

Rumsfeld from office for the good of our nation.

Sincerely,

SHEILA JACKSON-LEE,
Member of Congress.

HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. CORRINE BROWN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, with Mother's Day quickly approaching, I want to first thank all of the mothers and wish them a happy Mother's Day and thank them for what they do to make America the great place that it is. I want to thank in particular the American gold star mothers for their sacrifice and for the sacrifice of their children by answering the call of duty to their country.

Let me be clear: I support our troops 100 percent. I would like to honor our brave troops, all the military families and all that they do and have sacrificed for our Nation. I want to emphasize that I do not want our troops to be the scapegoats for this administration's failed policies. What is going on in Iraq right now is just another example of this failed administration policy.

And where is the leadership on this? Where is the President? This administration is once again missing in action. MIA. At this exact moment, with all of the uprising in Iraq, our troops are being placed in the most dangerous position. And although I pledge to do everything within my power as an elected official to ensure that our servicemen and women have the equipment and resources they need to carry out their mission, I find it disturbing, in fact, misleading that President Bush continues to hide the truth about Iraq from the American people.

In fact, up until yesterday, the administration was saying that another supplemental appropriation request would be unnecessary until after, by the way, November elections. To me, however, it seemed more than likely that this administration knew all along that they were going to need additional funding. Unfortunately, this new request of \$25 billion in supplemental spending for Iraq is just another example of the administration's pattern of covering up the facts and refusing to share information with the American people. Although the American public demands to know the truth about the cost of the war, time and time again the administration has denied them the opportunity to get the full story. Moreover, the Republican leadership in Congress refuses to fulfill its constitutional obligation to act as a check and balance on the executive branch.

With this \$25 billion, our country's taxpayers will be forced to spend over \$200 billion for this war. How much more will we need in the future? No one knows because the administration does not tell us anything. I would like

to say contrary to the administration's talk about how they pass measures like this to provide for the troops, in the last \$87 billion supplemental, the Bush administration never even requested sufficient funds for body armor, Humvees, and dozens of other badly needed supplies that the troops need over there for their survival. These items were only included in the package because it was stuck in in this Congress. Not this administration. The Congress put those supplies in for the troops.

In closing, we need to be included in the strategy. The President is asking for another \$25 billion. What I am requesting from them is some transparency. I am requesting a broader, inclusive strategy. We are three branches of government, not a dictatorship. America needs a plan for Iraq, Mr. President, one that does not involve hundreds more American troops going home in body bags.

In November, the American people will have their say. Do not forget the 2000 election because it does matter who is in charge.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, will the gentlewoman yield?

Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida. I yield to the gentlewoman from Texas.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. I thank the gentlewoman for what she has said. I want to join her in her salute to mothers with a happy Mother's Day, but also let me say that my heart goes out to mothers who have lost children in the war in Iraq and Afghanistan. I thank the gentlewoman for acknowledging them. I acknowledge my mom, Ivalita Jackson, at this time. I thank the gentlewoman so much and happy Mother's Day to her.

Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida. Happy Mother's Day to all of the mothers.

□ 1645

CALLING FOR RESIGNATION OF SECRETARY RUMSFELD

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. COLE). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MEEK) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to address the U.S. House of Representatives this evening and also the American people.

This hour every week the Congressional Black Caucus comes together to speak to the people of the United States about issues that are facing our country, how we can play offense in certain areas to make sure that we stay a vital and sovereign country. But today I must say it is a very difficult day to stand here in this House of Representatives and be able to share with the American people that we have grave issues with the leadership of the Bush administration as it relates to the handling of what has happened to Iraqi prisoners in our custody.

It is appropriate to say there will be investigations that will be conducted. It is appropriate to say that there are future courts martial that will take place and individuals will pay on the front line; but it is very difficult for us to continue, and when I say us, I would mainly want to say the majority party of this House, and for the majority leaders of this House to look in the face of something very wrong, very much mishandled in this country as it relates to the abuse of these prisoners.

I will say this is a very emotional thing for me due to the fact that I have had more than four people in my district die in Iraq. Yes, I commend the troops for their service. Yes, every day on the Committee on Armed Services I make sure that we do what we have to do to make sure that they have the equipment that they need to protect themselves, to make sure that Reservists that signed up to defend their country if need be, that they are able to make ends meet.

We commend our troops every day. We appreciate their patriotism. We have over 120,000 troops in the Middle East, not even counting the individuals that are providing civilian services and contract services throughout the world.

But I must say that Secretary Rumsfeld, with him having the number one job at the Pentagon and being the Secretary, should resign from the Department of Defense. The reason we are calling for his resignation is not because he happens to be a part of the Republican administration or we disagree with Secretary Rumsfeld with his strategy towards the war. It is to save American lives. It is just that simple.

American troops will be terrorized even more now in the Middle East than they have been over recent weeks and days due to the fact of the humiliation of Iraqis and pictures that we will never live down. The Iraqi people will never live it down, the Arab world will never live it down because their pictures are all over the Internet, The Washington Post, CNN, any network Web site. You can definitely pick them up by just picking up the New York Times. The Washington Post today has a picture of one of our soldiers with an Iraqi prisoner on a dog chain.

We all condemn these acts. There is nothing wrong with condemning them, but there is something fundamentally wrong for the President of the United States not to be able to say, I am sorry or someone in my administration, or I was wrong. I will share with you as a Member of Congress and somebody who has been elected for 10 years, there are days I have to admit that I am wrong. There are days that publicly I have to say that I made a mistake. There are certainly days I have to say I am sorry, to not even my constituents when I make a mistake, but also to the American people.

But I will say, this is not the time to shield the administration, the majority

party in this Congress, to shield the President because this is an election year, or to shield Secretary Rumsfeld because he is going to be before the Senate and before the Committee on Armed Services at 3 by putting forth a resolution saying we commend the troops' service in Iraq.

We commend them. We appreciate them. We love them. Members of the minority party here on the Democratic side, we are fighting for up-arming Humvees. We fought to make sure that individuals had Kevlar vests. We are working to make sure that the Reservists called up on a 12-month call, that they can get home in 24 months or even shorter because their families are going through a lot.

But for this administration, and as it relates to the economy and other issues that have taken place in this country, where the President has hunkered down and said they are my friends, we are in this together, and we are going down together, he cannot do that this time. I do not want the President to have to fire Secretary Rumsfeld, but that may have to happen. I am hoping that Secretary Rumsfeld understands on behalf of the country and on behalf of protecting American troops abroad and also on behalf of protecting Americans and shielding us against additional terrorist attacks in this country, that not only should the world see it, but America sees it.

This is a huge mistake. This is a mistake that is going to cost Americans their lives. I hope that he would be leader enough to say, you know, Mr. President, I did the best I could, but I know the circumstances that we are living under now, and I know the pressure being put on the United States and I know this endangers our troops even more. Personally, even though I did not have my hands on these individuals, I resign. Not to say by him resigning this issue goes away, but it at least shows Americans and the world that we have some level of account and balance.

I think it is very, very important for us to understand that, one, we have over 120,000 American troops in uniform overseas; two, we have Americans that live here in the United States that need protection and we need the Arab world to be with us, or some of our allies in the Arab world to be with us in our efforts against terrorism. As a member of the Select Committee on Homeland Security, terrorism is alive and well in the world; and we need as many friends as we can get.

So chastising Mr. Rumsfeld in the Oval Office, as is referenced in the New York Times today, is not enough to let individuals know that we are sorry and that we are working towards corrective action to make sure that does not happen again. Going on television, going around on Arab television and saying this is not how Americans see the war, this is not how we look to fight against terrorism, we denounce the acts of the pictures, that is not saying anything.

Pictures, the President said today in his press conference we are sorry that these pictures have given an image of Americans that we are insensitive. I am sorry about the pictures. Sorry about the pictures and the act are two different things.

We need to make sure, Mr. President, and to the majority party here in this Congress, we need to protect our troops in harm's way. We need to make sure we do that. If we do not remove Secretary Rumsfeld from the position of Secretary of Defense, we are letting the world know that we are not really sorry. We are letting the American people know that we are not really sorry. We are not doing that. I will share with you that we cannot fall short of that.

This is not the first mistake, this is not the first blunder, but this is a serious, serious issue. I do not think the American people, and definitely some Members of this Congress, understand the gravity of this situation. This is a very, very difficult situation dealing with some very, very dangerous individuals that will use these pictures to fuel more terrorism, show them to young Arab children and say, this is what America thinks of you. We have to be able to push back by saying that is not true, we removed the individuals that were in control. It was not just front line individuals that were held responsible; and it is very, very important that we do that.

Before I yield to the chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus, I just want to make sure that the American people understand that this is not a partisan issue. When our troops are taken hostage or a civilian employee is taken hostage, I guarantee Members that we, although preferably not, will see something similar to this if we do not respond to it in a very strong way.

Mr. Speaker, I would also say that the President has spoken out and has done the right thing for less. I will say that this situation is not a time to say that we are not going to allow certain Members of Congress to ask for the Secretary to step down. American lives are at stake.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS), chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his leadership and service. I want to very briefly discuss some points. This afternoon there was a vote on a resolution to condemn those folks, military and otherwise, who did these despicable acts to prisoners in Iraq. As soon as I got back to my office, Mr. Speaker, I was asked by several papers and news outlets why is it that you voted against the resolution, joining some 50 other Members in doing so.

I guess the thing that I would have to say is timing. Here we are, we had a resolution which basically said, and let me quote it, it says, "Resolved, That the House of Representatives (1) de-

plores and condemns abuse of persons in the United States custody in Iraq regardless of the circumstances." And then it goes on to talk about a handful. It says "declares the alleged crimes of a handful of individuals should not detract from the commendable sacrifices of over 300,000 members of the United States Armed Forces who have served," and it goes on.

I think in and of itself the word "handful" is very, very upsetting to me. We do not have a clue at this juncture as to how extensive this abuse is. We have a situation where we know that there are officers, military officers, who are in the various pictures. We know about the report that was written by the military, a very extensive report that Secretary Rumsfeld just recently said he had not read; but the fact is that this is a situation that certainly calls for us not early on limiting this to a "handful" of military personnel, or a "handful" of individuals, but it is one where we should be simply asking the question what happened here in Iraq at the Abu Ghraib prison. Do we have similar circumstances in Afghanistan? Do we have similar circumstances at Guantanamo Bay?

I think when all is said and done, the resolution that we passed today that I voted against will be inaccurate in declaring that there were only a handful of individuals.

□ 1700

One of the other concerns that I had about this document was that it talked about the military investigating this matter as if the Congress consisted of a bunch of potted plants sitting in a window doing nothing. This is a Congress that voted with regard to the Iraq War. This is a Congress that has stood up over and over again talking about its love for our military. This is a great Congress. But the fact is that when we stand to the side and say to our military to go and investigate themselves and then send us a report from time to time, I think it sends a horrible message not only to the military, and I will explain that in a moment, but it also sends a horrible message to the Muslim community and to the world.

Why do I say that? It would appear that there has already been substantial finger pointing within the military itself. The people who are caught in the picture, some of them have said that they have got orders from higher-ups. The person who was in charge of all the prisoners there said that she did not even have much of any authority on this particular cell block.

So then there is finger pointing in the military in and of itself. There are also allegations that civilians were involved in all of this. So the question becomes not whether the military can effectively do a good job of investigating itself, the question becomes is how will the investigation appear to the world when we have already gotten finger pointing within the military itself?

Just the other night, I was at the Howard County Muslim Council at a dinner in my district. And as I listened and I talked to members of the Muslim community, some of them with tears in their eyes talked about how offensive these pictures were and how offensive the allegations were to the Muslim people, not only because of who they are, not only because of their culture, but also because of their religion. And one of the things that they talked about was whether they could now trust the United States to do a fair job in providing a transparent and thorough investigation of these types of acts. And one of the things that they asked me to do is just ask the question why not a tribunal? Why not a worldwide investigative agency look into this so that when the message is sent back to the world, the world will be satisfied that we have done all that we could to investigate every single human being, be they military or civilian, that had anything to do with these kinds of despicable acts no matter where they may fall in the line of command?

So what they want is an investigation which is thorough and one that is transparent and one where they can feel comfortable that all of those involved will be brought to justice and that they will be punished accordingly. So that is so very important that we do that.

The other thing that concerned me here was that we talk about investigating a handful of people and we talk about wanting to make sure that these investigations take place, but as I said a little bit earlier, what is the Congress's role in all of this? We have a duty. We have a duty to look into these matters. We have a duty as a Senate and the House to look carefully at every aspect of all of this because one of the things that we do that no other organization on this level does in this country is we set policy not only for this country, but quite often policy that affects the world.

And if we are not gathering information ourselves to make sure that we have a complete understanding of how these kinds of acts could take place and whether there were people asleep at the switch or whether there were folks who simply did not care or whether there were people who just failed to read reports, and then to claim that they had no knowledge of the information, or whether those who had an obligation to let the Congress know and the President know of these atrocities and did not, we need to have that information so that we can set policy to make sure that it never happens again and so that we can send a powerful message, a very powerful message, to the world that we have done all that we could do.

The other audience that we send a message to is our military. Early on in this process, we would read reports where the President and others and military brass said we will reprimand

certain folks that may have been in the chain of command. And as soon as I heard that, I said it is too early. It is too early to be reprimanding anybody because I do not see how they can reprimand when they do not know the full extent of the alleged offense.

It does not make sense. So when our friends in the Muslim community and when our friends in the world hear that, the question is, is this a slap on the wrist to reprimand someone for being a part of a process that caused other people to go through indignities and to be offended to such a great extent? I just think that that sends a wrong message to the military when they hear that there is going to be a slap on the wrist early on before a true investigation by the military or by the Congress or by an international tribunal-type organization is done.

It sends a terrible message. And the message that it sends is that, although millions of people have been offended by these acts, that they do not measure up to the kind of investigation and the type of justice that they should be subjected to. And that is a major problem because we do not want anyone believing, whether they are in the military or whether they are civilian, that this kind of conduct is all right.

Finally, the other audience is the American people and our soldiers. The American people have stood up over and over again, as has the Congressional Black Caucus, for our troops. They believe in our troops, for they are our sons, our daughters, our mothers, our fathers, our aunts, our friends. They are the ones who live in our neighborhoods. They are the ones who coach the Little League baseball team. They are the police officers when they, as National Guard, would go away on weekends and now they are serving for more than a year, but they are our neighbors; so we all care about them.

We also are in prayer for them for we realize that they are in harm's way. It pains us tremendously when we go to Walter Reed Hospital and see our young men and young women with amputations of the leg and of the arms. It pains us tremendously when we see pictures on the front page of The Washington Post and The New York Times of caskets, rows and rows of caskets, of our young people coming back in these steel caskets. It hurts and it pains us. But the fact still remains that, as the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MEEK) said a few moments ago, if we send a message to the world, and that message is that they get a slap on the wrist when the world has seen these kinds of pictures, the question becomes what happens when our military folk or when our civilians are captured? Does it become a tit for tat: If you did it to me, I will do it to you?

One of the things we in the Congressional Black Caucus has said over and over again is that we stand up for the moral authority of this country. Not the military authority, the moral authority. And the question certainly be-

comes have we violated that moral authority when we do not address these problems?

Finally, let me say this: that no one will stand behind one of these podiums and even begin to suggest that we have a lot of our military that could fall in the category of the folks who did these kinds of despicable acts. No, we will never do that because we do not believe it. I believe in my heart that 99.9 percent of our military would never engage in this kind of activity and would find it despicable just as the Congressional Black Caucus finds it despicable. But the fact is that we must get to the bottom of this so we also protect their reputations, so that we pull out those who would do these kinds of things so that the others can say, okay, fine, now we have now rid ourselves of those who have no respect for human dignity, who have no respect for the beliefs of others, who have no respect for the culture of others, who have no respect for human life.

And I end on that point in that there have been even allegations that there have been deaths, and again, when we give a slap on the wrist, we never get to the question of did people die at the hands of our military? Are those deaths being hidden? And that is why I could not, for the life of me, understand why we would restrict this to a handful of folks, a handful, and I think that does a disservice to our military, I think it does a disservice to our country, I think it does a disservice to the world.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I am so glad that the chairman shared with the American people and Members of the House on how dangerous this situation is for our troops in Iraq. And, Mr. Speaker, I am going to enter for the RECORD a statement of why I voted against a resolution today and I will hand it to the Clerk.

But I think it is important for discussion points to the fact that the Pentagon knew to contact 60 Minutes II 2 weeks ago, when they wanted to run the story of these pictures and what has happened to these prisoners and they were guaranteed once, if other news organizations were moving forth, if they were to just stand by and allow the Pentagon to take another look at this that they would be given an exclusive interview.

Those kinds of things, when a news organization, 60 Minutes II, or 60 Minutes period, when they call, I mean it is kind of difficult for me to even just comprehend or understand that the Secretary of Defense had no knowledge of what was going on in this prison. That is one fact.

The second fact is the issue on January 13 of 2004.

□ 1715

A soldier gave a disk of pictures to a brass commander to let him know what was going on. The Ryder report never made it up the chain of command, that is what someone has said. But I will

tell you, we are going to continue to have problems, and even more problems, if we slow-walk this thing, if we politic this thing in a way of trying to shield the administration and the President. I can care less about shielding someone. I do care about protecting American lives. I am glad the gentleman addressed that.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will yield further, I just think the gentleman is absolutely right. We have to stand up for what is right. I heard the gentleman say a little bit earlier that you do have to leave the politics at the door.

When I saw the picture, and the gentleman showed it today a little bit earlier, I know he showed it at a news conference and it has been on the front page of so many papers, where a lady soldier has what appears to be something similar to a dog chain, dog leash, around the neck of a naked Iraqi prisoner, and he is on the ground naked, and it looks as if she is trying to pull him around.

I tell you, when I think about any person, sometimes I think that we need to pause and try to put ourselves in the position of people who may be suffering through something, and I think if we imagine our son or imagine our father or imagine our daughter being dragged around on a leash like a dog, I think it would cause you to say, wait a minute, hold it.

I want to get to the very bottom of this. There have been diaries, at least one diary I know of, that has been featured in the Baltimore Sun, in my newspaper, as to how a gentleman in the military described and talked about how deep this thing went. In other words, it was not a little handful of people. They are talking about commands coming from people beyond the prison cells. In other words, loosen them up, they were told, or put them in a position so they will confess to certain things and provide certain information.

I just think that we in the United States, as I said before, we have done well because of moral authority. Just the words "moral authority" are so powerful.

I would hate to think that countries all around the world would begin to say, Wait a minute, hold it. You are telling us about moral authority? You are telling us about how to treat inmates? You are telling us about how to address issues in a humane fashion? And then they just would throw out the pictures and say, well, it is a problem. We are not going to do that. If that is the way you do it, you cannot suggest to us what to do when we see what you are doing.

That is what we have to be concerned about. That is part of the reason why it is not just a political issue. It is not a political issue. It is a humane issue, how human beings should be treated.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, what is about to happen is due to the lack of top-end re-

sponse from this administration, that you are going to have the true American spirit break through many of the troops that know different. They are going to blow the whistle on them. Not blowing the whistle on them because they are an Independent or member of the Green Party or the Democratic Party or the Republican Party that disagrees with the President. They are going to blow the whistle to save lives of Americans, because they know the tension and how Americans are treated abroad now.

You have people that are living overseas that they would not wear a flag, or you have some ambassadors that are not flying the American flags on their cars due to the fact of terrorism, of them being a target.

If we are going to be the leader of the free world, then we have to be the leader. We have to be able to lead in a way that lives up to that title.

I will tell you, today earlier when we had a press conference about Secretary Rumsfeld, if you have a basketball team and they are not doing well, sometimes you have to remove the coach.

I will tell you right now, I am not one to stand up on a daily basis or I do not remember a time in my career that I have asked for someone to step down. I really have not. It is not something in my nature. I feel it is something that someone will say, well, I am not performing the job in a way that I should perform it on behalf of especially the lives of troops that are overseas, that are fighting right now as we are here on this floor, fighting on behalf of Americans and fighting on behalf of making sure that we are able to make advances in the Arab world, fighting on behalf of creating and trying to maintain democracies, that their lives are at stake and we want them to come home. We want them to come home. We want to make sure they get home to their families.

I just want to share a few things. 135,000 soldiers are in Iraq right now; 767 and counting have died since the war. Nearly 40 troops have died since these pictures were released last week.

I will tell you that I am just getting goose bumps by just mentioning those numbers. But I also feel for those individuals from the Middle East that are Americans, that are fighting in the armed services, that are paying taxes every day, that hate and despise and pray against future terrorism, that they are wearing the flag on their shoulder, they are carrying that M-5 machine gun. They are taking the bullets; they are losing limbs. And to have people of the same hue, people that live in the Middle East, being treated like these pictures depict that they are treated, or depicting how they have been treated, I will tell you, from what I have seen thus far and what has been reported thus far, we have not even broken the ice on this issue.

I am very, very concerned about the future of our security here in the

United States. I am very, very concerned about the increased attempts and achievements of terrorism, of terrorists achieving their goal of killing American troops. I am concerned about the diplomatic community, about the CIA agents that we have working within terrorist organizations to try to weed out terrorism before it happens. I am concerned about those individuals that are contract company workers that are civilians that are there trying to fight with us in this war on terrorism. I am concerned about their safety.

I do not have a lot of patience for the President to call the Secretary of Defense into the office and chastise him. That is what you do to a teenager when they stay out too late. This is the security of the world. This is the security of the United States. This is our future, how our children will live, how our grandchildren will live.

No one is going to stop a troop and say, wait a minute, are you a Republican, before I kill and torture you. They are not going to do that. They are not going to ask you if you are black or Hispanic. Well, who do you support? They are going to kill you and torture you because you are an American, because we are not responding in the way we should respond.

I implore the administration and Mr. Rumsfeld, please do not try to low-ball and low-roll this thing, to say we are going after some low-level individuals, and it does not rise to the level of the Pentagon. The Pentagon did know. I am pretty sure they did know. We will have very good evidence in the very near future. But why do we have to lose additional American lives, and then make sure that the world knows that we mean business about this?

Passing resolutions to clear our conscience so we can go home and spend the weekend and say we passed a resolution condemning and commending our troops is not enough.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will yield further, I do believe, to pick up on the very last statement that the gentleman made, so often it is easy to pass a resolution clearing one's conscience; but I do believe also that, as a reporter asked me, she said, why did you want to vote against this resolution? Now you got to spend all this time with me explaining it.

What I said to her was that perhaps my explaining it and explaining why I wanted an extensive congressional investigation, why I wanted an investigation to go beyond the military investigating itself, why I wanted to send a strong message to the world, the Muslim world, American world, all over the world, about how serious we consider this matter to be, perhaps that might very well save some lives, not just today, but for many years to come.

Just yesterday, Secretary Powell came before the Congressional Black Caucus for an hour and 15 minutes, and I shall never forget the expression on

his face when he said he had read the report, and when he said that he found the acts to be terrible and horrific. But he also said something else. He said, "I promise you we will get to the bottom of this." That was yesterday, and here we are today saying a handful of individuals committed some acts that were so despicable.

The thing that is so amazing is that I do not even see how we could even have words like that in the resolution, because it does in fact say to all those people that may have been involved, say there are similar acts in Afghanistan, Guantanamo Bay, other cell blocks in Iraq, well, it looks like we got off pretty easy this time. It looks like we will be okay. We got a little reprimand going on, and we will be fine.

So I want to thank the gentleman for his vigilance, for standing up for people that do not even know, perhaps, that we are standing up for them. They may not even know that those statements that we make today may very well save lives tomorrow.

Someone asked the question, they said to the Congressional Black Caucus, why is it that you stand up over and over and over again? Why is it that you stand up and so often you do not win? You may not win this battle.

But our response has been one of clarity, and it simply says that we may not win, but we will set the trend. We may not win, but we will stand up for what we believe in and know that somebody is listening. We may not always win, but we do know that by being silent it is far worse, because it appears that we go along with things as they are, and silence basically is giving consent.

So I want to thank the gentleman for yielding and want to thank him for his leadership.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman. I am glad he is here, and we appreciate his service.

We are going to continue to stand up on behalf of the American people, need it be defense, need it be education, need it be this issue dealing with Iraq. I thank the gentleman for being here tonight, and I thank the Black Caucus for continuing to do what they are doing.

Mr. Speaker, as I close, I just want to say that we must have the annals of this House and the annals of history here in the United States to reflect that pictures that continue to come out about the abuses of what took place in Iraq or what is taking place in other parts of the world, that we condemn them, and we salute our troops; but at the same time our response is imperative and needed to be able to continue this effort against terrorism and have friends in the world that are willing to be with us.

APPOINTMENT OF CONFEREES ON H.R. 2443, COAST GUARD AND MARITIME TRANSPORTATION ACT OF 2003

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. COLE). Without objection, the Chair appoints the following conferees:

From the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, for consideration of the House bill and the Senate amendments, and modifications committed to conference:

Messrs. YOUNG of Alaska, COBLE, DUNCAN, HOEKSTRA, LOBIONDO, SIMMONS, MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida, OBERSTAR, FILNER, BISHOP of New York and LAMPSON.

For consideration of the House bill and Senate amendments, and modifications committed to conference:

Mr. COX and Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi.

There was no objection.

□ 1730

TUTORIAL ON FEDERAL GOVERNMENT FINANCES

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

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, this afternoon I am going to give sort of a tutorial on Federal Government finances. This is the 195th birthday of Abraham Lincoln and, in his famous Gettysburg Address, he sort of indicated, can a Nation of the people and by the people and for the people long endure? Of course, the challenge of the Civil War was a huge challenge. But I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that a challenge even greater than the wars might be the willingness of the United States, the House and the Senate and the President, to deal with real financial problems and, of course, the financial challenge before us is overspending and overpromising.

This is a pie chart of how we spend Federal Government money. We see at the bottom piece of the pie is the 21 percent that is spent on Social Security right now. Then, as we go around, Medicare is 12 percent. However, it is interesting that Medicare is expected to be a greater piece of the Federal pie, if you will, a greater percentage of total Federal spending than Social Security within the next 25 years, because it is growing very quickly. Medicaid is 6 percent, also growing, and that is growing with the increasing number of seniors that are spending all of their savings, as they have spent \$40,000 or \$50,000 or \$60,000 per year on nursing home care, and then after all of their finances have been depleted, then they go on Medicaid and the Federal Government starts paying nursing home care.

Other entitlement programs, 10 percent. Entitlement means if you reach a certain age, if you reach a certain level

of poverty, you are eligible for additional help. If you are a business or an industry or a worker, you are entitled if you work, but do not make very much money, you are entitled to an income tax credit. If you are a farmer and the prices of the products you sell are low, you are entitled to a supplement to build it up, that income, a little more for those farmers to keep the farmers in business. This Congress and the United States has been very generous with other people's money. In fact, so generous that we are now facing the dilemma of a huge debt and huge promises that I call entitlements, unfunded liabilities.

The domestic discretionary spending that goes in the appropriation bills, along with defense, is 16 percent. Defense is 20 percent. With the Iraq and Afghanistan war, it has gone from about 19 percent up to 20 percent, and then interest, interest on this increasing debt.

The interest cost for this country is now about \$300 billion a year to pay interest at a rate that is the lowest, almost the lowest in history, but a very low interest rate. Alan Greenspan, the chairman of the Federal Reserve, has now suggested that there is no question that eventually interest rates are going to go back up again, and that, compounded by the fact that we are increasing the amount of debt that we have to pay interest on, it is anticipated that within the next 20 years, interest on the debt will be one of the largest pieces of pie.

What does that mean to future generations? What does that mean for our kids and our grandkids. I am a farmer from Michigan, and the tradition on the farm has been you pay off some of that farm mortgage to try to give your kids a little better chance at a better life than you might have had. But in this Congress, what we are doing is going the other way. We are building up a debt, we are building up obligations because, somehow, we think the problems we have today are so great that it justifies us borrowing money from our kids and our grandkids and making them pay for the overspending that we are pushing on them today in this Congress.

Right now, we are in the midst of a budget decision in conference committee with the House and the Senate, trying to figure out a budget of what we are planning on spending for the 05 budget, that means the 05 fiscal year starting September 30, October 1 of 04, and going for 12 months until October 1 of 05, that is called the 05 fiscal year budget, and that is what we are working on, that is what we are arguing about.

This year, the good news is it is probably the most lean budget that we have had since 1996. But still, it is growing at between two and three times the rate of inflation in terms of the increased expansion of that spending, the increased size of government, taking money away from the people that have