

year of 1998, a year which has been hailed by historians as perhaps the most unproductive and irresponsible of any year in the history of the Congress in the post World War II era. This is a Congress that, for the first time in 30 years of having a Budget Act, was not even able to agree on a Federal budget resolution because of an internal struggle in the Republican caucus here in the House between the far right and the not-so-right.

After failing to gain approval of a variety of schemes, this was a Republican House whose major accomplishment in 1998 was the passage of something called the Omnibus Appropriations Bill. That was the one that weighed in here at 40 pounds, almost broke the table up here at the front of the Congress, and which was presented in such a fashion that few if any Members knew what was in it until weeks later, as the reporters began to discover all the pork that was laden in this allegedly conservative bill.

Undoubtedly some Americans are going to be pleased to hear that this Congress is shut down and not doing anything, instead of approving that kind of nonsense. No doubt there will be some on the fringes who really believe the government should do nothing that will be very pleased that their dreams have been realized and that this House is largely doing nothing.

February, well, it does not look noticeably better. Under the best of circumstances, this House may convene for a few hours on about 10 days to approve a few largely uncontested bills.

Today, for example, we will pass the first piece of legislation in this Congress. It is a measure that we are approving, reapproving today, in the very same words that we approved unanimously last year. For some reason the Senate never got around to considering it.

Tomorrow we will replace one stopgap measure approved last fall with another stopgap measure to carry us forward just a few more months until the House finally gets down to work to develop a meaningful bipartisan long-term solution to the transportation problem.

I would say that even if we gave Ken Starr another \$50 million or so to waste, I do not even believe he could find anything notable that this House has done in the opening weeks of 1999 to help the ordinary American citizen. Most of the folks that I represent down in central Texas would prefer to see their Representatives in this House, the people's House, tending to the Nation's business.

The President has outlined what I think are a number of very important budget priorities throughout December and January. I believe they demand our attention and debate. He has emphasized the importance of conserving the surplus, letting it build up. I be-

lieve we should do that. I believe it is time to stop the shutdown of this House and get back to the Nation's business.

HOW LONG WILL THE WAR WITH IRAQ GO ON BEFORE CONGRESS NOTICES?

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

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, I ask my fellow colleagues, how long will the war go on before Congress notices? We have been bombing and occupying Iraq since 1991, longer than the occupation of Japan after World War II. Iraq has never committed aggression against the United States.

The recent escalation of bombing in Iraq has caused civilian casualties to mount. The Clinton administration claims U.N. resolution 687, passed in 1991, gives him the legal authority to continue this war. We have perpetuated hostilities and sanctions for more than 8 years on a country that has never threatened our security, and the legal justification comes from not the U.S. Congress, as the Constitution demands, but from a clearly unconstitutional authority, the United Nations.

In the past several months the airways have been filled with Members of Congress relating or restating their fidelity to their oath of office to uphold the Constitution. That is good, and I am sure it is done with the best of intentions. But when it comes to explaining our constitutional responsibility to make sure unconstitutional sexual harassment laws are thoroughly enforced, while disregarding most people's instincts towards protecting privacy, it seems to be overstating a point, compared to our apathy toward the usurping of congressional power to declare and wage war. That is something we ought to be concerned about.

A major reason for the American Revolution was to abolish the King's power to wage war, tax, and invade personal privacy without representation and due process of law. For most of our history our presidents and our Congresses understood that war was a prerogative of the congressional authority alone. Even minimal military interventions by our early presidents were for the most part done only with constitutional approval.

This all changed after World War II with our membership in the United Nations. As bad as it is to allow our presidents to usurp congressional authority to wage war, it is much worse for the President to share this sovereign right with an international organization that requires us to pay more than our fair share while we get a vote no greater than the rest.

The constitution has been blatantly ignored by the President while Con-

gress has acquiesced in endorsing the 8-year war against Iraq. The War Powers Resolution of 1973 has done nothing to keep our presidents from policing the world, spending billions of dollars, killing many innocent people, and jeopardizing the very troops that should be defending America.

The continual ranting about stopping Hussein, who is totally defenseless against our attacks, from developing weapons of mass destruction ignores the fact that more than 30,000 very real nuclear warheads are floating around the old Soviet empire.

Our foolish policy in Iraq invites terrorist attacks against U.S. territory and incites the Islamic fundamentalists against us. As a consequence, our efforts to develop long-term peaceful relations with Russia are now ending. This policy cannot enhance world peace. But instead of changing it, the President is about to expand it in another no-win centuries-old fight in Kosovo.

It is time for Congress to declare its interest in the Constitution and take responsibility on issues that matter, like the war powers.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12 of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m.

Accordingly (at 1 o'clock and 30 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until 2 p.m.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Reverend James David Ford, D.D., offered the following prayer:

May Your gifts of goodness and peace, O God, be upon us and all people; may Your blessings of joy and happiness be and abide with us all; may Your abundant favor touch every person in the depths of their hearts; and may Your comfort bring healing and assurance to all in need. Above all the noise of each day and above any clash or contention, we are thankful that Your still small voice strengthens and ministers to us in our very souls. For this we are eternally grateful. 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.