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 responsibilities 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.

But the American people responded with an admirable lesson in civic-mindedness and responsibility. In so doing, and let me make this absolutely clear, they penned one of the most beautiful pages of our modern era.

The United States was not the only target of the September 11 attacks. Terrorism threw down a calculated challenge to the values that are core to humanity, freedom, moral decency, compassion, and respect for the lives of others.

Immediately after the attacks, Spain expressed its active solidarity and its commitment to the Government and the people of the United States. Allow me here in this Chamber to reiterate that solemn commitment today.

Speaking in Madrid a few months before 9/11, President Bush expressed America's solidarity with Spain's fight against the terrorism that we have had to endure for too long. That solidarity has materialized in the form of active cooperation. We will never forget that gesture of support. And I will never forget it.

The United States and Spain would both like to see the United Nation's counterterrorism committee play a real and effective role. We would like to see a world list of terrorist organizations drawn up and approved. We also feel it important to ensure that the voice of the victims of terrorism is listened to permanently.

Just 10 days ago, the first-ever World Congress of Victims of Terrorism was held in Madrid. The victims are the moral backbone that underpins our fight against terror. They give us valor. They give us courage. But at the same time they also call us into account and demand results from us. They also demand justice and reparation.

There can be no justification whatsoever for terrorism. It destroys the causes it purports to defend. The political or religious causes that terrorism allegedly serves are among its victims also.

And allow me to say here today that terrorists must be made to realize that the only and inevitable outcome is defeat. We derive our strength from the moral superiority of democratic systems. And as has occurred on past occasions in history, I have no doubt whatsoever that freedom will triumph over barbarity this time too.

Today, in Afghanistan and in Iraq, the most important phase of the fight against terrorism is currently taking place. In Iraq, terrorists are trying to prevent the Iraqi people from taking their own destiny in hand.

We refused to countenance the repeated violations of international law by Saddam Hussein's tyranny.

We remain committed to Iraq's material and institutional reconstruction, and I can guarantee you that we fully intend to see our commitments through.

At this point, I would like to pay a sincere tribute to all those who have given their lives in order to restore freedom to the Iraqi people, to guarantee the security and consolidate democracy. Our appreciation and gratitude will always be with those who have died.

The fight against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is another common feature of our pursuit of a more stable and freer world.

Recent progress in the fight against the proliferation of these weapons would not have been possible had it not been for the firm stance that we have taken.

Proliferation poses a very real threat to everyone's security. Faced with the risk that these weapons might be used by terrorist groups, we cannot stand by and do nothing. In addressing this challenge, we have to act together and with resolve. To ignore this reality or to evade the real issue and the genuine priorities would not only be highly irresponsible but would prove extremely costly in terms of our own security and freedom.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Vice President, the transatlantic link stands for freedom, freedom in all areas. And it is thanks to that freedom that North America and Europe are the two most prosperous regions in the world.

Experience shows that free trade is a source of economic growth and wealth for everyone. That is why I proposed recently, and reiterate here today, that we should create a great economic financial and trade zone between Europe and the United States by the year 2015.

I am sure that we can open up a new era of growth and stability that would benefit the rest of the world too.

It is my belief that freedom brings prosperity. That is what I have tried to do in my country since 1996 through economic liberalization and reforms. It is also the reason why in Europe I have promoted initiatives that prioritize above all else liberalization, innovation, and improved competitiveness.

The very close relationship we have forged between our two countries includes a Latin American dimension also. For me, Latin America is a key continent for my country. Spain is the world's second biggest investor in that region behind the United States.

The countries of the region have made great efforts in recent decades to consolidate democratic regimes and free market economies. That is a further reason for our desire to strengthen ties between Europe and Latin America.

I am convinced that the Atlantic relationship will not be complete until it embraces the American continent in its entirety. For the medium and long term, we should set ourselves the joint goal of building a veritable community of common values and interests, including a large free trade area. And rest assured that Spain is willing and ready to work towards that goal.

The Hispanic communities in the United States represent a source of new and, until very recently, unimaginable opportunities for these closer ties between the United States, Latin America, and Europe.

I myself have been a privileged witness to this emerging and very promising reality in Texas, New Mexico, California, New York, and Florida.

Mention of Florida necessarily brings me to say something about Cuba and its large exiled population. Like so many Spaniards, I too come from a family with roots in Cuba. This Caribbean island is one of the last remaining anomalies of history, not just in the Americas but anywhere in the entire world.

I would like to reiterate my desire and hope here today that before too long Cuba can be welcomed into the fold of free nations.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Vice President, honorable Members of the House, as Prime Minister of Spain, I have endeavored at all times to harness the trust which the people of my country have placed in me for the last 8 years to help make Spain a safer, more prosperous, more committed, and consequently more respected country.

Relations between our two nations stretch back more than 200 years. Spain provided valuable support to the United States in its fight for independence. Thereafter, our relations may not always have been governed by understanding. However, there has never been a more propitious time than the present to undertake grand projects together. What we have achieved together in recent years has already served to create a strong relationship, a relationship between countries that are friends, allies, and partners.

And in concluding, may I say that in Spain the American people have a friend from Europe. In Spain, the United States has a firm, strong, and responsible ally. Let us continue to work together, together for the cause of democracy and freedom in the world.

Thank you.

[Applause, the Members rising.]

At 11 o'clock and 28 minutes a.m., the President of the Government of Spain, accompanied by the committee of escort, retired from the Hall of the House of Representatives.

The Deputy Sergeant at Arms escorted the invited guests from the Chamber in the following order:

The Members of the President's Cabinet;

The Acting Dean of the Diplomatic Corps.

JOINT MEETING DISSOLVED

The SPEAKER. The purpose of the joint meeting having been completed, the Chair declares the joint meeting of the two Houses now dissolved.

Accordingly, at 11 o'clock and 31 minutes a.m., the joint meeting of the two Houses was dissolved.

The Members of the Senate retired to their Chamber.