

pay the premium and get the insurance to protect you, or you can decline to pay the premium and face the risk of the consequences. This Nation remains at risk. We are engaged in a struggle unlike any in the history of this country, and we are facing an enemy that is driven by culture, by religion, by fanaticism, and that is intent upon doing harm to the people of our country. This threat is one that we must face head on. This threat is one that we must be sure that we prevail against. And this threat is one that we must be willing to pay the cost of.

Mr. Speaker, it is my hope that every Member of Congress and the American people will join with us in regaining the sense of urgency that we have in making sure that we have done everything necessary to ensure the protection of the American people. I would urge every Member of this Congress and every listener to take a look at this report and its contents on the Web site of the Select Committee on Homeland Security. The Web address is www.house.gov/hsc/democrats/. Let me repeat that, Mr. Speaker: www.house.gov/hsc/democrats/.

As my colleagues review this report, I think they will find that we as a Nation have a long way to go in being able to tell the American people that we are prepared enough to defend against, to prevent, to deter, and to respond to a catastrophic terrorist attack.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that every Member of this Congress will join together in that same spirit that this Congress exhibited on September 11 of 2001 when we gathered just outside of this Chamber on the steps of this Capitol and joined together in expressing our resolve to prevail against al Qaeda, expressing our commitment to do whatever is necessary to win, and joined together in singing "God bless America." For the truth is, we are the greatest Nation that has ever existed on the face of the Earth. We have tremendous responsibilities in our leadership in this world, and we must do whatever is necessary to prevail in the war on terror.

HOMELAND SECURITY: FIRST PRIORITY FOR AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BISHOP of Utah). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. LANGEVIN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. TURNER) for hosting his important Special Order today. As we mark the 1-year anniversary of the creation of the Department of Homeland Security, it is a time to both recognize successes and acknowledge failures. There is no more important issue facing Congress today and the administration than protecting the freedom and security of the American people. In fact, the preamble to our Constitution makes providing

for the common defense the first responsibility of Congress.

Improving the safety of our citizens at home must be undertaken just as aggressively as pursuing terrorists abroad. I want to express my deepest appreciation to all those who have taken on this task, from the nearly 200,000 employees of DHS working in every sector in every State, to the dedicated and courageous first responders in all of our communities. We owe you a great debt of thanks and gratitude for your hard work. While it is true there is much still to be done, I know that these great Americans are up to the challenge.

Every day we ask our firefighters, police, and other emergency personnel to put their lives on the line; and since September 11, the burdens on these men and women have only grown. They need our support to keep America safe. With dozens of States experiencing their worst fiscal crisis since World War II, combined with the activation of thousands of Guard and Reserve members, first responders are more desperate than ever for Federal assistance. They are short on the most basic needs, including personnel, overtime, and equipment.

The Department of Homeland Security needs significantly more resources in order to get state-of-the-art training and equipment to our front line of first responders, along with national standards of future purchases and practices, so that all of our personnel are operating capably and consistently. In addition, we must ensure our law enforcement agencies are properly equipped to share information and coordinate activities so threats that cross jurisdictional lines can be adequately addressed.

One critical component of this goal is providing the communications equipment and infrastructure necessary for first responders to take effective and coordinated action.

□ 1515

Interoperable telecommunications technology exists today at an affordable price, but we must provide the funding and leadership to ensure it is deployed without delay.

Information must also flow more smoothly between Federal agencies and the State and local personnel who are the first to respond to an emergency. Unfortunately, at present, resources are being allocated and priorities are being set in the absence of a reliable threat assessment that can be mapped against existing vulnerabilities. State and local responders are operating without the benefit of current, specific intelligence and most lack the clearance or physical means to receive classified information even when it is available. We need to clarify the information-sharing responsibilities within our Intelligence Community and ensure that those who need this information receive it in a timely and beneficial manner.

Furthermore, we continue to face serious vulnerabilities at our ports, borders, and nuclear and chemical facilities and other critical infrastructure. While our airports are significantly safer due to increased passenger and baggage screening, passengers and crew are still at risk from the cargo traveling on these planes.

DHS should also deploy technology like remote sensors and unmanned aerial vehicles to secure every mile of our land border. We need to station Customs inspectors at high-risk ports abroad, increase accountability for companies shipping goods to this country, and deploy systems to track every ship and container entering a U.S. port.

DHS must ensure the highest levels of security at nuclear and chemical facilities, which means requiring the private sector to act as an equal partner in critical infrastructure security.

Finally, as we endeavor to identify threats before they become real dangers, we must be ever vigilant of defending the civil liberties of our citizens. Protecting the homeland does not need to run counter to protecting privacy and freedom. We should make sure that intelligence tools are used judiciously, and we must work always toward a balance that ensures both security and liberty.

The gentleman from Texas (Mr. TURNER), the ranking member, this week led Democrats on the Select Committee on Homeland Security in unveiling a report entitled *America at Risk: Closing the Security Gap*, and I was proud to join him in that effort. This important and comprehensive report details many of the remaining shortfalls in our homeland security defense efforts and, more importantly, offers substantive proposals for addressing them. I want to commend the gentleman from Texas (Mr. TURNER), the ranking member, for his leadership on this report. I hope this report will serve as a catalyst for bipartisan action, and I look forward to working with my colleagues to address this most important issue.

Mr. Speaker, our Nation has come a great distance since September 11, but we stop now at our own peril. We must act quickly to address the problems that remain and provide safe and secure communities for all of our citizens.

AMERICA: A NATION STILL AT RISK

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BISHOP of Utah). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. HOEKSTRA) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Mr. Speaker, tonight I want to build off the comments of perhaps some of the previous speakers in talking about America is still a Nation at risk.

In his new book, *Why America Slept*, author Gerald Posner raises the possibility that better tactical performance by the United States could have averted the September 11 terrorist attacks. He suggests that the problem was that law enforcement and other agencies failed to effectively identify and act on numerous clues in the months preceding those tragic events. This could be true, but it is more likely that the attacks could have been averted had the U.S. recognized a new enemy emerging in the 1990s and developed a strategy to effectively respond to it, a lapse that the United States Intelligence Community will have to make up as it reinvents itself to respond to a fluid world that I think was redefined by September 11.

Terrorist attacks throughout the previous decade were treated as isolated criminal acts rather than a developing new emergent threat bent on destroying the United States, and I think this is a question that we have to ask ourselves, and we have to determine what we believe the threat will be in the future. We know what happened during the 1990s. We know about the examples of the first attack on the World Trade Center in 1993. There was a bombing. In 1996, there was a bombing of the U.S. military barracks in Saudi Arabia, and also in the 1990s there were the attacks on our embassies in Africa, and then in 2000 the USS *Cole* was attacked. But these are just a small sample of the increasing number of terrorist attacks against the U.S., our people, our interests and our allies that took place throughout the 1990s.

In 1995, two unidentified gunmen killed two U.S. diplomats and wounded a third in Karachi, Pakistan. In 1997, a Palestinian sniper opened fire on tourists atop the Empire State Building, killing a Danish national, wounding visitors from the United States and Argentina. In 2000, a bomb exploded across the street from the U.S. Embassy in Manila. We have had bombings in Turkey and other places.

The strategic error that we made through the 1990s is that we assumed that with the collapse of the Soviet Union, American policymakers assumed that the international political environment had become more stable and more predictable. How wrong we were.

During the 1990s, the international political environment became more volatile and more unpredictable, and this was not necessarily unrecognized by our leadership.

In a February 17, 1998, speech President Bill Clinton said, And they, then in parenthesis, the predators of the 21st century will be all the more lethal if we allow them to build arsenals of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and the missiles to deliver them. We simply cannot allow that to happen. There should be no doubt Saddam's ability to produce and deliver weapons of mass destruction poses a grave threat to the peace of that region and

the security of the world. There is no more clear example of this threat than Saddam Hussein's Iraq. His regime threatens the safety of his people, the stability of his region and the security of all the rest of us. In the next century, the community of nations may see more and more the very kind of threat Iraq poses now, a rogue state with weapons of mass destruction, ready to use them or provide them to terrorists who travel the world. If we fail to respond today, Saddam will be emboldened tomorrow by the knowledge that they can act with impunity.

Again, on February 17, 1998, President Bill Clinton highlighted the threat not only of Saddam Hussein, but of this emerging threat that we saw in the 1990s of various terrorist organizations and people who seek to do us and our allies harm. In that same speech, the President at that time, President Bill Clinton, said, And someday, some way, I guarantee you he will use the arsenal, and I think every one of you who has really worked on this for any length of time believes that, too.

Continuing, In this century we learned through harsh experience that the only answer to aggression and illegal behavior is firmness, determination and, when necessary, action. In the next century the community of nations may see more and more the very kind of threat Iraq poses now, again, a rogue state with weapons of mass destruction, ready to use them or provide them to terrorists, drug traffickers or organized criminals who travel the world among us, unnoticed, a different kind of emerging threat to the United States and our security.

December 17, 1998, President Bill Clinton, I am convinced the decision I made to order this military action, though difficult, was absolutely the right thing to do. It is in our interests and in the interest of people around the world. Saddam Hussein has used weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles before. I have no doubt he would use them again if permitted to develop them.

In another speech, this is by Richard Haas, he is a top Middle East expert on the National Security Council during the Bush administration. The stakes here are very real, and they are enormous. This is someone who has used weapons of mass destruction twice against his own people and against Iran. He does not have qualms.

As we are going through the 1990s, and even as we were going through the first couple of years of the new millennium, we have seen that America was becoming more aware and our leaders were becoming more aware of these various threats.

Madeleine Albright in a speech September 9, 1998, here is what she has to say. In this struggle, our adversaries are likely to avoid a traditional battlefield situation because there American dominance is well established. We must be concerned instead by weapons of mass destruction and by the cowardly

instruments of sabotage and hidden bombs. These unconventional threats endanger not only our Armed Forces, but all Americans and America's friends everywhere. We must understand that this confrontation is long-term. It does not lend itself to quick victory. Force for peace, freedom and progress and law in the world, but no threat, no bomb, no terrorist can diminish America's determination to lead.

She goes on, A second major threat to America's security also has entered a new phase, and that is weapons of mass destruction and the systems that deliver them. For decades we viewed this threat primarily through a narrow Cold War lens, and now our concerns have broadened. We are deeply concerned by regional tensions in South Asia where both India and Pakistan have conducted nuclear tests.

Going on later on, she talks about chemical or biological warheads, and they are devilishly difficult to shoot down.

Again, already in 1998 or maybe saying as late as 1998, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright identifying the threat to America, our people, our infrastructure and our allies. We need to continue this discussion and this debate to see whether this threat continues to be real.

National Security Adviser Samuel Berger in an op-ed, *Washington Times*, October 16, 1998, And indeed, we have information that Iraq has assisted in the chemical weapons activity in Sudan with information linking Bin Laden to the Sudanese regime and the al-Shifa plant.

The threats are real. They have been identified in administration after administration. This week and over the last couple of weeks, we have had the opportunity to get an update, and I would encourage my friends to take a look at some of the statements that have recently been made so that they can reach their own judgment as to the kind of threat that faces America today, because as we understand the threat and reach agreement as to what the threat may be, that will also then provide the foundation for our actions and our response to that threat.

Steve Cambone, an Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence, delivered his views on this back on January 22, 2004. Here is what he had to say. We are a Nation at war. We do not know how long it will last, but it is unlikely to be short. We cannot know where or against whom all of its battles will be fought. There are multiple fronts in this war. There is no single theater of operations. We do know that we are all at risk, at home and abroad, civilians and military alike. We do know that battles and campaigns will be both conventional and unconventional in their conduct. Some of those battles and campaigns will be fought in the open, and others will be fought in secret where our victories will be known to only a few.

Going on, In describing the situation that we find ourselves in today, we are facing a turbulent and volatile world populated by a number of highly adaptive state and nonstate actors. Some of these are weighing whether to or to what extent or how they might oppose the interests of the United States and its friends. Others, such as terrorist organizations, who are responsible for attacks in the United States, Turkey, Indonesia, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Israel, Kenya, the Philippines, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq and other places, have committed themselves to war.

□ 1530

"In such a world, where largely ungoverned areas can serve as sanctuary for terrorists, and where political and military affairs in Europe, Asia, Africa, and South America continue to evolve, it is impossible to predict with confidence what nation or entity will pose a threat in 5, 10, or 20 years to the United States or to our friends and allies. In such a world, where our vulnerabilities are all too well understood by our potential adversaries, we should expect to be surprised.

"Not everything that unfolds in the coming years should be a surprise. We can expect that an adversary will continually search for an effective means to attack our people, our economic military and political power, and the people and the power of our friends and allies.

"We can also expect that an adversary will have access to a range of modern technologies and will be prepared to use them to magnify the destructiveness of their attacks, using truck bombs and improvised explosives; cyberintrusions to attack the computer systems upon which we rely; radio transmitters to jam our space assets; small laboratories to develop new biological or genetically altered agents; and chemical and nuclear technology and materials delivered by missile, plane, boat, or backpack to poison our environment and destroy human lives."

Also this week, I believe it was on Tuesday, Tuesday or Wednesday, February 24, George Tenet, the Director of the CIA, Director of the CIA under both President Clinton and President Bush, gave his update to the Senate Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence and also the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence. And part of his testimony, unusual in that it is typically in closed session, but part of his testimony was given in open session, and that is available on various Web sites for people to read. And I encourage people to go back and read the full testimony that Director Tenet gave in front of the Senate's Select Committee on Intelligence.

Let me just give you some brief excerpts of it. Because, again, what it does is it follows and builds on the conclusions, the statements, and the threat perception that President Clin-

ton outlined for us in the late 1990s; that Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, that Sandy Berger and other members of the Clinton administration laid out as potential threats, and that now continue to be seen in this administration but are being seen in a new light. They are being seen through the lens of September 11.

Here is what Director Tenet has to say: "Terrorism: I will begin today on terrorism with a stark bottom line. The al Qaeda leadership structure we chartered after September 11 is seriously damaged, but the group remains as committed as ever to attacking the U.S. homeland. But as we continue the battle against al Qaeda, we must overcome a movement, a global movement infected by al Qaeda's radical agenda.

"In this battle we are moving forward in our knowledge of the enemy, his plans, capabilities, and intentions. And what we have learned continues to validate my deepest concern. It is a concern that was expressed to the Clinton administration, it is a concern that we continue to have," the statement concluding, "that this enemy remains intent on obtaining and using catastrophic weapons."

During the 1990s, we saw what al Qaeda and other organizations were willing to do and what they were capable of doing. Director Tenet goes on and explains a little about the war against al Qaeda and its leadership:

"Military and intelligence operations by the United States and its allies overseas have degraded the group. Local al Qaeda cells are forced to make their own decisions because of disarray in the central leadership. We are creating large and growing gaps in the al Qaeda hierarchy. We are receiving a broad array of help from our coalition partners, who have been central to our effort against al Qaeda."

This is something that we found out in some of the travels and in the opportunities I have had to meet with individuals in the Middle East.

"We have a number of allies in the war against al Qaeda. Since the May 12 bombings, the Saudi government has shown an important commitment to fighting al Qaeda in the kingdom, and Saudi officers have paid with their lives. Elsewhere in the Arab world we have received valuable cooperation from Jordan, Morocco, Egypt, Algeria, the UAE, Oman, and many others. President Musharraf of Pakistan remains a courageous and indispensable ally, who has become a target of assassins because of the help he has given us.

"Partners in Southeast Asia have been instrumental in the roundup of key regional associates of al Qaeda. Our European partners work closely together to unravel and disrupt the continent-wide network of terrorists planning chemical, biological, and conventional attacks in," not in America, not in the U.S., "in Europe."

Again continuing to quote: "So we have made notable strides. But do not

misunderstand me. I am not suggesting al Qaeda is defeated. It is not. We are still at war. This is a learning organization that remains committed to attacking the United States, its friends and its allies."

Again, these are the words of our Director of Intelligence, Director Tenet.

Going on again: "Successive blows to al Qaeda's central leadership have transformed the organization into a loose collection of regional networks that operate more autonomously. These regional components have demonstrated their operational prowess in the past year. The sites of their attacks span the entire reach of al Qaeda: Morocco, Kenya, Turkey, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Indonesia.

"Al Qaeda seeks to influence the regional networks with operational training consultations and money. Khalid Shaikh Mohammed sent Hambali \$50,000 for operations in Southeast Asia. You should not take the fact that these attacks occurred abroad to mean that the threat to the United States homeland has waned. As al Qaeda and associated groups undertook these attacks overseas, detainees consistently talk about the importance the group still attaches to striking the main enemy: the United States.

"Across the operational spectrum, air, maritime, special weapons, we have time and again uncovered plots that are chilling. On aircraft plots alone we have uncovered new plans to recruit pilots and to evade new security measures in Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and Europe. Even catastrophic attacks of the scale of 11 September remain within al Qaeda's reach. Make no mistake, these plots are hatched abroad, but they target U.S. soil or that of our allies."

Again, this is Director Tenet speaking to the Senate Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence earlier this week. And I encourage my colleagues to go to the Web sites and read this testimony in complete detail to better understand the threats that we still face; and if they have questions, to peel back the layers so that they can make their own personal assessment of the threats that still face the United States.

Again Director Tenet goes on: "So far I have been talking only about al Qaeda, but al Qaeda is not the limit of terrorist threat worldwide. Al Qaeda has infected others with its ideology, which depicts the United States as Islam's greatest foe.

"Mr. Chairman, what I want to say to you now may be the most important thing I tell you today. The steady growth of Osama bin Laden's anti-U.S. sentiment throughout the wider Suni extremist movement, and the broad dissemination of al Qaeda's destructive expertise, ensures that a serious threat will remain for the foreseeable future with or without al Qaeda in the picture."

I believe that if you go back and take a look at the statements in the Clinton

administration, what Director Tenant laid out earlier this week is very little different; is very, very consistent with what the Clinton administration outlined during the 1990s. There is a real threat out there. That threat continues to evolve, it continues to change, and it continues to mature and respond to the steps that we take against it.

Again going back to Director Tenant's testimony: "A decade ago, bin Laden had a vision of rousing Islamic terrorists worldwide to attack the United States. He created al Qaeda to indoctrinate a worldwide movement and global jihad with America as the enemy, an enemy that would be attacked with every means at hand. In the minds of bin Laden and his cohorts, September 11 was the shining moment, their shot heard round the world, and they want to capitalize on it.

"And so even as al Qaeda reels from our blows, other extremist groups within the movement it influences become the next wave of terrorist threat. Dozens of such groups exist. These far-flung groups increasingly setting the agenda are redefining the threat we face. They are not creatures of bin Laden, so their fate is not tied to his. They have autonomous leadership. They pick their own targets. They plan their own attacks.

"Beyond these groups with the so-called foreign jihadists, individuals ready to fight anywhere they believe Muslim lands are under attack by what they see as infidel invaders. They have drawn broad support networks, have wide appeal, and enjoy a growing sense of support from Muslims who are not necessarily supporters of terrorism. The foreign jihadists see Iraq as a golden opportunity."

He kind of closes this part of his presentation to the Senate Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence with these words:

"Let me repeat: For the growing number of jihadists interested in attacking the United States, a spectacular attack on the U.S. homeland is the brass ring that many strive for." Let me just repeat that: "For the growing number of jihadists interested in attacking the United States, a spectacular attack on the U.S. homeland is the brass ring that many strive for." He then goes on, "with or without encouragement by al Qaeda's central leadership."

Like I said, I would encourage my colleagues to go to various different sources and review this material from Director Tenant that was given in open session and is available to them. Go through it in detail. It is that important that they have that information as we move through this year.

I genuinely believe and agree with the assessments that came out of the Clinton administration, that are coming out of this administration, and that have come out of Director Tenant as he worked with the Clinton administration and as he works in this administration, that the threat is real. I be-

lieve that that is a bipartisan conclusion.

Working on the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, one of the things that you find is that on issues of national security there are not partisan differences. We strive to leave the partisan labels at the door when we move in. We recognize that the issues that we work on are so critical that we cannot politicize them. We cannot make them partisan. We need to have and focus on what is best for the security interest of the United States.

In light of that, on a number of occasions members of the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence have had the opportunity to travel abroad together to meet with leaders from different countries to assess what is going on in Iraq or what is going on in Afghanistan. And in that light, six of us had the opportunity a week and a half ago to go to Libya, to go to Iraq, and to go to Afghanistan.

Let me just give a few highlights of that trip. I will have a diary available within the next week or so, if Members want to see a more detailed explanation of exactly my views of what happened on this trip; but it is a bipartisan delegation, four Republicans and two Democrats, who went on this trip.

□ 1545

Our first stop was in Libya. It is kind of amazing as the individuals who were leading this trip were planning it in late November and December, I do not think that any of us would have expected when we traveled overseas in February that we would be stopping in Libya. That is one place that congressional delegations and Americans basically did not go. But in December and early January, Colonel Qadhafi started signals out that he was willing to disengage in his weapons of mass destruction program, and he was willing to move forward and allow U.N., NATO or U.S. inspectors into the country to look at his programs and then destroy those programs, and then move into the area of having closer economic and cultural ties with the U.S. and Europe.

So our State Department requested that we stop in Libya and meet with Colonel Qadhafi and encourage him in the direction that he was moving. After much effort and seeing much of the Libyan countryside, that is exactly what we had an opportunity to do, to express our appreciation to Colonel Qadhafi about the direction he was going and encourage him to continue in that direction.

We still have a number of issues with Colonel Qadhafi in terms of how he treats the people in Libya, but we will continue to work with him on those outstanding issues, but recognize as he dismantles the weapon of mass destruction program in Libya, that provides us with a huge step forward. It is a significant step forward. Already we have learned much about how that whole network of chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons worked. It has helped

us expose things in Pakistan and give some kind of a better understanding what currently may be available in North Korea, what may be available in Iran, and what these countries may have had access to on the international market, and how they would have accessed these goods and services and products, and how far they might have progressed.

There has been much benefit as to Colonel Qadhafi and the steps he has already taken. We encourage him to continue moving in that direction.

We also had some very interesting quotes as we sat down with an individual that we had read much about, but none of us ever had the opportunity or ever expected to have the opportunity to be in the same room with him or any of his parliamentary leaders. Some of their quotes included, "God created man on this Earth. Therefore, they have natural needs and natural rights. These are not bestowed by anyone else, and they cannot be taken away by men."

Another quote that came out of our discussions, and remember, this is the Libyans talking to Members of the U.S. House of Representatives, "Every person has the right to develop to their full potential to live in peace, security, and prosperity."

Another quote, "How can you enslave people who are born free?"

Something that they are very proud of, and it is captured in this quote, "The leader of the revolution has even received recognition with an international human rights award."

Let me go back to the first quote, and would it not be great if Libya and others lived by what they told us, "God created man on this Earth. Therefore, they," meaning men, "have natural needs and natural rights. These are not bestowed by anyone else, and they cannot be taken away by men."

We had an opportunity to spend about an hour and 45 minutes with Colonel Qadhafi. As I said, we were supposed to meet with him in the morning, and we finally ended up meeting with him late in the afternoon. It was a fascinating discussion. The message that he first delivered us, even though we were in a situation where we had been adversaries for such a long time, we never knew each other. It was felt that was not good, we ought to get together, and we ought to have a dialogue. And I think we agreed that we want to have that dialogue, and not just a dialogue on weapons of mass destruction, but also on human rights within his country.

He talked about his decision to dismantle the weapon of mass destruction program and denounce terrorism, which was based solely on the self-interest of Libya. Our concern was not why Colonel Qadhafi has moved in that direction, but we ought to be thankful that he has decided to move in that direction. Colonel Qadhafi expressed a desire for the normalization of relationships between our countries, a desire for political economic ties, as well

as cultural and student exchanges between Libya and the United States. It was a fascinating opportunity to get an insight into this man and into this country and to be part of perhaps history, to be part of a history that will be part of rewriting the chapter of relationships between the United States and Libya.

We then went on to Iraq. I have been to Iraq a number of times before in measuring the progress of what has been going on. There are a number of reasons that we ought to be pleased about the success that we are having, but as we go through this, I think it is important to recognize that there is still so much to do. There is no doubt that we are making progress on the economic side. There is no doubt that we are making progress on the political side. There is no doubt that we are making progress on the national security side, but the bottom line is there was so far to go.

Both Iraq and Afghanistan, remember, they had either been under the control of someone like Saddam Hussein for the last 30 years, a total destruction of the fiber within the country, the fiber of a civil society.

In Afghanistan, we have the same thing, which has been under control of the Taliban or the Russians for the last 10, 12 years, and as President Karzai told us, what little we had in terms of infrastructure and a civil society, what little we had was destroyed during the 1990s.

But we are now in the process of helping these countries rebuild a civil society, and by a civil society we mean there is a rule of law, that they understand the rules by which they as a society have agreed to live by; that they have an enforcement mechanism, and that they have a police force to monitor and enforce the laws and the rules that have been put in place; that they have a judiciary that can adjudicate disputes between the people in a peaceful way; and they also have the opportunity for representative government, and that they have an opportunity for transparent government bureaucracies.

What does that mean? It means that the people have a high degree of confidence that the actions that are going on in the institutions of government are free from corruption and are achieving the results to benefit the people of the nation and not a few of the rulers.

So we are working to establish a civil society in both Iraq and Afghanistan; and we are making progress, but do not underestimate the amount of work that needs to take place. Recognize how far these countries have to go, and recognize where they started from.

When this Nation was founded, we started with the Articles of Confederation, found out that they did not work the way that we wanted them to, and then we developed the current Constitution. When our Founding Fathers got together that second time to develop the Constitution as we now know it, it took them 4½ months to write it.

Afghanistan has just completed writing its Constitution and ratifying it. Hopefully they will be moving, and we are expecting that they will be moving towards elections this summer. It is a significant step forward and guarantees equal rights to men and women. Twenty-five percent of their new Parliament are guaranteed to be women by the nature of their Constitution.

In Iraq, we are asking this government to come up with a process for selecting the people who will write their Constitution. And then developing the Constitution, we are basically giving them right around 4 months to do that. It is important that we have an accelerated process, but we are asking these folks to do a lot in a very short period of time, and we are asking them to do it in a dangerous and difficult environment.

There are still folks out there who want to ensure that we do not have a civil society in Iraq and that we do not have a civil society in Afghanistan because they recognize that as the roots of a civil society take place, they will no longer be able to benefit at the expense of the larger population, and they realize that they will lose the power to intimidate the people of Iraq and Afghanistan. These were brutal rulers in both of these regimes, killing thousands of their own people. In Iraq, it is estimated that Saddam Hussein and his henchmen killed over 300,000. We are asking to provide an opportunity to move these societies to the rule of law, transparent government, functioning judiciaries, a functioning free press and an openness in their society.

There are a lot of statistics that are out, and I believe these are also available on various Web sites from the Pentagon, talking about the progress that we are making in Iraq, talking about the progress that we are making in the area of electricity, talking about the progress that we are making in the area of oil production, and talking about the progress that we are making in the area of education, opening schools, inspecting new schools, training teachers, having 1,500 secondary students participate in student exchange programs, talking about what is going on in health care, providing training to 2,500 medical staff by April 4. These are folks who for 20 years have been in isolation. There are all kinds of positive things that are going on that are helping to bring back a civil society in Iraq. We are making sure that we provide folks with basic human needs, including food and those types of things, telecommunications.

There is a lot of information about the progress that we are making, but I just want to share a few things that I think are maybe as indicative, if not more indicative, of the change that may be taking place in Iraq. Let me state again, there is a tremendous amount of work that still needs to take place in Iraq. There is a tremendous amount of work that still needs to take

place in a relatively short period of time in a difficult environment with people who are committed to seeing not that the coalition fails, but that the folks in Iraq, the Iraqis who want to build a new nation, that they will fail. These are folks that are thrilled that they have been liberated and that America is there. They are thrilled that Saddam Hussein is gone.

The interesting story in Afghanistan is the most popular person, as President Karzai talked to us in Afghanistan, and he is a very popular President because he represents the move toward civil society in Afghanistan, but the most popular person in Afghanistan today is the American Ambassador to Afghanistan. President Karzai said it is a good thing your ambassador is not on the ballot because he might win.

The Iraqis and the Afghans are optimistic about the opportunity they have to create a new Iraq and create a new Afghanistan.

□ 1600

Like I said, one of the most moving parts of our trip was when we went to one of the police academies in Baghdad. Part of creating a civil society is to make sure that not only do you have the rule of law which is going to be developed in their constitution but that the person on the street recognizes that there is a rule of law and there is a mechanism to enforce that. Part of that is the police force. We all know that that is essential by what the folks who are opposed to the coalition and to a new Iraq have been doing over the last couple of months. They are no longer targeting Americans and coalition forces. Sure, they will take a shot at us if they see a vulnerability or an opening, but what they are now doing is they are attacking those folks that are helping to put together the pieces of a new Iraq. A critical part of that is the police force.

The week before we went to Iraq, there were a couple of just dramatic bombings, deadly bombings. Over 100 policemen or recruits were killed in two bombings. Each time we go on this trip and when we come home, we are committed to honoring the lives and the sacrifices of American and coalition forces in Iraq. What we also wanted to do this time is we wanted to extend our appreciation to the young men, and the young women, in Iraq who are stepping up and taking their place eagerly in the new Iraqi police force, recognizing that when they leave that academy they become the targets, because they are that link of the new Iraqis who are going to be putting together and enforcing and creating a civil society.

They are the targets for those that are opposed to our success. They recognize that in the last couple of weeks 100 of them had been killed. Just this past Monday, I believe, or this past weekend, there was another bombing, another seven policemen were killed. We

met with these young recruits. They are going to go through 4 to 6 weeks of training. Some of them may be selected to go on for more advanced training. They will be the ones that in many cases will be patrolling the streets of Baghdad with coalition and American forces, to get additional training. We went there. Eloquently, the leader of our delegation, the gentleman from New York (Mr. BOEHLERT), expressed our appreciation and expressed our sympathy to these recruits in recognizing that 100 of their colleagues had died recently.

We then had the opportunity to go around and to talk to many of these recruits as they were lined up in formation, and we shook hands with probably over 200 to 250 of the 500 troops or the policemen that were assembled there. Universally, the message was consistent. You could see the energy, the enthusiasm and the excitement on their faces and in their eyes. They were excited about what they were doing. You could hear it by what they said, because the message consistently as they shook our hands was, thank you. Thank you. Thank you for being here. Thank you for liberating us from Saddam Hussein and thank you for coming to us and expressing your support for what we are doing and the training and the jobs that we have committed ourselves to and recognizing the sacrifice that Iraqis are paying in building a new Iraq.

And then as we moved past, as we shook their hands, they took their hand, placed it on their heart and moved it away, meaning the true sincerity by which they were expressing their words and their actions and their emotions. As we left and as we finished meeting with and talking with these recruits, they broke out into a spontaneous applause and cheer, recognizing the partnership and the kinship, although very few of them spoke English, but the partnership and the kinship that they felt with a congressional delegation from the United States and a police academy headed by a Brit that we all were on the same page, working and moving in the same direction of building a new and a free Iraq with a civil society and that we were united in the effort to fight terrorism in Iraq and Afghanistan.

We saw the same kinds of things as we went and drove the streets in Iraq, the actions of the kids as we walked by or as we drove by through the streets of thumbs up. They knew what it was like before. They know what it is like now. They can only anticipate. But they anticipate with eagerness what they see happening in the future.

I just want to share a few more things. One of the great things now about Iraq, it was a closed society for 30 years. There was a story of someone who was imprisoned. They asked him, there was a question as to, or there was somebody who wanted to help us, they said, well, he was a Baathist and these types of things and people were sus-

picious. But then he said, well, you know, I spent a year in jail, at which point in time it kind of perked the interest of some folks. They said, maybe this guy is all right. They said, why did you get into jail? He said, I badmouthed Saddam Hussein. I badmouthed Saddam Hussein to my best friend and my best friend told the authorities, and I ended up in jail.

That was the kind of Iraq that they saw for 30 years. So they eagerly anticipate going in places they have never been. In this new society, they are experimenting, and they are seeing things they never had before. Freedom of dissent, freedom to express opinions, access to technology they never had before, cell phones, satellites; and as soon as they have that, they have access to information they never had before, and in a very short period of time, they are now finding that many Iraqis are putting up their own Web pages, communicating in e-mails, talking about what it is like to be in a new Iraq, what they hope for in the future. Here is one story off one of the Web pages. Thursday, February 12, 2004:

Hi, friends. I received this e-mail from a Kurdish Iraqi who now lives in exile. I post this without any editing on my part. This has moved me.

This is an e-mail that someone gave to me and thought I would be interested in reading it.

For the love of our nation. I am a big fan of Iraq. I love it inch by inch from Zakho to al-Fao. I love Iraq's mountains. I love Iraq's desert. I love Iraq's big cities and small villages. I love Iraq's old and new music. I love Iraq's poetry. I love Iraqis' sarcastic sense of humor. I love Iraq's tea shops. In short, without Iraq, there is no me.

Born a Kurd in the breathtakingly beautiful North, I was taught as a child to speak, read and write both of Iraq's main languages, Kurdish and Arabic. Oh what a feeling it would be when one day I learn how to speak Assyrian and Turkish so that I could communicate with my Assyrian, Chaldean and Turkman brothers and sisters in their native language. I love the sound of the speakers at dawn when Iraqis are called to prayer, not because of my religious passion but because it is the practice of my people. I love the bells of the Iraqi churches on Sundays, not because of my Christian views or lack thereof but simply because of my Iraqiness.

You see, comrades, I would like to ask of you a small favor. I want you to please look at the word Iraq. Look at it. Now picture it on Ahmad Radhi's jersey. Picture it on the atlas. Picture it in the index of every book where civilization is mentioned. Picture it at the United Nations. Picture it on your passport. The secret is very simple. To love Iraq and Iraqis without exception is to not think of Iraq as Saddam Hussein, as those in favor of the occupation and those opposed to it. It is not to think of it as to whom Kirkuk belongs. But what's really beautiful

about Iraq is the fact that it predates all of these things, not as a piece of land through which two rivers flow but as a civilization where the setting of the stage for all that human beings have accomplished began. That is Iraq and we are blessed to be members of this land that has fascinated the world in its entirety.

Why am I writing this? I am writing this because I see among us a bigger sense of division than unity. I see among us more feelings of resentment than those of joy. I see among us more anger than sobriety. I see among us people like fanatic Kurds and people who instead of trying to understand them or convince them otherwise, they attack their people as if they have a mandate from the Kurds of Iraq.

In Kirkuk, Kurdish flags virtually crisscross the city. In response to the Kurdish obsession with their flag, the Turkmans have done the same with their flag. The Arabs of Kirkuk are virtually trapped in the middle of too much ethnic tensions. They have every right to Kirkuk just as the people of Dohuk have every right to Najaf as long as their desire for residency is on the basis of their Iraqiness rather than their Kurdishness or Arabness or Shiaism or Turkmanism. Yes, I am inventing these terms because they should not exist.

Am I boring you? Well, read on. There are 1 million Kurds living in Baghdad. That number is larger than the Kurds of Kirkuk, Sulaimania, Arbil and Dohuk, not combined but individually. What does that mean? In a democratic Iraq; that means 1 million votes. We are often deceived of hearing the Sunni center without considering the number of Kurds and Shia, not to mention Christian and Yezidi Iraqis that live in Baghdad and around Baghdad. We hear the Kurdish North without looking at Mosul, the second largest Arab city in Iraq after Baghdad. We hear of the Shia South without considering the Sunni, Kurds and Arabs that live all around the south from Basra to Hilla to Najaf to Karbala.

The bottom line is, Iraq is the land of the Iraqis. The groups that constitute our beautiful mosaic should be Iraqis before they are Kurdish, Arabic, Assyrian. Once an Iraqi government is established and the various Iraqi groups are given something to lose, they will naturally feel more Iraqi. Once we are sober and awakened, things will be different. Have faith in Iraq because there is no land on Earth that is more beautiful than Iraq. Behold, one little beautiful flower of new Mesopotamian nationalism blossoms. More will follow. Salaam.

There are all kinds of these. Let me go to the last one. This is interesting because one of the key issues about what is going to be happening in Iraq and Afghanistan and other parts of the Muslim world is what is going to happen to the women, will they have equal rights. Like I said, in Afghanistan 25

percent of the new parliament will consist of women. The women are guaranteed equal rights in the constitution, equal rights between men and women. It is a very, very positive statement. Here is another: "Iraqi Women Groups Take to the Streets."

Iraqi women representing 55 women groups and organizations from all over Iraq gathered at Fardus Square this morning to sign a petition against resolution 137 to demand equal rights and fair, unbiased representation, at least 40 percent, in the future Iraqi transitional council, governorate and municipal councils. Forty percent. They are not satisfied with what they got in Afghanistan with 25. They want at least 40 percent.

The sit-in was organized by the Supreme Council of Iraqi Women, the Advisory Committee for Women Affairs, and the Iraqi Women Network. Other noted women groups were present such as the Iraqi Contemporary Women Movement, Organization for Women Freedom in Iraq, Iraqi Hope Association, Independent Women Organization, Women's Union of Kurdistan, Kurdistan Free Women Movement, Iraqi Women Revival Organization, and the Iraqi Students and Youth Union. Over 55 different groups. Think of it, in a very short period of time, the number of organizations that are forming and learning how to participate in representative government. They will make mistakes, but they are going through a very constructive process. They are learning how to express their voice in a meaningful way that they have not had the opportunity to do.

Several women activists gave speeches. Planning Minister Dr. Mahdi Al-Hafudh shyly gave a brief word of support and signed the petition. It got interesting when a woman in a burqa showed up at the gathering with her three kids. Remember, this is all on their Internet, the Web pages. Reporters all stormed forward trying to interview her. Her husband was imprisoned for years by the former regime for political reasons, only to be executed in the end and for her to pay for the bullets. A very heart-rending story. She held his death certificate, as you can see in the pictures. She said, we didn't wait all these years without the most basic rights to be denied them now. An Arab reporter asked her if she was Sunni or Shiite.

□ 1615

Her quote: "'I'm neither,' she snapped at him. 'I'm an Iraqi citizen first and foremost, and I refuse to be asked such a question.'

"AYS, and I, skulked around Fardus square and took pictures. Omar joined us later. We signed the petition against Resolution 137 and the woman offered us a rose. If you want to sign it, there is an on-line petition which you can find at this site. Equality in Iraq. The petitions are to be submitted to Paul Bremer, and Kofi Annan later this week. Bremer has made it known that

he will veto any law that will not recognize basic civil freedoms, but Resolution 137 is yet to be vetoed.

"You can find pictures of the gathering" as well.

Communication and representative government and participation is alive and well, as the other e-mail indicated and closed, "Behold, one little beautiful flower of new Mesopotamian nationalism blossoms. More will follow." Let us hope and pray that that is exactly what will happen in Iraq. There is a tremendous amount of work that has been accomplished in Iraq. There is a tremendous amount of work that has been accomplished in Afghanistan. There is a tremendous amount of work that needs to still occur for those flowers, additional blossoms, to bloom. But that is what we are working for so that these folks can have a representative government, a new and free Iraq and a new and free Afghanistan.

THE DISPARITIES IN WEALTH AND INCOME

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

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. Speaker, as the only Independent in the House of Representatives, my views are a little bit different than many of my Democratic and Republican colleagues. So I want to share some thoughts today, thoughts that are not necessarily often expressed here on the floor of the House or often expressed, unfortunately, in our corporately controlled media. Also I would like to mention to Members of the House that if they need any further information on any of the issues that we are going to be discussing they can get it from our Web site which is www.Bernie.house.gov.

Mr. Speaker, the corporate media does not talk about it terribly much, and we do not talk about it terribly often here on the floor of the House, but the United States of America is rapidly becoming three separate nations. We are becoming a Nation which has an increasingly wealthy elite composed of a small number of people with incredible wealth and power. That is one part of our Nation. The other part of our Nation is a middle class, the vast majority of our people, and that part of our society is shrinking. Middle class is shrinking. The average worker in America is working longer hours for lower wages. And the third part of our society, the low-income people, what we are seeing is a substantial increase in poverty, and we are seeing millions and millions of the poorest people in this country struggling hard just to keep their heads above water. One America incredibly rich, another America working longer hours for low wages, another America struggling hard to make ends meet.

Mr. Speaker, there has always been a wealthy elite in this country. That is

not new. And there has always been a gap between the rich and the poor. But the disparities in wealth and income that currently exist in this country today have not been seen since the 1920s. In other words, instead of becoming a more egalitarian Nation with a growing middle class, we are becoming a Nation with by far the most unequal distribution of wealth and income in the entire industrialized world. It is not England with its royalty. It is the United States of America which has the most unequal distribution of wealth and income of major countries.

Today, the wealthiest 1 percent of Americans own more wealth than the bottom 95 percent. The wealthiest 1 percent, yes, that is right, the wealthiest 1 percent own more wealth than the bottom 95 percent. The CEOs of our largest corporations now earn 500 times what their workers are making, while their employees are being squeezed, being forced to pay more for their health insurance, while pensions are being cut back for workers, while retiree benefits are being cut.

The CEOs of large corporations are making out like bandits. And I am not just talking about the crooks who ran Enron or WorldCom or Arthur Andersen. I am talking about the highly respected CEOs like the retired former head of General Electric, Jack Welch, who, when he retired in 2000, he received \$123 million in compensation and a \$10-million-a-year pension benefit for his lifetime, and meanwhile he cut back on the jobs that GE had in America and shipped substantial amounts of those jobs over to China and Mexico. But he did take good care of his own needs.

And I am talking about Lou Gerstner of IBM. He is the former head of IBM, who, from 1997 to 2002, received \$366 million in compensation while slashing the pension benefits of his employees.

I am talking about people like C.A. Heimbold, Jr. of Bristol-Myers Squibb, who received almost \$75 million in 2001 while helping to make it almost impossible for many seniors in our country to afford the outrageously high cost of prescription drugs.

Mr. Speaker, we do not talk about this issue enough, but we should, and that is that today the Nation's 13,000 wealthiest families, who constitute 1/100 of 1 percent of the population, a tiny, tiny percentage of Americans, receive almost as much income as the bottom 20 million families in the United States of America; 1/100 of 1 percent receive as much income as the bottom 20 million families. And I defy anyone to tell me that that is in any way fair or that is in any way what the United States is supposed to be.

New data from the Congressional Budget Office, the CBO, shows that the gap between the rich and the poor in terms of income more than doubled from 1979 to the year 2000. In other words, we are moving in exactly the wrong direction. The gap is such that the wealthiest 1 percent had more