

So this great America of ours is at the pinnacle of its power and it is an indispensable nation and we ought to behave like an indispensable nation. Instead of being preoccupied with Peyton Place-type activities, we should look to where are we now and what can we do with our enormous power and wealth to make the world a better place for our constituents, to deal with some immediate problems.

I do not want to have to go back to my constituents and say, look, we have no hope. The relief of the overcrowding schools, the coal-burning furnaces, these are relatively small things, but we are not going to get any help with them. I do not want the despair which drives people to choose vouchers, which is a ridiculous way to go because only a handful of children can ever be served through that method. And vouchers to private schools, there are just not enough out there. It is the public school system that will continue to educate most of our children and we have to stay with the public school system.

We can experiment more with charter schools, which are public schools, there are a number of things we can do to try to improve the schools, but we cannot spoon-feed the process or put Band-aids on. We really need to do something dramatic about guaranteeing that every youngster has a clean, safe school with an atmosphere that is conducive to learning; that every youngster is in a classroom where the teachers are not overwhelmed because there are so many children.

There are a lot of very small things that a mere stroke of the pen on some appropriations bills could put in place. But yet we choose not to live up to the calling or the responsibility that history has thrust upon us.

I want to read, in closing, a statement that I made on February 4, 1997, following President Clinton's inaugural address and I put it in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

Mr. Speaker, President Clinton's inaugural address was not a State of the Union speech obligated to provide substance for general proposals. Appropriately, the President used his second inaugural statement to set a tone for the next 4 years, the prelude to the 21st century. America is a great country blessed by God with wealth far surpassing any nation on the face of the Earth now or in the past. The Roman Empire was a begger entity compared to the rich and powerful Americans. God has granted us an opportunity unparalleled in history.

President Clinton called upon both leaders and ordinary citizens to measure up to this splendid moment. The President called upon all of us to abandon ancient hatreds and obsessions with trivial issues. For a brief moment in history we are the indispensable people.

Other nations have occupied this position before and failed the world. The American colossus should break the historic pattern of empires devouring themselves. As we move into the 21st century we need indispensable leaders with global visions. We need profound decisions.

I conclude with a poem of my own.
"Under God

The indivisible indispensable nation
Guardian of the pivotal generation
Most fortunate of all the lands
For a brief moment
The whole world we hold in our hands
Internet sorcery computer magic
Tiny spirits make opportunity tragic
We are the indispensable nation
Guardian of the pivotal generation
Millionaires must rise to see the need
Or smother beneath their splendid greed
Capitalism is king
With potential to be Pope
Banks hoard gold
That could fertilize universal hope
Jefferson, Lincoln, Roosevelt, King
Make your star spangled legacy sting
Dispatch your ghosts
To bring us global visions
Indispensable leaders
Need profound decisions
Internet sorcery, computer magic.
Tiny spirits make opportunity tragic.
We are the indispensable nation,
Guardian of the pivotal generation
With liberty and justice for the world
Under God.

□ 2030

Instead of being preoccupied with a soap opera and the human story of one man's fragility, we should look to our role as the indispensable nation, we should look to our role as the generation within this indispensable nation that has a golden opportunity to turn things around.

I started by saying that in the African-American community there is strong support for President Clinton despite all of the revelations. And I certainly know from firsthand information gathered in my district that it is very strong. I made it my business to question ladies of the church and find out where they stood.

And I think there have been many reasons that have been said before why blacks support this President. We are afraid of what happens when he is no longer there. We appreciate the fact that he has stayed with the issues that matter most.

But I think, also, there is a wisdom in the African-American community by these church ladies and other people who have been raised on the Bible. They know the legacy of King David is not wiped out by his weakness in connection with Bathsheba. They know that Sampson is still a symbol of strength despite the fact that he had a weakness and was vulnerable.

They looked over the whole pattern of history and they know that the good that men do often dies with them, and it is not fair.

We are in a situation now where trivialities may smother America, trivialities. We have opened Pandora's box. If a President's life can be invaded by the government, trivialities will smother us all. Who will be next and how many dramatic human stories will television have to play with along the way?

I hope that for the next 5 weeks we can turn away from preoccupation with the personal life of one man and deal with preoccupation with the life of the Nation. We are an indispensable na-

tion. We ought to behave like people who are a pivotal generation within this indispensable nation.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SHIMKUS). While the Chair did not interrupt the Member, the Chair would remind all Members to avoid specific personal references to the President even as a point of reference or comparison to a more general standard of conduct.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Ms. PRYCE of Ohio (at the request Mr. ARMEY), for today and for an indefinite period, on account of illness in the family.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania, for 5 minutes, on September 10.

(The following Members (at the request of Ms. LEE) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. STUPAK, for 5 minutes, today.

Mrs. MINK of Hawaii, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. CONYERS, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. NORTON, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. MINGE, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. LEE, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, for 5 minutes, today.

EXTENSION OF REMARKS

By unanimous consent, permission to revise and extend remarks was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Ms. LEE) and to include extraneous matter:)

Mr. KIND.

Mr. ETHERIDGE.

Mr. KENNEDY of Massachusetts.

Mr. MILLER of California.

Mr. STARK.

Mr. HAMILTON.

Mr. KANJORSKI.

Mr. MATSUI.

Mr. SANDERS.

Mr. UNDERWOOD.

Mr. MURTHA.

Mr. DELAHUNT.

Mr. DIXON.

Mr. GEPHARDT.

Mr. VENTO.

Mr. MORAN of Virginia.

Mr. SANDLIN.