

my sister's name in. She couldn't be here. I called her and told her that I put her name on the wall. I had an opportunity to sign it.

I know that we in the Congress, all of us, are a part of making sure that we have enough research to be able to look and find ways that either we can prevent cancer from happening, or find medicines and procedures that can take away the issue of cancer. I know there is a commitment by 2015 to eradicate all cancer here in the U.S. So that is very, very important.

I just wanted to lay that out because I know we wanted to all commend them. We have serious issues that we are talking about, but at the same time, Mr. Speaker, we have got to lay out the commitment of those who did come up here.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Thank you, Mr. MEEK. I am glad you touched on that. I lost both my grandmothers to lung cancer, and, unfortunately, in America we all know someone who has been touched by cancer, and it is so incredibly important that Congress redouble its effort and commitment to funding the research so that in our lifetimes as 30-somethings, we can see a cure for not just lung cancer, but cancer of all types in our lifetime and during our congressional careers. So I know we all are committed to that.

Mr. DELAHUNT, I think we are wrapping up. Do you have any additional items to add?

Mr. DELAHUNT. Again, I would say that I think what is being revealed to the American people is that this administration is really driven by politics.

We hear now about immigration and border protection, but for 6 years they have been the majority in this body, they have been the majority in the Senate and have owned the White House, they had an opportunity to vote and to support Democratic proposals which would have strengthened border security. And a comparison, I think, is in order here right now.

The average number of new Border Patrol agents that were added per year during the Clinton administration was 642; during the Bush administration, 411. Immigration fraud cases that were completed in 1995, almost 6,500; in 2003, on the average, 1,300.

And what I find particularly fascinating is those cases that were filed against employers for hiring illegal immigrants, in 1999 there were some 417. In 2004, there were three.

The reality is the resources were never provided to enforce the existing laws that would have served us well, and now we are hearing about border protection. There is no other conclusion that one can reasonably reach other than it is great politics in an election year to energize the so-called base. But it is not fair to the American people on an issue that really needs to be debated in a respectful and civil way and analyzed appropriately.

#### THE OFFICIAL TRUTH SQUAD

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MCHENRY). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. PRICE) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate once again the opportunity to come before the House of Representatives tonight and bring the latest version of the Official Truth Squad.

You have heard a lot of information over the last hour, much of which, in terms of its tenor and its tone, was the genesis for the Official Truth Squad, because what we as Republican freshmen Members of Congress determined about a year or a little over a year ago was that there was an awful lot of disinformation and misinformation and distortion and demagoguery and division, attempting to divide the Nation in such a way that it did a disservice to everybody. And, Mr. Speaker, you have heard an awful lot of that over the last hour.

We have got some very serious things to talk about tonight, but I wanted to spend a few moments and just try to lower the temperature a little bit, try to decrease the calamity that you have just heard. You have heard a lot of discussion about all sorts of issues, mostly national security issues. You have heard some claims about the 9/11 Commission and how none of the recommendations of the 9/11 Commission have been proposed or adopted by Congress.

But what the Official Truth Squad is all about is about truth. It is about fact. It is about real things. And one of our favorite quotes comes from Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, who had just a great quote. He said that everyone is entitled to their own opinion, but nobody is entitled to their own facts. Everyone is entitled to their own opinion, but not their own facts. And that is important, Mr. Speaker, because when you hear all these things, these accusations and incredible distortions that are leveled, very rarely are they ever rooted in fact.

And I am here to give you a few instances of fact, and I just want to spend a few moments to talk about national security and the 9/11 Commission recommendations because the distortions have been phenomenal.

We have on the other side of the aisle, the Democrat side of the aisle, a leader who has said within the last 2 weeks that she didn't believe that the capture of Osama bin Laden would make America any safer. That is a stunning statement from the individual who wants to be third in line to the Presidency, a stunning statement. She has also, as well as so many individuals on the other side have, called for the implementation of the recommendations of the 9/11 Commission. Well, in fact, what they ought to do is look in the mirror or talk to their colleagues, because Capitol Hill Democrats have repeatedly, repeatedly opposed legislation implementing rec-

ommendations of the 9/11 Commission that were meant to strengthen America's national security and prevent further terrorist attacks. And I have just got a couple of them here for you, Mr. Speaker, that I would like to share with you.

The 9/11 Commission stated: "The government has made significant strides in using terrorism finance as an intelligence tool."

□ 2200

Yet the Democrats voted, 174 of them voted "no." Voted "no" for the bill that would allow us to continue to use that kind of intelligence in making certain that we can capture terrorists, find terrorists. "No."

The 9/11 Commission recommendation, they call for its adoption and its implementation. We propose it on the floor of the House in a responsible way, in a positive way to try to make America safer, and what do the vast majority of the Democrats on the other side of the aisle do? Vote "no," 174 of them.

The 9/11 Commission says, "The REAL ID Act has established statute standards for State-issued IDs acceptable for Federal purposes, though State compliance needs to be closely monitored."

So the REAL ID Act that this House passed that was signed into law with the good work of a Republican House and a Republican Senate and signed by the President, how many folks on the other side of the aisle, our good friends who have just been clamoring for adoption of the 9/11 recommendations, how many supported it? Well, I will tell you that 152, the vast majority of them, voted "no," voted "no" on the REAL ID Act.

Again, the 9/11 Commission says, the House and the Senate have taken positive steps, but Secretary Chertoff and his team still report to too many bosses. The House and the Senate Homeland Security Committees should have exclusive jurisdiction over all counterterrorism functions of the Department of Homeland Security.

And when that recommendation of the 9/11 Commission is proposed on the floor of the House, where are our friends on the other side of the aisle who clamor over and over for adoption of these recommendations? The majority of them, 120, vote "no," vote "no," Mr. Speaker.

So as a member of the Official Truth Squad, as an individual who has been frustrated, when I go home and talk to folks, they want us to work together. And I encourage individuals to work together. These are not Republican problems that we have or Democrat problems, they are American problems, they are American challenges.

So I encourage my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to throw fewer stones, throw fewer barbs, be less political. I know it is an election season, and that is fine, but there are real problems and real challenges to solve.

We have real solutions, and we encourage and invite our colleagues on

the other side of the aisle to indeed join us in solving these issues, especially, especially in the area of national security.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I am going to be joined tonight by a number of individuals who want to talk about a very, very serious issue as it relates to not just our Nation, but indeed the world. And that is, again, an attempt to try to lower the temperature, try to lower the pressure points and talk objectively and within reason about the issue of nations, about the issue of religion, about the issue that has grown into a firestorm with the Pope's comments that I believe have been taken out of proportion.

And to open that, I would like to just share a comment from the Pope. And we all know the comments that have been made and how they have been taken most recently. And the quote that I find most instructive from the Pope is this. It says, "For the careful reader of my text, it is clear that I in no way wanted to make mine the negative words pronounced by the medieval emperor, and their polemical content does not reflect my personal conviction."

I think that is a powerful statement, Mr. Speaker. Powerful statement. And what the Pope has attempted to do, I believe, is to try to talk within reason about the issue of religion and about the issue of politics, because it is extremely important for us as a world at this stage right now.

The response that has been received, however, has not been as reasoned. And this is a quote from a branch of al Qaeda, and it is troubling, Mr. Speaker, it is troubling, these words. "We tell the worshiper of the cross, the Pope, that you and that the West will be defeated, as is the case in Iraq and Afghanistan and Chechnya. We shall break the cross and spill the wine. God will help Muslims to conquer Rome. God, enable us to slit their throats and make their money and descendants the bounty of the Mujahadin."

That is a quote, Mr. Speaker. So I would call on all individuals of goodwill, all Christians, all Jews, all Muslims, all members of any religion around the world to take a deep breath, to take a step back. This kind of verbal assault does nothing to assist us in the world community to solve any of the challenges that we have.

I would point to a comment that was in the L.A. Times where they noted that the Pope paused twice during his speech to remind the audience that he was quoting another individual and departing from his prepared text. The Pope twice reminded the audience that he was quoting someone else, an indication that he was clearly aware of the sensitivity of his comments.

Finally, there was a press communication that was put out by the Vatican that said that the Pope's option in favor of interreligious and intercultural dialogue is equally unequivocal. In his meeting with representatives of

the Muslim communities in Cologne, Germany, on August 20, 2005, he said that such dialogue between Christians and Muslim "cannot be reduced to an optional extra. The lessons of the past must help us to avoid repeating the same mistakes. We must seek paths of reconciliation and learn to live with respect for each other's identity."

So it is in that context, Mr. Speaker, that we open the discussion tonight with some good colleagues and good friends who are reasoned in their discussion and their perspective on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be joined by many of them this evening. I wish to introduce and yield to the gentlewoman from Pennsylvania (Ms. HART), who I, as just a freshman member of the Republican Conference, have found to be a stalwart individual, individual who truly speaks the truth, and an individual whom I know her heart is good. I yield to my good friend, Congresswoman HART from Pennsylvania.

Ms. HART. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding and for his comments. You know, I am pleased that we have joined the Official Truth Squad, because the main reason why several of us wanted to be on the floor tonight was to further discuss and hopefully enlighten each other and anybody who may be listening about what Pope Benedict was really talking about in Regensburg.

Unfortunately, there was a significant amount of negative response and I believe inaccurate characterizations of the speech, or actually the class he was teaching as Regensburg, a university where he taught.

And the discussion was regarding many things, but I think his focus was a hopefulness that faith and reason should always be joined together. Many of us have been speaking of this to each other, kind of challenging each other in our thought processes about why the reaction to his speech was so negative, and, in fact, why he was accused of being critical of Islam in the comments that he cited that were made in the Middle Ages during a conversation, an intellectual conversation, between a Christian and a Muslim about their faith, when at the time they could speak, I guess, honestly and peacefully to each other.

Pope Benedict discussed it, and I think it is important that his actual words be cited. I know that Congressman MURPHY wants to say a few things about that, but I want to open with the passage that so many people have been decrying. He said, "Show me just what Mohammed brought that was new."

Now, this is a quote. This is not the Pope's words. He is quoting from a Byzantine emperor, Manuel II Palaeologus, and his discussion with a man they called an educated Persian on the subject of Christianity and Islam.

And the quote from the Byzantine Emperor was, "Show me just what Mohammed brought that was new, and there you will find things only evil and

inhuman, such as his command to spread by the sword the faith he preached."

The emperor goes on to explain in detail the reasons why spreading the faith through violence is something unreasonable. Violence is incompatible with the nature of God and the nature of the soul.

It does not end there, however. The statement is, "God is not pleased by blood, and not acting reasonably is contrary to God's nature. Faith is born of the soul, not the body. Whoever would lead someone to faith needs the ability to speak well and reason properly without violence and threats. To convince a reasonable soul, one does not need a strong arm or weapons of any kind or any other means of threatening a person with death."

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I think it is extremely important that we appreciate that those were not the Pope's words, correct?

Ms. HART. Mr. Speaker, he was quoting as an example of a discussion between two educated people of different faiths.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I think that is incredibly important. I do not think we can repeat that often enough, given the response that has been seen. These were not the Pope's words. He was using this quote from 600 years ago as an instructive tool.

I yield.

Ms. HART. I thank the gentleman.

Yes. I mean, his goal was to challenge those faiths today, not just Christians, not just Jews, not just those of the Islamic faith, not just anyone in particular, but everyone to be challenged, to always include together in their thoughts and their discussion and discourse with others, sure their faith as a basis, but reason as well.

And I believe today, unfortunately, much of the discourse, and certainly the response, was completely inappropriate to what the Pope was teaching that day in Regensburg; was exactly, unfortunately, an illustration of a radical, really, faith without reason.

In fact, it was illustrated as without reason in the reaction that we saw, that was reported in the news, much of which was reported as being a response to what the Pope said; you know, threats on lives, threats on the Pope's life, unfortunately a murder of an Italian nun, and basically a demand that the Pope apologize.

Now, clearly he did apologize for the reaction to his words, but I believe that he had hoped and expected that his words would stand as stated. That it is a call to all people of all faiths to enter a discourse; do not abandon your faith, but bring along with it the reason and the goal of being peaceful-minded and having the goal of getting along with those of other faiths as the two gentlemen did who he cited in his quote.

I would be interested in yielding to Mr. MURPHY, if that is all right with you, Mr. PRICE?

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Absolutely. I appreciate so much the importance of connecting faith and reason, because I think that is what the Pope has challenged all of us to do is to reflect upon our own faith.

Clearly we are in a point in this world now where there are individuals who are not desirous of joining faith and reason together. And so I think we ought to be commending the Pope for bringing forward this incredibly important issue that will allow us, should we be able to navigate these waters well, that will allow us to continue to survive in a world at peace.

Ms. HART. Hopefully, if I may move us in the direction of a discourse without threats of violence, without acts of violence, and toward the goal that all of these leaders profess to have, at least most of them, which is peace.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Which is, in fact, the end point in the goal of all of the great religions.

Ms. HART. That is right.

□ 2215

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. I welcome my good friend from Pennsylvania, as well, Dr. MURPHY, joining us this evening. I look forward to his comments.

Mr. MURPHY. Thank you.

I thank the gentleman for yielding and the gentlewoman from Pennsylvania, also, to spend some time on some of the important points in our world today. We are so very deeply concerned that throughout our world and really throughout the history of humankind, so many people have lost their lives and blood has been shed and cities have been burned and armies have been massed, unfortunately, in the name of religion. It has sometimes and very frequently distorted its goals.

I wanted to start off by going back to some of the speech that Pope Benedict gave. In a sentence that followed his quote under question again, where he is continuing his quote about the emperor and saying, The emperor, after having expressed himself so forcefully, goes on to explain in detail the reasons why spreading the faith through violence is something unreasonable. Violence is incompatible with the nature of God and the nature of the soul. "God," he says, "is not pleased by blood, and not acting reasonably is contrary to God's nature. Faith is born of the soul, not the body. Whoever would lead someone to faith needs the ability to speak well and to reason properly without violence and threats. To convince a reasonable soul, one does not need a strong arm, or weapons of any kind, or any other means of threatening a person with death."

As I read this, I am also struck by some of the similarity with an article about religious tolerance in Islam. There are several quotes which I need to read into the record, too, to talk about some things we need to understand as Americans and the world needs to understand. Our nation, predominantly a Christian nation and one

that is founded on many of those principles and very much a part of our history, our Constitution and our laws, there is so much we need to learn. I say these things not in any kind of way of being conciliatory but a way of saying we need to approach things with understanding and not the violence which is occurring around the world. It is so disturbing to see churches burned, to see a nun shot, to see calls and crying out for assassinations. This is not the way to seek peace.

Let me read here from this article on religious intolerance in Islam about piety, where the author, Dr. Abdullah M. Khouj, writes:

Piety eliminates any type of racial, social or national discrimination. Religious discrimination is completely incompatible with Islam. Islam was revealed in a part of the world and at a time when the majority of people were polytheists. Islam came and showed people the need to believe in one God as the only way to understand themselves and to improve their lives. Allah confirmed to the prophet that we must believe all previous messengers and that we must reach a level of understanding with other religions. He says: "Say ye: 'We believe in God and the revelation given to us, and to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob and the tribes, and that given to Moses and Jesus, and that given to all prophets from their Lord: We make no difference between one and another of them: And we bow to God in Islam.'"

The author goes on to say:

And when a Muslim discusses religion with a non-Muslim, Allah enjoins us to speak with reason and good manners.

Again he continues:

"And dispute ye not with the People of the Book, except with means better than mere disputation, unless it be with those of them who inflict wrong and injury: But say, 'We believe in the revelation which has come down to us and that which came down to you. Our God and your God is one; and it is to him we bow in Islam.'"

Again the author continues:

Indeed, Allah requires us to ensure that religious discussion never be allowed to become violent.

Finally he quotes:

"Let there be no compulsion in religion. Truth stands out clear from error. Whoever rejects evil and believes in God hath grasped the most trustworthy hand-hold that never breaks. And God heareth and knoweth all things."

As I read those words that have come from the Islamic Center, I am struck that really throughout history, so many faiths and governments have dealt with religious conflict. Early this evening, in fact, I was meeting with folks from Northern Ireland, from Ireland and the United Kingdom who have themselves been dealing with a conflict which has gone on more predominantly for the last few decades but really for centuries of conflicts between Catho-

lics and Protestants/Christians in Northern Ireland. Much blood has been shed. There have been revolutions. There has been a peace agreement which has been in place since 1998 but a government is not yet set. It is true these things we have to remember, that when people have religious intolerance and wars and bloodshed ensues, it is of terrible consequence.

One of the reasons we are here today is to say that we are not here to support any kind of intolerance. We are here to call the world to do what it should do in terms of those principles of religious freedom which are so important for bringing peace to the world.

Here let me call upon something that George Washington said. He said, back in 1792, "Of all animosities which have existed among mankind, those which are caused by difference of sentiments in religion appear to be most inveterate and distressing and ought most to be deprecated. I was in hopes that the enlightened and liberal policy which has marked the present age would at least have reconciled Christians of every denomination so far that we should never again see the religious disputes carried to such a pitch as to endanger the peace of society."

He goes to say, in 1775:

"As the contempt of the religion of a country by ridiculing any of its ceremonies or affronting its ministers or votaries has ever been deeply resented, you are to be particularly careful to restrain every officer from such imprudence and folly and to punish any and every instance of it," he was saying to Benedict Arnold.

"On the other hand," Washington continues, "as far as lies in your power, you are to protect and support the free exercise of religion of the country and the undisturbed enjoyment of the rights of conscience in religious matters with your utmost influence and authority."

It would seem to me at that time, as Washington has said, as so many countries have dealt with these issues, that what we need to have is not more violence, not more accusations, not more calls for assassinations and murders and burnings, not more continuation of war, hiding behind these with some extremists who have themselves captured or are hiding behind some aspects of faith, but understand that we are in a world that can little tolerate these burnings, these assassinations, these murders but on one which really must call for an interfaith dialogue, of patience, of understanding; truly seeing what the words are and not using them as some sort of vehicle for more incendiary language.

There is so much that we need to use and perhaps, in the Pope's words, those should really be a stepping-off point to continue this dialogue, not to continue on with this violence which we are seeing. The world can little afford more war. As I watched also the comments of the United Nations today from leaders to continue these comments, this is

not the way the world should be operating. This is not the way the U.N. should be operating. My hope is that every American of every faith, that every man or woman of the cloth of every faith, not only here in the United States but throughout the world, sees this as an opportunity to be called upon by their Maker to speak out and say that if there is any hope for us in this world, if there is any hope for the faiths of which we adhere, that this is the time above all times when truth and dialogue are needed to discuss things rather than swords.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. What a wonderful picture you paint. I thank you so much for those remarkable words. It is not often that we get the opportunity here in Congress to talk about these overarching issues and matters that come before us. And what a beautiful quote you read from the father of our country, George Washington, to talk about conscience and to talk about religious liberty and religious freedom. If ever there was a nation that was founded upon the principle of religious tolerance, I would suspect that it is indeed the United States of America. And maybe it is this discussion tonight that begins that call to individuals truly across America and around the world to enter into that dialogue that you talk about, because it is so extremely important that we turn away from the sword, that we move toward a path of discussion and dialogue and of joining together faith and reason so that we can walk together in peace as opposed to challenge each other to arms which was so distressing, as you mentioned, to see at the United Nations today. I was so distressed to see so many of the comments that were made there.

We are joined as well by my dear friend and colleague in the freshman class, Mr. FORTENBERRY from Nebraska, who is a man of deep faith, I know, and a dear friend. I look forward to your comments on our discussion this evening.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. I thank the gentleman from Georgia for coordinating tonight's discussion, and I thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania as well for his beautiful insights that he read that, as you so well said, have helped us create an opportunity not just tonight but through the events of the day, the difficult tensions, nonetheless, maybe there is a moment here which will allow us to explore, to unpack the inextricable link between faith and reason.

I would like to tell a story, though, that might augment some of these reflections. As a much younger man, I spent a considerable amount of time in the Middle East and I was in a country that was predominantly Moslem and was being hosted by a Moslem family who were extraordinarily generous to me in welcoming me into their home. They lived in an oasis area that was just rich in agricultural production. Their neighbor was a Christian man.

My host made a point to introduce me to him, knowing of my own faith tradition. He very humbly showed me, because I did not understand the language, the nature of their community, the nature of the way they lived. If I recall correctly, he took his Christian neighbor's hand, bowed down and gave it a kiss to show again the unity, in spite of the distinctions that are their faith tradition, the ability to live next to one another out of respect and humility, out of respect perhaps for a higher good, a higher calling to be a member of the human family. And perhaps again what has already been discussed tonight in terms of the Pope's comments, it gives us an opportunity to explore that beautiful wedding of faith and reason as it flows out of the very nature of the divine.

If you recall, though, the Pope's very first writing, his first encyclical, was *Deus Caritas Est*, God is Love. If I could read some reflections on that, they are these:

"The Holy Father has already made clear in *Deus Caritas Est* that love of our neighbor is not primarily a government project, that justice is not enough, and often is not even a beginning. We simply cannot just talk of faith and justice without beginning and ending in charity and the reasons for it." In other words, the reasonableness of acting in faith or acting out faith in love and the unreasonableness or the irrationality of imposing the faith, particularly, or enforcing a faith particularly through violence. I think again the opportunity to unpack that discussion tonight is extraordinary.

I appreciate the gentleman's allowing me a little bits of time to speak.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. I thank the gentleman so much from Nebraska for those comments and for that experience.

I think that we can all hearken back to those times in our lives when we shared those experiences with individuals of a different faith and recognize when you get right down to it, the core of each of the great religions in this world is the ability or the call to live together in peace. I think that is what the Pope was attempting to move us as a world in the direction of discussing that.

I yield to my good friend from Pennsylvania.

Ms. HART. I thank the gentleman from Georgia and also want to reflect for a moment on the statement of the gentleman from Nebraska regarding the Pope's statement and also what the goal was, a reflection by a Father James Schall.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. If the gentleman will yield, thank you for quoting the source. I didn't say that earlier.

Ms. HART. Which both he and I have read, was an outstanding analysis of the speech that the Pope made. After he cited what the Holy Father had said in the *Deus Caritas Est*, in the statement of Love Thy Neighbor, the anal-

ysis goes on to say that this speech, after that, was his second shot of trying to get us all to realize what is wrong with our current world, with the state of our current world and the state of mind of our current world. According to Father Schall, these shots are designed to do what all good intellectual battle does, namely, to make it possible for us to see again what is true and to live it.

□ 2230

My colleague from Nebraska's real-life experience that shows that many people do live it and that those are the examples that we need to see more of. Unfortunately, our news carries with it from day-to-day stories of violence that those carrying it out carry out in the name of God, Allah, or the name of their faith.

Congressman MURPHY reflected on the problems in Northern Ireland, again, violence carried out often in the name of faith. It is such a misuse of the teachings in the Old Testament, in the New Testament, and what most people would accept as a, I would say, progressive interpretation of the Koran, that that is not encouraged. What is encouraged is this peaceful dialogue. What is encouraged is this goal of us finding a way towards peace.

The analysis by many in the days since the Pope's speech at Regensburg I think are fortunately giving a second look, after the unfortunate analysis in the New York Times which criticized him for his words. Phillip Blond from the International Herald Tribune made a statement that I think is extremely poignant and to the point. He said, "Secular reason as value free and religiously neutral is meant to police interactions." Unfortunately, it really doesn't always work for us.

He states, "Little wonder then that religious people are so unable to interact about what is most crucial to them. Pope Benedict wants to change this. He wishes to restore the last time the great faiths talked to each other when he cited the High Middle Ages, when faith and reason were not separated and Christians could criticize Islamic conceptions of God and Muslims could do likewise. His address was intended to inaugurate an authentic theological engagement between the faiths. That this has been so misunderstood only stresses the urgency of this application."

I think those are the telling words we must take to heart here in the United States, in the Middle East, in Europe, throughout the world, as we seek to solve the serious problems we face: Nuclear arms in the hands of Iran, the wars that we face on extremists in Afghanistan, in Iraq, the challenges we face in our own country where people are not willing to engage and discuss the truth on a level of honesty. It is a challenge to all of us.

I am very pleased that we are taking the opportunity tonight to really analyze it a little bit more, to understand it a little bit more.

I yield back to the gentleman.

Mr. MURPHY. If I may ask the gentleman to yield to me for a moment, I appreciate that. I want to follow up with some things that my colleague from Pennsylvania was saying as part of this.

Again it is important as our words are heard, my colleagues and Mr. Speaker, that we are not standing here in a conciliatory posture. This is not a matter of asking people to surrender their beliefs or their strength or undercut that which is the basis of our Constitution. It is in fact something that strengthens it.

An article that was written in Time Magazine that just appeared commented here about an analysis of things that Pope Benedict said. It is important to note that this article, by Jeff Israely, said that "Pope Benedict spoke about the need for the West." He was saying "His questions are not reserved for the Islamic world, as he has done before. Benedict spoke about the need for the West, especially Europe, to reverse its tendency towards godless secularism. He believes that the gift of reason that he cherishes in Christianity has been warped by the West into an absolutist doctrine and that, he believes, prevents the opening of a productive channel for dialogue with a more faithful Islamic society. Reason and faith, he insists, must come together in a new way."

This is so important for where we are in this crossroads of the world. When I listened today to the President of Iran and the President of Venezuela, or listening to these incendiary words, calling out more criticism and calls for more violence among so many, and when these are underscored and peppered by comments that are meant to provoke violence on the basis of faith, this is the very thing that I believe that the Pope was trying to prevent. Unfortunately, his words were distorted, misquoted, and, in some cases, not quoted fully at all. That is in part why we are here tonight to talk about it in more detail.

Our role here as Members of Congress is punctuated and exentuated by that of which when we took our oath of office to uphold the Constitution of the United States, I remind us all that here in the very Preamble of the Constitution, where we are here to form a more perfect union, establish justice, ensure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense and promote the general welfare, here is where it is important to say that we are calling for reason and dialogue as it comes to questions of faith, and that should be something we should all agree to.

But we must also recognize that we cannot give in to those who continue to threaten violence, who would attack, would kill and do anything in that manner. We will continue to defend those principles of our Nation.

But it is something that we are so keenly aware of, because we have struggled with this as a nation. One of

the reasons in our own Bill of Rights we have freedom of speech, which was included, and that itself could not have been part of the initial Constitution in 1787, we recall. They couldn't even agree how to put that in. That required another Constitutional amendment that they agreed to and didn't get in for a couple years when the States had to ratify those amendments.

This was the time when George Washington was also trying to keep our Nation together as its first President. But he had here, and this is another quote from 1783, at that time he said, "I now make it my earnest prayer, that God would have you, and the State over which you preside, in his holy protection, that he would incline the hearts of the Citizens to cultivate a spirit of subordination and obedience to Government, to entertain a brotherly affection and love for one another, for their fellow Citizens of the United States at large, and particularly for their brethren who have served in the field, and finally, he would most graciously be pleased to dispose us all, to do Justice, to love mercy, and to demean ourselves with that charity, humility and pacific temper of mind which were the Characteristics of the Divine Author of our blessed Religion, and without a humble imitation of whose example in these things we can never hope to be a happy Nation."

Indeed it is our own Nation which has struggled with issues of religious freedom, freedom of the press, freedom of the person, habeas corpus, all of those things which are part of it. We have not done those struggles without bloodshed. We have faced our own wars here, our own problems, our own riots, our own violence. And as we reflect upon those, that is perhaps why tonight we are particularly motivated to say these aspects of continuing to take things out of context, to misrepresent them and to call upon more violence, simply have to stop and the strength of our Nation and people must stand behind them.

Let me also add this, as I have talked to citizens in my district since these comments were made and watched the reactions. It is in many ways to serve as a wake-up call for all of us, that there are those factions, and I do not believe for one second these are the beliefs of all Muslims, but there are those factions who use this as an excuse to an attack the West, use it as an excuse to attack those who are Christians or Jews or even other Muslims.

Those things cannot be tolerated by anybody in the world. It is unfortunate, and yet I hope it is only a temporary thing and it is fixed soon. The U.N. has been silent on those principle. And I would hope in the midst of all this other vituperative rhetoric that has taken place in the U.N. today and continues around the world, that leaders of nations, leaders of faith, will speak out and say this is not the way we should operate as democracies and as a people who want to live together in peace.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. I thank you so much. The silence truly has been deafening, and it is disappointing and it is disconcerting. But as a Christian, but a non-Catholic, I have struggled and attempted to find folks who have a perspective on what has occurred over the past number of days, and there are a couple individuals that I find that have given some hope. Some people have called back through history and brought my attention back to the fact that religions can grow, that spirituality can grow.

There is a quote that I would like to share before I yield again from Michael Potemra, who said, "The Koran is one of the loveliest books ever written, a distillation of monotheism that is full of spiritual wisdom, and I never fail to profit from the reading of it. But the global mainstream of Koran interpretation stresses passages that are harmful and slights those that are irenic. The Pope's words approached without quite touching this unpleasant truth. As a result of the current riots, there will be even more Western voices calling for 'a clash of civilizations against Islam itself.' Before we decide that Islam cannot be saved from its darker side, we should call to mind Christian history. Less than 150 years ago, Pope Pius IX was still formally condemning freedom of religion as a heretical notion, and John Calvin, the spiritual progenitor of the theology of America's Founding Fathers, ran a cruel theocracy in Geneva that, among other things, executed the theologian Servetus for his heresy."

I might not agree with all of that. However, I think it is important to appreciate his conclusion, and that is that "religions acted on by the spirit can change and our Muslim brothers and sisters needs our prayers and they need us to support the forces among them that are resisting the lure of religious hatred."

That ends the quote. I would be happy to yield to my good friend from Nebraska.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. I would like to thank the gentleman from Georgia. I would like to return to some of the commentary that the gentleman from Pennsylvania made, because in our founding documents, in another of our founding documents, the Declaration of Independence, here are the words. "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, and are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights, and among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

In other words, the founding document in a certain sense separated the institution of church and state, yet at the same time affirmed the transcended values, the transcended ideals that make democratic politics possible.

Frankly we are at a crossroads, because I think for the world to progress in the name of civil reform, in the name of civilization, we have to recognize this fundamental principle, that

every person has inherent dignity and rights. That is the foundation of an order that can then be built upon justice and in charity.

That is what we are facing worldwide. It is so essential that those of us who have been given the gift of stabilized societies, who have lived with the blessings of that philosophical context, help others who are reaching out as well for civil society and to build up the institutions that can promote that very principle, that every person has inherent dignity and rights.

This is the crossroads that we face I think in the world today, because all of civilization hinges upon that key principle. We have had to work that out in our country. It has been imperfect. We have fought. It is not perfect today. And yet at the same time, this has spread beyond our shores, this idea, because of the transnationalism that has now occurred, because of the advances in communications, in technology and transportation have caused the world to shrink very, very rapidly. So we have an opportunity to rethink some of the foundations on which the very order is built.

So, again, this is an opportunity to explore it a little more deeply, some of our own history, some of the goodness embedded in our own history and perhaps what other people are longing and reaching out for.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. I appreciate those comments. We have been joined by some others.

I yield to my good friend from Pennsylvania for their introduction.

Ms. HART. I thank the gentleman for yielding. I am pleased we have been joined by two more of our colleagues. I wanted to wrap up my points if I may.

Is this the most important thing that we need to learn, and not just us standing here when I say we, I mean everyone who is hopefully going to be part of a dialogue among the faiths toward hopefully a more peaceful world, is something better than what we see at the typical interfaith meeting or the typical interfaith discussion, something beyond we will be nice to each other for an hour and then we will go home. We need to build real understanding and real respect for each other and for each other's rights to be here.

For example, the discourse that we have been hearing that denies Israel's right to exist cannot exist in a discussion that is aimed toward peace. I would like to quote an editorial from the Wall Street Journal from a couple of days ago. "Everyone at the table must reject the irrationality of religiously motivated violence." It goes on to say, "The Pope wasn't condemning Islam. He is inviting it to join, rather than reject, the modern world."

□ 2245

I would like to turn it over if I may to my colleague from Michigan.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. We welcome the gentleman from Michigan (Mr.

McCOTTER) to this discussion, an individual who has great wisdom, and we look forward to your comments.

Mr. McCOTTER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Georgia for confusing me with someone else, but in all seriousness, as someone with a very pluralistic district, who myself have many friends in the Muslim community, I wish to join the number of voices that are echoing the call for dialogue between all of the great religions.

But I think we would be remiss if we missed a simple intelligible fact, as if one of the fundamental dialogues that must occur is within the Muslim community itself, both here and home.

While conversation amongst the religions is always very healthy, we face a dire situation in the Muslim community where there are those who are bent on the death and destruction not only of non-Muslims but upon Muslims themselves.

So I would ask my Muslim friends to engage in that dialogue amongst their co-religionists because, in the final analysis, I, as an outsider, in my own mind, in my own heart, can think of no truer definition of an infidel than someone who claims to be a Muslim, killing their fellow Muslims in the name of Allah.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. I thank the gentleman for his comments and appropriate perspective and call once again for dialogue which I think is the underlying message that we would deliver this evening, and that is, that faith must be connected to reason and that dialogue between peoples is what will bring us to a peaceful solution.

I welcome my good friend, the honorable gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. ENGLISH), once again great friends from Pennsylvania joining us tonight.

Mr. ENGLISH. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman for an opportunity to share, the opportunity to comment on I think on what has been a very important moment.

It is a sobering sign of the times, in my view, that a papal speech that was meant to address the harmony between faith and reason and deplore the idea of religious violence is contradictory to the nature of God would inspire demonstrations and violence in a large cross-section of the Islamic world.

The angry reaction of some Muslim leaders and politicians to the September 12 academic lecture by Pope Benedict XVI in Germany has disturbed Catholics and non-Catholics alike and raised many questions about the possibilities of honest dialogue between Islam and the non-Islamic world, particularly in a world of 15 second sound bites.

The Holy Father's lecture was not intended obviously to be a critique, let alone a criticism, of Islam. It was instead a very esoteric discussion of three different views on the nature of knowledge, particularly the knowledge of God. The pope used a quote by the late Byzantine emperor, not a Catholic,

Manuel II Paleologus, regarding Islamic teachings on holy war and the command to spread the faith by the sword, as a starting point of his discussion.

The basic thrust of the Pontiff's remarks were that Christian theology derives from Hellenic roots that view God as the embodiment of reason and is, therefore, bound by reason because to be otherwise would be contrary to his own nature. He contrasts Christian theology with a strain of Islamic thought which, in the Holy Father's description, posits that God transcends reason and, therefore, is not bound by any restrictions whatsoever. He also contrasts Christian theology with the evolving viewpoint that reason needs no embodiment, that it stands outside of any form of divine authorship and views Christ as merely an inspired moral philosopher rather than as the Logos, the embodiment and author of reason and the creator of the physical world.

A careful reading of the pope's remarks quickly reveals that he spends more time describing the dehellenisation of Christian theology than discussing Islamic theology and never at any point disparaged or insulted Islam. In fact, he specifically describes the emperor's remarks as brusque and is astounded by the quality. At no point does the pontiff endorse the emperor's remarks or make them his own.

Mr. Speaker, there are three points that need to be made about the extreme reaction of the pope's quotation of the Byzantine emperor.

First, the current turmoil is in large part the fault of those in both the West and the East who have misrepresented the pope's words and the pope's intent. In the West, the news media has done a spectacularly poor job of reporting on the talk and putting it in context. When the pope apologized for the upset that his words caused, Jim Lehrer of PBS' Lehrer News Hour said the apology "stopped short of retracting his statement," as if the pope had made the emperor's words his own.

The persistent misreporting of the controversial quote as the words of the pope himself was evident also in the demands by Muslim leaders for a papal apology. From Turkey to Iraq to Iran to the West Bank, many leaders and politicians have exploited the controversy to suit their own ends. This kind of debased manipulation of religious sensibilities for demagogic gain should be condemned by moderate Muslim leaders in the West.

Second, both Christianity and Islam needs to come to terms with their historic mistakes and excesses. Christianity has much to answer for in its history, including inquisitions, pogroms, forced conversions and holy wars which have left scars that have yet to fully heal. Nevertheless, Islam is not without its own transgressions. From its 7th century destruction of Christian churches in north Africa to its repeated invasions of Christian Europe,

Islam has a long history of conquest. Indeed, Christendom's Crusades need to be understood within the context of Islam's assaults on the Byzantine Empire and the continued threats to Europe.

Mr. Speaker, if only Muslims are allowed to express historical outrage and only Christians are required to apologize for past wrongs, there will be no chance of a deep historical and cultural dialogue. More importantly, experience demonstrates that while we may learn from history, we must put past offenses behind us if we are ever to hope to live in peace. Conflicting sects and ethnic groups from Northern Ireland to South Africa recognize that demanding Draconian justice for intergenerational grievances leads only to prolonged conflict and have chosen instead to concentrate on building a better future for their children. The Christian and Islamic worlds can and must do the same.

Third and finally, this particular controversy underscores the importance of the pope's call for a dialogue based on faith and reason. Even religions as different in their conceptions of God as Christianity and Islam must find ways to engage politically, culturally and, over time, theologically. My home State, Mr. Speaker, was founded by William Penn, a refugee of an oppressed political minority who created an environment where sects could live together and exchange views and have mutual respect and even admiration. Voltaire wrote at the time that Pennsylvania had the freest air on earth. Pope Benedict's commitment to this kind of genuine dialogue is clear.

Despite the fact that Pope Benedict never intended any offense, the pontiff has repeatedly expressed regret at the misinterpretation and misunderstanding of his remarks on Islam. He has expressed deep respect for the faith of Muslims.

Speaking at the September 21 general audience in St. Peter's Square in front of more than 40,000 people, the pope noted from his recent trip to Bavaria and told his audience, "This quotation, unfortunately, has lent itself to misunderstanding."

I think we can take him at his word. I think in my view we can let this matter die, and we should use it as a starting point for a genuine dialogue between the Christian West and those of us in the West who want to see a liberal society and also Islam.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to comment on this recent turn of events.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I thank my good friend from Pennsylvania for joining us this evening and for those wonderful, wonderful words of wisdom.

We have just a very few short moments left. In closing, let me just thank my good friend also from Pennsylvania Congresswoman HART who truly organized this activity this evening. I think this has been a re-

markable discussion. It has been a lofty discussion. It truly has been a privilege to come to the floor, and the privilege of service is indeed the privilege of leadership.

I guess if I were to summarize I would say that what we call our colleagues to this evening is, in fact, not just our colleagues, but all Members of the civilized world, is to an appreciation that faith and reason go hand-in-hand and that dialogue is what is absolutely necessary if we are to solve the remarkable challenges that we have as a diverse world.

Mr. Speaker, we live in a glorious and a wonderful Nation. It is a Nation of religious liberty. It is a Nation that continues to be a beacon of hope and a vessel of liberty truly to the world. The opportunity that we have here is remarkable in order to initiate that new dialogue, and it is a privilege to come to the floor Mr. Speaker.

If I may, I want to call on you and I ask all of our colleagues and all of the individuals watching in this time, in this very, very challenging time of an election season here in the United States, that the comments that you have heard before we began our discussion 59 minutes ago and the comments you are about to hear are most likely one of division, of disinformation and of misinformation. I challenge my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to raise the level of rhetoric, raise the level of discussion and debate in this body so that we may indeed join together and solve the remarkable challenges that we have as a Nation.

### 30-SOMETHING WORKING GROUP

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FITZPATRICK of Pennsylvania). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, it is again a pleasure to be on the floor this evening with the 30-Something Working Group, and my colleague Mr. MEEK my will be joining me in a few short minutes.

But I say to my good friend from Georgia who has just issued a call to raise the tone of the dialogue, I think the Official Truth Squad would do well to engage in a little truth and acknowledge that it is they who have engaged in the vicious rhetoric that has gone back and forth for the last dozen or so years that they have controlled this chamber, and that the direction that they have moved this country in has given us neither faith nor reason to believe that this country will be able to be put on the right track unless we making some significant changes, not the least of which is in our economy.

Security, Democrats believe that security is incredibly important, not just our national security and our homeland security, but economic security, and no matter what this district is I travel to, no matter what district you

represent, the people in this country are yearning for a commitment from this Congress to move this country in the right direction on economic security. That does not appear to be the commitment of the leadership of this institution. One has only to look at the commentary across the country to know that it is not just my opinion, but this is the opinion of many, many people both who have expertise in economics as well as the rank-and-file individuals who are struggling to make ends meet on a daily basis.

I want to just walk through some of the commentary that we have seen recently and compare the rosy picture that has been painted by this administration and by this Republican leadership, compared to what the reality on the ground every day for working families is.

Let us look at the economy according to essentially do-nothing Washington Republicans, and the way we are characterizing them is simply because we have spent the least amount of time at work during this 109th Congress than in history. We have worked the least number of days, produced the smallest amounts of legislation, and yet the administration and the Republican leadership continues to toot a horn that does not deserve to be tooted.

Let us look at what President Bush said just the other day. Just 2-days ago he said, I would say look at what the recent economy has done. It is strong. We have created a lot of jobs.

You also have majority leader JOHN BOEHNER say on September 1 that the American economy is strong; it continues to provide more economic opportunity and higher wage jobs to working families across the country.

What I would say to the President and to my colleague Mr. BOEHNER is that I am not sure what country they are living in or who they are speaking to, but they seem to believe that if you say something enough times and repeat it often enough that eventually it will sink in and someone will believe it.

□ 2300

But if you ask about the economy according to America's working families, let's see what one young woman talked about from her point of view. Denine Gordon, who is 32 years old and is a waitress who makes the minimum wage, news about her latest trouble. Her van has been in the shop for a week because she and her husband can't afford to fix it. "This is the least I have ever made in my entire life," the Republican and mother of three said. "The gas prices went up, and the tips went down." She said that in the newspaper as reported by AP just 2 days ago.

Debbie Brewer, a 50-year-old woman and a deli owner, rattled off her biggest complaints about the economy as she counted change while closing her register for the night. "We will never see 99 cents again," the Republican said, of