

inhabitants to protect it to the best of our ability. We have serious environmental problems, but unfortunately, the Bush administration is making matters worse, not better.

Mr. ACEVEDO-VILA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to show strong support for Earth Day. It is a great opportunity to encourage citizens to be conscious and take action regarding their responsibility towards environmental protection.

The first Earth Day was held in 1970 as an annual event to honor our planet and our responsibility for it. Earth Day's purpose is to educate our citizens of the importance of conserving the environment and to encourage them to restore their local community, improving quality of life and human health for all.

The natural resources of Earth are the essential components of our environment and the development of life; therefore our dedication to its conservation is very important for sustaining future generations. Currently, Puerto Rico, as well as the rest of the world, is facing many environmental challenges due primarily to human development and environmental pollution. Essential resources such as water, air, soil and biodiversity are threatened by human activity. The existing population of Puerto Rico is almost 4 million people and this overpopulation results in limited available resources to support its residents. Water scarcity and contamination, air pollution and climate change, the destruction of natural habitats for construction, erosion causing water shortage, and the endangerment of many species are among the main problems that our environment is facing.

Pure water is essential for all life on Earth and provides habitat to many organisms. The human race is putting in serious danger this vital resource by the energy production, interruption of water flows, deforestation, and the wasting of water by those who overuse this resource. Air is an essential resource for life as well. Its pollution comes primarily from coal burning power plants, automobiles, and industrial operations. These activities affect not only human health but also the atmosphere that protects us from the sun's radiation. Human activities also destroy biodiversity through contamination, deforestation and destruction of natural habitats for construction and other developments. As humans, we are totally dependent on nature for survival and, instead of conserving, our actions negatively impact nature.

In Puerto Rico, we are faced with immediate challenges in areas like Vieques, Culebra and Roosevelt Roads, where contamination threatens the health and well being of thousands of residents, water quality, and sustainable economic development. Residents of these regions deserve full and prompt clean up and decontamination of their lands. Another challenge for the Island is the protection and recovery of endangered species population. Endemic species' population such as the golden coquí (*Eleutherodactylus jasperi*), the Puerto Rican boa (*Epicrates inornatus*), and the Puerto Rican parrot (*Amazona vittata*) that lives primarily at the Caribbean National Forest, El Yunque, have been significantly reduced due to encroachments of their habitats. The West Indian manatee (*Trichechus manatus*) and the green sea turtle (*Chelonia mydas*) are other examples of endangered species as a result of marine contamination on coastal areas due to human development.

In order to protect some of the natural environment of Puerto Rico, I have introduced legislation designating approximately 10,000 acres of land in the Caribbean National Forest in Puerto Rico as the El Toro Wilderness and as a component of the National Wilderness Preservation System. Through this legislation, the habitats within the El Toro Wilderness will be protected, as well as the forest's magnificent biodiversity.

It is necessary to educate our citizens about the importance of environmental conservation and conservation practices to maintain the natural resources of Puerto Rico and the rest of the world for future generations. This can be better accomplished by providing information through schools, communication media, conservation programs, and volunteer or special activities. Earth Day is a perfect moment to put in practice these goals by instructing and encouraging citizens to contribute to environmental conservation. As responsible and dedicated citizens to the conservation of our environment, Earth Day should become an every day priority to ensure and increase the quality of life and human health. Earth Day is not only one day; it is every day because every day is a good time to consider our environment, and take action to protect the nature that surrounds us.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the subject of this Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BURNS). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Oregon?

There was no objection.

THE REAL LESSONS OF 9/11

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

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, we are constantly admonished to remember the lessons of 9/11. Of course, the real issue is not remembering, but rather knowing what the pertinent lesson of that sad day is. The 9/11 Commission will soon release its report after months of fanfare by those whose reputations are at stake.

The many hours and dollars spent on the investigation may well reveal little we do not already know, while ignoring the most important lessons that should be learned from this egregious attack on our homeland. Common sense already tells us the tens of billions of dollars spent by the agencies of government whose job it is to promote security and intelligence for our country failed.

A full-fledged investigation into the bureaucracy may help us in the future, but one should never pretend that a government bureaucracy can be made efficient. It is the very nature of a bureaucracy to be inefficient. Spending an inordinate amount of time finger-

pointing will distract from the real lessons of 9/11. Which agency, which department, or which individual receives the most blame should not be the main purpose of the investigation.

Despite the seriousness of our failure to prevent the attacks, it is disturbing to see how politicized the whole investigation has become. Which political party receives the greatest blame is a high-stakes election-year event and distracts from the real lessons ignored by both sides.

Everyone I have heard speak on the issue has assumed that the 9/11 attacks resulted from the lack of government action. No one in Washington has raised the question of whether our shortcomings brought to light by 9/11 could have been a result of too much government. Possibly in the final report we will hear this discussed, but, to date, no one has questioned the assumption that we need more government and, of course, though elusive, a more efficient one. The failure to understand the nature of the enemy who attacked us on 9/11, along with a predetermined decision to initiate a preemptive war against Iraq, prompted our government to deceive the people into believing that Saddam Hussein had something to do with the attacks on New York and Washington.

The majority of the American people still contend that the war against Iraq was justified because of the events of 9/11. These misinterpretations have led to many U.S. military deaths and casualties prompting a growing number of Americans to question the wisdom of our presence and purpose in a strange, foreign land 6,000 miles from our shores.

The neocon defenders of our policy in Iraq speak of the benefits that we have brought to the Iraqi people: removal of a violent dictator, liberation, democracy and prosperity. That the world is a safer place is yet to be proven. So far it is just not so.

If all of this were true, the resistance against our occupation would not be growing. We ought to admit we have not been welcomed as liberators as was promised by the proponents of the war. Though we hear much about the so-called benefits we have delivered to the Iraqi people and the Middle East, we hear little talk of the cost to the American people: lives lost, soldiers maimed for life, uncounted thousands sent home with diseased bodies and minds, billions of dollars consumed, and a major cloud placed over U.S. markets and the economy.

Sharp political divisions reminiscent of the 1960s are rising at home. Failing to understand why 9/11 happened and looking for a bureaucratic screw-up to explain the whole thing, while using the event to start an unprovoked war unrelated to 9/11, have dramatically compounded the problems all Americans and the world face.

Evidence has shown that there was no connection between Saddam Hussein and the guerrilla attacks on New

York and Washington. And since no weapons of mass destruction were found, other reasons are given for invading Iraq.

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The real reasons are either denied or ignored: oil, neoconservative, empire building and our support for Israel over the Palestinians.

The proponents of the Iraqi war do not hesitate to impugn the character of those who point out the shortcomings of current policy, calling them unpatriotic and appeasers of terrorism. It is said that they are responsible for the growing armed resistance and for the killing of American soldiers. It is conveniently ignored that if the opponents of the current policy had had their way, not one single American would have died, nor would tens of thousands of Iraqi civilians have suffered the same fate. Al Qaeda and many new militant groups would not be enjoying a rapid growth in their ranks.

By denying that our sanctions and bombs brought havoc to Iraq, it is easy to play the patriot card and find a scapegoat to blame. We are never at fault and never responsible for bad outcomes of what many believe is, albeit well-intentioned, interference in the affairs of others 6,000 miles from our shores. Pursuing our policy has boiled down to testing our resolve.

It is said by many who did not even want to go to war that now we have no choice but to stay the course. They argue that it is a noble gesture to be courageous and continue no matter how difficult the task. But that should not be the issue. It is not a question of resolve, but rather a question of wise policy. If the policy is flawed, and the world and our people are less safe for it, unshakable resolve is the opposite of what we need.

Staying the course only makes sense when the difficult tasks are designed to protect our country and to thwart those who pose a direct threat to us. Wilsonian idealism of self-sacrifice to make the world safe for democracy should never be an excuse to wage preemptive war, especially since it almost never produces the desired results. There are always too many unintended consequences.

In our effort to change the political structure of Iraq, we continue alliances with dictators and even develop new ones with countries that are anything but democracies. We have a close alliance with Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and many other Arab dictatorships, and a new one with Qadhafi of Libya. This should raise questions about the credibility of our commitment to promoting democracy in Iraq, which even our own governments would not tolerate. Show me one neocon that would accept a national election that would put the radical Shiites in charge. As Secretary Rumsfeld said, it is not going to happen.

These same people are condemning the recent democratic decisions made

in Spain. We should remember that since World War II, in 35 U.S. attempts to promote democracy around the world, none have succeeded. Proponents of war too often fail to contemplate the unintended consequences of an aggressive foreign policy. So far, the antiwar forces have not been surprised with the chaos that has now become Iraq's, or Iran's participation, but even they cannot know all the long-term shortcomings of such a policy.

In an eagerness to march on Baghdad, the neocons gloated, and I heard them, of the shock and awe that was about to hit the Iraqi people. It turns out that the real shock and awe is that we are further from peace in Iraq than we were a year ago. And Secretary Rumsfeld admits his own surprise.

The only policy now offered is to escalate the war and avenge the death of American soldiers. If they kill 10 of our troops, we will kill 100 of theirs. Up until now, announcing the number of Iraqi deaths has purposely been avoided, but the new policy proclaims our success by announcing the number of Iraqis killed. But the more we kill, the greater becomes the incitement of the radical Islamic militant.

The harder we try to impose our will on them, the greater the resistance becomes. Amazingly, our occupation has done what was at one time thought to be impossible. It has united the Sunnis and the Shiites against our presence. Although this is probably temporary, it is real and has deepened our problems in securing Iraq. The results are escalations of the conflict and the requirements for more troops. This acceleration of the killing is called pacification, a bit of 1984 newspeak.

The removing of Saddam Hussein has created a stark irony. The willingness and intensity of the Iraqi people to fight for their homeland has increased manifold. Under Saddam Hussein essentially no resistance occurred. Instead of jubilation and parades for the liberators, we face much greater and unified effort to throw out all foreigners than when Saddam Hussein was in charge.

It is not whether the Commission investigation of the causes of 9/11 is unwarranted, if the Commissioners are looking in the wrong places for answers, it is whether much will be achieved.

I am sure we will hear that the bureaucracy failed, whether it was the FBI, the CIA, the National Security Council or all of them, for failure to communicate with each other. This will not answer the question of why we were attacked and why our defenses were so poor. Even though \$40 billion are spent on intelligence gathering each year, the process failed us.

Now, it is likely to be said that what we need is more money and more efficiency. Yet that approach fails to recognize that depending on government agencies to be efficient is a risky assumption. We should support any effort

to make the intelligence agencies more effective, but one thing is certain: More money will not help. Of the \$40 billion spent annually for intelligence, too much is spent on nation building and activities unrelated to justified surveillance.

There are two other lessons that must be learned if we hope to benefit by studying and trying to explain the disaster that hit us on 9/11. If we fail to learn them, we cannot be made safer, and the opposite is more likely to occur. The first point is to understand who assumes the most responsibility for securing our homes and businesses in a free society. It is not the police. There are too few of them, and it is not their job to stand guard outside our houses and places of business. More crime occurs in the inner city where there are not only more police, but more restrictions on property owners' rights to bear and use weapons if invaded by hoodlums. In safer rural areas where every home has a gun and someone in it who is willing to use it, there is no false dependency on the police protecting them, but full reliance on the owner's responsibility to deal with any property violators. This understanding works rather well, at least better than in the inner cities where the understanding is totally different.

How does this apply to the 9/11 tragedies? The airline owners accept the rules of the inner city rather than that of rural America. They all assume that the government was in charge of airline security, and, unfortunately, by law it was. Not only were the airlines complacent about security, but the FAA dictated all the rules relating to potential hijacking. Chemical plants or armored truck companies that carry money make the opposite assumptions, and private guns do a reasonably good job in providing security. Evidently we think more of our money and chemical plants than we do our passengers on airplanes.

The complacency of the airlines is one thing, but the intrusiveness of the FAA is another. Two specific regulations proved to be disastrous for dealing with the thugs who, without even a single gun, took over four airlines and created the havoc of 9/11. Both the prohibition against guns being allowed in the cockpit and precise instructions that crews not resist hijackers contributed immensely to the horrors of 9/11. Instead of immediately legalizing a natural right of personal self-defense guaranteed by an explicit second amendment freedom, we still do not have armed pilots in the sky.

Instead of more responsibility given to the airline companies, the government has taken over the entire process. This has been encouraged by the airline owners, who seek subsidies and insurance protection. Of course, the nonsense of never resisting has been forever vetoed by passengers.

Unfortunately, the biggest failure of our government will be ignored. I am sure the Commission will not relate

our foreign policy of interventionism, practiced by both major parties for over 100 years, to being seriously flawed and the most important reason 9/11 occurred. Instead, the claims will stand that the motivation behind 9/11 was our freedoms, prosperity and our way of life. If this error persists, all the tinkering and money to improve the intelligence gathering will bear little fruit.

Over the years the entire psychology of national defense has been completely twisted. Very little attention has been directed towards protecting our national borders and providing homeland security.

Our attention all too often was and still is directed outward toward distant lands. Now a significant number of our troops are engaged in Afghanistan and Iraq. We have kept troops in Korea for over 50 years, and thousands of troops remain in Europe and in over 130 other countries. This twisted philosophy of ignoring our national borders while pursuing an empire created a situation where Seoul, Korea, was better protected than Washington, D.C., on 9/11. These priorities must change, but I am certain the 9/11 Commission will not address this issue. This misdirected policy has prompted the current protracted war in Iraq, which has gone on now for 13 years with no end in sight.

The al Qaeda attacks should not be used to justify more intervention. Instead they should be seen as a guerilla attacks against us for what the Arabs and the Muslim world see as our invasion and interference in their homeland. This cycle of escalation is rapidly spreading the confrontation worldwide between the Christian West and the Muslim East. With each escalation the world becomes more dangerous. It is especially made worse when we retaliate against Muslims and Arabs who had nothing to do with 9/11, as we have in Iraq, further confirming the suspicions of the Muslim masses that our goals are more about oil and occupation than they are about punishing those responsible for 9/11.

Those who claim that Iraq is another Vietnam are wrong. They cannot be the same. There are too many differences in time, place and circumstance. But that does not mean the Iraqi conflict cannot last longer, spread throughout the region and possibly throughout the world, making it potentially much worse than what we suffered in Vietnam.

In the first 6 years we were in Vietnam, we lost less than 500 troops. Over 700 of our troops have been killed in Iraq in just over a year. Our neglect at pursuing the al Qaeda and bin Laden in Pakistan and Afghanistan and diverting resources to Iraq have seriously compromised our ability to maintain a favorable world opinion of support and cooperation in this effort. Instead, we have chaos in Iraq while the Islamists are being financed by a booming drug business from U.S.-occupied Afghanistan.

Continuing to deny that the setbacks against us are related to our overall foreign policy of foreign meddling throughout many years and many administrations makes a victory over our enemies nearly impossible. Not understanding the true nature and motivation of those who have and will commit deadly attacks against us prevents a sensible policy from being pursued.

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Guerrilla warriors who are willing to risk and sacrifice their all as part of a war that they see as defensive are a far cry philosophically from a band of renegades who, out of unprovoked hate, seek to destroy us and kill themselves in the process. How we fight back depends on understanding these differences.

Of course, changing our foreign policy to one of no preemptive war, no nation-building, no entangling alliances, no interference in the internal affairs of other nations, and trade and friendship with all those who seek it, is no easy task. The real obstacle, though, is to understand the motives behind our current foreign policy of perpetual meddling in the affairs of others for more than 100 years. Understanding why both political parties agree on the principles of continuous foreign intervention is crucial. Those reasons are multiple and varied.

They range from the persistent Wilsonian idealism of making the world safe for democracy to the belief that we must protect our oil. Also contributing to this bipartisan foreign policy view is the notion that promoting world government is worthwhile. This involves support for the United Nations, NATO, control of the world's resources through the IMF, the World Bank, the WTO, NAFTA, FTAA and the Law of the Sea Treaty, all of which gained the support of those sympathetic to the poor and socialism, while too often the benefits accrue to the well-connected international corporations and bankers sympathetic to economic fascism.

Sadly, in the process, the people are forgotten, especially those who pay the taxes; those who lives are lost and sacrificed in no-win, undeclared wars; and the unemployed and the poor who lose out as the economic consequences of financing our foreign entanglements evolve.

Regardless of one's enthusiasm or lack thereof for the war and the general policy of maintaining American troops in more than 130 countries, one cold fact must be soon recognized by all of us here in the Congress. The American people cannot afford it; and when the market finally recognizes the overcommitment we have made, the results will not be pleasing to anyone.

A guns-and-butter policy was flawed in the 1960s and gave us interest rates of 21 percent in the 1970s with high inflation rates. The current guns-and-butter policy is even more massive, and our economic infrastructure is more

fragile than it was back then. These facts will dictate our inability to continue this policy both internationally and domestically.

It is true, an unshakable resolve to stay the course in Iraq or any other hot spot can be pursued for many years; but when a country is adding to its future indebtedness by over \$700 billion per year, it can only be done with great economic sacrifice to all our citizens.

Huge deficits financed by borrowing and Federal Reserve monetization are an unsustainable policy and always lead to higher price inflation, higher interest rates, a continued erosion of the dollar's value, and a faltering economy. Economic law dictates that the standard of living then must go down for all Americans, except for the privileged few who have an inside track on government largess if this policy of profligate spending continues.

Unfortunately, the American people, especially the younger generation, will have to decide whether to languish with the current policy or reject the notion that perpetual warfare and continued growth in entitlements should be pursued indefinitely. I am sure the commission will not deal with the flaw in the foreign policy endorsed by both parties for these many, many years.

I hope the commission tells us, though, why members of the bin Laden family were permitted immediately after 9/11 to leave the United States without interrogation when no other commercial or private flights were allowed. That event should have been thoroughly studied and explained to the American people. We actually had a lot more reason to invade Saudi Arabia than we did Iraq in connection with 9/11; but that country, obviously no friend of democracy, remains an unchallenged ally of the United States with few questions asked.

I am afraid the commission will answer only a few questions while raising many new ones. Overall, though, the commission has been beneficial and provides some reassurance to those who believe we operate in a much too closed-off society. Fortunately, any administration under the current system still must respond to reasonable inquiries.

HAITI

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

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, once again, it is a great honor to address the House of Representatives and the American people on a recent armed services trip that I took to Haiti and also talk about Haiti and the U.S. relations as we move forth from this point on.

Many Americans understand the changes that Haiti has gone through and the Haitian people, but tonight I wanted to share a few things because