban from the capital city of Kabul and killed a number of al Qaeda leaders, we have not finished the job. Indeed, Osama bin Laden, the man responsible for masterminding the 9/11 attacks, is still alive and likely to be somewhere along the Afghan-Pakistan border, less than 100 miles from where President Bush stood just yesterday.

And the continued presence of active Taliban and al Qaeda resistance in Afghanistan and along the Pakistan border represents a lost opportunity. Instead of finishing the job against al Qaeda, the President decided instead to attack Iraq, a nation with no weapons of mass destruction and a government that was actually an ideological adversary of al Qaeda.

As a result of invading Iraq, the Bush administration squandered a huge opportunity to keep both our forces and the international community focused on defeating al Qaeda and its brand of radical Islam. The goodwill that the United States had developed throughout the world in the aftermath of 9/11 evaporated as we switched our focus from the enemy that attacked us to one that had not. As a result, our invasion of Iraq has fueled radical Islamic and anti-American forces and allowed al Qaeda to gain new recruits around the world.

Today, the United States is tied down in an increasingly volatile Iraq, and the man actually responsible for launching the attacks on the United States, Osama bin Laden, remains at the top of his terrorist network.

Meanwhile, the United States continues to make mistakes that will hamper our ability to put the Taliban and al Qaeda out of business permanently. First, the United States is sending the wrong message by reducing the number of our forces in Afghanistan. Just yesterday, as President Bush was arriving in Afghanistan, the director of the Defense Intelligence Agency, General Maples, told Members of this Congress that the insurgency in Afghanistan is growing and will increase this spring, presenting a greater threat to the central government's expansion of authority than at any point since 2001. And the greatest threat of Taliban resurgence is in southern Afghanistan, the area from which the United States will be withdrawing more than 2,000 troops.

While we welcome the additional NATO forces in Afghanistan, it would be far wiser to use these NATO troops to supplement rather than replace the U.S. forces in the region. We should not be sending the wrong signal to the Taliban and al Qaeda at this delicate time. We are still living with the consequences of neglecting Afghanistan in the past.

Second, Mr. Speaker, the United States must end the abuse of the detainees at the prison at the Bagram Air Base in Afghanistan. Recent evidence suggests that the abuses that have taken place there are even worse than those that occurred at the notorious Abu Ghraib prison in Baghdad.

The United States must lead by example. The abuse of prisoners is wrong and will only strengthen the hands of al Qaeda and the extremists. We cannot credibly demand that others adhere to the rule of law if we are flouting international human rights standards. The President's stopover in Afghanistan

gave him a chance to declare that such abuse is unacceptable.

Like so much else, however, it was another missed opportunity. As a result of many missed opportunities since 9/11, the United States is less secure than we could be. Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda are still in operation. The Taliban are feeling emboldened. We are bogged down in Iraq, and our weakened moral standing around the world has made it more difficult for us to influence events and protect our security. Let us stop missing opportunities to strengthen our security. We must not reduce our commitment to the people of Afghanistan, and we must increase our commitment to human rights.

Mr. Speaker, we can and should do better, much better.

THE PRESIDENT'S 2007 BUDGET

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. MORAN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I plan to yield to several of my colleagues. Mr. SCOTT from Virginia is also going to speak, and as soon as Mr. SPRATT, the ranking member on the House Budget Committee, comes out of an important hearing on the Dubai ports issue, he will be able to join us as well.

Mr. Speaker, the 2007 budget takes America down a wrong and unsustainable path. The decisions the President made in this budget favor the wealthy over the working class. These decisions reward those who live off what the IRS considers to be unearned income, while making those who have to work long hours every day, to support themselves and their families, pay far more in taxes. In fact, I think you would have found bipartisan agreement if we could have worked out tax cuts that were more in the interest of the working class and those hardworking families.

But, in fact, when you combine the focus of the tax cuts on those who live primarily off unearned income and the spending cuts that purportedly are necessary to offset the cost of these tax cuts, the majority of young people in this country will find it harder to go to college. It will be harder for low-income elderly to get the nutrition and health care they need, and it will be much harder for our grandchildren to pay for the future needs that their generation will face.

The decisions made in the President's 2007 budget, like his budgets since 2002, define a Nation, a community, if you will, that is not the America that we know. In fact, his priorities are just the opposite of what makes America great.

We heard from our colleagues on the other side of the aisle; they call it a so-called Republican truth squad. It boggles your mind.

But the fact is that the Bush administration has raised spending while they have cut taxes. You can't fight two wars on four tax cuts, ladies and gentlemen.

The gentlewoman from North Carolina suggested that the government never invests, it only spends. Well, what does she think is the purpose of the interstate highway system that enabled our economy to fulfill its potential during the Eisenhower administration and subsequent administrations, or the money that we have put into the public schools systems to empower our working class?

And that is what we are talking about, investment that will give us sustainable benefits versus tax cuts that are immediately lost, most of which seem to be invested overseas, and cuts in the real safety net that can make America achieve its greatness.

The conscious choices made in this budget reflect the flawed policies of an administration that has taken this country down a terribly wrong path, one that consists of waging an unnecessary and extraordinarily costly war, delivering huge tax cuts to the very wealthiest of this Nation, and taking the Federal debt to depths never before experienced, while reducing services to working Americans.

First, the 2007 budget is heavily impacted by the consequences of a reckless foreign venture, namely, the war in Iraq. The President's 2007 budget sets aside another \$120 billion supplemental to cover the cost of waging this war in fiscal 2007. Of course, this is on top of a regular defense budget of over \$450 billion. And, in fact, we have now allotted over \$400 billion, when you look through fiscal 2007, primarily for this war in Iraq, and very little for the war in Afghanistan that was referred to by our colleague from Maryland.

The money that is requested in these Iraq war supplementals is \$40 billion more than we request for transportation, \$33 billion more than we request for education and training, more than \$40 billion more than we request for the care of our military veterans, more than \$90 billion more than we will set aside to protect our environment and natural resources, and more than \$80 billion for what is considered diplomacy, but is spent on dealing with the AIDS crisis, on dealing with the ethnic cleansing, the genocide in Sudan and throughout the world, places where we could have such a constructive, positive effect.

The amount of money that is being requested in fiscal 2007 for this war in Iraq will bring the total amount requested by the Bush administration to \$490 billion, an enormous sum. The American people have to ask, has this been worth it, given the results to date? But we know the results are more than 2,300 Americans who have lost their lives in Iraq; more than 16,700 who have been wounded; tens, if not hundreds, of thousands of Iraqi casualties; and yet Osama bin Laden is still

on the run. Iraq now appears to be descending into an all-out civil war and al Qaeda recruitment levels are reportedly stronger than ever.

But while our men and women are risking their lives overseas, at the instruction of this administration, and of course, we have great regard for their courage and sacrifice, we are not being asked to sacrifice at home; and, in fact, the people who have been the most rewarded by this great economy—that was built on the investments that have been made in prior generations—they are being asked to sacrifice the least. In fact, they are actually being rewarded. The same time that these men and women are going to war, we are continuing trillions of dollars of tax cuts that primarily benefit the very wealthiest in our society. And yet these tax proposals are going to cost the American people about \$3 trillion, \$3 trillion over the next decade. The benefits from these tax cuts are heavily skewed toward the wealthy.

If they were to fix the alternative minimum tax for the middle class, that would be one thing. If they were to help working-class families deal with the vulnerabilities they face in providing for their families, that would be one thing. But that is not where most of it goes. More than half of these benefits go to the 4 percent of Americans who make over \$200,000 annually.

Four years from now, in 2010, taxpayers with incomes of more than \$1 million a year will receive average tax cuts worth \$155,000, 100 times the tax cut that the average taxpayer will receive. Is that fair? Is that smart? I don't think it is appropriate, and I don't think it reflects America's priorities. And they come at a huge cost to the fiscal security of this Nation; causing massive amounts of annual Federal deficits.

Over the last 4 years, we have seen the largest deficits in the history of our Nation. Mr. SCOTT is going to show you what has happened over the last 5 years on a chart. I hope you will pay close attention. It is unbelievable.

The current fiscal year, 2006, is expected to produce the largest deficit ever in the history of our country at \$423 billion. And this doesn't even take into account the supplemental spending requests that the President will send up to the Hill any day now which will increase the 2006 deficit to well over half a trillion dollars. And fiscal 2007 will be another year of historic deficits predicted to be \$354 billion.

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In fact, since President Bush took office, we have had the largest annual deficits in the history of this country, and those numbers are net numbers after you take the Social Security surplus and offset it against general fund deficits. So you can add another \$200 billion annually to each of those numbers.

So we are creating debt of over \$500 billion a year, Mr. Speaker. These deficits and the \$8 trillion in debt we now