

Development Fund, their executive directors, several pre-eminent scientists from major organizations, public and private sector universities, talking about the illnesses that plague people today as a result of this huge catastrophe. And then, finally, those who have served as ambassadors to our country and ambassadors from the affected nations will address what we can do in the way of additional international response to meet today's challenges still arising from the Chernobyl catastrophe.

I have never seen birth defects as I have witnessed among the children affected by this continuing tragedy in Chernobyl. The thyroid cancers, the conditions to the heart, the distortions of the human form related to radiation resulting from Chernobyl are horrendous.

The southern part of Belarus is largely depopulated, though some people who are refugees from Afghanistan are moving into the area, incredibly, and eating and planting seeds in the ground and eating contaminated food and infecting themselves even until this day. There is so much for the American people to understand. Though it was 20 years ago, Chernobyl lives as it will for thousands of years to come.

USING HISTORY AS A GUIDE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DENT). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, one of the things that bothers me is how some of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle come down here and paint a picture using history as a guide that is totally inconsistent with what I, as a Member of Congress for 24 years, have seen and believe.

The President of the United States and the Congress's number one responsibility is to protect this country from enemies, both domestic and foreign. After the attack on 9/11, the President of the United States went after the bad guys, the terrorists. And Saddam Hussein, we were told, was building weapons of mass destruction. In the early 1980s the Israelis attacked a nuclear production site in Iraq because he was trying to build a nuclear weapon. In the Iran/Iraq war he used chemical weapons to kill Iranians during that war. He killed thousands and thousands of innocent women and children, Kurds, using chemical weapons. And in just the last couple of days, some of our expert military personnel in Iraq have found 800 canisters, 800 canisters of chemical weapons, the type that were used to kill Kurds and kill people in the Iran/Iraq war. That is a weapon of mass destruction. We just found it. And so people that say that there are no weapons of mass destruction, or were none, we are starting to find those. And we believe that many of those weapons were carted out of the country before we invaded.

And when I hear my colleagues say there was no connection between al Qaeda and Saddam Hussein, and we had no reason to go in there, the fact of the matter is we know that Uday, Saddam Hussein's son, had leaders of the al Qaeda movement in Baghdad in the hospital and at other get-togethers many, many times. There was a loose-knit association between the Taliban, al Qaeda, Saddam Hussein and others who want to do the Free World ill. That is a fact. And how we see people trying to distort history to say, oh, my gosh, America's made a terrible mistake by going into Iraq really bothers me. The President is doing his dead level best to defeat the terrorists and protect this Nation and the world. There have been attacks in Spain, in France, in England, the United States and other places, in Bali, the terrorists in Egypt just recently. And we cannot back down to the terrorists. We cannot appease them. The President is doing the right things.

Now, regarding Iraq, we are turning the war over to the Iraqis. Eleven million people went to the polls and voted for freedom, democracy and a government; and that government will be formed. It is being formed as we speak.

But we are reducing our troop forces. I understand we have gone from 161,000 just recently to a troop reduction of 30,000 down to 131,000. So we are reducing our forces, and we are turning it over to the Iraqis as they are able to take care of the problems themselves.

The terrorists are going to continue to try to tear up jack over there. They are going to try to drive everybody out and destroy democracy. But it is in our interest and the Free World's to stay the course. And if we don't, we will rue the day that we didn't.

And I want to end up one more time by saying to my colleagues who were talking about Iran early today, the gentleman from Washington, Iran is a terrorist state. We cannot allow them to develop a nuclear capability. And if we do that, we will be dead sorry we did.

IRAQ DEMOCRACY PROMOTION

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

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, the notion that the Iraq war is all about building freedom and democracy across the broader Middle East has been a staple of White House talking points for nearly as long as we have had our troops in harm's way.

But a few weeks ago, courtesy of a front-page story in The Washington Post, we learned something interesting about the President's actual nuts and bolts commitment to democracy. He doesn't have one. That April 5 story by Peter Baker reveals that when it comes to promoting democracy, the bottom line reality doesn't match all the fancy rhetoric.

The administration, in fact, is dramatically reducing funding for programs and organizations that do the nitty-gritty work of helping nations train their people to build and sustain a democratic infrastructure, political parties, unions, a free press and other institutions.

The National Democratic Institute of International Affairs and the International Republican Institute will, according to The Post, be running out of USAID grant dollars in a matter of days. Only a special earmark is keeping them open for business.

The U.S. Institute of Peace has seen funding for its democracy programs in Iraq slashed by nearly two-thirds. The National Endowment for Democracy recently received its last \$3 million to spend in Iraq. As one vice-president at the U.S. Institute of Peace pointed out to The Post, the combined cost of all the programs dedicated to encouraging Iraqi democracy amounts to less than what we spend on the military occupation in Iraq in a single day.

Of course, in addition to being expensive in treasure, this military campaign has carried a devastating human cost, namely, 2,390 American men and women killed, all in the name of democracy that is in danger of never taking hold. It is not surprising, I guess, that this administration would short-change democracy promotion. After all, these are the folks who thought there was no hard work involved in creating a free society. They thought all you had to do was drop a few bombs, kick out a brutal dictator, and democracy would miraculously and spontaneously spring from the oil wells or something. That is one of the reasons their post-war planning was so tragically inadequate.

But this war was never really about building democracy in any real sense. If that had been the justification presented to the American people in 2002, this body and our colleagues on the other side of the Capitol would never have authorized the President to use military force.

No, it was only after the whole weapons of mass destruction thing turned out to be a fraud that the administration started casting about for another rationale. And they came up with this fanciful notion that the war would give rise to democracy, not just in Iraq, but among its neighbors and across the region.

Mr. Speaker, we can encourage democratic elements in Iraq without a military campaign that is killing Americans, killing Iraqis, and fomenting a civil war. It is time to bring our troops home and start investing in true democracy building efforts.

I have offered a new approach to national security called SMART. This stands for Sensible Multilateral American Response to Terrorism. And its core is the notion of investing in nations' democratic potential without resorting to military force.