

percent last month, certified, illegals coming across the border were detained and held to be returned to their country of origin, and the word is out. That is a tremendous deterrent, and the numbers are way down of people coming across the border. The fence below San Diego, two tiered, is making a big difference. The National Guard is making a difference. Billions of dollars having been spent is making a difference. As you heard the gentleman from New Jersey say, our ports are more secure. And most importantly, we are in the intelligence business again because that is why we failed prior to September 11.

And I want to close with this for our troops: John Stuart Mill said this: "War is an ugly thing, but not the ugliest of things." He said: "The decayed and degraded state of moral and patriotic feeling which thinks that nothing is worth war is much worse." He said: "The person who has nothing for which he is willing to fight, nothing which is more important than his own personal safety, is a miserable creature and has no chance of ever being free unless those very freedoms are made and kept so by the exertions of better men than himself."

And those people are our soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines. And we hail them and thank them for their courage and their sacrifice.

---

#### REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 6061, SECURE FENCE ACT OF 2006

Mr. SESSIONS (during Special Order of Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida), from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 109-653) on the resolution (H. Res. 1002) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 6061) to establish operational control over the international land and maritime borders of the United States, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

---

#### REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR THE ADOPTION OF H. Res. 1000, PROVIDING FOR EARMARKING REFORM IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. SESSIONS (during Special Order of Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida), from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 109-654) on the resolution (H. Res. 1003) providing for the adoption of the resolution (H. Res. 1000) providing for earmarking reform in the House of Representatives, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

#### PERMISSION FOR COMMITTEE ON RULES TO HAVE UNTIL 2 A.M., THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2006, TO FILE REPORT ON H. Res. 1000, PROVIDING FOR EARMARKING REFORM IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. SESSIONS (during Special Order of Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida.) Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Rules have until 2 a.m. on September 14, 2006, to file their report to accompany House Resolution 1000.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

---

#### THE 30-SOMETHING WORKING GROUP

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

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it is an honor coming before the House once again, and I must say that I am excited about being here tonight. It is another great day in this great country of ours.

And as you know, the 30-something Working Group, we come to the floor to share with the American people, not just Democrats but Republicans, Independents, those that are thinking about voting, those that have been turned off by political processes who are thinking about being engaged in the political process once again.

To those Americans who are not registered to vote, I would encourage them to register to vote. They can still vote in the upcoming November elections because there is a lot being said on the floor, Mr. Speaker, and we talked last night, the 30-something Working Group. We took 2 hours last night talking about the initiatives that we have with our Real Security Plan, talking about the memory and the sacrifice of those that gave their lives on 9/11 and those that are still living with the effects of 9/11, whether it be losing a family member or a first responder or someone that worked in the World Trade Center or was around the plane going down in Pennsylvania or the Pentagon here in Washington, D.C., those that are still living through it.

Today we had a resolution on the floor, Mr. Speaker, that dealt with addressing the memory of those that lost their lives on 9/11 and things that we have to do. The Republican majority found it fit to kind of put in a resolution about some things that they thought that they accomplished as it relates to making America safer. Some of that I join with them on as an American and as a Member of Congress, but a lot of it has not been achieved.

□ 2200

We have the 9/11 Commission Report that came out that said that we have

to not only inspect 100 percent of cargo containers that are on ships and 100 percent of those cargo containers that go in the bellies of airplanes that are flying throughout the United States of America, it is still not accomplished today. We still have a dismal amount of Border Patrol officers to protect American borders. Democrats, we have asked for 2,000 Border Patrol officers; the President's budget request to this Congress was only 215 or 216 Border Patrol officers.

Now, the Republican majority can come to the floor night after night, day after day, do 5-minute speeches, 1-minute speeches, or take a special order and talk a good game. But I used to be a football player, Mr. Speaker, I played for Florida A&M Rattlers. I was an outside linebacker. And before the game, you would read all about what the other team is saying and all of the talking and taunting. And then you have folks that tailgate before the game, and the bus would roll in and they would talk about what they are going to do to us, and then the coach would talk about how better the other team is. But it really doesn't count until that whistle blows and that kick-off takes place and that you have an opportunity to get out there and hit somebody. And when you hit somebody and when you run the ball down the field and you end up winning the game, all of that talk was for naught.

But what is unfortunate about this situation, even though I use that analogy, Mr. Speaker, this is not a game, this is for real. This is flesh and blood. This is flesh and blood. And the bottom line is, is that one can come to the floor and talk about, well, you know, Democrats and this, that, and the other, and they are holding us back. What are we holding the Republican majority back from, Mr. Speaker? That is what I want to know. That is the prevailing question here.

The bottom line, the Republicans in this House have been in this control for double digit years. So who is holding them back? Now, let's talk a little bit about control. I want to make sure that every Member understands what control and majority means.

The majority means that any amendment, any bill, any appropriations that you want funded will be funded because you are in the majority. You have more numbers than the Democrats do at this particular time in the House.

Why are the American people saying that they want change? Why are the American people saying that they want to move in a new direction? They want to move in a new direction because they want accountability. They want oversight. They want Article I, Section 1 of the U.S. Constitution to be adhered to. They want to make sure that their vote counts here in the U.S. House of Representatives. Right now, it is just a lot of talk. And I can tell you, as a Member of the House and someone that studies what happens here on this floor and what does not happen here on this

floor, I feel it is my obligation not as a Member of Congress but as an American to be able to come to this floor and say that it is just not happening.

We can talk about the facts, and like we do every night we talk about the facts. We have the vote number, down to the vote number when we start talking about border protection. No one can come on this floor in the Republican majority side and say that we have done an outstanding job as it relates to protecting our borders, period, dot. They cannot because they have not done it, Mr. Speaker, and they know it.

So I guess spending the time of 9/11, the fifth anniversary, coming to the floor, having control of a resolution dealing with the issue on 9/11, you can put anything that you want to put in it because you have the majority. It doesn't necessarily mean that it is true. And if the Americans want to move in a new direction, they will have an opportunity. And as we start looking at this whole piece on a new direction and real security, you go on HouseDemocrats.gov. I challenge the Republican majority to go on HouseDemocrats.gov, I challenge the Republicans to pick up the Democrats' bill here on this floor that fully implements the 9/11 recommendations. I ask the Republicans to do that, because it was a bipartisan commission that is respected by this whole country, had a Republican chair and a Democratic vice chair, and had former Members of Congress, members of the Intelligence Committee, the National Security Director come before them and the President of these United States come before them, 9/11 survivors come before them, clandestine organizations that we have within the Federal Government come before them. We have a number of individuals that put forth testimony, frontline first responders that came before them, individuals in academia who have been looking at this issue of homeland security come before them, and they put forth this document called the 9/11 Report, which was a book. Americans can go out to Barnes and Noble or what have you and go out and buy it, go on Yahoo and buy it. It was ready and accessible, and a number of Americans picked up and read it. And in that book, in that text and body: Safety for America.

What do we do in a democracy when the Congress put forth in the Commission to find out what we need to do? We try to implement at least 95 percent or 100 percent of it. But as I stand here today, Mr. Speaker, very little of that has been implemented as it relates to real security.

The Brits ended up intercepting a plot as relates to liquid explosives. Just today, Mr. Speaker, I am the ranking member of the Oversight Committee on Homeland Security, Management Integration and Oversight, and I must say that that in that committee the Under Secretary said, well, we are now starting to do tests as it relates to

liquid explosives, 5 years later, Mr. Speaker. Foot dragging process. And we start talking about the whole issue of how do we get technology involved and how do we get industry involved in helping us resolve threats to the United States, 5 years later.

Do you know why the Department of Homeland Security is foot dragging on this issue? It is the fact that they don't have Members of Congress that are willing to call them out on the carpet and say that we are willing to protect Americans now. We don't want to wait to be a Monday morning quarterback. Mr. RYAN, we don't want to talk about, well, you know, we could have, should have done it, and then we have another commission, it may not be named 9/11, it may be 10/11 that will come forth with a report saying that we found the Department of Homeland Security didn't prioritize the issue on liquid explosives because they felt that there were other threats that are out there.

Well, the bottom line is this: The oversight is not happening, and this Republican Congress has rubber stamped everything that President Bush has handed down and said, so shall it be written, so shall it be done. Let's do it the way you originally wrote it; we are not going to ask any questions, you are the President of the United States. Forget about our legislative responsibilities, forget about oversight, and forget about moving in a new direction.

The bottom line is this. The leader took this podium on this floor here today down in the well and said, if you really want to honor those individuals that have lost their lives on 9/11, if you want to honor those first responders, if you want to honor every American that is fighting abroad as it relates to Afghanistan and the war in Iraq, then implement what the 9/11 Commission called for.

We have got American passengers, we have individuals, law-abiding citizens taking off shoes, giving up hand sanitizer, gulping down water before they get through security screening; meanwhile, containers unchecked, unchecked, there can be 10,000 explosives in the container. We would never know it because we haven't prioritized. We haven't said that we are willing to implement what the 9/11 Commission called for. I don't want to give the 9/11 Commission an opportunity to say, we told the Congress to do it and they didn't do it. I wish they would say we told the Republican majority to do it and they didn't do it.

So, one can get on the floor and say all they have to say, but the facts are this. The fact is that they have not implemented the 9/11 Commission Report. They have not implemented making sure that we go beyond 6 percent of containers that are going throughout the United States of America on 18-wheelers. I used to be a State trooper. They move throughout this country, in the heartland of this country, into the ports of major cities, and they are un-

checked. I don't want to be able to say I told you so. I want to see it implemented.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I said last night, Mr. RYAN, I am done with asking the Republican majority to do the right thing. They have had double digit years to do it. They don't have the will nor the desire to do it. But they do have the will to come to the floor, Mr. RYAN, and to try to say, well, you know, we are doing all we can and the Democrats are holding us back. How can we hold the Republican majority back from securing America? That is not possible when you are in the minority.

The bottom line is, is that Republicans, Independents, Democrats, those that are thinking about voting, those that have not voted in a number of years will show up at the polls to put this country in a new direction. If you allow this kind of landslide policy making, this K Street Project policy making, pay-to-play, here on this floor, then we are going to find ourselves in a dismal situation.

I don't have to say it. Republicans are saying it, Independents are saying it, the media is saying it as you pick up the paper, as you turn on the news. So, you know, it is not like this is a Democrat-Republican issue. I will go ahead and give the benefit of the doubt, Mr. Speaker, and say that there are some Republicans that see it the way that we see it on this side of the aisle that we need to do better by the American people. But, guess what, they are not in the majority; they are not in the leadership of the American Congress. They are not the individuals that move policy through this process. We have the will and the desire to work in a bipartisan way if given the opportunity to make sure that we honor our member and women that have served in the military, that are now serving right now. There are men and women that have sand in their teeth.

Mr. RYAN and I have been to Iraq, I have been to Afghanistan, I have been in the Middle East talking to these leaders, I have been to Central Command. I have been there in Qatar, and I have talked to these individuals, and they are dedicated and they have the will and the desire to follow up. But when we have a Secretary of Defense that is saying that he is going to fire the next person that starts talking about how do we move out of Iraq and how do we replace the force there to be able to empower the Iraqi people, I have a problem with that. And the only reason why Secretary Rumsfeld is not front and center in front of the Armed Services Committee is the fact that Republicans have control of this House; otherwise, there will be Article I, Section 1 of the U.S. Constitution that is blood, sweat, and tears that are on that Constitution right now that he will be front and center making a statement like that. The Secretary of Defense of the United States of America said, if one other person comes to him talking

about how are we going to have this transfer of power, how are we going to draw down and redeploy U.S. troops, that they are going to be fired. That is not a democracy, that is kingdom politics, Mr. Speaker. And I will tell you this. The only people that can bring the kind of paradigm shift that we need in America right now is the American people. We can't count on the Republican Congress to do it. They have already shown that they cannot do it.

The attacks on U.S. troops are well above 700 attacks a week and climbing. Al Qaeda is sending more troops, more individuals to Iraq to train to carry out terror throughout the globe. And the bottom line is, the President said some sort of statement yesterday. Well, you know, if we were to redeploy troops or we were to leave Iraq, then they will follow us to the United States.

Well, you know something? We have this big department that is called the Department of Homeland Security that is supposed to protect Americans. And I can tell you this, under a Democratic controlled Congress we have already said within the 100 hours that full implementation of the 9/11 Commission Report will be implemented by this House and the Senate. We have already said it and we will do it, just like we balanced the budget without one Republican vote.

□ 2215

Mr. Speaker, the facts are on this side of the aisle. The will and the desire is on this side of the aisle. I am excited. I thank God that He preserved life long enough for me to make it here tonight to be able to share the sentiments on behalf of those that are on the National Security Committee, on behalf of U.S. troops in Afghanistan right now that are saying, "We need help." On behalf of those veterans, individuals who can't even walk straight right now, individuals that are still going through reflection, or memorizing what they went through in past conflicts. Those individuals in the PFWs, those individuals that possess what this country is all about and allowed us to salute one flag. On behalf of them, Mr. Speaker, I come tonight with the truth, to say we stand up for those individuals and for those Americans that prayed up our troops over the years: World War I, World War II. You name it. Korea. You name it. Grenada. You name it. Somalia. You name it. Gulf War I. You name it. We come to the floor on behalf of those individuals, those individuals who are veterans right now that have to wait twice a month for the veterans' assistance center to open, for the VA clinic to open in their rural America area, for those individuals that have to wait 4 months to be able to see an ophthalmologist, who served our country. We come to the floor for them. We come to the floor on behalf of those families that are praying for their loved ones that are in harm's way right now and making sure

that we don't allow their sacrifice and their commitment to go to the side because someone came to the floor of the House to say that, Oh, well, yeah, we have al Qaeda and this, that and the other. We have to worry about those Democrats over there.

You don't need to worry about us, Republican majority. You need to worry about the American people and what they think and what they feel. And when they show up on Tuesday, come this November, they will let you know how they feel. They no longer want a rubber-stamp Congress. They want a Congress that is going to legislate and oversight on behalf of the American people, regardless of who they may be.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I am excited about being here tonight. I think I have said that about three times. I think it is important that we continue to come to the floor and give validation to those individuals that need the representation, if they are in our districts or not. They are Americans and they deserve it.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I appreciate the gentleman's passion and want to thank you for inviting me to be down here with you again.

I think what you are trying to say is that this Congress, this President, has really put us and the American people in a lose-lose situation. Good Presidents and a good Congress do not put the American people and their military operation in a lose-lose situation. And now they have reverted back to just saying, Democrats don't care about national security. Democrats are more in favor of protecting the terrorists. Just name calling. It is like you are on the playground again.

The thing that we have to look at is the record. The record does not lie. And what the generals are telling the civilian side what to do and the civilian side not listening, as you expressed earlier. But here is what we are hearing from former generals who, once they get out, can all of a sudden start speaking the truth. Like General Shinseki tried to say to Rumsfeld, "You've got to send in a few hundred thousand troops." And Secretary Rumsfeld, Mr. Speaker, said, "No, no, no. Don't worry. We can do this on the cheap." Rumsfeld was wrong and Shinseki all of a sudden kind of disappears. Look what is happening now.

Lieutenant General Newbold: "What we are living with now is the consequences of successive policy failures." This man was the top operations officer for the Joint Chiefs, commanding general for the First Marine Division, Legion of Merit Navy and Marine Corps commendation medal.

How about General Eaton: "2½ more years of that leadership was too long for my Nation, for my Army and for my family."

These are generals.

How about General Riggs: "They only need the military advice when it satisfies their agenda."

I think what we want to do, Mr. Speaker, is get out of the politics and let's start solving problems. Seven hundred thousand people per Congressional district vote for us to come down here and fix problems, not to play politics with what is going on. And this has been all politics, all the time, from this administration. It doesn't matter if what they are saying is even remotely close to being based in reality. It doesn't matter what the facts on the ground are. You can sit here and say, the Democrats this and the Democrats that.

You're in charge of the House, the Senate and the White House. Don't go blame the minority party for your failures. That is what has happened here. I will be happy to yield.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Thank you, Mr. RYAN.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. The debate coming out of D.C. and the old Potomac two-step is, "We'll blame the Democrats." What are you going to blame the Democrats for? We have bills sitting in committee. No one has given them even one hearing in a committee. We have got discharge petitions sitting over here for veterans benefits and all kinds of other things. They never see the light of day. We are the minority party. You can't blame us. You can try, but you can't blame us. Take responsibility for your actions. And if you solve problems, the American people would return you back. But you haven't.

Just look. The failure to execute basic governmental programs. Look at homeland security. Look at Katrina. Look at the war. You got Newt Gingrich, the father of the Republican revolution in 1994, basically saying, "Vote the Republicans out." Here is what Speaker Gingrich said in the Wall Street Journal just a couple of days ago. Just consider the following, he says:

"Osama bin Laden is still at large. Afghanistan is still insecure. Iraq is still violent. North Korea and Iran still building nuclear weapons and missiles. Terrorist recruiting still occurring in the U.S., Canada, Great Britain and across the planet."

This is not a Democrat. This is someone who cares about his country and saying, "We may even disagree on how to fix the problem, but can we please admit that we have got some serious problems in 2006 in the United States of America? We have a government that doesn't work because it thinks the government is built on a concept of an economy that was 1950. It doesn't work." This is from a few months ago, about the Republican majority.

"They are seen by the country as being in charge of a government that can't function."

We don't need to make this up. We don't need to create this. This is not fiction. This is about what is happening here. We come down here, Mr. Speaker, because we want to start solving these problems. When we are not included in the debate, you are basically saying half of the country has no

solutions. Well, we have solutions. When we get in charge next year, we are going to show the American people our ability to govern. We are not trying to obstruct. We couldn't even obstruct if we wanted to. All we are saying is, every single aspect of the neoconservative political agenda has been implemented and it is not benefiting the American people.

Look at your energy costs. Look at your health care costs. Look at your tuition costs. Look at your tax burden. Look at the inefficiency of government. Look at how your government responds to natural disasters. Look how your government handles its foreign policy. Look at the prewar plan. When you have a problem with your political system and your leadership, when you have the Secretary of Defense. Just think about this. There is a problem when the Secretary of Defense wants to invade a country and doesn't want anyone around him talking about how we are going to get out once the war is over. We have got the best military machine the planet has ever seen. We knew we were going to march right to Baghdad. We didn't know it was going to be as quick as it was but we knew it would be quick. Certainly the Iraqis weren't going to be able to stop us. And then the Secretary of Defense, used to be called the Secretary of War, the same position. But the Secretary of Defense tells everyone around him that we're not allowed to talk about a post-war plan.

What? Mr. Speaker, that is crazy.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. I have to come in at this point.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Come in.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. You are making a great point, but I just have to come in at this point.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Supplement.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, the bottom line is over at the Department of Defense, it is almost like having what they call a 501(c)(3), kind of a community group that goes out and does good on behalf of the community. You go out and you pick board members to be on your board of this 501(c)(3). Let's just say it is the Boys Club or the Girls Club of America. You are the chairman of the board. You are saying, "I'm going to get everyone that says yes and agrees with me. I don't want anyone to disagree with me." We do know for any great organization that you need individuals that are going to question your original thoughts.

What we have now in America, in the Department of Defense and in this government, this Federal Government of ours, is a "yes" board of directors. The U.S. Congress, the Republican majority, is a "yes" board. They are a rubber-stamp board. They do anything and everything the President of the United States says, does, or whoever his advisers may say we should do.

But what is unfortunate is the fact that we are the superpower of the world and we are the United States of

America. This is not the Boys and Girls Club. This is not One-Two-Three 501(c)(3), we want to do good for you. This is national security. This is protecting women and children. This is making sure that our troops that have gone in past conflicts, that their memory is not stepped upon. This is making sure that individuals have health care. This is making sure that small businesses are able to provide health care. This is making sure that we balance the budget. This is not a 501(c)(3). This is the government of the United States of America.

And when you have the Secretary of Defense saying, "If anyone comes to me that doesn't believe in what I believe in, you can get out of here. If you want to talk about an exit strategy or redeployment of troops in Iraq, you can't be around me. You're fired." And all you hear is cricket sounds from the Republican majority. Quiet. No one is saying anything. No one is doing anything. No one called a hearing. No one called the Secretary to the United States Congress to say, "Excuse me, Mr. Secretary. Wait a minute. I heard you give speeches saying that whatever the men and women need and the commanders need on the ground in Iraq, that you're here to hear their call. You want to hear from them."

The President of these United States, the Commander in Chief, said, "Whatever our commanders tell us on the ground or over at the Pentagon, we're here to take on their recommendations."

But, Mr. Speaker, things have gotten so bold now, because no one is here to question kingdom politics here in Washington, D.C. So shall it be written, so shall it be done politics from the White House and from the Pentagon. And so that the Secretary of Defense feels so confident that he can publicly say, anyone who has anything to say about redeployment of troops in the Pentagon, they are gone. That is not a democracy. That is a rubber-stamp democracy.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I want to share a couple of other of these quotes that support what you are saying. Here is from General Batiste: "Rumsfeld and his team turned what should have been a deliberate victory in Iraq into a prolonged challenge."

General Zinni: "We are paying the price for the lack of credible planning or the lack of a plan. Ten years' worth of planning were thrown away."

How about General Swannack: "I do not believe Secretary Rumsfeld is the right person to fight that war based on his absolute failures in managing the war against Saddam in Iraq." That was from the New York Times in April. And on and on and on.

But here is the point I want to make before we yield to our other good friend from Florida about just not listening and not even accepting facts presented by nonpartisan people.

□ 2230

The 9/11 Commission was a bipartisan group that said you need to implement

these. After months and months of study on what happened on 9/11, this is what you need to implement. And it has not been done.

And then the Senate Intelligence Committee comes out and says there was no tie between Saddam and al Qaeda, and yet the administration goes out and continues to perpetuate falsehoods. Excuse me, but, I mean, come on. It was the Senate Intelligence Committee report, and the Senate is controlled by Republicans. That was basically a Republican report and a non-partisan report, and yet they continue to just go on and say things that just don't match with reality.

I yield to my friend from Florida.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Well, thank you, Mr. RYAN. It is wonderful to be here again with both of you, as we take the floor each night to talk to our colleagues and any Americans that might be within the sound of our voices.

Last night, we had the opportunity to talk about and reflect upon September 11 and its commemoration, and we had a commemoration of sorts on the floor this evening, Mr. RYAN and Mr. MEEK. I thought it was really interesting that the majority, Republican majority, felt it necessary to politicize what should have been a solemn and commemorative event, and a solemn and commemorative resolution with their ra-ra stuff on some of the most controversial legislation that has come off this floor related to so-called national security.

And on Monday, when we were in our home communities, I was in south Florida with our first responders in my community. And I told you both last night that again and again all day on Monday people asked me, well, Debbie, are we safer than we were 5 years ago? And, you know, that was such an incredibly difficult question to field because you want to tell them, yes, we are safer. We are elected officials, and the public puts their trust in us, and it is our job to be able to unequivocally say, yes, we are safer. But here is the rhetorical questions I will ask you. Have we captured Osama bin Laden? Have we smoked out the terrorists, as the President promised? Three years after "mission accomplished," do we even know what the mission is? A year after the last throes of the insurgency in Iraq, are we closer to the date that our troops can come home? Does the President still want the insurgents to "bring it on?"

If you look at the point shortly after we toppled the Taliban in Afghanistan, we have made one misstep after another after another. I mean, repeatedly. I would be hard-pressed to think of a way in which the aftermath of September 11 and the last 5 years could have been handled worse than it has been. I mean, are we truly resting the sum total of our national security on whether we take our shoes off when we go through the magnetometer at the airport, or whether we check our Coke at the door?

I mean, if you asked Americans, as we walked down a city block, what they could put their arms around and tangibly identify as the national security steps we have taken, that is what most people would name.

Basically, the war on terror is a junkyard of missed opportunities. That is exactly what we have been doing since 9/11, squandering opportunity. And last night, Mr. MEEK, we talked about how unified and patriotic the country felt and our citizens felt after 9/11. You never had a less partisan environment or a more unified American environment than the hours and days after 9/11, and weeks and months.

In that whole year following 9/11, people drove around and you had American flags on either side of every car, and this President and this Republican majority squandered those opportunities to really bring the country together by adopting the bipartisan recommendations of the 9/11 Commission, which is why that commission was created, in spite of the President's objections, who didn't want the 9/11 Commission to even exist in the first place.

But then, finally, he really had to grudgingly agree he would be supportive of it. And to this day, in 2006, September 13, 2006, we have not fully implemented it. We have not even come close to implementing their recommendations. Squandered and missed opportunities. It is just disgusting.

So no, sadly, the answer I had to give my constituents was, well, we are somewhat safer. We are safer in spots, but there are major, major gaps. And it doesn't have to be that way, Mr. MEEK. It really doesn't.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. If I may inject here, the last attack, the attack prior to 9/11, was in 1993. This is a very patient group. Just because we haven't been hit yet does not mean we are executing the plan properly. And to just dismiss the 9/11 report and continue down the road of ignoring what the experts are telling us from Iraq and from everything else puts us in a certain amount of danger.

And you have the charts that we have shown night after night that are on our Web site, [housedemocrats.gov/30something](http://housedemocrats.gov/30something), night in and night out, about the ports and the amount of ships coming in and cargo that are coming in that are not checked, Mr. MEEK. You guys are in Florida, we have Lake Erie in Ohio. I mean, this country is surrounded by cargo coming in and out of our ports, for us not to check it all.

And then, when you think about what we are spending in Iraq, \$2 billion a week, \$8 billion a month, and what we could do with that money on addressing the issue of our ports, on our homeland security, on our first responders, on making sure everyone has the proper radios and the proper equipment to coordinate these kind of things; what we could do with technology at the borders, at our airports, the retinal scans, and all kinds of

things that could spring up and even have some economic stimulus.

What economic stimulus are we getting out of Iraq right now? Nothing. Nothing. It is like putting money and just flushing it. And so I think it is time, and I yield to my friend, but I think it is time that we start straightening this out.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. I will just jump in on one thing. As you watch what they are doing unfold, because, again, we always remind people we don't have any control over this process right now. Hopefully, after November 7, we will be given that opportunity, because the American people, we know, want a new direction. But, Mr. MEEK, I don't know if you had a chance to read one of our papers in south Florida, the Sun Sentinel, the other day, but one of the Members in our delegation on the Republican side actually said the war in Iraq is over. He was actually quoted as saying the war in Iraq is over and that we won the war, and that now we are fighting a faceless enemy. Which is absolutely true, we are fighting a faceless enemy.

But I was flying here and reading the newspaper, reading that article, and wondering what planet this person was on and whether there an alternate universe he was observing. Because anyone that we know, no matter what their party affiliation, clearly recognizes that we are at war. This is called the war in Iraq. This is major, major conflict, where more than 2,600 troops have been killed. Ask the families of those troops whether they think the war is over. How about the wounded, the more than 20,000 wounded, whether they think the war is over and we won.

If that is the reality that our Republican colleagues are operating under, no wonder they are taking us in the direction that we are going in.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. And let us look at the colossal failure that has been made here. We have now, because of the decimation in Iraq and the inability of a post-war plan that Rumsfeld didn't want anyone to talk about, and not propping up some government there to combat Iran, now you have Iran as the major player in this region. And they are talking about nuclear weapons, they are funding terrorists through the back door in Iraq through Hamas. Through all of the terrorist organizations in the Middle East, Iran is the one stoking this fire.

We have put ourselves in such a position of weakness. Now, we have troops there and troops in Afghanistan, too, so what if something else happens? And I think it is interesting, and our ranking member on the Armed Services Committee, Mr. SKELTON, has been talking about this for a long time, and it is difficult to even fathom this, but one-half of all Army units, deployed and nondeployed, Active and Reserve, one-half of all Army units received the lowest readiness rating any fully formed unit can receive, with a decline in levels that haven't been seen since Vietnam.

So our army is not ready. Not only are we in a quagmire in Iraq, we have problems in Afghanistan, the poppy crop is growing like gang busters, it is a major parts of their underground economy that is going to the terrorists, now our army is not meeting the readiness capabilities in case something else happens.

And we are in a position of weakness with China because we are borrowing billions of dollars from them, so how do you negotiate with all these people from a position of weakness? You can't. It has been America that has always balanced the budgets so we didn't have to borrow money from people; very selective in our foreign policy; making sure we had friends and allies. All down the tubes in one presidency.

Yield to my friend.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. RYAN, I don't give the President total credit for all of this. He couldn't do it by himself. You have to have a rubber stamp Congress to give you full power, full power to be able to take the country down the track it has gone down. And the bottom line is that a Republican majority, from the leadership on down to the newly elected member of the Republican conference, has to take credit for giving the President the kind of power that he has right now.

We are fighting wars abroad for "democracy," when here at home we don't celebrate that very democracy that so many people speak of. We have individuals that are on their third and fourth deployment. I am on the Armed Services Committee, so I get the reports. I get the letters from my constituents saying my husband, my wife, my mother, my dad, my niece, my uncle, my next-door neighbor is on his way back to Iraq again. Because we went alone. We didn't go with a true coalition.

So I think it would be hard, if I was a part of the Republican majority, to try to muster up some talking points for the floor right now; to be able to say, well, okay, some of this stuff is not believable, so let's try to attack some members of the Democratic caucus. Let's try to muster up and embellish a "record" on possibly being weak on terrorism or being weak on national security. That's where the Republican majority is now. Mr. Speaker, they are gasping for political air right now.

But you know what is so important about this issue and this discussion about national security is that it is supposed to be nonpolitical. And, unfortunately, it is. And that is because the majority hasn't allowed bipartisanship in this House for so many years, and so they can hang it around their neck and say it is our war. It is our failure as it relates to national security and border security. Don't act like it is a crisis right now. You allowed it to happen under your watch. You have been the rubber stamp Congress.

Now, Mr. RYAN and Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, let me just tell you what the rubber stamp Congress has accomplished borrowing \$1.05 trillion from

foreign nations in 4 years. In more than 224 years of this country's history, with 42 presidents, \$1.01 trillion they were able to borrow in 4 years, and this Republican Congress and the President has allowed that to happen.

These are the countries here that own a part of the American apple pie: Japan, China, the U.K., the Caribbean, Taiwan, Germany, and OPEC nations. You know, this whole oil thing that we will talk about in a minute. Korea and Canada. They all have their hands in the pockets of the U.S. taxpayers, not because of the U.S. taxpayers but because of the Republican majority's out-of-control spending.

Oil companies? Oh, wow. At this time in history, when they unearth what happened under this Republican majority and this Presidency, they will see these record breaking profits. There was a meeting in the White House, I have the article to prove it, and I talk about it all time. It was a special meeting that took place in the White House, and the Vice President's aides and all met. And then the policymakers came here to the Congress, to the rubber stamp Congress.

Now, let me set this up here, because we believe in the 30-something Working Group, in third-party validators. Washington Post, Wednesday, November 16, 2005, White House document shows that executives from big oil companies met with Vice President CHENEY's Energy Task Force in 2001, something long expected by environmentalists but denied as recently as last week by the White House. Last week, industry officials testified before Congress. Document obtained by the Post on November 2005 shows that officials from Exxon Mobil, Phillips, Shell Oil Companies, and BP of America met in the White House complex with Cheney aides to develop a national energy policy, parts of which became law, and parts of which are still being debated in Congress.

□ 2245

That was 2001, Mr. Speaker. Look what happened:

2002, \$34 billion, record-breaking profits; 2003, \$53 billion; 2004, \$84 billion; 2005, \$113 billion in profits for oil companies. Meanwhile, average Americans are spending through the nose and trying to make it to work and to drop their kids off.

Look what happened here. This is what happened under the Republican majority and a rubber stamp Congress. So shall it be written and so shall it be done.

E-85, we talk about alternative fuels, flex vehicles. Every magazine I open talks about flex vehicles. Here is the bottom line. The Republican Congress have allowed these oil companies to be able to do anything they want to do when they want to do it. This is an actual pump here at an Exxon-Mobil station. It says you cannot use your Mobil credit card to buy E-85. Meanwhile, we can continue to feed off the Saudi Ara-

bian Middle East, what got us in this thing in the first place policies. You can use your oil card there. You can buy a bag of chips, you can buy a carton cigarettes, but E-85 that is produced in the Midwest versus the Middle East, you cannot use your Mobil credit card for that.

And on retirement packages, and I don't know very much about Lee Raymond, but the bottom line is he is a retired executive from Exxon-Mobil with a \$398 million retirement package and a \$2 million tax break. This is what happens with a Republican majority.

Again, the Republican majority rubber stamp, don't worry about balancing the budget. Democrats, we tried to balance the budget. We have done it before. We have tried to do it under this Republican majority. Not one Republican vote to balance the budget on rollcall vote 87, March 17, 2005.

Ranking Member SPRATT and the Budget Committee put it forth again. Failed. Not one Republican vote on rollcall vote 91 in 2004. Their will and desire is not there. The American people deserve balance.

Minimum wage. Yes, there was some bill that came up before we left for the break to talk about minimum wage, a bill that the Republican majority knew that the Senate would not take up and would never make it to the President's desk. But because we were hammering them on it, they said let's pass this. They added all kinds of stuff. It is called the Potomac two-step.

This chart, the bottom line is these are not minimum wage increases, these are increases for Members of Congress. This is our pay. This is what we make. Oh, look at them. Since 1997 there hasn't been an increase in the minimum wage, and you not a minimum wage worker right now, and I am not talking to the Members of Congress, I am talking to the American people, the bottom line is if the minimum wage goes up, and that means if you are a salaried worker, then your wages will go up. But the bottom line is that it is a fact that the Republican Congress has said not over our dead body. We are going to get our increase, but we are not going to give the American people a minimum wage increase. It goes on and on and on.

I am going to close with this, the Prime Minister of Iraq and the President of Iran. Mr. DELAHUNT brought this picture out last night. I don't care whichever way you cut, \$300 billion of spending, over 2,000 troops, thousands and thousands of American troops injured, here in Washington, D.C. "stay the course," no plan.

The Secretary of Defense says if you talk about or say anything about redeployment of troops or withdrawing from Iraq, you are fired. No question from the Congress, no response from the Congress. The Secretary of Defense is not called to the Hill immediately. The Republican Congress, what are they saying? They are saying nothing, Mr. Speaker. So accountability is not

there. They are embracing and guess what, this is a la the U.S. taxpayer through the Republican majority because of a lack of diplomacy and a lack of plan and going to a war of choice versus after Osama bin Laden in Afghanistan and giving those troops in Afghanistan the support they need.

So Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Mr. RYAN, I rest my case. The bottom line is that was not a message for Democrats or Republicans. It was not a message for Independents or the Green Party or other party affiliations. That is a message for Americans. The bottom line is whatever you may feel, if you are a member of the Republican Executive Committee or you have always voted Republican or you always voted Independent, you have to have issues with what the facts are.

I yield to Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Thank you. I want to pick up on the litany of issues you were going through because we need to zero in on how we make ourselves safer because the other side is going to spend a lot of time and they are spending a lot of time claiming they are the party of national security and they are the ones that need to be entrusted to keep us safe.

The last time I checked, that is who was in charge of keeping us safe, and they are not doing such a hot job. Mr. RYAN talked about how we like to use third party validators here. We absolutely do. I am going to use a third-party validator of Governor Kean, former Governor Kean of New Jersey who co-chaired the bipartisan 9/11 Commission and Lee Hamilton, a former well-respected Democratic Congressman who was the other co-chair of the 9/11 Commission. Here is what they said on Monday, September 11, 2006. "As we mark the fifth anniversary of the terrorist attacks, Americans ask: Are we safer? Two years ago, the 9/11 Commission found that our government failed in its duty to protect us. The commission, which the two of us led, made 41 recommendations to ensure that this Nation does everything possible to protect its people.

"Many of our recommendations, including those to reorganize the intelligence community, were written into law. Yet no law is self-executing. Implementation is often the harder step."

We know that implementation is the job of the Congress. The 9/11 Commission couldn't recommend things into thin air and suddenly they would happen. They have to be adopted into law and funded.

They continued, "We issued a report card on our recommendations in December. It included 10 Cs, 12 Ds, and 4 Fs. What we argued then," and this was September 11, 2006, 2 days ago, "is still true now: Americans are safer, but we are not yet safe.

"So what do we need to do?" This is their words, not ours.

"First, homeland security dollars must be allocated wisely. Right now,

those funds are spread around like revenue-sharing projects.” We are basically using the opportunity to spend money on homeland security for turkeys, we used to call them in Florida. We call them earmarks here. That means little itty-bitty projects, and every Member knows that there are potential security targets in their own district, but we don’t nitpick homeland security. You don’t spread the money around so thinly so you never make truly one area or region or community truly safe.

They said that until Congress passes a law to allocate funding on the basis of risk and vulnerabilities, scarce dollars will continue to be squandered.

“Second, States and localities need to have emergency response plans and practice them regularly. Hurricane Katrina taught us a lesson that we should have learned from September 11: From the moment disaster strikes, all first responders need to know what to do and who is in charge.”

Do they know that? No.

“Third, we called on Congress to give first responders a slice of the broadcast spectrum ideal for emergency communications.” That won’t happen until 2009. What in God’s name are we waiting for? 2009? What happened to the interoperability in communications that was so essential that was the major problem on 9/11?

I don’t have time to go through all of the recommendations, Mr. MEEK, because homeland security is so woefully lacking and the congressional leadership here has done, I can’t even use that word, congressional leadership has done such a poor job of implementing their recommendations and making us safer that it is laughable. It is ridiculous. It is outrageous for them to suggest that they are the party of national security and safety. I could go on and on.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I want to share as we end here from the Newt Gingrich commentary from the Wall Street Journal where he talks about some of this stuff, about trying to figure out what the solutions are by figuring or understanding what the problems are.

Then he talks about, and this is his advice to George Bush, “Then he should announce an honest review of what has not worked in the first 5 years of the war.” That is what we have been saying. Let’s find out what has not been working. Based on the findings, he should initiate a sweeping transformation of the White House national security apparatus. Good idea.

The current hopelessly slow and inefficient interagency system should be replaced by a new metrics-based and ruthlessly disciplined integrated system of accountability. That is what we want to do. Accountability. Let’s sit down and have hearings and figure this out. The House of Representatives has a role to play in this oversight. The President should insist upon creating a new, aggressive, entrepreneurial na-

tional security system. It is time to do this.

Following this initiative, the President should propose a dramatic and deep overhaul of homeland security grounded in metrics-based performance to create a system capable of meeting the seriousness of the threat.

This is about reforming the institution of government. The former Speaker understands it. The Democratic Party understands it, and the only people who seem not to get it are the people who serve in this administration and the high levels of this Congress. I hope it changes. All of the charts that we are using tonight are available on this website, [www.HouseDemocrats.gov/30Something](http://www.HouseDemocrats.gov/30Something). It has been an enjoyable evening once again.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. RYAN, I want to say that Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ is going to get an opportunity to go through her homeland security piece when we are on the floor again.

I want to encourage members to go on [HouseDemocrats.gov](http://HouseDemocrats.gov) and get a copy of the real security plan that we have here. We even have it in Spanish. Also energizing America is on there, and also an innovation agenda that has a lot of CEOs and leaders in the education field. They say they endorse our plan.

With that, we thank the Democratic leadership for allowing us to have this time. It is an honor to address the House once again.

#### THE ROAD TO AFFORDABLE HEALTH CARE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. SCHMIDT). Under the Speaker’s announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BURGESS) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. BURGESS. Madam Speaker, I too would like to say it is a privilege to come to the floor of the House and be able to address the House on important matters of the day.

In my first term in the House, the 108th Congress, and my background is actually as a physician, and when I came to Congress in 2003, one of the things that you do with a doctor when you put them in Congress is put them on the Transportation Committee. So I had a very good session of Congress on the Transportation Committee. I was fortunate enough after my reelection in 2004 to be placed on the Energy and Commerce Committee on the Subcommittee on Health. So having had experience in Congress on both roads and now health, what I thought I would talk about tonight is the road to affordable health care.

Some of the things that I want to talk about tonight are the overall affordability of health care and where we are in this country and where we are going. I want to talk about the public versus the private systems in this country. We obviously need to talk about the uninsured and some of the programs to help with the uninsured,

federally qualified health centers, association health plans and health savings accounts.

□ 2300

You almost can’t talk about health care in this country without talking about liability reform, and, indeed, we do need to touch on that, and the sustainable growth rate, patient access for Medicare patients, how physicians are reimbursed under the Medicare system, an item that is becoming of critical importance if we want to keep some of our best doctors providing care for some of our most complex and challenging patients.

Information technology has been one of the buzzwords up here ever since I started my time in Congress, and, indeed, we need to talk about that. Preparedness, whether it be from terrorism, whether it be from natural disaster, or whether it be from an outside source like the worldwide flu pandemic that hit this country in 1918, we need to be prepared for that should it happen.

We need to talk a little bit about the number of State mandates that are on insurance policies that tend to drive the cost of health insurance up and thereby reduce the overall affordability of health care.

There are some interesting things that are being done in some of the States as they approach some of the difficulties they had in providing health care to their citizens. I would like to particularly talk about Governor Mitt Romney’s plan up in Massachusetts that provides for personal responsibility in health care.

Finally, if there is time, we will talk a little bit about the reauthorization of trauma centers in this country. We will talk a little bit about transparency, raise transparency for price cost and quality in our health care system and maybe just a little bit about long-term care, because that is one of the drivers that is going to vastly increase the cost of Medicare and Medicaid as more and more baby boomers retire.

Let me just remove this for a minute so it is not distracting to any other Member of the House who might happen to come by and look at it.

We talk about the current problem facing us. We spend a fair amount of money in this country on health care. We have a gross domestic product of upwards of \$11 trillion, and we spend about 16 percent of that on health care; \$1.4 trillion is spent on health care in this country. In fact, Medicare and Medicaid alone in our HHS appropriations bill, which we have yet to pass, that bill will probably be upwards of \$660 billion just for Medicare and Medicaid.

Of course, we have the Indian health service, the veterans health service, Federal prisons also providing health care, so there is a significant chunk of this Nation’s health care that is already borne by the Federal Government. The other approximately 50 percent is broken down to that care that