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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m.

The Reverend Dr. Michael J. Easley, Senior Pastor, Immanuel Bible Church, Springfield, Virginia, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray. Creator, Sovereign, Lord of all, help us. Though we do not deserve it, we humbly ask for Your mercy; that You bless this country we dearly love.

Protect us from our enemies. We ask not merely for ourselves but for our children. We ask not merely for our children but for their children.

Protect us from ourselves. May we never exercise the strength of tyrants, misuse talents entrusted to us, or lord over those allotted to our charge.

We pray for this House and all it represents; for our men and women overseas, keeping an oath that they swore; for their families who keep watch and pray; for all who lead, govern and serve; for our marriages, our families; for common sense; for moral restraint to keep Your covenants.

Faithful God, we thank You. Thank You that You look at us and see Your son's work, and thank You that You even hear our prayers.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Florida (Mr. FOLEY) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. FOLEY led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Repub-

lic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The Chair will entertain one 1-minute at this time.

WELCOMING DR. MICHAEL J. EASLEY

(Mr. PENCE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to welcome Dr. Michael J. Easley to the floor of the Congress today to open what will be a very important session day in the life of this Congress in prayer.

Dr. Easley is senior pastor of the Immanuel Bible Church in Springfield, Virginia, and has been in that role for over a decade. He came to the region of the Nation's Capital, however, from Grand Prairie, Texas, where he served in ministry. He recently obtained his Doctorate of Ministry from Dallas Theological Seminary, where he also received a Master's of Theology in 1985.

Dr. Michael J. Easley, Michael to his friends and to the members of his church, is a man after God's own heart. He preaches the word of God with conviction and with sincerity and with clarity. In every sense as a family on the occasions we find ourselves in the Nation's Capital and find ourselves in the pews of his church, on those weekends I can testify, Mr. Speaker, that Dr. Michael J. Easley is, as the Scripture says, a workman approved, rightly able to handle the word of truth.

It is my profound honor to welcome him and to thank his wonderful wife, Cindy, and his four children, Hanna, Jessie, Devin, and Sarah for their contribution to the life and Ministry of Christ in this region of our Nation.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The Chair desires to make an announcement.

After consultation with the majority and minority leaders, and with their consent and approval, the Chair announces that during the joint meeting to hear an address by His Excellency Jose Maria Aznar, President of the Government of Spain, only the doors immediately opposite the Speaker and those on his right and left will be open.

No one will be allowed on the floor of the House who does not have the privilege of the floor of the House.

Due to the large attendance anticipated, the Chair feels the rule regarding the privilege of the floor must be strictly adhered to. Children of Members will not be permitted on the floor, and the cooperation of all Members is requested.

The practice of reserving seats prior to the joint meeting by placing placards will not be allowed. Members may reserve their seats by physical presence only following the security sweep of the Chamber.

RECESS

The SPEAKER. Pursuant to the order of the House of Tuesday, January 27, 2004, the House stands in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 5 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

During the recess, beginning at about 10:52 a.m., the following proceedings were had:

□ 1052

JOINT MEETING OF THE HOUSE AND SENATE TO HEAR AN ADDRESS BY HIS EXCELLENCY JOSE MARIA AZNAR, PRESIDENT OF THE GOVERNMENT OF SPAIN

The Speaker of the House presided.

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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The Deputy Sergeant at Arms, Kerri Hanley, announced the Vice President and Members of the U.S. Senate who entered the Hall of the House of Representatives, the Vice President taking the chair at the right of the Speaker, and the Members of the Senate the seats reserved for them.

The SPEAKER. The Chair appoints as members of the committee on the part of the House to escort His Excellency Jose Maria Aznar, President of the Government of Spain, into the Chamber:

The gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY);

The gentleman from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT);

The gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. PRYCE);

The gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. BEREUTER);

The gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER);

The gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI);

The gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER);

The gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ);

The gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS); and

The gentleman from Texas (Mr. RODRIGUEZ).

The VICE PRESIDENT. The President of the Senate, at the direction of that body, appoints the following Senators as a committee on the part of the Senate to escort His Excellency Jose Maria Aznar, President of the Government of Spain, into the House Chamber:

The Senator from Tennessee (Mr. FRIST);

The Senator from Alaska (Mr. STEVENS);

The Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. SANTORUM);

The Senator from Arizona (Mr. KYL);

The Senator from Virginia (Mr. ALLEN);

The Senator from Indiana (Mr. LUGAR);

The Senator from Oregon (Mr. SMITH);

The Senator from South Dakota (Mr. DASCHLE); and

The Senator from Connecticut (Mr. DODD).

The Deputy Sergeant at Arms announced the Acting Dean of the Diplomatic Corps, Her Excellency Mary Madzandza Kanya, Ambassador of Swaziland.

The Acting Dean of the Diplomatic Corps entered the Hall of the House of Representatives and took the seat reserved for her.

The Deputy Sergeant at Arms announced the Cabinet of the President of the United States.

The Members of the Cabinet of the President of the United States entered the Hall of the House of Representatives and took the seats reserved for them in front of the Speaker's rostrum.

At 11 o'clock and 2 minutes a.m., the Deputy Sergeant at Arms announced

His Excellency Jose Maria Aznar, President of the Government of Spain.

The President of the Government of Spain, escorted by the committee of Senators and Representatives, entered the Hall of the House of Representatives and stood at the Clerk's desk.

[Applause, the Members rising.]

The SPEAKER. Members of the Congress, it is my great privilege and I deem it a high honor and a personal pleasure to present to you His Excellency Jose Maria Aznar, President of the Government of Spain.

[Applause, the Members rising.]

ADDRESS BY HIS EXCELLENCY
JOSE MARIA AZNAR, PRESIDENT
OF THE GOVERNMENT OF SPAIN

(The following address was delivered in Spanish, with a simultaneous translation in English.)

President AZNAR. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Vice President, Honorable Members of Congress, ladies and gentlemen, allow me to begin by thanking you most sincerely for the warm welcome you have extended to me this morning. I somehow have the feeling that you, like me, are looking forward to a short speech.

As a parliamentarian and as Prime Minister of Spain, I am deeply honored to be invited to address the United States Congress. This Chamber is a living symbol, admired the world over, of our common desire for freedom and democracy.

I recall the great emotion the people of Spain felt on June 2, 1976, when King Juan Carlos I spoke from this very rostrum on the occasion of the commemoration of the Bicentennial of American Independence.

In his speech, His Majesty the King emphasized the important Hispanic contribution to the formation and independence of this great Nation.

We in Spain were going through difficult and delicate times then; and from this rostrum, our King set out his vision of a prosperous and modern Spain and conveyed the Spanish people's desire for freedom and democracy.

Today, 28 years on, Spain is fully consolidated as a democracy.

The process of political decentralization, which was set in motion with the 1978 constitution, has been completed successfully.

We are one of the great nations of Europe. Active members of the European Union, we are a dynamic, open, and enterprising country of 43 million people. Once an emigrant society, today we receive immigrants from the four corners of the world.

We are the eighth largest economy in the world today. Central to that achievement has been our membership of the European Union. Our economy is growing stably and with confidence at a rate above the average of our European Union partners. And our economy has generated half of all of the jobs created in Europe in recent years.

The Spain of today knows full well that growth and maturity bring re-

sponsibilities also. We know that we have to face risks and shoulder commitments, commitments that must be met.

We want to occupy a position in the first line of defense of democracy and the rule of law. Alongside friends and allies in good times as well as in times of difficulty, we share with you values and principles. Let me say that our commitment to freedom is unwavering.

Equally unwavering has been the commitment of the United States, and allow me to pay public tribute here today to the American people for the indispensable role that they have played in the fight for democracy and freedom.

For the last 8 years, it has been my privilege to serve as Prime Minister of Spain. At all times I have defended the value and validity of the Atlantic relationship for the good of Europe, as well as for global stability and security.

During my term in office, I have constantly worked towards that objective, firstly with the Clinton administration and more recently with the Bush administration. Indeed, one of the greatest personal and political satisfactions gained from these years has been the relationship I have established and built up with these two great Presidents.

It comes as no surprise, then, that our relations are nothing short of exceptional at present.

The Atlantic relationship strengthens Europeans and Americans alike, and it makes the world a safer and freer place.

In working intensely to further the process of the European Union, Spain believes that the process has to be carried forward while at the same time preserving and enhancing the Atlantic relationship. It is a relationship that lies at the very origins of Europe's construction. Having played a part in its development, it necessarily has to be a part of its future also.

That has always been our view, and it still is our view today, just a few weeks before 10 new countries join the European Union as members. Many of those countries had to endure the tyranny of communism. Many of them now look to the Atlantic Alliance to guarantee their freedom.

As a European, let me say that I have no wish whatsoever for an alternative to the transatlantic relationship. I want no alternative to the Atlantic relationship. Wanting a strong European Union, as Spain does, and being at the vanguard of Europe, as Spain is, does not entail working to be a counterpower to the United States. It means working towards an Atlantic-minded Europe. Given that we share the same principles and values, it is in our common interest to defend these.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Vice President, those very principles and values came under brutal attack on September 11, 2001. Nothing can make good the grief and suffering caused on that terrible day when terrorists demonstrated their despicable contempt for human life.