

## DIVISIVE PARTISAN BUDGET

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

Mr. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, let me just begin by saying if the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. SPRATT) would like to finish any additional comments, I appreciate his focus tonight on this budget.

Mr. Speaker, we are on the eve of a war in Iraq. We are at a time when we should be coming together as a Nation, and yet I am disappointed to say that this budget that may be on the floor of the House on the very day perhaps that we go to war is a divisive, partisan budget. I would hope the leadership of the House would choose to delay the consideration of this bill for many reasons, not the least of which is it will divide this House when we should be linking arms to support our troops, support the Commander in Chief in our war against Iraq.

This budget has many shortcomings that have been discussed in the last hour, but I would like to say that I think it is an unfair budget, as well as an irresponsible budget. It proposes the largest deficit in the history of the United States. Let me repeat: It proposes the largest deficit in the history of the United States.

In doing so, it asks tremendous sacrifices from some American citizens, including combat-injured, disabled veterans whose compensation and pension checks could be reduced significantly, while, on the other hand, providing lavish tax breaks to some of the wealthiest among us in this country. It seems to me that that budget flies in the face of the principle of shared sacrifice.

I am not here tonight or any night, Mr. Speaker, to attack those who have worked hard, been successful financially, created businesses and jobs, but I would say once America goes to war, it is not fair to ask for sacrifices from our men and women in uniform who are putting their lives on the line in the days ahead to ask for sacrifices from combat-injured World War II, Korean, and Vietnam and Desert Storm veterans and then turn around and say to a constituent in my district that it is okay for a person to make a million dollars a year in dividend income while sitting comfortably in security in their own home in central Texas and not have to pay one dime in taxes on that million dollars of income.

It is not right having the administration propose a billion-and-a-half-dollars cut in military construction appropriations that helps provide housing and day care and quality-of-life programs for our servicemen and women and the families who sacrifice so many times as much as those who wear our Nation's uniform. It is not right to put a burden on hard-working, average-income and low-income families through cuts in education commitments; through dramatic cuts in Medicaid funding, which provides health care for

low-income children; through cuts in Medicare, which is important for rural and urban hospitals to provide quality care and Medicare, the program that is so valuable and so necessary to so many senior citizens on fixed incomes.

This is not a budget worthy of support in this House. We should respect the fact that our Nation is about to send its sons and daughters into combat. I will support our Commander in Chief in that effort because I believe we do need to work together to send a clear message to Saddam Hussein and to our soldiers, our servicemen and women in the Iraqi theater that we are behind them, but we do not do that this week by passing a bill that underfunds some military programs such as housing and quality-of-life programs, underfunds Medicare and Medicaid, asks for sacrifice from farmers, senior citizens and young people trying to make a better life for themselves through a college education, while at the same time providing massive tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans who benefit from the sacrifices of average working folks who make up the heart and soul of our military forces.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the leadership of this House to consider pulling down this divisive, partisan budget bill. Let us come back together, put together a bill we can all be proud to support, and, in doing so, keep America unified, keep this Congress unified, and let our servicemen and women know that we are behind them.

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 CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS' PRINCIPLES ON U.S. MILITARY ACTION IN IRAQ

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to insert into the RECORD the Congressional Black Caucus' principles on United States military action in Iraq. They are as follows:

We oppose the unilateral first strike action by the United States without a clearly demonstrated and imminent threat of attack on the United States.

Only Congress has the authority to declare war.

Every diplomatic option must be exhausted.

A unilateral first strike would undermine the moral authority of the United States, result in substantial loss of life, destabilize the Mideast region and undermine the abilities of our Nation to address unmet domestic priorities.

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Further, any post-strike plan for maintaining stability in the region would be costly and would require a long-term commitment.

Mr. Speaker, I rise at a moment when America stands at the brink of war. Our actions in Iraq will define our moral standing in the world for this

generation and for generations yet unborn. I have given my oath to do everything within my power to support our men and women in uniform. We have a great American tradition that when we engage in combat, we support our troops. I will fulfill that solemn obligation. However, I also have pledged my commitment to ensure their sacrifice is warranted and just. That obligation does not allow me to remain silent tonight.

Mr. Speaker, the President has declared that he will allow no more time for a negotiated disarmament of Iraq. We all know the terrible consequences of that decision. The stakes are enormous. Many human beings will be harmed and others will die. In the course, American foreign policy could be seriously changed. So before a single shot has been fired, I must again raise what I consider to be the fundamental question about this preemptive war: By what authority, by what right does this Nation justify the taking of life in Iraq?

Mr. Speaker, the American people have created the strongest military force in history. We in this Congress will continue to support our troops. We will continue to ensure that they are the best trained and equipped in the world. Yet as a people, Americans have never subscribed to the proposition that our might makes us right. America has never led by military power alone, but by our devotion to principles and the legitimacy of our mission. And now that principled foundation of our national security has been placed in jeopardy and the legitimacy of our mission, and therefore the credibility of our Nation, is challenged by a significant part of the global community and our own citizens.

The administration regrettably has failed to achieve the U.N. approval and broad-based international support that are critical to achieving our objectives and protecting our men and women in uniform in the Middle East. We have an obligation to ask why the administration has failed to make its case.

If the President's rationale for war were self-evident, a broad-based multinational "coalition of the willing" would have indeed materialized. At the heart of the administration's failure, I am convinced, is the absence of clear and convincing evidence that Iraq poses an imminent threat either to the United States or other nations of the world.

Moreover, Mr. Speaker, the administration has yet to adequately explain the consequences of going to war to the American people. Have we received clear and convincing evidence that the President's decision will not destabilize the Middle East, will not make our defense against terrorism more difficult, and will not undermine our ability to meet the compelling domestic needs of Americans here at home?

Where is the administration's comprehensive plan for the political and