

Madam Speaker, the easiest thing in the world to do is to spend other people's money. And it never ceases to amaze how the Federal bureaucracy can rationalize or justify the most wasteful or ridiculous expenditures. But the lavish new embassy we are building in Baghdad and the staffing and expenses for it will just about take the cake.

Here is part of a recent Fox News report:

"It's as big as Vatican City and makes foreign embassies dotting the tree-lined streets of Washington, D.C. look like carriage houses." But the barely finished U.S. Embassy in Baghdad is already primed for expansion.

Due for completion in September, the \$592 million campus is surrounded by concrete blast walls and features green grass gardens, palm-lined avenues, and volleyball and basketball courts. Available to embassy employees are a PX, commissary, cinema, retail and shopping areas, restaurants, schools, a fire station, power and water treatment facilities, a swimming pool, a recreation center, and the ambassador's and deputy ambassador's residences.

And with months still to pass before it opens, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice told a Senate subcommittee in May that additional staffing and housing needs have forced officials to add more structures to the now 21-building site. She asked for an additional \$50 million from Congress to make that happen."

In other words, almost \$600 million is not enough. Then the budget for 2006 for the employees was \$923 million, not including salaries and expenses for about 600 employees from other Federal agencies and departments than the State Department.

Listen to a recent story from The Washington Post:

"Mention the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad to Lawrence Eagleburger and he explodes.

'I defy anyone to tell me how you can use that many people. It is nuts. It's insane, and it's counterproductive. And it won't work,' says the Republican former Secretary of State and member of the Iraq Study Group.

Secretary Eagleburger said, 'I've been around the State Department long enough to know you can't run an outfit like that.' And Secretary Eagleburger was reacting to a staffing level of 1,000, twice the size and 20 to 30 times the budgets we have at our embassies in China, Mexico and Britain."

The Post story quoted a senior State Department official as saying, "Maintaining an oversized mega embassy in Baghdad is draining personnel and resources away from every other U.S. embassy around the world, and all for what?" The story also said that counting contractors and Iraqi employees, the staff actually is not 1,000, but a staggering and astounding 4,000.

Madam Speaker, I know that many people in our Federal Government want to think of themselves as world statesmen and feel real important, but it is both unconstitutional and unaffordable for the U.S. to try to govern or police the whole world. And all this certainly goes against every traditional conservative position I have ever known.

Above all, what we are doing building this Taj Mahal embassy in Baghdad and allowing an almost \$1 billion budget to operate it is as far from fiscal conservatism as you can get.

And finally, Madam Speaker, because a previous speaker mentioned General Petraeus's report, let me add this: There is a very important reason why our Founding Fathers, and throughout the history of this Nation our leaders, have always believed in civilian control over the military. The admirals and generals will almost always give positive or optimistic reports saying progress is being made. We have received positive reports from our top military leaders all through the war in Iraq. It is almost like the generals saying they're doing a bad job if their reports are not positive.

Madam Speaker, we should admire, respect and appreciate our military, and I certainly do. But we should not worship them or feel it is somehow unpatriotic to ever criticize any Pentagon waste or any decision a general might make