United States of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 106th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 145 WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, JUNE 15, 1999 No. 84

House of Representatives

The House met at 9 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. STEARNS).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
June 15, 1999.

I hereby appoint the Honorable CLIFF STEARNS to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING HOUR DEBATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 19, 1999, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 25 minutes, and each Member, except the majority leader, the minority leader, or the minority whip, limited to 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate extend beyond 9:50 a.m.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. HAYWORTH) for 5 minutes.

GROWING CRISIS ON THE KOREAN PENINSULA

Mr. HAYWORTH. Mr. Speaker, I wish you and my colleagues in this House a good morning, although reports that have reached us this morning from far places on the globe are not so present. We awakened today to hear of a growing crisis off the Korean Peninsula in the Yellow Sea as the respective navies of North and South Korea clash.

Mr. Speaker, I noted with interest that in the prerecorded comments that one of our government spokesmen offered dealing with this situation, this spokesman said, well, in the past when there has been this type of confrontation, the North Koreans retreat or back off, and, quite frankly, we are surprised that the North Koreans did not follow that action this morning.

Well, Mr. Speaker, let me point out to that government spokesman and to my colleagues precisely why the North Koreans failed to back off. See, Mr. Speaker, the sad fact is the outlaw nation of North Korea is now for all intents and purposes a nuclear power. That is the cold, grim, stark reality.

Proliferation of nuclear technology, technology stolen by the Chinese Government and given to other nations like North Korea, has now borne its bitter fruit. Moreover, shockingly, surprisingly, Mr. Speaker, this administration has engaged in the willful, naive transfer of technology. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, when I first arrived in the Capital City for my first term, prior to taking the oath of office I had occasion to then meet with the Secretary of Defense at that time, Secretary Perry. I asked him why this administration was so intent on giving, giving two nuclear reactors to North Korea. The Secretary responded that I needed a briefing, a briefing that, by the way, was never forthcoming, Mr. Speaker.

A couple of points that we should bring out. We do not need a briefing to know that one does not put their hand on the eye of the stove when it is turned on and not expect to get burned. Now, the sad fact is that of those two reactors which this administration supplied to North Korea, within the last 6 months the U.N. inspection teams finally went in. The first thing they found out was that one reactor was intact, but the core of the second reactor was missing. Couple that with the fact that the North Koreans have developed what they call the Taepo Dong missile, an intercontinental ballistic missile capable of reaching the continental United States, and, Mr. Speaker, we begin to understand full well why the North Koreans continue to act provocatively. Add to that the extreme famine that the North Koreans find themselves in, documented cases of cannibalism; a totalitarian Communist state that does not view peace as its logical means of existence, that will have to turn to hostilities, and we see the situation that has been set up.

How sad it is, Mr. Speaker, that there is such a radically different interpretation from my left-leaning friends in the administration when it comes to providing for the common defense. How sad it is, Mr. Speaker, that the President of the United States 2 years ago stood at the podium behind me here and said that our children no longer faced the threat of annihilation by nuclear missiles, that nuclear missiles were not targeted at the United States.

Mr. Speaker, the President was, to be diplomatic, sorely mistaken in that evaluation.

Mr. Speaker, this House and those of us who serve in the legislative branch cannot continue to allow this type of drift and uncertainty in our foreign policy and in our national security situation. We must take seriously our role to provide for the common defense. That means steps to cut off the theft of our secrets by China. That means a realistic, not a socialistic utopian view, but a realistic assessment of the threat offered by an outlaw nation like North Korea and that also entails an honest assessment of our friends, the Russians, in the Balkan theater.

CONGRESS MUST ADDRESS THE THREAT OF GUN VIOLENCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 19, 1999, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) is recognized

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during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, gun violence against children in this country has reached a point where even Congress can no longer ignore its consequences. Even though there still have been the 10 to 15 children, victims of violence across the country, finally it was some very stark school shootings that focused the attention.

I sat on the floor of this Chamber and heard the Speaker articulate from this well how finally Congress and the House of Representatives would be coming forward. We could not rush to judgment before Memorial Day bringing something to the floor of the House. We had instead to take a more deliberative course of action.

Well, we have seen what has been the result of that more deliberate course of action. After the NRA has been spending hundreds of thousands of dollars per day over the last couple of weeks, even more in their fund-raising efforts, we now have coming before the House of Representatives a rather confused set of provisions, and we are poised to pull another Kosovo where we cannot go right, left, sideways or forward.

Mr. Speaker, that is unfortunate because there is, in fact, a very simple answer for the House of Representatives to move forward. First and foremost, it is to refine and pass the provisions that did secure approval in the U.S. Senate restricting the magazine clips, having child access protection and dealing with the gun show loophole to the Brady bill. These are modest steps, but the American public supports it, and it would be an opportunity for us to show that we have got the message and can work together.

The next step would be to consider Representative CAROLYN MCCARTHY's comprehensive bipartisan bill to reduce gun violence amongst our youth. The Child Gun Violence Protection Act, H.R. 1342, with bipartisan support, contains provisions that will make a difference and should be considered in short order before this Chamber.

Mr. Speaker, finally, and I think most interestingly for me, is an opportunity for us to take a step back and look at the same sort of approach that made a difference in reducing the carnage on our Nation's highways. If we would have taken a step back in history a third of a century, we would have heard the same arguments against being able to make a difference in auto safety that we hear today about gun violence. The Americans have a love affair with the automobile that, if anything, is more pervasive than the attachment to firearms. There is no single step that is going to make the total difference, that is going to solve the problem. Some of it may actually cost money investing in making things safer.

Well, we heard all of those arguments, but Congress finally was provoked to act, and it did so in a comprehensive way. It produced legislation, consumer product safety-oriented, that made automobiles safer. We had manufacturers, instead of fighting auto safety, understand that it was important to produce the safest possible product and competed in terms of providing the amenities of a safer vehicle. It was a selling point.

We found that the American people would rise to the occasion, and, even though it was inconvenient for some or perhaps a modest infringement on their lifestyle, we have seen dramatic changes take place in terms of attitudes of people; driving and alcohol, for instance. We have changed America's patterns. A third of a century later, we have cut in half the rate of death and destruction on our highways.

I am absolutely convinced that we can do the same thing dealing with the reduction of gun violence with our youth, that we can have as much consumer safety for real guns as we have for toy guns. The key will be whether or not the Members of this Chamber are willing to stand up for our families and for our children to look at the apologists for gun violence, look past their misrepresentations and political threats and do what is right. If we were able to do it to change a climate of carnage on our highways, I think we can do the same thing to reduce gun violence for our children.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to Congress this week taking this important first step to avoid a debacle like we had, an inability to make some decisions on Kosovo, and send clear statements about our commitment to reduce gun violence for our children.

KEY TO SUCCESS OF 2000 CENSUS IS LOCAL INVOLVEMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 19, 1999, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MILLER) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, we are less than 10 months away from the upcoming decennial census, the 2000 census. And the magical date is April 1 of 2000 would be conducted to count all the people in this great country, and it is essential to our entire democratic process that we have the most accurate census possible and one that is trusted by the American people.

It is fundamental to our elective system of government because most elected officials in America are dependent upon the census. The key to the success of the census is local involvement; local involvement in the planning for the census, local involvement in the process of developing the addresses which is taking place today, and local involvement at the conclusion of the census to allow a quality check and verification that we have counted everybody the census.

Sadly, the administration and most of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle are opposed to local involvement at the end of the census, the quality check that was provided in 1990, and they are opposed to letting local communities, the mayors and city councils and county commissioners and city managers and such across this country, to have one last chance to check their numbers because they say we are going to allow them to be involved before the census takes place, and that will solve all the problems.

Well, Mr. Speaker, that is exactly the problem. That there are mistakes. We all make mistakes, and there are going to be errors in the census in 2000, and we need to do everything that we can to correct those.

Now, this program that they are advocating is called LUCA, Local Update of Census Addresses, is a good program because it is allowing communities that want to participate to check addresses at this early stage. Unfortunately, not enough of the communities are involved in that, and that is a problem, but those that are involved are finding major problems with the Census Bureau.

Mr. Speaker, there was an article on the AP wire service last Friday identifying exactly the type problem that we thought would happen. A lot of this is anecdotal because we are going to talk about it community by community as we go through this. This is Flathead County in Montana.

''Flathead County officials said they found errors in two-thirds of the first addresses they checked in data provided by the Census Bureau in preparation for the 2000 count. Rick Breckenridge, the head of the county computerized mapping project,'' and this is a fairly advanced community because they have computerized their records, so we should not have the type of errors that the Census Bureau has come up with, ''said of the first 100 addresses supplied by the Census Bureau, there were 67 discrepancies. In one case, the Census Bureau had one address where he had 16; apparently, the Census Bureau missed an apartment complex, he said. In other cases, the bureau had addresses where the county records showed none.

''Breckinridge said the errors could lead to a serious undercount when the 2000 Census is conducted next spring. Clerk and Recorder, Sue Haverfield, said the errors occurred although the county gave the Bureau computer maps of its roads last summer. That information was not incorporated into the Census Bureau maps returned to the county recently. She said, 'Frankly, with the technology now available, what they are providing is ridiculous.'" Mr. Speaker, this is the type of errors we have got to catch, and thank goodness Flathead County caught it, and hopefully we can get it corrected. I encourage every community to be involved to catch these types of errors because the Census Bureau and the administration refuses for them to have a chance to look for the errors at the conclusion of the census as was provided in the 1990 census.