

continue to attack it. Yet the terrorists' most powerful myth is being destroyed. The whole world is seeing that the car bombers and assassins are not only fighting coalition forces; they are trying to destroy the hopes of Iraqis, expressed in free elections. And the whole world now knows that a small group of extremists will not overturn the will of the Iraqi people.

We will succeed in Iraq because Iraqis are determined to fight for their own freedom, and to write their own history. As Prime Minister Allawi said in his speech to Congress last September, "Ordinary Iraqis are anxious to shoulder all the security burdens of our country as quickly as possible." That is the natural desire of an independent nation, and it is also the stated mission of our coalition in Iraq.

The new political situation in Iraq opens a new phase of our work in that country. At the recommendation of our commanders on the ground, and in consultation with the Iraqi government, we will increasingly focus our efforts on helping prepare more capable Iraqi security forces, forces with skilled officers, and an effective command structure. As those forces become more self-reliant and take on greater security responsibilities, America and its coalition partners will increasingly be in a supporting role. In the end, Iraqis must be able to defend their own country; and we will help that proud, new nation secure its liberty.

Recently an Iraqi interpreter said to a reporter, "Tell America not to abandon us." He and all Iraqis can be certain: while our military strategy is adapting to circumstances, our commitment remains firm and unchanging. We are standing for the freedom of our Iraqi friends and freedom in Iraq will make America safer for generations to come. We will not set an artificial timetable for leaving Iraq because that would embolden the terrorists and make them believe they can wait us out.

We are in Iraq to achieve a result: a country that is democratic, representative of all its people, at peace with its neighbors, and able to defend itself. And when that result is achieved, our men and women serving in Iraq will return home with the honor they have earned.

Right now, Americans in uniform are serving at posts across the world, often taking great risks on my orders. We have given them training and equipment, and they have given us an example of idealism and character that makes every American proud. The volunteers of our military are unrelenting in battle, unwavering in loyalty, unmatched in honor and decency, and every day they are making our Nation more secure. Some of our servicemen and -women have survived terrible injuries, and this grateful Nation will do everything we can to help them re-

cover. And we have said farewell to some very good men and women who died for our freedom and whose memory this Nation will honor forever.

One name we honor is Marine Corps Sergeant Byron Norwood of Pflugerville, Texas, who was killed during the assault on Fallujah. His mom, Janet, sent me a letter and told me how much Byron loved being a Marine, and how proud he was to be on the front line against terror. She wrote, "When Byron was home the last time, I said that I wanted to protect him like I had since he was born. He just hugged me and said: 'You have done your job, Mom. Now it is my turn to protect you.'" Ladies and gentlemen, with grateful hearts, we honor freedom's defenders, and our military families, represented here this evening by Sergeant Norwood's mom and dad, Janet and Bill Norwood.

In these 4 years, Americans have seen the unfolding of large events. We have known times of sorrow, and hours of uncertainty, and days of victory. In all this history, even when we have disagreed, we have seen threads of purpose that unite us. The attack on freedom in our world has reaffirmed our confidence in freedom's power to change the world. We are all part of a great venture: to extend the promise of freedom in our country, to renew the values that sustain our liberty, and to spread the peace that freedom brings.

As Franklin Roosevelt once reminded Americans: "Each age is a dream that is dying, or one that is coming to birth." And we live in the country where the biggest dreams are born. The abolition of slavery was only a dream, until it was fulfilled. The liberation of Europe from Fascism was only a dream, until it was achieved. The fall of Imperial Communism was only a dream, until, one day, it was accomplished. Our generation has dreams of its own, and we also go forward with confidence. The road of Providence is uneven and unpredictable, yet we know where it leads: it leads to freedom.

Thank you, and may God bless America.

(Applause, the Members rising.)

At 10 o'clock and 4 minutes p.m. the President of the United States, accompanied by the committee of escort, retired from the Hall of the House of Representatives.

The Deputy Sergeant at Arms escorted the invited guests from the Chamber in the following order:

The members of the President's Cabinet.

The Associate Justice of the Supreme Court.

The Acting Dean of the Diplomatic Corp.

JOINT SESSION DISSOLVED

The SPEAKER. The Chair declares the joint meeting of the two Houses now dissolved.

Accordingly, at 10 o'clock and 5 minutes p.m., the joint meeting of the two Houses was dissolved.

The Members of the Senate retired to their Chamber.

MESSAGE OF THE PRESIDENT REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE HOUSE ON THE STATE OF THE UNION

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. Speaker, I move that the message of the President be referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union and ordered printed.

The motion was agreed to.

PERMISSION FOR MEMBER TO REVISE AND EXTEND REMARKS ON THIS LEGISLATIVE DAY.

The SPEAKER. Without objection, the gentleman from California (Mr. DREIER) is permitted to revise and extend and insert extraneous material on this legislative day.

There was no objection.

AMENDMENT PROCESS FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 418, REAL ID ACT OF 2005

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, the Rules Committee may meet the week of February 7th to grant a rule which could limit the amendment process for floor consideration of H.R. 418, the REAL ID Act of 2005.

Any Member wishing to offer an amendment should submit 55 copies of the amendment and one copy of a brief explanation of the amendment to the Rules Committee in room H-312 of the Capitol by 12 noon on Tuesday, February 8, 2005. Members should draft their amendments to the bill as introduced on January 26, 2005.

Members should use the Office of Legislative Counsel to ensure that their amendments are drafted in the most appropriate format and should check with the Office of the Parliamentarian to be certain their amendments comply with the rules of the House.

RESIGNATION AS MEMBER OF COMMITTEE ON RESOURCES

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DREIER) laid before the House the following resignation as a member of the Committee on Resources:

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, February 2, 2005.

Hon. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker of the House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SPEAKER HASTERT: I am writing to inform you of my resignation from the Resources Committee, effective today, Wednesday, February 2, 2005.

Sincerely,

MARK SOUDER
Member of Congress.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the resignation is accepted.