

included news, call-in talk shows, covering various legal, health and educational topics, as well as music programs. The station became so popular that they were broadcasting 16 hours a day in three languages: Arabic, Kurdish and English.

While we take radio shows that cater to women for granted, this was a revolutionary concept in the Middle East. Women who had been oppressed for years were finally able to hear their side of the story. And Radio Al Mahaba provided a forum for women to make sure that their voices were heard.

The station received 100 calls a day from women asking questions, giving advice and voicing their opinions of how to rebuild their country. The radio station had found an audience, and they were financially in good shape as well from new sponsorships.

But last October, Radio Al Mahaba fell silent. The terrorist attack on the Palestinian Hotel in Baghdad destroyed their transmitter. And while the radio station was not the target of this attack, many leaders in Iraq were not all that upset that these women's voices were silenced once again.

But the women of Radio Al Mahaba were resilient. They found another transmitter, but it wasn't as powerful as the one they lost during the terrorist attack. The new transmitter could only reach about one-third of their listening audience. And less listeners meant less sponsorship revenue for the station.

Unfortunately, the rented transmitter died about a month ago, and they are in desperate need of funds to get back on the air. Once they receive this funding, they plan to expand listening audiences to include all of Iraq and its neighbors. They also plan on broadcasting in Persian to reach the women of Iran, who have been oppressed for nearly 30 years.

If democracy in Iraq is going to succeed, women will have to play a role, a vital role, in making sure that it goes forward. The radio station can be the place for women in Iraq and throughout the Middle East to learn about the issues that will affect their lives. It allows them place to be heard without often violent consequences for the first time in their lives.

The right to educate yourself and to be heard are cornerstones of our democracy, and these characteristics should be carried over to the new Iraq.

At this point in Iraq's history, the station is in the midst of a battle. But not just a military battle, but also in the battle for Iraqi women's rights against fundamentalists.

The station's 28 full-time and part-time staff risk their lives every day to make sure that the voices are heard. Despite this terrible risk, they are all very dedicated because, in one of the staffer's words, "they want to reach out and touch people's lives. They want to give hope and knowledge, empowerment support and the passage of freedom to Iraqi women."

Mr. Speaker, I recently had a chance to talk to President Bush about this station and he was very enthusiastic about the role it will play in democracy in Iraq. It is my hope that the passage of tomorrow's resolution honoring the radio station will raise awareness and find funding for the station so they can continue their message of hope to the women of the Middle East.

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

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

A PARODY OF CONGRESS

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, something odd has happened. There are a lot of odd things that happen around here, but the Republican Web site, the one that they use for scheduling the weekly activities of Congress, has been hacked by writers for the John Stewart Show, and they don't seem to mind. So we are going to be a parody of Congress this week instead of a real Congress this week, despite the fact that we are borrowing \$1.4 billion a day to run the government, we are running a \$2 billion a day trade deficit, average families haven't seen their wages go up in 5 years, and we are raining tax cuts on the wealthy.

There are a few real things that we could deal with that the American people are concerned about. Maybe high gas prices. No, those things are not on the agenda. We have the faux agenda for Congress, which is designed purely for either entertainment purposes or for political purposes.

Well, what are we doing? We are taking up an amendment to ban the threat of gay marriage. Now, let's see. The Senate didn't pass it.

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That means it is not going forward. But, nonetheless, the House is going to use valuable time to vote on banning the threat of gay marriage even though we know that the constitutional amendment cannot move forward because the Senate has already disapproved this venture.

But it is good for the ratings, entertainment value. The John Stewart writers thought it would be fun to bring that up in the House. So we are going to bring it up. Then we are going to do another thing here called "court stripping." We are going to say there are only two and a half branches of Congress, or maybe one and a half, the President and half a Congress, and the judiciary only if they are pets of the President and the Congress.

That is, no judge will be allowed to hear a case challenging the Pledge of

Allegiance. Now, no judge has found the Pledge of Allegiance unconstitutional. Quite the opposite, they have found that the use of the words "under God" is diminimus in the Pledge and have upheld its use.

But the Republicans, they do not even want judges to hear those cases any more and reject those claims any more, because they think that this might provide entertainment value or excite some strange people in the Republican base. So we will spend a day on court stripping instead of dealing with high-energy prices.

Then we are going to take up two phony bills on a serious issue, stem cell research, could have tremendous benefits for the American people. The President is opposed to stem cells, the Republicans are opposed to stem cell research. The United States is falling behind the whole rest of the world.

Americans will have to go overseas to get procedures that have been developed by stem cell research that could cure Parkinson's or other debilitating diseases, because the Republican right wing does not want research on using stem cells, but the American public does want that research.

So we are going to take up two fake bills, two pretend bills. We are going to ban a practice that is not happening called fetal farming, and everybody will probably vote for that, and then we are going to authorize them to do what they can already on the President's lame program that is not working and is having America fall behind on stem cell research. So you see, we are really for stem cell research.

Well, not really, because the lines they are using are all corrupted and it is not going anywhere. And then the real bill, the real compromise bill that passed the House, it passed the United States House of Representatives, is going to probably pass the Senate this week. It will go to the President and he will veto it.

So in order to give them political cover or to provide entertainment value, they will vote on two fake stem cell bills, and then vote to support the President in vetoing the real stem cell bill that could provide tremendous advances in research for the American people.

So this is a sort of play Congress week. Maybe it was not the Stewart writers, maybe it was Colbert who was going through interviewing Members of Congress, and he might have gotten some of the data there.

But in any case, instead of dealing with very real problems that are confronting Americans, instead of dealing with world crises, instead of dealing with high energy prices, growing debt, stagnant wages, you know, access to better education for our kids, health care, high-cost pharmaceuticals, adequately funding veterans benefits, none of that is on the schedule this week.

This week we do not have time for those things because we are playing

Congress taking up bills that are not going anywhere, or that are pretend bills that will go somewhere to cover up the fact that they are killing the real bill that would do something useful and also that, you know, we are taking up constitutional amendments that are not going to pass. Hooray for the Republican majority.

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

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

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

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

IS THE UNITED STATES BANKRUPT?

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

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, there are plenty of signs that the United States economy is not working well. One of the signs is our national debt. The latest figures show we are somewhere over \$8 trillion in the hole, and every day the hole gets deeper. You would think someone here in Washington would pay attention.

Back in the year of 2000, as a result of major decisions made during the 1990s by the Congress, by then President Clinton, we were able to balance the annual budget and were actually paying down this enormous debt, the accumulated debt of the country.

So things do not look too good there, and the United States has to cover those borrowings by borrowing from foreign interests. We know nearly half of U.S. debt securities are now purchased by foreign interests, and the United States is in hock, having to pay every year hundreds of billions of dollars in interest, interest to those foreign holders of our debt, interest we could be spending here at home; dollars we could be spending here inside the borders of the United States, rather than to those who are loaning us the money.

Another sign of our predicament is this, that is, the monthly and annual trade deficits of our country, where more imports are coming into our Nation, more and more and more every month, every day, every year, than we export out.

It is not that we are not exporting things. We are. But we are importing vastly more than we are exporting. In

fact, the latest figures, compiled by the U.S. Census Bureau, indicate that in the month of May, the last month for which we have final figures, our goods and services deficit went up another \$63.8 billion in 1 month. In 1 month.

That means, if you look at these monthly figures of our trade deficit, more imports coming in here than exports going out, in January of this year, they surpassed the debt, the trade debt from last year, in February, in March, in April, and then in May. May was worse than April. Without question, this year will go down as one in which the United States will have amassed the largest trade deficit in history.

We are literally in uncharted waters, because when these goods are purchased in our country, those dollars that are then forked over for those goods go somewhere else. Go somewhere else. And then those countries, take China, for example, or Korea, any of the nations with whom, or Japan with whom we have huge trade deficits, have those dollars to spend. We do not have them to spend. They do.

So they are literally taking our earned assets, and they are trading them internationally. In fact, the State of Indiana just did something incredible. They made a decision to lease out the Indiana Turnpike to foreign interests. This is unbelievable.

This is unbelievable. So the poor State of Indiana, the taxpayers of that State that had paid off the bonds on the turnpike over 30 years ago are now in hock to Spanish and Australian investors for the next 99 years. Unbelievable.

It is like a fire sale. Chicago Skyway did the same thing. Leasing out a public asset to foreign interests. And then we not only owe them the annual interest payments; but our children and our grandchildren, you can just see the pieces of America being taken away because we are not paying our own way.

There was an article in a London paper, the Telegraph, the headline of which is, "U.S. could be going bankrupt." And it is really talking about at what point do you officially declare bankruptcy. And it says, the United States is heading for bankruptcy, and research by Professor Laurence Kotlikoff for the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis said the United States is indeed bankrupt insofar as it will be unable to pay its creditors, who in this context are current and future generations to whom it has explicitly or implicitly promised future net payments of various kinds.

Certainly pension benefits, certainly health care benefits, all of those endangered because the Nation is in hock. We owe others. What is interesting about that Indiana turnpike deal is that the tolls have been doubled now. So the foreign interests to which the Indiana turnpike was leased out have now doubled the costs on the U.S. consumer. We do not have control of our own future until we get the trade ac-

counts and our budget accounts in order.

Certainly the President ought to submit a balanced budget. Certainly this Congress ought to pass one. That has not happened during the Bush administration.

[From the Telegraph (UK), July 14, 2006]

US 'COULD BE GOING BANKRUPT'

(By Edmund Conway, Economics Editor)

The United States is heading for bankruptcy, according to an extraordinary paper published by one of the key members of the country's central bank.

A ballooning budget deficit and a pensions and welfare timebomb could send the economic superpower into insolvency, according to research by Professor Laurence Kotlikoff for the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, a leading constituent of the U.S. Federal Reserve.

Prof. Kotlikoff said that, by some measures, the U.S. is already bankrupt. "To paraphrase the Oxford English Dictionary, is the United States at the end of its resources, exhausted, stripped bare, destitute, bereft, wanting in property, or wrecked in consequence of failure to pay its creditors," he asked.

According to his central analysis, "the U.S. government is, indeed, bankrupt, insofar as it will be unable to pay its creditors, who, in this context, are current and future generations to whom it has explicitly or implicitly promised future net payments of various kinds".

The budget deficit in the U.S. is not massive. The Bush administration this week cut its forecasts for the fiscal shortfall this year by almost a third, saying it will come in at 2.3pc of gross domestic product. This is smaller than most European countries—including the UK—which have deficits north of 3pc of GDP.

Prof. Kotlikoff, who teaches at Boston University, says: "The proper way to consider a country's solvency is to examine the lifetime fiscal burdens facing current and future generations. If these burdens exceed the resources of those generations, get close to doing so, or simply get so high as to preclude their full collection, the country's policy will be unsustainable and can constitute or lead to national bankruptcy.

"Does the United States fit this bill? No one knows for sure, but there are strong reasons to believe the United States may be going broke."

Experts have calculated that the country's long-term "fiscal gap" between all future government spending and all future receipts will widen immensely as the Baby Boomer generation retires, and as the amount the state will have to spend on healthcare and pensions soars. The total fiscal gap could be an almost incomprehensible \$65.9 trillion, according to a study by Professors Gokhale and Smetters.

The figure is massive because President George W. Bush has made major tax cuts in recent years, and because the bill for Medicare, which provides health insurance for the elderly, and Medicaid, which does likewise for the poor, will increase greatly due to demographics.

Prof. Kotlikoff said: "This figure is more than five times U.S. GDP and almost twice the size of national wealth. One way to wrap one's head around \$65.9 trillion is to ask what fiscal adjustments are needed to eliminate this red hole. The answers are terrifying. One solution is an immediate and permanent doubling of personal and corporate income taxes. Another is an immediate and permanent two-thirds cut in Social Security and Medicare benefits. A third alternative,