

The survivors in Galveston were committed to protect their city in the future. They dredged the ship channel and the island was literally raised 17 feet by the dredging. It would be an engineering marvel even today. A massive sea wall was built to protect the city from future hurricanes. The economic loss, property loss, and loss of life had a serious impact on the coastal city.

Although the great storm in Galveston was extraordinary, those who survived and pitched in to help rebuild Galveston were just as extraordinary in their grit and character. Those brave Texans who survived faced the challenges head on, and eventually Galveston rose back from that murky mud.

Galveston has come a long way since that weekend in 1900. It is once again a thriving community, rich in history, opportunity; and the citizens are as resilient as they were 105 years ago today. Galveston did lose, however, its title of "wealthiest city" to another place up the bayou called Houston.

Today, as our Gulf Coast neighbors struggle to put their lives back together after the devastating blow they received from Hurricane Katrina, our thoughts and prayers go out to the victims and families. The devastation caused by this hurricane affects the entire Nation, and we must come together to provide for our friends, our relatives and our neighbors in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama during this time.

On the anniversary of the "great storm," the Galveston storm, the people of southeast Texas are ready and showing their compassionate spirit to those devastated by Katrina. I commend them for their kindness in this time of need. Just as Galveston was rebuilt, we remain optimistic that this recent disaster will be overcome by collective efforts of all Americans. As Americans, we are all in this together, Mr. Speaker; and we need to be on the same page in the hymnal. That is just the way it is.

SMART SECURITY AND THE IRAQI CONSTITUTION

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

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, tonight on the heels of Hurricane Katrina, I cannot help but ask how the victims would have been helped had our National Guard and our military and our Corps of Engineers equipment been made available here at home, not across the world, making trouble instead of fixing troubles here as we responded to Katrina.

Tonight I will discuss what is happening in Iraq since we were last in session 5 weeks ago. For the last 4 years, the Bush administration has often justified the war in Iraq by boasting of the new-found freedoms Iraqi women would

supposedly enjoy thanks to our military intervention.

Many of us remember that staple of the President's stump speech, that the first voter in the Iraqi elections was a 19-year-old woman. In this very Chamber, an Iraqi woman sat with the First Lady during the State of the Union address and flashed the victory sign in celebration of the election that had just taken place.

Well, that was then, Mr. Speaker. That same woman, now Iraq's ambassador to Egypt, is one of several Iraqis now publicly criticizing their nation's draft constitution and its treatment of women's rights.

"When we came back from exile," she said, "we thought we were going to improve rights and the position of women. But look what has happened. We have lost all of the gains that we made over the last 30 years. It is a big disappointment."

In fact, the very second article of the Iraqi Constitution declares that Islam is "the official religion of the state," and that "no law may be enacted that contradicts its established provisions."

You do not have to be a theologian, Mr. Speaker, to know that adherence to strict Islamic tradition is incompatible with equal rights and dignity for women.

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Most depressing of all, perhaps, is that this constitution may actually represent a weakening of women's rights from the previous regime. That is right. Women may have fewer legal protections in this new so-called democracy than they had under the rule of that famous feminist and egalitarian Saddam Hussein. Is this what nearly 1,900 American soldiers have died for, so that Iraq could slip into repressive theocracy? Perhaps this is the noble cause, the cause we have been hearing so much about: second-class citizenship for Iraqi women.

The weapons of mass destruction claim was discredited long ago. The Iraq-al Qaeda link is nonexistent. Now it even appears that the spreading-freedom-and-democracy rationale for this war is also a fraud.

Mr. Speaker, this is just one more reason that we must end this occupation and bring our troops home as soon as possible.

One week from Thursday, I will be holding a hearing here on Capitol Hill where we will hear from experts about how we might achieve military disengagement while still playing a constructive role in the rebuilding of Iraq. Bringing the troops home should be the beginning; it should not be the end of a reassessment of our national security policy. It is time to end the reflex impulse of using military force to solve world conflicts and erroneously planned actions based on citizens' fears. This has the appearance of strength; but as Iraq has shown, it often undermines our national security rather than enhancing it.

I have proposed a new approach. It is called SMART Security. SMART stands for Sensible, Multilateral American Response to Terrorism. SMART is based on the belief that war should be an absolute last resort, to be undertaken only under the most extreme circumstances.

But that does not mean that SMART is not serious and smart about protecting America. It is vigilant about fighting terrorism and weapons of mass destruction. But it does so with strong multilateral alliances, improved intelligence capabilities, vigorous inspection regimes, and aggressive diplomacy. SMART would reshuffle our national security budget. No more billions thrown at outdated Cold War weapons programs. That money would instead be invested in energy independence and other efforts that truly are relevant to the modern security threats we face.

SMART also includes an ambitious international development agenda, to help address the root causes of terrorism: Democracy-building that includes women as equals; education for women and girls; addressing resource scarcity—these are key ingredients to building stable societies in Iraq and elsewhere.

It is my hope and belief that the grievous mistakes we've made in Iraq will lead us to this new, smarter national security policy. SMART Security protects America by relying on the very best of American values—our capacity for global leadership, our dedication to peace and freedom, and our compassion for the people of the world, all people, women and men alike.

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

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

EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take the Special Order time of the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON).

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

There was no objection.

HURRICANE KATRINA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, America has really seen a lot, we have been through a lot, in the past week. We have watched Hurricane Katrina from start to finish. We have seen it form in the Atlantic, sweep across Florida, and enter the gulf. And we have watched in horror as it has devastated the southern portions of Louisiana and Mississippi and Alabama.