

OREGON CITIZEN MIKE HAWASH
ADVERSELY AFFECTED BY MA-
TERIAL WITNESS LAW

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I am reflecting on the words of the majority leader, actions speak for themselves, and I think we are going to have a series of discussions here on the floor of this Chamber dealing with the actions of the Republican majority and the mismatch between what the American public wants and needs. The notion that we are going to cut veterans benefits when we are sending our veterans-to-be into battle in the Middle East, the fact that we are providing even the tax treatment for the veterans that he referenced was achieved only after the Republican majority was embarrassed with their original proposal. They had to withdraw it because it confused assistance for our veterans with aid for people who gamble from overseas and manufacture tackle boxes. Mr. Speaker, I would like instead today to reflect on a moment of what times of stress especially in war serve as a mirror for who we are. There have been times in our history like World War II where it has reflected in a very positive sense on our character, it has brought out the best in the American public, but also during that same period of time, there was also reflected some of the things that we are least proud of. For example, our treatment of legal Japanese residents and Japanese citizens in this country, herding them up and putting them in concentration camps.

One of the problems I have with the current situation is that it is fraught with danger, and if we are not careful, we will have a risk of losing track of who we are. I was struck last fall when I read an article in the Washington Post that talks about how the material witness law in this country casts dozens of citizens, of Americans, into limbo, where there were 44 people who were jailed as material witnesses and kept in maximum security conditions for a few days, in some cases for several months or longer. Seven of them were American citizens. I was troubled when I read that account, Mr. Speaker, but I must say that I was shaken when I saw it occur in my community, where 3 weeks ago Maher Hawash, Mike to his friends, a 38-year-old software engineer, although born in the West Bank and who grew up in Kuwait, has been an American citizen for over a dozen years, he lives with his wife Lisa, raising three children here in our community of Portland, Oregon, was arrested in the Intel parking lot at 6:30 in the morning. At the same time almost a dozen armed agents swept into his home. I heard from his former boss, Steve McGeady, a friend of mine, in Portland, who was stunned by the accusation but more by the treatment of

this American citizen, kept in solitary confinement for 3 weeks under this material witness warrant, attorney and family subject to a gag order. This is a person with strong ties to the community and does not appear to represent any risk of flight.

Citizens who know Mike have organized their own Web site, freemikehawash.org, that says it all. Mr. Speaker, he had a hearing yesterday but he is bound over again under these conditions. We do not know what is going on. He is going to be kept in detention, it looks like, for at least another 2 to 3 weeks. Mr. Speaker, this is deeply troubling treatment for an American citizen. Put him before the grand jury now. If they think he has committed some sort of crime, charge him. If not, for heaven's sake, release him. We should not have a shroud of secrecy. We should not have indefinite detention in solitary confinement for American citizens. We should not be punishing them, their family and friends.

As I said, Mr. Speaker, at times difficult situations provide a mirror. I would hope that the mirror that we hold up to ourselves at this time should show America at its best, not at its worst.

IRAQI LIBERATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. STEARNS) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to support the actions of the world's greatest fighting force, the United States Armed Forces, which is currently about 360,000 men and women deployed overseas defending our freedom. Though the terrains may differ greatly, their overall objectives remain the same, Mr. Speaker. From the sweltering jungles of Colombia and South Korea to the barren moonscapes of Iraq and Afghanistan, U.S. forces put life and limb in harm's way to maintain the security of our great country. War is a concept not easily understood, never black and white, its ramifications always permanent and, of course, severe. The fighting men and women of the United States know the consequences of war, yet continue to place upon their shoulders this great mantle of responsibility. Though victory in war always comes at a price, our efforts in the Iraqi theater have yielded great success. Our Armed Forces have liberated thousands of Iraqis and have begun the delivery of much needed humanitarian support. Saddam's regime seems to be on its knees, ready to collapse. In what has been a historic campaign, U.S. Marines, a sea-based service, have marched inland to Baghdad in what has been the deepest land penetration ever by its air-ground team of planes, helicopters, troops and tanks. American troops have Baghdad surrounded. We have demonstrated an

ability to insert troops deep into the city and the 1st Brigade of the United States Army recently renamed Saddam International Airport to Baghdad International. The evil and torturous regime of Saddam Hussein and his Baath party cronies seems to be at its end, all due to the valiant efforts of coalition forces. Though support for this operation has been great and widespread, we as a body have been forced to face the politics of war. We have been faced with a task of funding this war and making sure that our troops are supplied with the best equipment in the world. This week we must pass the wartime supplemental conference report as soon as possible in order to keep our military machine safe and, of course, efficient. We must also continue to show the world that what we are doing is right and for the benefit of our global safety. We must uproot Saddam and show the world the atrocities that he has committed. So far, the terrorist links have been established, Mr. Speaker. Al Qaeda terrorists fought against coalition troops in southern Iraq. Foreign nationals—Egyptians, Jordanians, Saudis, Syrians, Yemenis—were captured Sunday and led U.S. soldiers to their training grounds at Salman Pak. And, most convincing, raids of the Ansar al-Islam camps in northern Iraq revealed extensive al Qaeda ties for this group believed to have extensive, high-ranking connections with the Iraqi regime. As initial reports concerning chemical weapons become more clear, we will learn the truth behind Saddam Hussein's lies. All we can do is pray that the maniacal leader will think of the people, the 4.5 million Iraqi citizens, before he considers unleashing all this chemical arsenal.

Mr. Speaker, after Baghdad is secured and the Republican Guard is completely destroyed, we will be faced with the task of reconstructing Iraq. But as eyes turn toward the U.N., many will turn to the rich oil fields of Iraq and the many ways in which their countries think they can profit from our military's work. Countries that denounced our actions will look for ways to get their hands on some of this Iraqi oil. France and its allies claim the United Nations is the only body with the international legitimacy to administer Iraq. But, Mr. Speaker, is it? The United Nations failed miserably in its supervision of Kosovo, Bosnia and Somalia. Until Bush stepped in last year, it had completely dropped any attempt to get Iraq to disarm. The United Nations has never successfully fostered a democracy. This is not surprising since many if not most of its members are nondemocratic countries and a police state like Libya heads the U.N. human rights commission.

There is at least one group of people among whom the United Nations has no legitimacy. That is the 24 million Iraqis who have suffered under more than two decades of Saddam Hussein's rule. Iraqis have seen U.N. inspectors

come and go. They have seen U.N. officials rush to Baghdad to confer with Saddam with no easing of repression as a result. They have watched as U.N. resolutions, including those obligating Saddam to respect human rights, go not just unenforced but are not even cited in passing by the United Nations.

Again my congratulations to our Armed Forces and to our President. God bless them both.

NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from Hawaii (Mr. CASE) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. CASE. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Texas, our respected majority leader, for his remarks this morning. I think I and all of us owe him a happy birthday whenever he may be and we wish him a happy birthday on, I believe it is his 56th birthday. Unfortunately, there my commendations have to end for the morning because as the war in Iraq comes to its inevitable close and our focus turns back to our domestic issues, our domestic challenges and as they turn back to the number one challenge that we face domestically, which is our Federal budget and fixing our economy, which is an area that the majority leader did not cover, I must say to my colleagues and my constituents back home and my fellow citizens that when it comes to the Federal budget that has been proposed by our President and embraced by our Republican colleagues and as it comes to that budget that we will see later on the floor this week, I must say I am tempted to feel relieved, and I am tempted to feel relieved, because for too long I have been worrying about the little things like our economy and jobs and money and debt and education and health care.

At my State legislature like many of us in the State legislatures, I just spent a decade worrying about whether we had enough jobs, whether our taxes were fair, whether we were borrowing too much or whether we were spending too much, whether our kids were getting a good head start, whether our seniors had the basics, what my Hawaii would be like not next year but in 10, 20 years and what I could do to hand it off well. And at home, of course, because government is no different than a household in principle, my wife and I, we have long worried about our jobs and whether we could keep up with expenses, whether our debts were too high, whether our kids would grow up healthy, whether we could get a good, affordable education, whether our parents could live with decency. I am tempted to feel relieved because after all those years of worry both in my State legislature and at home, my Republican colleagues in the White House and here in the Congress have given me and are about to again give me a bud-

et to vote on that says basically, do not worry, your fears are for naught. You can have your cake and eat it, too. You can do whatever you want. It will all work out. Do not worry, be happy.

For example, let us take debt. My wife and I, we have been worrying about how much we owe. We do not like debt and when we have to incur debt we do not like it to get too high. We worry about retiring in debt. We worry about whether our kids are going to have to bail us out. We do not think that that is good for us and it is certainly not good for them. In the State legislature back in Hawaii, I worried for a long time about how much my State was borrowing, about whether our hard-earned dollars were going just to pay off debt, whether we were handing off Hawaii in better shape to our children than the Hawaii that we had been responsible for administering. But now I am tempted to feel relieved, because I am told my Federal Government is somehow different, I am told debt is good, do not worry about it, that the largest debt run-up since President Reagan's era is no problem. And Alan Greenspan, somebody that says debt is not bad, chronic debt is bad. Chronic debt does not work. It leads to a worsening economy. It leads to interest rate increases. I am told about Mr. Greenspan, he is all wet, do not worry about him.

Let us take taxes. In my State House, I embraced some tax relief in the 1990s, but I worried about whether that tax relief was going to those most in need, whether that tax relief was going to result in economic revitalization. I worried about the connection between lower taxes and an increased economy. Would cuts fix our economy? But here I am told, do not worry. We cannot give you any evidence of a connection between the tax cuts that we recommend and economic revitalization. And we do not have to worry about the Congressional Budget Office saying there is no connection. Do not worry, it will all work out.

Let us take expenses, especially unknown or uncertain expenses. My wife and I worry about expenses that we know about and those that we do not yet know about. We worry about college. We worry about setting money aside. We worry about a little bit of a rainy day fund to worry about things that do not come along. But now I am told from this budget, do not worry, we do not need a little rainy day fund. We already have one. It is called Social Security. We can bail it out if we need to and we do not even have to include known expenses, expenses that we may not know how much they will be exactly but we sure know that they are coming.

We all know, for example, that \$75 billion is just the first installment of our obligations overseas for the war with Iraq. Yet that is not factored into this budget. Why not? I do not know. I guess I am being told, do not worry about it, it will come later. And do not

worry about that. Do not worry about the long-term. We can get through the next couple of years. We can get through the things that are coming at us down the road. Do not worry about the projections of an increasing deficit, a deficit projected to increase by some estimates from 300 to \$400 billion up to close to a trillion dollars, given the full impact of this tax cut. Do not worry about that.

So I am a happy camper today. I do not have to worry. And if I were not so worried, I would be awfully scared.

MEDICAL SAVINGS ACCOUNTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. GUTKNECHT) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to talk about an issue that everyone should be aware of and I think more and more Americans are becoming concerned about and that is the rising cost of health care here in the United States. Some of the estimates this year, and we are talking to small businesspeople in my district, they are looking at increases in the cost of their health care of anywhere from 10 percent to 40 percent and some even more than that. One of the ideas that has been around for a number of years in terms of controlling the costs of health care in the United States is the concept of medical savings accounts. This is a plan that really goes back a long ways. As a matter of fact, in my district where we have an awful lot of farm families, they in effect have had medical savings accounts for a very long time. What they do is they essentially use their checking account as the medical savings account, but the principle is relatively simple and that is where people can put money away, either through their employer or individually, into a medical savings account to pay those ongoing medical bills. At the same time, they buy a catastrophic insurance policy that will pay those catastrophic expenses if they should come down with cancer, if they should need a major surgery, something like that. Catastrophic insurance is relatively inexpensive. And so in the last several years we have allowed more and more of the employers to do these medical savings accounts, to set up these programs on a pretax basis so that they get the advantages of the Tax Code. But there was one major, glaring error and omission from the legislation we passed in the past here in the Congress and that is that public employees could not participate in these. And so I have been talking to my public employees back in Minnesota. They would very much like to participate in medical savings accounts for a whole variety of reasons, one of which is it is a way that they can begin to save money for long-term care, because we are now beginning to