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Senate

The Senate was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Monday, March 22, 2004, at 12 noon.

House of Representatives

THURSDAY, MARCH 18, 2004

The House met at 10 a.m.

Rabbi Elie Spitz, Congregation B'nai Israel, Tustin, California, offered the following prayer:

Master of the Universe, may You bless our great country and its leaders. May You give them, our congressional leaders, the wisdom to discern the path of righteousness.

Scripture teaches: "Today, I place before you life and death, blessing and curse. Choose life."

Sixty years ago this day, the Germans invaded greater Hungary to oust the government and begin deportations of hundreds of thousands of Jews and others. Many of those who survived have modeled an affirmation of life and a passion for justice in the shadow of tragic loss.

May You, the Almighty, guide our congressional leaders toward affirming life and pursuing justice in all that they do. May they find Your light despite shadow.

Infuse their acts with strength and courage, memory and wise purpose, open hearts and outstretched hands.

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 New Jersey (Mr. ANDREWS) come

forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. ANDREWS led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic 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 10 1-minute speeches on each side.

HONORING SPECIALIST MICHAEL WOODLIFF

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

Mr. FOLEY. Mr. Speaker, last Friday in Punta Gorda, Florida, I attended the funeral services for one Specialist Michael Woodliff who was killed in Iraq. He was laid to rest in Arlington Cemetery on Monday.

At the ceremony there was no bitterness, but fond memories for a fallen hero. His friends and families describe his credos as faith, family, country. His father said to me, "Michael died serving his country with pride in defending his homeland."

Michael would not want the political debate that has taken place in the last 24 hours of acrimony and division. Michael would want us not to question the merits of the war in Iraq. He would want us to track the terrorists who killed him and others who killed those in New York on September 11.

Iraq has changed the world as we know it. Libya is cooperating on nuclear weapons. North Korea is talking about peace. Pakistan and India are trying to settle their longstanding skirmish over Kashmir.

Michael Woodliff died defending the honor of this country. Politicians should think of him when they utter words on this floor. His sacrifice to this Nation is a lot better than the speeches I have heard by some.

God bless you, Michael. Thank you for serving your Nation.

THE AMERICAN PEOPLE DESERVE THE TRUTH

(Mr. INSLEE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, one of the reasons this current administration has run up the largest Federal deficit in the universe's history is it has not told the truth to the American people.

The most recent example of that is this story that has come out that the chief actuary for Medicare had numbers indicating that the President's Medicare bill would cost billions of dollars more money than the administration told the American people. Indeed, Richard Foster advised the administration that this bill would cost \$534 billion, when the administration was telling the American people it would cost about \$400 billion.

And the reason this individual was not able to blow the whistle at that time is they effectively said they would

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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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fire him if he told the truth to the American people.

In an e-mail disclosed yesterday in the Wall Street Journal, it was disclosed that this gentleman got an e-mail that said essentially, if you tell Congress or the American people the truth, quote, "The consequences for insubordination are extremely severe," closed quote. We know what that means.

This administration told the person he would be fired if he told the truth to the American people. Well, we disagree with Jack Nicholson: We can handle the truth, and we deserve it.

IRAQ

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

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, a year ago our troops went into Iraq, removed Saddam Hussein from power, and the world is a safer place with him gone. Hussein was a homicidal tyrant who disregarded international law, basic human rights, and invaded his neighbors at will. He supported Palestinian terrorists and suicide bombers. He used chemical weapons of mass destruction against Iran and his own people. He killed thousands and thousands.

Hussein reigned over the people of Iraq in terror and he terrorized the region. Human rights organizations report that women told them that rape was routinely used by Iraqi officials as a means of torture and intimidation. Electric shock, pulling out fingernails, dripping acid on victims' skin, gouging out eyes, were torture methods used by Saddam's regime.

Iraq has come a long way since then. And if we stay the course, we can build a future for Iraq free of this kind of terror and deal a deathblow to the terrorists who rely on murder and coercion and death to advance the terrible agenda by building a free democratic Iraq.

THE RISING COST OF OIL

(Mr. DEFAZIO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, oil hit a new high yesterday. Prices over 2 bucks a gallon in places in the western United States; \$30 billion will be extorted from American consumers this year because OPEC is fixing prices and driving up the cost.

Now, what is the response of the oil men at the Bush White House? A collective yawn and silence from the Bush administration. I guess their buddies in the oil industry are doing pretty well because they are adding on a little margin to these increases in prices.

Now OPEC is violating the rules of the World Trade Organization. We have an administration that is a big fan of the World Trade Organization and rules-based trade. Will they file a com-

plaint on behalf of American consumers because OPEC is breaking the rules? They have told me they will not do that.

They are going to unilaterally disarm Americans in face of this attack against our economy by OPEC because some of their buddies in the oil industry are adding a little margin on and doing okay.

IRAQ

(Mr. MURPHY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. Speaker, 1 year ago the Iraqi people lived under the rule of a man who massacred and tortured his own people by the hundreds of thousands, who supported terrorists groups, and who was a human weapon of mass destruction.

Today 25 million Iraqis have been liberated and an example has been made of Saddam Hussein. Today America is a safer place. Today the world is a safer place because of the actions of our military.

Since September 11, thousands of Guard and reservists have been activated to fight the war on terror and 40 percent of the current force in Iraq is composed of these soldiers. And despite what some critics continue to say, Guard and Reserve service is just as honorable as regular military service. They have left their families and their jobs to serve their Nation. They too have seen the horrors of Saddam Hussein's regime and the gratitude of the Iraqi people as they work hand in hand to rebuild their country.

Today I thank all who serve. I give a special nod to our guardsmen, for when I see them, I do not see half a soldier, but I see twice a patriot.

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE MEDICARE BILL

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

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, Members of the House, we now learn that the efforts to provide a prescription drug benefit to the seniors of this Nation, which they so desperately need, that legislative process has now become a scandal.

We learned in the papers this morning that administration officials were threatened to be fired if they told the Congress the true cost of that legislation. We learned that the Medicare administrator was negotiating to set up a consulting business with the very people who would benefit from this legislation.

We learned that the legislative chairman of the committee was negotiating with the pharmaceutical industry for a contract to a job after leaving Congress. We learned in the New York Times that there is an inquiry now about the offering of a bribe to a Re-

publican Member of Congress to support that legislation.

No wonder the senior citizens do not like this bill. It was never about them. It was only about the special interest and special money and campaign contributions and employment contracts for the Republican administrators and the Republican Members of the House.

ONE YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF THE WAR IN IRAQ

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

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, today this House should recognize that just 1 year ago the campaign started in Iraq to liberate the Iraqi people. A significant part of the war on terrorism, military victory in Iraq, and the capture of Saddam Hussein have helped move the world closer to safety.

Make no mistake about it, the decision to go into Iraq was not taken lightly. And the price of freedom is costly, but we must endure. We must recognize and relate the victories that have been achieved.

Unfortunately, we cannot count on our own news outlets to be objective and complete in this, because just last week, Mr. Speaker, a momentous event occurred that has yet to receive sufficient mention in the press. And this, of course, was the signing of the interim Iraqi Constitution by the 25 signatories.

The press scarcely reported what will likely be the outcome of this constitution and how this will shape the world events for the rest of this century.

Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate our President on his leadership for getting this done. I want to congratulate Ambassador Bremer.

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I want to congratulate our soldiers and our Reservists who dedicate themselves to ensuring as much safety as possible for the people of Iraq. As we focus on the future, we must understand that sacrifices have to be made for democracy and freedom to flourish for generations to come.

CONSEQUENCES FOR TELLING TRUTH ABOUT MEDICARE BILL EXTREMELY SEVERE

(Mr. EMANUEL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, the consequences for insubordination are extremely severe. That was the warning that the Medicare actuary Richard Foster received from his superiors for trying to tell the truth about the real costs of the Medicare bill. The penalties for misleading the American people are extremely severe as well.

Today, we learned that some in the Republican leadership knew all along the real cost of the prescription drug