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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. PORTER).

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
March 1, 2006.

I hereby appoint the Honorable JON C. PORTER to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

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

PRAYER

Bishop Steven E. Wright, National Chaplain, the American Legion, offered the following prayer:

Our Father who art in heaven, we thank Thee for countless blessings poured out upon the people of this great Nation. From our earliest beginnings we have placed our trust in Thy power to guide and defend us. We reaffirm that trust as we seek Thy strength, Thy wisdom, Thy inspiration and Thy love to be upon our Representatives here in this House in their deliberations and efforts and decisions this day.

We thank Thee for the valiant men and women of our Armed Forces and for our veterans and ask Thee to bless them and their families with safety and with Thy comforting love. We pray likewise for each individual and family unit and ask Thee to particularly bless fathers and mothers with the ability to instill virtue in its many forms in their children.

We express our love and gratitude for Thy tender mercies in all our trials and challenges, and do so with a concluding moment of silence, allowing each here to offer the personal benediction of his or her own heart and faith.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. 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 pro tempore. Will the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. WILSON) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina 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 PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair desires to make an announcement.

After consultation among the Speaker, the majority and minority leaders, the Chair announces that during the joint meeting to hear an address by the Honorable Silvio Berlusconi, Prime Minister of the Republic of Italy, only the doors immediately opposite the Speaker and those on his right and left will be open.

No one will be allowed on the floor of the House who does not have the privilege of the floor of the House.

Due to the large attendance that is anticipated, the Chair feels the rule regarding the privilege of the floor must be strictly adhered to.

Children of Members will not be permitted on the floor, and the cooperation of all Members is requested.

The practice of reserving seats prior to the joint meeting by placard will

not be allowed. Members may reserve their seats by physical presence only following the security sweep of the Chamber.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of Thursday, February 16, 2006, the House stands in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 3 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

□ 1055

JOINT MEETING OF THE HOUSE AND SENATE TO HEAR AN ADDRESS BY THE HONORABLE SILVIO BERLUSCONI, PRIME MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC OF ITALY

The Speaker of the House presided.

The Deputy Sergeant at Arms, Mrs. Kerri Hanley, announced the Vice President and Members of the U.S. Senate who entered the Hall of the House of Representatives, the Vice President taking the chair at the right of the Speaker, and the Members of the Senate the seats reserved for them.

The SPEAKER. The Chair appoints as members of the committee on the part of the House to escort the Honorable Silvio Berlusconi, the Prime Minister of the Republic of Italy, into the Chamber:

The gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER);

The gentleman from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT);

The gentleman from New York (Mr. FOSSELLA);

The gentleman from California (Mr. GALLEGLY);

The gentleman from Florida (Mr. MICA);

The gentleman from Ohio (Mr. TIBERI);

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

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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The gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOUNG);

The gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI);

The gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER);

The gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. LARSON);

The gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PASCRELL);

The gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. DOYLE);

The gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN); and

The gentleman from California (Mr. THOMPSON).

The VICE PRESIDENT. The President of the Senate, at the direction of that body, appoints the following Senators as members of the committee on the part of the Senate to escort the Honorable Silvio Berlusconi, the Prime Minister of the Republic of Italy, into the House Chamber:

The Senator from Tennessee (Mr. FRIST);

The Senator from Kentucky (Mr. MCCONNELL);

The Senator from Alaska (Mr. STEVENS);

The Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. SANTORUM);

The Senator from New Mexico (Mr. DOMENICI);

The Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN);

The Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY);

The Senator from New York (Mrs. CLINTON); and

The Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ).

The Deputy Sergeant at Arms announced the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps, His Excellency Roble Olhaye, Ambassador from the Republic of Djibouti.

The Dean of the Diplomatic Corps entered the Hall of the House of Representatives and took the seat reserved for him.

The Deputy Sergeant at Arms announced the Cabinet of the President of the United States.

The Members of the Cabinet of the President of the United States entered the Hall of the House of Representatives and took the seats reserved for them in front of the Speaker's rostrum.

At 11 o'clock and 7 minutes a.m., the Deputy Sergeant at Arms announced the Honorable Silvio Berlusconi, Prime Minister of the Republic of Italy.

The Prime Minister of the Republic of Italy, escorted by the committee of Senators and Representatives, entered the Hall of the House of Representatives and stood at the Clerk's desk.

[Applause, the Members rising.]

The SPEAKER. Members of the Congress, it is my great privilege and I deem it a high honor and a personal pleasure to present to you the Honorable Silvio Berlusconi, Prime Minister of the Republic of Italy.

[Applause, the Members rising.]

ADDRESS BY THE HONORABLE SILVIO BERLUSCONI, PRIME MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC OF ITALY

[Spoken in English:]

Prime Minister BERLUSCONI. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Vice President, distinguished Members of Congress, it is an extraordinary honor to be invited to speak before you in the Capitol building, one of the great temples of democracy. I speak in representation and in the name of a country that has a deep friendship with the United States and is bound to your country by ties which go back many centuries.

Many American citizens have Italian roots. For them, the United States was a land of opportunity that welcomed them generously, and they contributed their intelligence and their labor to help make America great. And I am proud to see that so many Italian-Americans are today Members of the Congress of the greatest democracy in the world.

For my generation of Italians, the United States is the beacon of liberty, of civil and economic progress.

I will always be grateful to the United States for having saved my country from fascism and Nazism at the cost of so many young American lives. I will always be grateful to the United States for defending Europe from the Soviet threat in the long decades of the Cold War. By devoting so much to this victorious struggle against communism, the United States enabled us Europeans to employ our precious resources in the recovery and development of our economies.

I will always be grateful to the United States for having helped my country to climb out of poverty and achieve growth and prosperity after the Second World War thanks to the generosity of the Marshall Plan.

And today I am still grateful to the United States for the high price in lives you continue to pay in the fight against terrorism to assure our common security and defend human rights around the world.

As I will never tire of repeating, when I see your flag, I do not merely see the flag of a great country. Above all, I see a symbol, a universal symbol of freedom and democracy.

[Spoken in Italian:]

Mr. Speaker, these sentiments have inspired all of my political activity and the action of the governments that I have had the honor of leading.

The United States has always been able to count on a steadfast, loyal ally of the United States, ready to stand by you in defending liberty. We have demonstrated this wherever Italy's tangible help has been required, and we are deeply proud of this contribution.

Some 40,000 of our troops are assigned exclusively to peacekeeping operations.

In Afghanistan, we are now commanding NATO's ISAF mission.

In Iraq, we are involved in bringing peace and building democracy.

In the Balkans, Italy is now commanding the missions in Kosovo and Bosnia Herzegovina.

We are also present in the Middle East, in Sudan and other parts of the world, and in every other place where gaping wounds must be healed.

Mr. Speaker, before the barbaric attacks of September 11, Western countries basked in the certainty of their security. They basked in the certainty that, after the fall of the Berlin Wall, nothing could interfere with their civil and democratic life.

In 2001, in the early days of my second government, I was called to chair the G8 summit in Genoa. After the conclusion of the summit's official program, the final dinner became a dinner among friends. At one point that evening, I sat back slightly from the table, almost an external observer, in order to enjoy the cordial discussion among the leaders of the largest industrial countries of the world.

President Bush was chatting amiably with Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan. Pearl Harbor and Hiroshima were but a distant memory. Prime Minister Blair was joking with Chancellor Schroeder. And the President of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin, was also talking with President Bush. The tragedy of the Second World War and the Cold War, which had lasted for so many years, was forgotten. I felt great pleasure inside. I thought that the world had in fact changed, and how different and peaceful it was the world we were handing to our children. An age of lasting peace beckoned.

But just a few short months afterwards, the unthinkable occurred.

September 11 marked the beginning of an entirely different type of war from those that spilled the blood of humankind in centuries past. It is not a conflict between states, nor a clash of civilizations, because it is not an attack by Islam on the West. The moderate Islam that is allied with Western democracies is itself a target of terrorists. Rather, this is an attack by radical fundamentalism, which uses terrorism against the advance of democracy in the world and dialogue among civilizations.

Western democracies find themselves facing an assault by extremist organizations that strike at the innocent and threaten the basic values on which our civilization is founded.

Democratic governments have a daunting task. They must ensure the security of their citizens and guarantee that they can live free from fear.

This is the new frontier of liberty.

Mr. Speaker, I am firmly convinced that in addition to the generous effort by your great country, a grand alliance of all democracies is needed to defend this frontier. It is only by joining the efforts of all the democracies on all continents that we will be able to free the world from the threat of international terrorism, from the fear of aggression by the forces of evil.