

subsidize. Americans should not be compelled to pay the lawyers who remove historic American symbols. The Public Expression of Religion Act would stop this action. I am glad to be a co-sponsor of this bill, and I urge support for its passage.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, today the Republicans bring to the floor a bill that would undermine yet another basic freedom. The so-called "Public Expression of Religion Act" is nothing more than an attack on religious liberty. It promotes government-sponsored religion by limiting challenges to such constitutional violations.

This bill is about the government stopping people from standing up for their civil rights. By restricting people's ability to stand up for their civil rights when governments promote a particular religion, this bill chips away at the constitutionally protected separation of church and state.

That's not all that's at issue here. Language in the bill leaves the door open to all sorts of state-sponsored violations of constitutional freedoms. It casts a dangerously wide net.

This bill also gives the green light to civil rights violations. Exempt from monetary damage payments, local, State and Federal Governments would not have to think twice before violating the separation of church and state. They could act with impunity.

Paying attorneys' fees is a normal, time-honored procedure. It allows citizens to stand up for their constitutional rights, knowing that if the court rules in their favor, they can recover the legal fees. This bill is an egregious ploy to undercut Americans' civil rights.

Barring attorney's fees would be unprecedented. This dangerous example would set our civil rights on a slippery slope to extinction.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All time for debate has expired.

Pursuant to House Resolution 1038, the previous question is ordered on the bill, as amended.

The question is on the engrossment and third reading of the bill.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, and was read the third time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the passage of the bill.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

WAIVING POINTS OF ORDER AGAINST CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 5631, DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2007

Mr. COLE of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 1037 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 1037

Resolved, That upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider the conference report to accompany the bill (H.R. 5631) making appropriations for the Department of Defense for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2007, and for other purposes. All points of order against the conference report and against its consideration are waived. The conference report shall be considered as read.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. COLE) is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. COLE of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MATSUI), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. COLE of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 days to revise and extend their remarks and insert tabular and extraneous material into the RECORD.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. COLE of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, on Monday the Rules Committee met and reported a rule for consideration of the conference report for H.R. 5631, the Department of Defense Appropriations Act for fiscal year 2007.

Mr. Speaker, when the Rules Committee met on Monday night, it reported a rule that waives all points of order against the conference report and against its consideration. Additionally, it provides that the conference report be considered as read.

Today, I rise to support the rule for H.R. 5631 and the underlying legislation. This piece of legislation is a hard-fought compromise between the House and the Senate. The required give and take in this case is a tremendous example of the dedication that Members of both bodies of Congress and both political parties have when it comes to supporting our troops in the field.

Mr. Speaker, many said we could not be at this point today. Many expected compromise could not be reached. I am pleased to say this has not been the case.

Furthermore, the underlying legislation also provides the continuing resolution for the government to remain in operation until November 17. This represents a great compromise and maintains the lower funding levels from either the House or Senate from the previous year or the fiscal year 2006 current rates. H.R. 5631, in short, represents good, bipartisan, bicameral work.

Mr. Speaker, the primary purpose of the underlying legislation is to secure and improve the defense of our country. To that end, the underlying legislation provides for several critical needs for our forces. First, its overall

level of funding provides \$377.6 billion plus \$70 billion in the fiscal year 2007 bridge for operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Additionally, a full \$17.1 billion is provided for the Army for the purpose of resetting and refurbishing the force. This is particularly critical at a time when the Army clearly requires and deserves additional funds to fulfill the many complex and dangerous missions it has been called upon to undertake.

Other critical expenditures in this legislation includes significant dollars for the Army's future combat systems, the Navy's shipbuilding program, and aircraft research and development and procurement by the Air Force.

Rather than focusing on the specific numbers, however, I want to address the fundamental reasons for the underlying legislation and the challenges that it attempts to address.

Mr. Speaker, today we are at war in both Iraq and Afghanistan, and are embarked upon the greatest military rebuilding effort in a generation. While our forces are stretched, they are doing a magnificent job. There is no doubt of their dedication, professionalism, and commitment to the missions we have asked them to fulfill. Frankly, we ask more of them than anyone should have to give; yet when we do, they always exceed our expectations.

Mr. Speaker, our combatant commanders and the administration have been very open during the multiple oversight hearings about the challenges they foresee in what they refer to as the long war. It is not a war that can be fought and won by force alone. It is one that requires military action, but also reconstruction, stabilization, and the fostering of democratic concepts and structures of government in areas and among peoples who have been subjected to dictators and totalitarian regimes for decades.

This task is neither simple nor easy. However, it is necessary for the security of our country. When the American people are asked to support our troops in the field, they always respond with the generosity and commitment required of them. Historically, however, Congress and the President have not always funded the military in peacetime at levels necessary to adequately protect us from future threats. I believe that many of the challenges we face today come from underfunding our military during the 1990s.

Mr. Speaker, today we may hear that the force is stressed. We may hear that we don't have enough troops. We may hear about excessive deployment rates. We may hear about increasing levels of stress on military personnel and their families. In large measure, I accept these assertions as true, but they are issues that have grown out of an historical reluctance to see the world for what it is, a very dangerous place.

At the end of the first Bush administration in 1992, we were left with a military that was much larger and could have sustained operations in the

current environment for a much longer period of time. During the 1990s, many of the forces we wish we had today were RIF'ed, disassembled, retired and transferred in pursuit of the so-called "peace dividend."

If there is one thing we should learn from this experience, it is that the military is like life insurance: it is expensive, and no one wants to pay for it, but it is there for a specific purpose and to be used when the situation requires.

We have clearly seen what the misguided decision to reduce our forces from 15 divisions and then down to 10 divisions has meant for the Army. It has resulted in a force that is burdened, strained and stretched by our historically naive decisions.

Mr. Speaker, the road out of this situation is not easily traveled. It is one that will require the sustained commitment and support of the administration and both Houses and both parties in Congress. This bill is a step in that direction. It is a step toward achieving our objective in Afghanistan and Iraq. It is a step toward building a future for us that can meet America's changing security needs. This is an ongoing process.

However, Mr. Speaker, some today may try to make the underlying legislation out to be more comprehensive than any bill can possibly be. They will argue it should be the final answer, a cure for all problems. This is not, and, indeed, this can never be.

The defense of our country requires a constant vigilance born of necessity. And the funding, sizing and transformation of our military forces is by necessity an evolutionary process. One appropriations bill will not meet all of the challenges or solve all of the security needs of our country. However, this bill is a real substantive and incremental step in securing our future.

Mr. Speaker, the appropriators have forwarded us a bill that is substantial, sound, and needed.

□ 1545

It is a robust vote of confidence in our servicemen and prioritizes the funding on ongoing operations. It is one that I believe we should support. And after all is said and done here today, I am convinced that this bill will indeed receive an overwhelming bipartisan vote of support in this House.

To that end, Mr. Speaker, I urge support for the rule and the underlying bill.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Oklahoma for yielding me time, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Ms. MATSUI asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, the rule before us makes in order a conference report for the fiscal year 2007 defense appropriations bill. It will be the first

conference agreement to pass both Chambers, and it would do so on time. That should be commended.

However, the majority leadership has yet to come to an agreement on much else. As a result, the conferees were forced to include a continuing resolution that will keep the Federal Government open for business through November 17.

Mr. Speaker, the conference agreement itself is a responsible effort to support our troops in the field. Thanks to the effort of Subcommittee Chairman YOUNG and Ranking Member MURTHA, we will continue to invest in modernizing our military. But, just as important, we will fund the training and equipment our troops need to complete their mission, wherever they are stationed.

No one disagrees that the war in Iraq has placed a significant strain on our Armed Forces. An article in yesterday's New York Times describes the situation starkly:

"Other than the 17 brigades in Iraq and Afghanistan, only two or three combat brigades in the entire Army, perhaps 7,000 to 10,000 troops, are fully trained and sufficiently equipped to respond quickly to crises, said a senior army general."

[From the New York Times, Sept. 25, 2006]
UNIT MAKES DO AS ARMY STRIVES TO PLUG GAPS

(By David S. Cloud)

FORT STEWART, GA.—The pressures that the conflict in Iraq is putting on the Army are apparent amid the towering pine trees of southeast Georgia, where the Third Infantry Division is preparing for the likelihood that it will go back to Iraq for a third tour.

Col. Tom James, who commands the division's Second Brigade, acknowledged that his unit's equipment levels had fallen so low that it now had no tanks or other armored vehicles to use in training and that his soldiers were rated as largely untrained in attack and defense.

The rest of the division, which helped lead the invasion of Iraq in 2003 and conducted the first probes into Baghdad, is moving back to full strength after many months of being a shell of its former self.

But at a time when Pentagon officials are saying the Army is stretched so thin that it may be forced to go back on its pledge to limit National Guard deployment overseas, the division's situation is symptomatic of how the shortages are playing out on the ground.

The enormous strains on equipment and personnel, because of longer-than-expected deployments, have left active Army units with little combat power in reserve. The Second Brigade, for example, has only half of the roughly 3,500 soldiers it is supposed to have. The unit trains on computer simulators, meant to recreate the experience of firing a tank's main gun or driving in a convoy under attack.

"It's a good tool before you get the equipment you need," Colonel James said. But a few years ago, he said, having a combat brigade in a mechanized infantry division at such a low state of readiness would have been "unheard of."

Other than the 17 brigades in Iraq and Afghanistan, only two or three combat brigades in the entire Army—perhaps 7,000 to 10,000 troops—are fully trained and sufficiently equipped to respond quickly to crises, said a senior Army general.

Most other units of the active-duty Army, which is growing to 42 brigades, are resting or being refitted at their home bases. But even that cycle, which is supposed to take two years, is being compressed to a year or less because of the need to prepare units quickly to return to Iraq.

After coming from Iraq in 2003, the Third Infantry Division was sent back in 2005. Then, within weeks of returning home last January, it was told by the Army that one of its four brigades had to be ready to go back again, this time in only 11 months. The three other brigades would have to be ready by mid-2007, Army planners said.

Yet almost all of the division's equipment had been left in Iraq for their replacements, and thousands of its soldiers left the Army or were reassigned shortly after coming home, leaving the division largely hollow. Most senior officers were replaced in June.

In addition to preparing for Iraq, the Army assigned the division other missions it had to be ready to execute, including responding to hurricanes and other natural disasters and deploying to Korea if conflict broke out there.

Maj. Gen. Rick Lynch, who took command in June, says officials at Army headquarters ask him every month how ready his division is to handle a crisis in Korea. The answer, General Lynch says, is that he is getting there.

Since this summer, 1,000 soldiers a month have been arriving at Fort Stewart, 400 of them just out of basic training. As a result, the First and Third Brigades are now at or near their authorized troop strength, but many of the soldiers are raw.

The two brigades started receiving tanks and other equipment to begin training in the field only in the last month, leaving the division only partly able to respond immediately if called to Korea, General Lynch said.

"I'm confident two of the four brigade combat teams would say, 'O.K., let's go,'" General Lynch said in an interview. "The Second and Fourth Brigades would say, 'O.K., boss, but we've got no equipment. What are we going to use?' So we'd have to figure out where we're going to draw their equipment."

Meanwhile, the division is also preparing for deployment to Iraq on an abbreviated timeline.

The brief time at home does not sit well with some soldiers. Specialist George Patterson, who reenlisted after returning from Iraq in January, said last week that he was surprised to learn he could end up being home with his wife and daughter for only a year.

"I knew I would be going back," Specialist Patterson said. "Did I think I would leave and go back in the same year? No. It kind of stinks."

Instead of allowing more than a year to prepare to deploy, the First Brigade training schedule has been squeezed into only a few months, so the brigade can be ready to deploy as ordered by early December. Though the unit has not yet been formally designated for Iraq, most soldiers say there is little doubt they are headed there early next year.

Some combat-skills training not likely to be used in Iraq has been shortened substantially, said Col. John Charlton, the brigade commander. "It's about taking all the requirements and compressing them, which is a challenge," he said.

The timetable also leaves officers and their soldiers less time to form close relationships that can be vital, several officers said.

And soldiers have less time to learn their weapons systems. Many of the major weapons systems, like artillery and even tanks, are unlikely to be used frequently in a counterinsurgency fight like Iraq.

The division has only a few dozen fully armored Humvees for training because most of the vehicles are in use in Iraq. Nor does it have all the tanks and trucks it is supposed to have when at full strength.

"There is enough equipment, and I would almost say just enough equipment," said Lt. Col. Sean Morrissey, the division's logistics officer. "We're accustomed to, 'I need 100 trucks. Where's my hundred trucks?' Well, we're nowhere near that."

Last week, in training areas deep in the Fort Stewart woods, First Brigade soldiers were still learning to use other systems important in Iraq, like unmanned aerial vehicles, which are used for conducting surveillance.

Standing at a training airfield with three of the aircraft nearby, Sgt. Mark Melbourne, the senior noncommissioned officer for the brigade's unmanned aerial vehicles platoon, said only 6 of the brigade's 15 operators had qualified so far in operating the aircraft from a ground station.

All of them are supposed to be qualified by next month, but the training has been slowed by frequent rain, Sergeant Melbourne said.

This week, the First Brigade began a full-scale mission rehearsal for Iraq.

Normally, armored units preparing for Iraq are sent to Fort Irwin, Calif., for such training, but transporting a brigade's worth of equipment and soldiers there takes a month, which the schedule would not permit.

So the trainers and Arabic-speaking role players, who will simulate conditions the unit is likely to encounter in Iraq, were brought here to conduct the three-week exercise in a Georgia pine forest, rather than in the California desert.

Mr. Speaker, I was pleased that the conferees recognize this growing crisis in the military and took steps to mitigate it. Specifically, the conference agreement provides \$20 billion in additional funds to ensure that the needs of the Army and the Marine Corps for fiscal year 2007 are fully funded.

This agreement also includes forward-thinking provisions. Ranking Member MURTHA included language in the House bill prohibiting permanent U.S. bases in Iraq. I was pleased to join many of my colleagues in supporting that language. I appreciate that conferees preserved and strengthened this policy in the final agreement. Quite simply, intentions matter. And clarity in the United States' intentions is needed more so in Iraq than anywhere else.

There are many other smart provisions included in this agreement. The bill includes a 2.2 percent pay increase for all members of the Armed Forces. It increases mental health and posttraumatic stress syndrome research, and it provides funds for the replacement of National Guard and Reserve equipment lost in Iraq and Afghanistan.

But, finally, Mr. Speaker, I appreciate this agreement for the simple fact that it is on time. Conferees worked together over several weeks to produce a very balanced conference agreement. It should be a model for the work Congress still has to do.

With only a few days remaining in this fiscal year, not a single appropriations bill has been signed into law.

This is not new. In the last 5 years, only six of the 68 appropriations bills were finished on time. Some may try to shift blame to the other Chamber, but the majority has no one to blame but itself.

Again, I turn to another article in yesterday's New York Times, which summarizes the situation quite clearly:

"While Republicans prefer to blame Democrats for the backlog, intramural fights and sharp differences between House and Senate Republicans have been chief impediments to major legislation."

[From the International Herald Tribune, Sept. 25, 2006]

CONGRESS WINDS DOWN, WITH MUCH BUSINESS UNFINISHED
(By Carl Hulse)

WASHINGTON.—A Congress derided as doing nothing has a week to do something, and the prospects are cloudy.

Procrastination, power struggles and partisanship have left Congress with substantial work to finish before taking a break at the end of the week for the midterm elections. The fast-approaching recess and the Republican focus on national security legislation make it inevitable that much of the remainder will fall by the wayside.

At best, it appears that only two of the 11 required spending bills will pass, and not one has been approved so far, forcing a stopgap measure to keep the federal government open. No budget was enacted. A popular package of business and education tax credits is teetering. A lobbying overhaul, once a top priority in view of corruption scandals, is dead. The drive for broad immigration changes has derailed.

An offshore oil drilling bill, painted as an answer to high gas prices, is stalled. Plans to cut the estate tax and raise the minimum wage have foundered, and an important nuclear pact with India sought by the White House is not on track to clear Congress. New problems surfaced over the weekend for the annual military authorization bill.

And numerous other initiatives await a planned lame-duck session in mid-November or a future Congress.

"It is disappointing where we are, and I think Republicans need to be upfront about this," said Representative Jack Kingston, Republican of Georgia and a member of the House leadership. "We have not accomplished what we need to accomplish."

Given the practical and political realities, Republicans have chosen to concentrate on legislation emphasizing their security credentials, like the bill governing interrogations and trials of terrorism detainees, a National Security Agency surveillance program and spending on the Pentagon and the Department of Homeland Security.

"With obstruction from the Democrats at an all-time high, we have focused on four security issues in an effort to enact some solid, substantive accomplishments," said Eric Ueland, chief of staff to Senator Bill Frist of Tennessee, the majority leader, who is stepping down at the end of this session.

While Republicans prefer to blame Democrats for the backlog, intramural fights and sharp differences between House and Senate Republicans have been chief impediments to major legislation. The fissures over terrorism detainees and how far to go in changing immigration law are merely the latest and most public examples of serious policy differences among Republicans.

Circumstances have changed in Washington from the days when Republicans were famous for party discipline. President

George W. Bush, weakened by his sliding popularity, has been unable to hold sway over Congress.

The Republican leadership in the House and the Senate is in transition and lacks the muscle of the former House majority leader, Tom DeLay. Republican lawmakers, many facing their most serious electoral opposition in years, are fending for themselves.

"We have no central core of political authority driving things in Washington," said James Thurber, director of the Center for Congressional and Presidential Studies at American University. "Individuals and expressions of individual will by committees, and also by strong people like John McCain, have dominated, and the result is internal fighting."

Democrats have made no secret of their intention to try to brand this Congress as worse than lackluster.

"When we say this is the most do-nothing Congress in the history of our country, this isn't just flippant," said Senator Harry Reid of Nevada, the Democratic leader. "This is true." Besides denouncing the legislative output, Democrats are mounting an effort to chastise Republicans as failing to conduct sufficient oversight of the Iraq war.

Republican leaders dispute the notion that this has been an unproductive session, pointing to legislation on bankruptcy, class action, highway spending, energy policy and pensions, as well as to two Supreme Court confirmations. And they say they already plan to be back Nov. 13 to finish whatever remains at the end of the week.

Democrats have been happy throughout the year to stand almost united in both the House and the Senate against many of the Republican initiatives, forcing the majority to find enough votes to pass legislation from its own membership. That has often forced major concessions from the leadership. In other cases, Republicans in the House and the Senate have simply been unable to find common ground.

"In the 26 years I have been here," said Representative Barney Frank, Democrat of Massachusetts, "I don't think I have ever seen so much tension between the House and the Senate, and it is all among Republicans."

The immigration measure was a notable example as House Republicans refused to entertain the bipartisan Senate bill that took a comprehensive approach to the flood of illegal immigrants. A push for a formal budget plan collapsed because of differences over spending between House and Senate Republicans.

A House-Senate Republican feud over the handling of a pension measure, which ultimately passed, left a collection of tax breaks in limbo despite nearly unanimous support in Congress. Those tax benefits included a deduction for college tuition costs and a research and development tax credit for businesses. The leadership has been reluctant to bring the benefits to a vote independently because they could be used to help advance more contentious legislation, like the cut in the estate tax sought by Republicans.

A new struggle between rank-and-file Republicans and the leadership threatens to engulf the must-pass spending measure for domestic security. Lawmakers were insisting that a provision allowing Americans to bring back cheaper prescription drugs from Canada be added to the bill even though House leaders and the pharmaceutical industry oppose the Plan.

Mr. Speaker, the 109th Congress has had fewer voting days than almost any other Congress in history. We have lost precious weeks on politics as we debated bills that would never become

law; and, as a result, Congress will leave Washington this week with many of the American people's priorities unfinished. There will be no lobbying reform, no comprehensive immigration reform. Congress will have ignored the millions of seniors stuck in the prescription drug benefit doughnut hole.

As I said last year when I also managed a prior continuing resolution, this Congress needs new and better priorities. Until then, delays will continue and deadlines will be missed and we will end up here every year with last-minute solutions to keep the Federal Government open for business.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, the conference report made in order under this rule affirms our support for the men and women of the United States military. I commend the conferees for their work, especially Subcommittee Chairman YOUNG and Ranking Member MURTHA. They made great progress in a short time by working together. I would challenge the rest of my colleagues to do the same.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. COLE of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, at this time, I am pleased to yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Michigan (Mrs. MILLER).

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding this time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of the rule as well as the underlying legislation.

We are a Nation at war against the forces of terror who would like to threaten the freedom and the liberty that we all hold so dear and are constitutionally required to defend.

Now, I know that the Democratic minority leader in this House recently stated that national security should not be an issue in the upcoming election. She actually said that. She said that national security should not be an issue in the upcoming election. But the fact of the matter is that the American people are very interested in knowing who stands up for the defense of our Nation and who buries their heads in the sand when it comes to defending our freedom. They are interested in what we are doing here because our first and foremost responsibility is to provide for the national defense. That is in the preamble of our Constitution.

This bill is an important indication of our national will because it allocates needed resources to ensure that our troops on the front lines have the equipment and training that they need to defeat our enemies. It helps us to prepare for emerging threats with support for ballistic missile defense. It provides needed funding for the weapons systems of the future, like future combat systems, that will allow our forces to remain the most powerful fighting force on the planet. And it also provides needed funding to study ways to help our troops become more mobile and enhance their capability in the future.

Mr. Speaker, a lot has been said recently about earmarks and much of it in a derogatory fashion. But not all earmarks are bad, and let me tell you about one that I am proud to have secured that is in this bill being done at Selfridge Air National Guard Base in my district.

Mr. Speaker, as we seek alternatives for everyday energy needs, we also need alternatives for our military. This bill is providing \$4 million for the second phase of a project to turn waste into fuel and electricity.

NextEnergy, which is an alternative fuel research cooperative in the great State of Michigan, has been working with the U.S. Army TARDEC on this very important project. And the technology that they are developing will take waste produced by units such as mess hall and other types of waste and turn it into liquid fuel. This fuel would then run a generator that could produce high-quality electric energy that every unit needs.

One, of course, can only imagine how much it costs to transport fuel in the battlefield. You can think about taking a unit of fuel and transiting it up to a mountaintop in Afghanistan, for example.

This project not only enhances the capability and mobility of our troops, it will also provide additional security for our troops as well. So I am proud to have brought forth this earmark, and I have no problem coming to the floor and defending it. And I think all Members should come to the floor and defend their earmarks.

Mr. Speaker, this is a reasonable rule to manage an outstanding bill. It has the right priorities and makes a further commitment to maintaining our military as the best trained, the best equipped, the best supported, and the most lethal fighting force on the planet.

I urge my colleagues to support the rule and the underlying bill as well.

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I yield 6 minutes to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. OBEY).

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, this rule will allow the House to pass the Department of Defense appropriation bill for the year; and, in addition, it will allow the Congress to move forward with a \$70 billion partial payment on the cost of funding the war in Iraq and Afghanistan.

I would much prefer that we would be paying for the entire year, rather than continuing to see this war financed on the installment plan. We are now reaching almost \$500 billion that has been expended on this endeavor, and I think it would be helpful to the American people if they could see the full cost each year, rather than having it dribbled and drabbed out month by month in order to hide the full impact of the cost. This rule also allows the House to consider the continuing resolution for the remainder of the budget.

We will, when the House leaves this week, have passed only two appropria-

tion bills, the defense bill and the homeland security bill. That means the entire domestic portion of the budget plus the bills to finance foreign operations and State Department operations will be delayed until after the election, well into the fiscal year.

Now, the majority leader in the Senate, Senator FRIST, I note yesterday objected to the "obstructive tactics" of the Democratic minority on appropriation bills. I want to point out no one in this House is going to be able to point to a single instance in which the minority party has delayed consideration of any appropriation bill. In fact, we can point to at least 16 occasions on which the minority accelerated or helped to move forward the appropriation bills. That does not mean we always voted for them. We voted for some and against others. But I made the point at the beginning of the year that we were going to cooperate fully procedurally because at the end of the year I wanted people to understand that if these bills were not passed that the responsibility would lie with the majority party. And it has.

Now the responsibility does not lie with the majority appropriators. The problem is that this House started out the year with the majority party leadership allowing the strong right wing of their caucus to dictate the content of the budget resolution, and that budget resolution was incredibly unrealistic.

Now, as a result, we find the Senate counterparts of our friends on the majority side of the aisle who are reluctant to go on record endorsing many of the actions that were required by that budget resolution in the appropriations process. And so they prefer to push it past the election so that there will be no accountability for most of the actions taken by Congress on the domestic portion of the budget.

There will be no final accountability with respect to the number of research grants that are cut from NIH below the base 3 years ago. There will be no accountability for the fact that No Child Left Behind education funds are short-sheeted by over \$1 billion. There will be no accountability for thousands of other decisions made in the domestic budget, because all of those final decisions have been postponed until after the election when you can then bring bills up for a vote without having any political consequence. I think that is unfortunate, and I would simply say that this demonstrates what happens when the priority of the majority party is simply to deliver king-size tax cuts to persons making over a million bucks a year.

The minority party throughout has tried to show that we could meet our responsibilities in education, in health care, in science, in agriculture, and in other areas by having a very modest cutback in the size of tax cuts that are aimed at those folks who are in the top 1 percent of earners in this country, in fact, even better than the top 1 percent, those who make \$1 million or

more a year. And I would venture to say that I think if you asked most of those people they would say "We don't need a tax cut quite that large as long as you are taking care of the middle-class folks. Instead, use that money to meet these responsibilities."

Unfortunately, the Congress has chosen not to do that. So, once again, we have to finance the entire domestic portion of the budget on a continuing resolution, hiding until after the election all the multiple decisions that I thought we were so eager to make when we ran for election 2 years ago.

□ 1600

Mr. COLE of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, let me take a moment to make a couple of points in response to my good friend from Wisconsin's observations. First, on the bridge fund for appropriations for ongoing operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, I just want to note for the record, it is considerably higher than it has been in the past, \$70 billion, I believe, as opposed to \$50 billion. That is a significant increase.

Also, that bridge fund allows us to frankly adapt to changing conditions on the battlefield. The reality is battlefields do not move in budgetary cycles, or wars do not.

And, finally, it keeps us from building in a lot of expense of operations in Afghanistan and Iraq into the permanent base. We think it has been a good procedure to move forward with in this conflict. In terms of the cuts my friend mentioned, let me just say again for the record, if we check each year, we actually spend more money than we do the year before, and on more things.

We have many, many choices to make, many, many tough decisions to make. The most important priority for government is always the defense of its citizens and the operation of its military. I would actually argue, I would probably agree with my friend, we should have been spending more there, we should have spent more there during the 1990s.

In every other area of government, the reality is, including education, you mention No Child Left Behind, our expenditures are considerably higher than they were just a few years ago, and they continue to grow every year.

So while we would all like to do more, the reality is we have increased the expenditures considerably. Some would argue too much.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to my good friend, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. GINGREY).

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the rule and the underlying conference report for the fiscal year 2007 Department of Defense Appropriations Act.

I would like to commend Chairmen Lewis and Young as well as the staff of the Defense Subcommittee for their tireless efforts in support of our soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines who

are bravely defending us at home and abroad.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation covers an extensive range of priorities that are vitally important to our armed services, and we must pass it before adjourning later this week. As we fight for our way of life, our enemies are actively and aggressively adjusting their tactics while waging their terrorist war of religious intolerance against the free nations of this world.

This legislation provides the necessary supplemental funding to give our deployed soldiers the resources they need to continue taking the fight to the terrorists. It contains funding for force protection, including improvised explosive device jammers to shield our soldiers from roadside bombs, as well as increased funding to replace and repair battle-worn equipment.

Mr. Speaker, our House and Senate colleagues did a good job securing funding for many important programs which are our military's top priorities. Chief among these, Mr. Speaker, is the F-22 Raptor. I am particularly encouraged by the work the Appropriations Committee has done to fund the F-22 program this year, as this aircraft is vital to our Nation's defense.

The conference agreement includes authority for multiyear procurement of 60 F-22 aircraft, beginning with 20 fully funded in this fiscal year and continuing with two subsequent lots of 20 aircraft each in fiscal years 2008 and 2009.

This will go a long way towards providing stability for the program and ensuring that America maintains air dominance for the foreseeable future. Further, Mr. Speaker, as we fight the global war on terror, the United States must without question continue to modernize and strengthen our ability to support our men and women in harm's way.

Maintaining our Nation's airlift capabilities is critical to this mission, and I would like to applaud conferees for their recognition of this in funding nine C-130Js, two KC-130Js, and the C-5 modernization program.

The conferees also responsibly recognize the importance of developing life-saving innovations to benefit our warfighters. Accordingly, \$1 million was included in the conference report for the research and the development of protein hydrogel, which is manufactured in my district, by definition, Mr. Speaker, an earmark and one that I proudly sponsored.

Protein hydrogel has the potential to quickly seal battlefield wounds to prevent excessive bleeding and death. We are absolutely doing the right thing providing for that research.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to again thank my colleagues, thank Mr. COLE, thank them for their hard work, and I urge support for this rule and the conference report.

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3½ minutes to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER).

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from California.

Mr. Speaker, I have every intention of voting for the underlying appropriation bill, which will fund the Department of Defense for fiscal year 2007, presumably, and I believe critical to our national defense. Yet it has been languishing for 9 months. In the last breath before the election, we bring the bill to the floor.

However, I have noticed as well, I am sure many Members have, that the Republican leadership has chosen to insert the must-pass continuing resolution in this important legislation, rather than allow a free-standing vote on that issue.

Let no one be mistaken. The Republican leadership, by tucking the CR in the defense appropriation bill, does so because in my opinion it is embarrassed by its own incompetence and ineffectiveness. Just look at the facts. This do-less-than-the-do-nothing Republican Congress is projected to be in session just 93 days in 2006. That is 17 fewer days in session than the do-nothing Congress of 1948, which was famously derided by President Truman.

Yet despite the light work schedule, the Republican majority has failed to enact a budget for fiscal 2007. It has failed to act on even one appropriation bill as we are 5 days from the end of the fiscal year.

No conference reports. That is why we are having this continuing resolution. Furthermore, the Republican-controlled Congress has failed to enact the recommendations of the bipartisan 9/11 Commission.

Failed to enact a long overdue increase in the Federal minimum wage. Failed to enact real immigration reform, and protect our borders, protect our country. Failed to address the fact that 46 million Americans are uninsured today, and failed to enact legislation that moves toward energy independence.

The record, frankly and sadly for the American people and for our country, is that this Republican Congress on fiscal issues is simply abysmal. We go deeper and deeper and deeper into debt.

In 6 years, this Republican Congress and the Bush administration have turned a projected 10-year budget surplus of \$5.6 trillion into a 10-year deficit of almost \$4 trillion. Republicans' failed fiscal policies have created record budget deficits and forced this Congress to increase the debt limit four times in 5 years.

In the last 4 years of the Clinton administration, we never once raised the debt limit. In fact, in the entire 8 years, the debt limit was only raised twice, in the first 4 years as we were coming out of the fiscally irresponsible first Bush administration.

Mr. Speaker, this continuing resolution, tucked as it is in this defense appropriation bill, is an admission of failure by the Republican Congress. As our friend from Georgia, Congressman KINGSTON, a Republican leader, said

yesterday: "It is disappointing where we are. And I think Republicans need to be up front about this. We have not accomplished what we need to accomplish."

Mr. Speaker, I could not agree with Congressman KINGSTON more on that particular issue. The CR tucked in a defense bill, a CR, an admission of failure, a CR in a bill that is critical to our national defense and to our country. How sad. What a stark admission of failure.

Mr. COLE of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I actually came here to debate the defense budget, but I am happy to respond to a number of points that my good friend from Maryland made.

Let me first say I appreciate his recognition for the outstanding work the Republican Congress did in the final 4 years of the Clinton administration balancing the budget and dragging our friends across the aisle kicking and screaming to that laudable thing.

Mr. HOYER. Will my friend yield on that point?

Mr. COLE of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, I did not interrupt my friend. I would like to finish my remarks if I may.

Not only did I appreciate the recognition that the budget was balanced with a Republican Congress, I also would ask my good friend simply to recall the situation this administration inherited, a recession that began literally within weeks after the President took office, followed by the shock of 9/11, which sent this economy, we think, into a tailspin.

We had 3 consecutive years of reduced revenue by the Federal Government, the first time since the 1930s that that would happen, and frankly something that I would not blame on any party. I simply think it was an incredibly unfortunate confluence of events with a growth era that had run its course, and was coming down, hit by a dastardly attack that I know we all agree was a great tragedy in American history.

Given that, I think the policies that the President pursued and this Congress supported of cutting taxes, reviving the economy, beginning to create jobs and now increasing the amount of revenue available to us were indeed the right course. And indeed the budget deficit has gotten progressively smaller as those policies have kicked in and been allowed to work.

The challenge in front of us now is coming again to the spending restraint that we found in the bipartisan fashion during the 1990s. I would just point out to my good friend that I very seldom see my colleagues on the other side of the aisle come here and tell us we need to spend less money. They usually propose more money on almost every piece of legislation than we propose.

Ergo, I suspect that means taxes need to go up, because they not only want to cover the current deficit, they

want to spend beyond the current spending levels or higher than current spending levels. So on that we are simply going to have a debate and disagree.

I am happy about this legislation. As my good friend from California mentioned, we had wonderful bipartisanship in the conference. We have a product that we can both be proud of. I think both parties and all Members are doing the appropriate thing for the men and women that are serving us in uniform. I look forward to continuing the discussion.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. COLE of Oklahoma. I yield to the gentleman from Maryland.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, as you know, I have been here for many years, 26 to be exact. The gentleman mentions 9/11, a cataclysmic event in the history of our country. He is right to mention that. Obviously it cost us money.

But I have served here for 26 years, as the gentleman knows, 18 of these have been with Republican Presidents, 8 with a Democratic President. I tell my friend, in every one of the 18 years with a Republican President we ran deficits above \$100 billion.

During the Clinton administration, as you know, we ran 4 years of surplus and 4 years of decreasing deficits, the only President in our life time who had a surplus, i.e., \$62.5 billion surplus; the only President in our lifetime who did that during his tenure.

Further, I say to my friend, in 1993, with Democrats in control of the Congress of the United States, and with not one Republican vote, we passed an economic program which raised revenues, which you mention frequently, I do not mean you personally, but your party mentions frequently, but you never mention the fact that in that same bill, we cut \$254 billion in spending.

Furthermore, in terms of spending, you say restraint of spending. Democrats do not control spending at all. We do not have control in the House; we do not have control in the Senate. Yet the Republicans have spent, as you well know, at twice the rate of spending under the Clinton administration. I thank you for yielding.

Mr. COLE of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time.

Well, again I want to thank my friend, in a very back-handed, but I think very obvious fashion thanking that Republican Congress which was actually in control of the purse strings. And I will leave it to the American people to decide who they want as the next President of the United States.

But you have made a very eloquent case, in my opinion, for the continuance of a Republican majority in Congress, because that is when spending control was actually achieved. I thank my friend.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH).

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from California for yielding me the time.

Mr. Speaker, we have a right and an obligation to defend America, as one of my colleagues from the other side of the aisle pointed out. It is in the preamble to the Constitution of the United States.

We also have an obligation to tell the truth to the American people. The Bible says: "You shall know the truth. And the truth shall set you free."

The truth is that about \$70 billion in this spending will go for bridge funding to support the ongoing operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

□ 1615

The truth is there should have never been a war against Iraq. The truth is Iraq did not have weapons of mass destruction. The truth is Iraq had nothing to do with 9/11. The truth is Iraq did not have any relationship to al Qaeda and 9/11. The truth is Iraq had nothing to do with the anthrax attack on this country. The truth is Iraq did not have the intention or the capability of attacking the United States. The truth is Iraq did not try to get uranium from Najaf for the purpose of making nuclear weapons. The truth is Iraq did not try to secure aluminum tubes for the reprocessing of uranium. The truth is we never should have gone to war in Iraq, and the truth is we should bring our troops home from Iraq.

Of the numerous reasons to vote against this bill, the continued funding for the war in Iraq is most noteworthy. If the U.S. were to withdraw as soon as possible out of Iraq, we would save \$1.5 billion each week in Iraq, \$6 billion a month and \$72 billion annually, and then maybe we would not have to borrow money from China, Japan and Korea to fight a war.

It is increasingly clear that this administration's occupation and reconstruction of Iraq has failed. For every \$1 spent on war costs, we are taking away \$1 from programs that are needed in this country for housing, for education, for health care, for the elderly. After 3½ years, Iraq is less safe, not more.

Mr. Speaker, this administration's policies have turned Iraq into a breeding ground for terrorists and created the greatest recruiting tool ever for al Qaeda. Even the national intelligence estimate suggests the invasion of Iraq has evolved into our largest terrorist threat. The more money we spend in Iraq, the more of a problem we will have with terrorism.

What should we do? We should get out of Iraq. We should support our troops by bringing them home, bring them home so that we can give them the appropriate honor for their service.

Congress has the power to end the war, and that power is in this moment. Cut off the funds for the war, and the war is over. The money in the pipeline can be used to bring our troops home.

The greatest tragedy is that we have lost close to 2,700 American soldiers and tens of thousands more have been injured. Up to 200,000 innocent Iraqis have died as a result of the invasion. Every day, 120 more Iraqis die at the hands of execution-style death squads, kidnappings, murders, IEDs and sectarian violence.

The war in Iraq has been a great and tragic mistake. It has cost us in blood and treasure. It has damaged our once unchallenged representation in the world. It has squandered the goodwill rained upon this Nation after 9/11.

We should vote against this rule, vote against the bill. This is a vote on Iraq.

Mr. COLE of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Again, I came here largely to talk about the defense bill, but I want to discuss some of the points my good friend from Ohio made. While I respect him, I respectfully disagree.

Frankly, the administration, this government, never claimed we went to Iraq because of 9/11. We claim we went there because they repeatedly violated U.N. resolutions and they were pursuing activities, as indeed they were, to get themselves out of sanctions, and they expelled weapons inspectors from their country. Every intelligence agency in the world believed they were pursuing weapons of mass destruction; and, indeed, the reality is we probably simply caught them early in the process, rather than later in the process.

I think my friend's comments are based on the unstated but very real premise that this war is somehow better off if Saddam Hussein was still in Baghdad. That is simply an assertion or an opinion that I reject. I have been to Iraq six times, as many of my colleagues frankly on both sides of the issues have been numerous times, and I simply remind my friends what Saddam Hussein and Baghdad meant: two regional wars that more than 1 million people died in; twice close to nuclear weapons, once in 1981, once in 1991; 270-odd mass graves in Iraq.

I have been to Iraq. Nobody in Iraq wants Saddam Hussein back. Nobody in Iraq, at least of any significant numbers, would tell you that they lived in a good era, and everybody in the region I think would tell you that the region is better off without him.

That does not mean that we have an easy situation that is confronting us. Indeed, it is very difficult and I would acknowledge that up front, but I think it calls for perseverance. I think an immediate withdrawal would be a disaster for the region and, frankly, would endanger people, thousands of whom have placed their faith and their confidence in the United States of America.

I am extraordinarily proud, as I know each and every Member of this body is, of the men and women that wear the uniform of the United States and do the tough job that we ask them to do. I think in the long view of history peo-

ple will look back on this and say they did a very important job very well for this country and, like their fathers and grandfathers before them, for the region in which they were deployed, because where they go, democracy has followed.

Democracy certainly was not going to break out on its own in Iraq, nor was Saddam Hussein going to wither away on the vine in Iraq, in my opinion.

So I respect the decision that the President and the administration made, that this Congress on a bipartisan basis supported, dozens of my friends on the other side of the aisle voting in favor of giving the President the right to use force; half, I believe, of our friends in other body on the other side of the aisle voting for the President to have the option to use force and go into Iraq.

That is something we ought to remember as we have this debate. We did not go to war on a partisan vote. We went to war on a bipartisan decision.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4½ minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. NADLER).

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, it is growing very tiresome to hear Republicans rewriting history and blaming all the ills of our society on the 1990s and the Clinton administration.

The gentleman from Oklahoma said the Army was too small, that in the 1990s it was reduced from 15 divisions to 10. Maybe so, but, you know, we have had 6 years of the Bush administration and 6 years of the Republican Congress to fix that if that is the problem. I have not seen any proposals to change that. I have not seen any proposals from that side of the aisle or from the administration to increase the Army to 11 or 12 or 15 divisions.

The real problem is that we are wasting the Army. The real problem is that Secretary Rumsfeld thought we could fight a war on the cheap. He sent the troops into Iraq with not enough troops, dismissed General Shinseki when he told him we need twice as many troops as you may think; otherwise, we will have a long-term war on our hands, and he was right. We sent the troops in without the proper body armor and without the proper equipment, and Americans died because of that.

The other real problem is that we are wasting our funds, \$300 billion so far, not just funds, 2,700 lives in a foolish, counterproductive war in Iraq, a war started by the Bush administration under false pretences, after misrepresenting facts and intelligence to this Congress.

We were told that we had to go war to prevent the imminent development of weapons of mass destruction, nuclear weapons, the mushroom cloud by Iraq. That was not true.

We were told about the connection of Iraq to al Qaeda. That was not true.

If the President had told us the truth, that Saddam Hussein at that

point in history, not 12 years earlier, at that point in history presented no real threat to us, there was no likelihood of weapons of mass destruction, there was no connection to al Qaeda but we should invade Iraq in order to make the Mideast democratic, would this Congress have voted for war? Would the American people have supported starting a war? I do not think so.

I am not going to get into a debate whether the intelligence was wrong or misrepresented. That is a question the American people can decide eventually on whether the Bush administration was a fool or an ape, because that is the question. Either they had it wrong or they misled us. I think it is the latter, but, either way, the fact is, as the gentleman from Ohio said, this war has not made us safer. It is to the contrary.

The national intelligence estimate says the war in Iraq has hurt our efforts in the real war, the war on terrorism. It is a cheap recruiting device of Islamic Jihadists all over the world; and, not only that, this war, the downfall of Saddam Hussein has done one other thing, it has liberated Iran to be the real menace, a far worse menace than Saddam Hussein ever could have been, a real menace to us and to liberty in this world.

The fact is, the foolishness, the stupidity of Iraq aside, we are fighting a real serious war, a very serious war on a much larger scale against the Islamic terrorists. That is the war we must fight and win, but the Bush administration, the Republican Congress does not take that war seriously. We get a lot of rhetoric about the war on terrorism, but they will not put up the money, they will not put up the effort because they do not take it seriously.

The biggest threat that we are faced with is not Iraq. The biggest threat we are faced with is that al Qaeda or some other Jihadist group gets nuclear weapons. The knowledge is all over the place. The barrier to nuclear weapons is where do you get the nuclear material, where do you get the fissionable material. I tell you where. You get it in the former Soviet Union where there is enough material to build 40,000 nuclear bombs lying around, not properly guarded.

We have a program to get it out of there to protect ourselves from the Osama bin Laden nuclear bomb. We will get it out of there over 30 years. We removed more nuclear material from the former Soviet Union in the 5 years before 9/11 than in the 5 years since. For 15 or \$20 billion, we could get it all out and would not have to worry about nuclear explosions in American cities as we must because of the stupidity of the Bush administration in not getting our stuff out of there.

Twelve million shipping containers a year come into this country. They are not inspected. We had a party-line vote on this floor against the Democratic proposal to insist on electronic screening of every container to make sure it does not have an atomic bomb or a radiological weapon in it, but they say

we cannot do it; we will have a study of it. This is 1942. In 1942, we built aircraft carriers. We did not have studies of weather to build aircraft carriers.

And all the chemical and nuclear plants are unprotected which, if attacked or sabotaged, could kill hundreds of thousands of Americans. They do not want to spend the money because they do not take the war on terrorism seriously enough. We do.

Mr. COLE of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I want to differ with my good friend from New York on something. I actually never mentioned President Clinton. You did. I talked about the 1990s, and I think there were mistakes in terms of size in our force by a Democratic President and a Republican Congress. I say this as somebody who was very pleased to serve in my first term on the Armed Services Committee where Members on both sides generally found themselves out of step with the majority on this body on the floor and the administration and wanted to do more. So I do not think this is a partisan mistake. I think this is a bipartisan error in judgment and a mistake about the way the world is, and I think my remarks reflected that.

In terms of talking about whether or not the President told us the truth, I think the record is very clear that he did tell us the best intelligence estimates that we had. And I suspect that most members of the Intelligence Committee, if you look at the committee and go back and look at how they voted on a bipartisan basis, you will find there was considerable bipartisan consensus that that was indeed the case.

Fair enough to say that there is now evidence that the judgment was wrong. I think that is legitimate to bring up and discuss. What concerns me is, quite often, because we now disagree with the judgment, we have to attack the motives of the people who made the judgment at that time. I disagree with that. I think the motives were good motives. We can argue about whether or not the decision was correct, but I do not think the President of the United States deliberately misled this body, nor did this body deliberately mislead the American people in the war. That is my opinion and my view of it.

In terms of not caring about the war on terror, I would submit that is simply not the case. We can disagree about tactics, we can disagree about methods, but the fact that this country has not, thank goodness, and I always knock on wood when I say it, suffered another attack since 9/11, something that nobody on 9/12 would have predicted, is not an accident. It has happened because millions of Americans, thousands of people in uniform, our intelligence system, our border people and, frankly, people in this body have made tough and good decisions to try and keep this country safe.

Now, could it be safer? I will quote the President. We are safer, but we are not safe. I think that is the record, but the reality is we are considerably safer today than we were on 9/10, the day before, when we had no earthly idea the danger that we were facing and had not taken the preparations in my opinion that we should have taken to deal with it.

□ 1630

I don't judge people harshly for that. People make mistakes, and it is easy to have 20-20 hindsight and be a Monday morning quarterback. But I do give credit when the record shows that somebody has succeeded, and I would tell you, in my opinion, this President, this administration, and, frankly, this Congress has by and large done the right things to keep the country safe over the last several years.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2½ minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE).

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentlewoman for her leadership, for her yielding, and for her fairness in this overall process. And I also want to thank the distinguished ranking member of the Defense Subcommittee, Mr. MURTHA, and the ranking member of the full committee, Mr. OBEY, all of whom have been champions for a significant provision of this bill that would ensure that we are not establishing permanent military bases in Iraq.

The American people do not want an open-ended occupation in Iraq. Congress must be on record supporting this. My colleague, Mr. ALLEN, and myself offered a similar provision to the war supplemental in March, but it was stripped in the conference committee for the supplemental. So I am pleased this conference committee for this bill retained this important first step in taking the targets off the backs of our troops in Iraq by showing the world that we have no designs to stay in Iraq permanently.

However, the language will apply only to funds for this fiscal year of 2007, which this conference committee is responsible for, and we need to make the policy of the United States permanently not to have permanent military bases in Iraq. So while I support this provision, I cannot support this bill.

Yes, this war was authorized by this body. And, in fact, several of us, many of us supported a resolution that would have provided for the United Nations to continue with the inspections process. I offered the resolution, so did Mr. SPRATT. Had that happened, and had this body allowed for the process to move forward, 2,700 of our young men and women would not have died, nor would 15,000 to 20,000 have been seriously injured.

This war was unnecessary. Many knew that then, and of course now the National Intelligence Estimates are

saying exactly what many of us tried to say during that horrible, horrible period. There were no weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. We knew that; you knew that. There was no connection between Saddam Hussein and Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda. We knew that; you knew that. Iraq was not a hotbed for terrorism when this march to war began. You knew that; we knew that.

And so this war has been deceitful all the way from its beginning. It has been wrong and it has been immoral. It is a perfect example of the failed policies of this administration's priorities when it comes to protecting our Nation. Again, we have spent over \$300 billion on an unnecessary war in Iraq that our own intelligence services say is increasing the risk of terrorism, yet we don't have any money to secure our ports or to implement the 9/11 Commission recommendations.

So why should the American taxpayers fund a failed occupation? Why should we pay for increasing the risk of terrorism and funding a hotbed for terrorists in Iraq?

Mr. COLE of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I simply want to respond to a number of the points my good friend made. First, let me for the record go back and remind people of all the statements that we could line up here of one American leader after another, of both political parties, who told us that Saddam Hussein had active weapons of mass destruction and was actively pursuing those programs.

It was this Congress, under President Clinton, that passed legislation that made it the object of American policy in 1998 to remove him from power because we thought he was a very dangerous person. So I do not think you can say everybody knew that that wasn't the case. Quite the opposite, in my opinion, is true. Most people saw him as a danger.

In my opinion, they were correct. They may not have had an exact count of what he had available, but I think given his record of having used chemical weapons against his own people, of having launched the wars, of having tried twice and come close twice, according to our people, in acquiring numeral weapons, they were right, particularly in light of 9/11, to be very skeptical and very concerned.

Second, I will ask our colleagues to take somewhat of the long view here. If this were 1954-55, we could all get here and say, gosh, wasn't Korea a terrible thing; it is a dictatorship, 50,000 American lives, what a waste. The reality is, if you look at Korea today, the sacrifices, the decisions made by a Democratic President, Truman, I think worked very well. There is a democracy there. It is secure. Thank goodness we made the tough decisions in that part of the world. I think Iraq will look the same way down road.

Finally, I want to deal with my friend's concern about the war in Iraq

has made us less safe or has stimulated terrorism. I have not had an opportunity to read, obviously, the classified document, which I understand today is now going to become available to all of us, so I want to preface my remarks by noting that I want to read what they actually said. But I do want to offer this observation. To say that somehow that Iraq has fostered Islamic terrorism and that Afghanistan somehow wouldn't have is just counterintuitive to me. If Iraq did it, and we were in Afghanistan alone, which nobody seems to debate, we would still have that same force running through the Islamic world, that same stimulus. It is a reaction, I think, to us legitimately defending ourselves in the case of Afghanistan. It would occur just as surely as it has in Iraq.

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. COLE of Oklahoma. I yield to the gentleman from Wisconsin.

Mr. OBEY. I thank my friend, and I would just like to point out, is it not true, however, that we were told by the intelligence community that even if Iraq did have weapons of mass destruction, that they would most likely use them only if we attacked?

Mr. COLE of Oklahoma. Reclaiming my time, I appreciate my friend's observation, and I would be happy to deal with it, but I think that comment can be handled on your side and I look forward to the discussion.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. MATSUL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE).

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. I think the discussion my good friend has just enunciated is the basis of the frustration of so many of us here in the United States Congress. In fact, we have done a horrible job of oversight and explaining to the American people that we, frankly, this government, this White House, frankly made a horrific mistake. We are not more safe because of the conflict in Iraq, and a lieutenant general of the United States Army, retired, who had been in Vietnam, said we have the exact same mess that we had in Vietnam.

In fact, Iran is the one that is ecstatic, because we actually fought their war for them in terms of the actions of Saddam Hussein against Iran. We have boosted Iran's status in the region. That is, of course, of no interest to the United States. We have created an atmosphere that threatens Israel even more. The longer it goes on, it benefits al Qaeda and the insurgents.

As we speak before this House on the defense appropriations, we remain committed to our U.S. soldiers. We thank them for their service. But in tribute to them, the 2,700 that are dead as we speak, and dying, the 18,000 that have been injured severely, this is not worth staying the course.

And my words are an anecdote that is taken from this lieutenant general: "It is like a person jumping off the Empire State Building, getting down to the 50th floor, waving at those in the window and saying, I am staying the course, and then plopping to the ground having committed suicide."

We are committing suicide in Iraq. We are not safer than we were. This Congress has failed. I support the troops and the appropriations dealing with their issues, but to support and give tribute to those who have died, we need to bring our troops home and bring them home now, claiming victory, transitioning leadership into Iraq and into their surrounding allies and stopping the divide.

We have depleted NATO. We have depleted our military resources. And we realize when we left Vietnam, our standing in the world was higher than it had ever been. When we leave Iraq, we will have a higher standing. We will be able to fight the war on terror.

I am so sad that my colleague keeps saying the same old thing over and over again, staying the course and committing suicide.

Mr. COLE of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I will proceed to closing.

Mr. Speaker, we had a very spirited debate here today, and those in the Chamber here understand that many important things are happening in this world and in this country. We are dealing here also with this conference report, and this conference report made under this rule is a fair and responsible agreement. It does state clearly our support to the troops and our military.

As Congress considers the remaining appropriation bills later this year, I would urge my colleagues to follow this example, Democrats and Republicans working together to craft a responsible bill providing for the national defense. This agreement and this working together is all the evidence we need that national security is not a political issue, it is an American issue.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. COLE of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, today, in closing, I again want to draw the attention of the Members to the strength of the underlying legislation, H.R. 5631. We have had a vigorous and good debate on the rule and the underlying legislation today, which I believe will help convince the House to support this vital appropriations measure.

Much of our discussion today, frankly, is not centered on the legislation or the rule; it is focused on the conflict in Iraq. I, for one, simply want to state for the record that I think the world is better off without Saddam Hussein, and I think most of the positions that my friends on the other side of the aisle take sort of ignore the question, is the world better or worse off without him. I think it is better, and it took American action to do that.

I think it is better that there is a democracy in Baghdad; that people have gone in much higher percentages in their population to the polls on three occasions, under difficult situations, than frankly our citizens will go to the polls this November.

I think it is better that that government is actually pluralistic, that represents all the different elements in the country. And I think long term there is more hope in Iraq, and it is a better model for the future in the Middle East than Iran, which simply is neither democratic nor peaceful in terms of its neighbors.

Mr. Speaker, the underlying legislation takes critical and incremental steps in funding not only the warfighters' needs of today but the future needs of our warfighters as well. Today, our Nation's soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines require and rely on the passage of this legislation. And despite the vigorous debate we have had today over Iraq, I have no doubt that that legislation and this funding measure will receive strong bipartisan support in this House. I am very confident that this House will not let them down.

Mr. Speaker, I am sure it is no surprise that I intend to vote for the rule and the underlying legislation, and I would urge my colleagues to do the same.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The previous question was ordered.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

CHILD INTERSTATE ABORTION NOTIFICATION ACT

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 1039, I call up the Senate bill (S. 403) to amend title 18, United States Code, to prohibit taking minors across State lines in circumvention of laws requiring the involvement of parents in abortion decisions, and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the title of the Senate bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FOLEY). Pursuant to House Resolution 1039, the amendment in the nature of a substitute printed in House Report 109-679 is adopted and the Senate bill, as amended, is considered read.

The text of the Senate bill, as amended, is as follows:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Child Interstate Abortion Notification Act".

SEC. 2. TRANSPORTATION OF MINORS IN CIRCUMVENTION OF CERTAIN LAWS RELATING TO ABORTION.

Title 18, United States Code, is amended by inserting after chapter 117 the following:

"CHAPTER 117A—TRANSPORTATION OF MINORS IN CIRCUMVENTION OF CERTAIN LAWS RELATING TO ABORTION

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