

would. No one will forgive us if we botch the reconstruction and leave Iraq a worse mess than we found it.

Mr. KING of New York. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. GOSS), the chairman of the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence.

(Mr. GOSS asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GOSS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the distinguished gentleman for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning to celebrate the purpose of the Medal, which is the great leadership of Tony Blair. The world needs civilized leaders. The world is a scary place. There are a lot of things going on, and all that is necessary for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing. Good men are not infallible. Mistakes can be made. But good men acting on good judgment, doing the best they can with what they have is what we are celebrating here today.

Tony Blair as Prime Minister has been a great friend to our country, which has a special relationship, of course, with the United Kingdom, of which we are very proud, and an especially strong relationship in the area of intelligence. He has been a great friend with President Clinton when he was President of our country, and with President Bush. Who is currently the President of our country.

I think that friendship has gone through a lot of activity in the past several years, and Tony Blair has been there standing strong. He is a proud person to be associated with, in my view. I am pleased that the gentleman from Florida (Ms. BROWN-WAITE), the gentleman from New York (Chairman KING), the gentleman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY) and others have had the good sense to bring this forward at this time, and I thank them for doing it, and I urge strong support.

Mr. KING of New York. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

As I said at the outset, it is a great honor for me personally to be able to stand here and move this legislation today. I must say that I am sure some of my Irish ancestors are appreciating the improbability of this moment that I would be making such an impassioned defense for a British Prime Minister.

The fact is, Tony Blair transcends national politics. He transcends pettiness and partisanship, and that is what we have tried to do here. Yes, obviously, there are differences between Members on this side of the aisle and certain policies of Tony Blair. We are not talking about his policies per se; we are talking about his courage, we are talking about his unique sense of dedication to democratic values and the fact that he is such a close ally of the United States, and that does transcend whatever differences there may be, and that should also transcend

whatever differences we might have in recognizing the greatness of an individual and realizing the uniqueness of a very special relationship.

But, if I could just add in closing, because I know there is going to be a record of this and we have gone over different debates, I would just thank the gentleman from Massachusetts for introducing the full column by Mr. Pollack. I would stand by that, and I would say that anyone reading that, any balanced person reading that would see that as an affirmation that weapons of mass destruction did indeed exist, and also honest differences as far as nuclear weapons. It is all there. I will allow the public to look at that, to read it, and come to their judgment. It certainly went far beyond as far as being reasoned, as far as being rational, some of the overheated rhetoric that has been coming forth from others here. And that to me is the type of debate we should be having, an intelligent debate.

Also, I would say there is a difference between a parliamentary system and the system that we have. Indeed we fought a revolution in 1776 to establish our type of government.

But in conclusion, let us get back to the main point. Tony Blair is a unique world leader, an outstanding world leader, a long and dear and absolutely loyal friend of the United States. For that, Mr. Speaker, he deserves this Gold Medal as much as any world leader ever has. I stand with him. I would hope that the overwhelming majority of this Congress would stand with him, stand with the United States Senate in acknowledging the uniqueness and the unique loyalty and sense of courage that Tony Blair has demonstrated.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. KING of New York. I yield to the gentleman from Massachusetts.

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Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. I would be willing to stand with the Senate on this if we could stand with them on the child tax credit. Can we make some kind of deal here on standing with the Senate?

Mr. KING of New York. Reclaiming my time, I would say that when Tony Blair is here, that if we can arrange a private meeting with the ranking member from Massachusetts, I am sure he can impart unique wisdom to the Prime Minister of Great Britain, and that would really mean that the Prime Minister has earned his gold medal.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to this legislation for a number of reasons. First, to force the American people to pay tens of thousands of dollars to give a gold medal to a foreign leader is immoral and unconstitutional. I will continue in my uncompromising opposition to appropriations not authorized within the enumerated powers of the Constitution—a Constitution that each member of Congress swore to uphold.

Second, though these gold medals are an unconstitutional appropriation of American tax

dollars, at least in the past we have awarded them to great humanitarians and leaders like Mother Theresa, President Reagan, Pope John Paul II, and others. These medals have generally been proposed to recognize a life of service and leadership, and not for political reasons—as evidenced by the overwhelming bipartisan support for awarding President Reagan, a Republican, a gold medal. That these awards have generally gone to these types of otherwise deserving individuals is why I have many times offered to contribute \$100 of my own money, to be matched by other Members, to finance these medals.

I sense that this current proposal is different, however. No one is claiming that British Prime Minister Tony Blair has given a lifetime of humanitarian service like Mother Theresa, or demonstrated the historical leadership of a Ronald Reagan. No one suggests that British Prime Minister, leading the avowedly socialist Labour Party, has embraced American values such as freedom and limited governments and imported those to Great Britain—as Margaret Thatcher had attempted before him. No, Tony Blair is being proposed for his medal for one reason: he provided political support when international allies were sought in advance of America's attack on Iraq. Does this overtly political justification for awarding this medal not cheapen both the medal itself and the achievements of those who have been awarded it previously?

I find it particularly odd that this Republican-controlled Congress would nominate one such as Tony Blair to receive this award. His political party is socialist: Britain under Blair has a system of socialized medicine and government intervention in all aspects of the commercial and personal lives of its citizens. Socialism is an enemy of freedom and liberty—as the 20th century taught us so well. It is the philosophical basis of a century of mass-murder and impoverishment.

In May, a British television poll found that Prime Minister Blair is the most unpopular man in Great Britain. A brief look at his rules leaves little question why this is so. He has eroded Britain's constitutional base—recently abolishing the ancient position of Lord Chancellor without any debate. He has overseen a massive expansion of government with the creation of costly “assemblies” in Wales and Scotland. He has also overseen changes in Britain's voting system that many have claimed has opened the door to widespread voting fraud. In short, he is no Margaret Thatcher and certainly no Winston Churchill. Yet today Congress is voting to give him its highest honor.

Mr. Speaker, it is very easy to be generous with the people's money. I believe the politicization of this medal, as we are seeing here today, really makes my own point on such matters: Congress should not be spending the people's money for appropriations not authorized within the enumerated powers of the Constitution. When it does so, it charts a dangerous course away from the rule of law and away from liberty. I urge a “no” vote on this unfortunate bill.

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 1511, to award the Congressional Gold Medal to Tony Blair, Prime Minister of Great Britain.

The Congressional Gold Medal is the highest honor Congress can bestow to civilians and foreign leaders in recognition of their outstanding and enduring contributions to the