

are going to establish a baseline. I suggest that this baseline is not only going to have overwhelming Democratic support, but we are going to find dozens of Republicans on the other side of the aisle who, when finally given a choice, are going to make a clear stand with us. It's just the beginning, it's long overdue, and it's exactly what the American people, what our troops and the Iraqi people deserve.

ON THE PRESIDENT'S BUDGET AND DEBT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2007, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. BUTTERFIELD) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, in just a few minutes, we will begin to debate House Concurrent Resolution 63. The American people are ready for this debate, and finally the time has now come, and we will decide and recommend whether or not the President should escalate our troop strength in Iraq. I look forward to this debate.

But this morning, Mr. Speaker, I want to use my time to talk about the fiscal crisis that we have in America. You know, Mr. Speaker, in my speeches to constituents throughout the First District of North Carolina, I always make a point to talk about the fiscal crisis that we are facing in this country, the fiscal crisis that the Republicans have created over the last 5 years. You know, Mr. Speaker, when I tell them that we have unprecedented deficits that have resulted in \$8.6 trillion in debt, and when I tell them that we spend \$2 billion a week in Iraq, \$8 billion per month, and yes, \$100 billion per year, but only spend \$90 billion in funding education in this country, they are absolutely shocked.

And now, Mr. Speaker, the President's 2008 budget will raise our debt by more than \$1 trillion over the next 5 years. This proposed budget that we received last week from President Bush would make tax cuts for the wealthy permanent while cutting vital programs that are important to middle-class families.

To help pay for the nearly \$2 trillion in tax cuts over the next 10 years, the budget substantially cuts Medicare and Medicaid, creating uncertainty for millions of seniors and low-income families who get their health insurance through these programs. The President's budget also shortchanges veterans' programs, cutting veterans' health care by \$3.5 billion over 5 years and providing less than veterans service organizations say is needed to meet the growing needs of our veterans, including those returning from Iraq and Afghanistan.

Mr. Speaker, congressional Democrats have repeatedly, repeatedly expressed the desire to work construc-

tively with the administration to restore fiscal responsibility to the Federal budget consistent with our Nation's priorities. However, this budget that we received last week is marked by a disappointing dedication to the failed policies of the past rather than a commitment to a new course. Fortunately for the American people, Democrats will now produce an alternative that will be fiscally responsible and meet the demands of our great Nation.

IRAQ WAR RESOLUTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2007, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. COHEN) for 5 minutes is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. COHEN. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, you like I am a freshman in this body and today we will begin the debate on one of the most important topics that this Congress has debated and that is America's involvement in the Middle East and Iraq and eventually in Afghanistan in dealing with the whole terrorist situation.

I have been in this House, Mr. Speaker, and listened to the Republicans and listened to the Democrats and the Democrats, of which I am a member, have talked about protecting the troops and opposing the President's surge, which is really an escalation, and the Republicans have come in here today and said that we need to in essence stay the course, we need to put in more troops and we're doing wrong by opposing the President's escalation or surge.

Mr. Speaker, from what I have heard from the American people, the American people realize this war has been a failure, that American men and women are dying, and dying for what purpose? For the purpose theoretically of trying to bring democracy to Iraq where the people in Iraq don't even want us to be there, where the Iraqi government is almost nonexistent, where calling what is going on in Iraq a civil war is almost a misnomer, for a civil war connotes a nation and there really is not a nation in Iraq. The ministries are not working. The government is not working. Many of the people in Iraq of the highest caliber have left Iraq and gotten out of what is a zone where there have been tens of thousands of Iraqis die. What the people across the aisle talk about in bringing democracy to these people, in bringing democracy to these people we have killed tens of thousands of Iraqis, we have destroyed their nation, and we have put casualties among tens of thousands of Iraqis. What a price to pay to bring democracy to a country, to destroy the country.

Mr. SKELTON, who will bring forth the Democratic response, has said that this, quote-unquote, surge is 100,000 troops too few and 3 years too late. I don't have anybody in this House I respect more on this position than the

head of the Armed Forces Committee, Mr. SKELTON from Missouri.

The fact is this war was started under false pretenses and much of that information has come out lately. Many of the people who voted to give the President the power to go into Iraq did so under facts, or appearance of facts that were given the American people and this Congress that were false. I remember being at home and watching on television when the President addressed this Congress and talked about Osama bin Laden and talked about what he said were connections between Iraq and 9/11 and it made everybody feel like if you were a red-blooded American, you wanted to do something about Iraq because they had destroyed the Twin Towers, they had killed 2,000 people, Americans and others, and put a devastation in this world that we hadn't seen except in movies.

Well, that information given us was false. There wasn't a connection between Iraq and 9/11. We went to war for reasons that are still not quite clear and known, and this United States of America went to war against a country that was not at war with us and we were an aggressor nation. This is something we shouldn't have done. It is not about cut and run, as the people on the Republican side say, but it is, as President Clinton says often, it is about stop and think. And when you stop and think, do you support the troops by continuing to send them in harm's way?

Mr. Speaker, I am a prizefight fan and one of my favorite fighters was Floyd Patterson. At one time Floyd Patterson fought Muhammad Ali and Muhammad Ali was just whooping him and whooping him and whooping him. And his trainers kept putting him back in the ring and Floyd kept going in there and trying to fight. But Floyd Patterson didn't belong in the ring with Muhammad Ali. He could beat a lot of fighters, but he couldn't beat Muhammad Ali. He was in the wrong fight at the wrong time and he just got beat and beat and beat. And what a good trainer would do is throw in the towel, and say, We quit. It's a technical knockout. We'll fight another day. We'll figure out a new way to fight Muhammad Ali maybe or maybe that's just somebody we can't fight. It just wasn't our fight.

To support our troops isn't to continue to send more troops into Iraq and have more American men and women die and more American men and women come back as casualties and be in veterans hospitals but is to get them out of a war they can't win and out of a situation where all they are is fodder for a civil war, where Iraqis are killing Iraqis and Iraqis are killing Americans and whether the Americans are there or not, the Iraqis are going to have their civil war and there is going to be bloodshed. The only issue left, Mr. Speaker, is how much American blood will be spilled on this foreign soil on a foreign policy folly that is somewhat