about the 900th American dead or of the 899th or the 898th, or the other brave men and women who have died just yesterday, not to mention since the war was launched by the President.

Iraq is not popular with the American people, so it has fallen out of favor in the President's remarks. By the Republican convention, finding any comments about Iraq by the President will be akin to finding weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. Just not there.

They have moved on as quickly as possible, but remember meanwhile, 160,000 U.S. soldiers remain in harm's way in Iraq, fighting and dying because America sent them there, but the America they left behind, not the America they have come home to.

That is worth some discussion. We have an administration that talks tough on terror, but they completely overlook Iran. Ten years later the administration's best sound bite today is we will look into it. That is not a plan to combat terror at home or anywhere else.

The administration had 10 years to look into it. Instead, they looked to someone they knew on evidence that was flimsy at the start and proven false since; the President committed American soldiers to a war in Iraq. When they could not find weapons of mass destruction, the administration changed the reason for going to war. Then they changed it again. Is that the administration's plan to combat terror? Yes. There is terrorism in the world, but we need real leaders and a real plan to meet that threat.

There is terrorism in the world, and America is capable of meeting that threat, but not with bullets and bombs alone. And if you look at the record of this administration, you have to conclude that they do not have a plan on terror. They hold news conferences to tell everyone, presuming they include terrorists, that America should be vigilant, but afraid. America should go about its business, but be afraid. That is not a plan. That is rhetorical duct tape.

America needs to be strong, not afraid. We did not win World War II by being afraid. We won by being American. We won by being American by fighting for American values, by fighting for American freedoms, but today American freedoms are under attack, and it is happening right here by this administration. In the immediate aftermath of 9/11, the administration switched language in the middle of the night and America woke up to something called the PATRIOT Act. There is nothing patriotic about depriving Americans of their civil liberties. There was nothing patriotic a few days later when the House voted to restore some of the civil liberties taken by the PATRIOT Act.

Then Republicans deliberately left open the vote until they could force enough Republicans to change their vote. Yes, I said change their vote.

The White House had preordained the outcome of the vote, so Democrats and Republicans voted. Then the Republicans voted again. The process was rigged. Civil liberties never had a chance. That is what the administration calls its plan to combat terror. Monitor the books you checked out of the library or the movie tickets you are buying online. They can go to a secret court and gain access to your entire life.

George Orwell called it ''1984,'' his legislative novel that we used to think could not happen in America. It is happening. We have law enforcement agencies, smart, dedicated public servants who know how to catch the bad guys. We have the financial resources to arm the agencies with the funding they need to support our people. We do not need 1984 in 2004. Every time the administration says, oh no, that is not what we are doing, another story surfaces about America under suspicion for doing something like taking pictures at a popular tourist site in Seattle, for example.

The administration does not have a plan to combat terror. It has a terror alert stuck on ''be afraid, always.'' The American people deserve more than that. America is strong enough to fight the war on terror. It needs a leader strong enough to do it.

JOHN KERRY is a decorated combat veteran, a war hero who has seen the face and the horror of war firsthand. America can win the war on terror, but not by subverting American freedoms and civil liberties.

America can win the war on terror under the leadership of a sailor who led men in combat and who risked his own life to save others under fire. America can win the war on terror, but it needs a combat veteran to do it. JOHN KERRY is just such a man. We will have him in 104 days.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HENSARLING) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. HENSARLING addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time of the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HENSARLING).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from North Carolina?

There was no objection.

FREE SPEECH BY RELIGIOUS LEADERS BEING DENIED

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I am on the floor again tonight, as I have been for the last 2 or 3 weeks, to talk about the fact that in America today with all of our brave men and women fighting for freedom for the Iraqis and in Afghanistan and certainly to protect the American people, that yet in this country today a minister, a priest or a rabbi or cleric cannot speak freely about the politics and the moral issues of the day in America. I think that is a sad commentary on this great Nation.

I want to briefly talk about the history of this issue. Prior to 1954, there was never any restriction of speech on our ministers in this country or our rabbis or our priests until 1954. The Lyndon Baines Johnson amendment in the Senate, never debated, no hearings were held; and yet the Senate unanimously accepted the amendment by Senator Johnson that basically said if you are a 501(c)(3), you may not have political speech, and that means endorsement or opposition to a candidate.

Well, I looked at the history of this, and I looked at the history of churches being qualified for a 501(c)(3). Never in any of the history that we looked upon was there any restriction of speech at all on the churches or synagogues or mosques in this country.

The reason I bring this to the floor again tonight is because I believe sincerely if morality in this great Nation is to survive based on the Judeo-Christian principles that this Nation was founded upon, then the ministers, the priests and the rabbis and the clerics should be able to speak freely about the moral and political issues of the today without any restriction.

The IRS is in charge of overseeing the speech of our churches, synagogues, and mosques. They testified 2 years ago they cannot even enforce the law. Yet, what we have today is a man named Barry Lynn with the Americans United that stands for the separation of church and State; and what he does is file a complaint, like he did in Colorado 4 weeks ago. Bishop Sheridan, a Catholic Bishop, the diocese of Colorado Springs, wrote a pastoral letter, three pages to the Catholics in Colorado Springs, and reminded them that the Catholic Church stands for protecting the unborn, it stands against stem cell research, it stands against euthanasia; and all they did in the pastoral letter was he did not mention Mr. KERRY or Mr. Bush. He did not mention Democrat or Republican, liberal or conservative, but what he did was mention the word ''pro-life.''

And I want my friends to know in the House that in the early 1990s that the Internal Revenue Service expanded, through an administrative process, the definition of what the Johnson amendment said. So in this documentation I am holding up tonight, Mr. Speaker, is a section called ''code words.'' Well, this begins to sound like what I can imagine in the late 1930s in Germany, code words.

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Code words are like prochoice, prolife, liberal, conservative, Democrat and Republican. So what the bishop did in his pastoral letter was he mentioned the word ''prolife'' and because of that, Barry Lynn filed a complaint against him to challenge the tax status of the diocese in Colorado Springs. This is just one small example of many things that are happening.

In Kansas, I spoke to a minister today and he knows that there is a group in Kansas that is watching what he is saying in his church. Well, let me say to my friends in the House, whether you be Democrat or Republican, this can happen to your church as well. What is happening in this country, there is an element that is trying to monitor the speech and the sermons in the churches and the synagogues and the mosques of this great Nation today.

Let me read very briefly and then I will close, Mr. Speaker. The Main Stream Coalition headed by Caroline McKnight in Kansas is sending letters to more than 400 churches in the area reminding them of the IRS rule that we are trying to change to return to freedom of speech that we had in this country prior to 1954, which forbids tax exempt groups, including religious organizations, from participating in political campaigns for or against a candidate.

Coalition volunteers will also visit churches and report any major violation to the IRS. This reminds me of what I thought might have happened in the late 1930s in Germany when the Jewish people went to their synagogue, where they had somebody watching who went in.

Mr. Speaker, this Congress, we are here to protect the first amendment rights of all the American people. That includes our preachers, our priests and our rabbis and the clerics in this country. I hope if we are going to honor those men and women who have given their lives for this country, who have died for freedom since the beginning of America through today and the days following today, then we must do our job to make sure that there is freedom of speech in our churches and synagogues and mosques in this country.

I close tonight, Mr. Speaker, by asking the good Lord to please bless our men and women in our uniform and their families. I close by asking the good Lord to bless America.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HENSARLING). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BROWN of Ohio addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time of the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from California?

There was no objection.

SMART SECURITY AND ASSAULT WEAPONS BAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, during the 2000 Presidential campaign, George W. Bush pledged to renew the assault weapons ban that President Clinton signed into law in 1994. This is a courageous decision by a candidate who claimed he was not your typical conservative.

Four years have passed and Candidate Bush's pledge has gone unfulfilled by President Bush. It is amazing what the politics of a reelection campaign will do to one's former pledges.

The assault weapons ban will expire on September 13 unless President Bush renews the ban before that very point. First, Congress would need to approve this decision, however. With recess approaching, that leaves only 3 legislative days in September before military assault weapons designed to kill large numbers of people are once again available on America's streets.

Of course, President Bush and the White House are well aware of this deadline. So why are they not acting? Actually, the answer is simple. The answer is the National Rifle Association has conditioned its support for George W. Bush on his strong opposition to gun control measures. The NRA has issued a not-so-subtle threat to withhold its vast resources from the President's reelection campaign unless he agrees not to renew the assault weapons ban.

The problem, besides the fact that President Bush has once again failed to live up to one of his campaign promises, is that this is an issue of extreme importance to our national security.

Al Qaeda training manuals recovered in Afghanistan specifically urge terrorists to exploit America's ''lax gun laws'' to acquire and train with assault weapons. For many terrorists around the world, America is known as the great gun bazaar.

Mr. Speaker, I do not know about you, but I find this highly disturbing. If President Bush truly wanted to be smart about keeping America safe from terrorism, as he says he does, he would work to immediately renew the assault weapons ban. Renewing the ban is absolutely necessary to protect Americans from terrorism. Renewing the ban would keep deadly weaponry out of the hands of terrorists.

These guns serve only one purpose, to take lives. In fact, the 2003 National Hunting Survey by Field and Stream Magazine confirmed that most gun owners do not consider assault weapons suitable guns for hunting in the first place. The ban clearly works.

In 1995, the first year the assault weapons ban went into effect, the assault weapons represented nearly 4 percent of all guns recovered from crimes. By 2000, assault weapons represented a little more than 1 percent of weapons used in crimes.

Mr. Speaker, clearly the time has come for a national security strategy that protects Americans from assault weapons, not one that protects the President's favorite campaign donor from losing revenue.

That is why I have introduced H. Con. Res. 392, legislation to create a SMART security platform for the 21st century. SMART stands for sensible, multilateral, American response to terrorism.

In crafting this legislation, my staff and I received the support of the wonderful organizations, Physicians For Social Responsibility, the Friends Committee on National Legislation, and Women's Action for New Directions. Without these groups, the legislation would not have happened in the way it did.

SMART security is stronger on national security than President Bush claims to be. SMART security will stop the sale of weapons to oppressive regimes and regimes involved in human rights abuses.

SMART security will pursue enhanced inspection regimes and regional security arrangements to ensure that state sponsors of terrorism do not get a hold of more light weaponry or even deadlier chemical or biological weapons.

It is time America got smart about its national security. I urge all of my colleagues to cosponsor this vitally important resolution, H. Con. Res. 392 because SMART security is tough, is pragmatic, is patriotic, and it will keep America safe.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. MALONEY addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. PENCE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. PENCE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)