

ALTMIRE) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. ALTMIRE 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.

DISPENSING WITH CALL OF PRIVATE CALENDAR ON TODAY

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the call of the Private Calendar be dispensed with today.

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

There was no objection.

NOTHING IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE TRUTH

(Mr. KUCINICH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KUCINICH. This afternoon I will move to refer an Article of Impeachment to the Judiciary Committee.

People ask me, don't we have more important things to do? Think about this. This war has cost us our constitutionally guaranteed civil liberties. Is there something more important?

The Iraq war will eventually cost between two and \$3 trillion, meaning every American family will pay upwards of \$30,000 for this war. The war has contributed substantially to higher gas prices. Is there something more important?

Over 4,100 of our troops have died, and as many as 1 million innocent Iraqis have perished. Is there something more important?

There was never any proof that Iraq constituted an imminent threat to our national security, or that Iraq had the capability or intention of attacking the United States. Iraq had nothing to do with 9/11 or al Qaeda's role in 9/11. Yet Congress was led to believe otherwise.

The Bible says, "You shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free." Congress must know the truth in order for our Nation to remain free. In a free Nation nothing is more important than the truth.

GOOD WAR—BAD WAR

(Mr. KIRK asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KIRK. Mr. Speaker, successful counterterrorism programs teach that to win, you must attack both terrorists and their money. Through Congress' partisan lens, Iraq is the bad war, while Afghanistan is the good war. Our partisan lens will not recognize good news

from Iraq or bad news from Afghanistan.

In Afghanistan, the Taliban is back, funded by billions from heroin. The U.N. reports that in 2008, Afghanistan is now also the top producer of hashish. Money from heroin and now hashish total hundreds of millions, if not billions.

In sum, the Taliban's drug profits now may equal the operations budget of General McKiernan and his NATO Army.

The hot issue today is a possible surge of troops to Afghanistan. I will sound a note of caution that without aerial spraying and other counterdrug programs that worked in Colombia, such an Afghan move will only accelerate violence between two very well-funded opponents.

To turn the rising Taliban tide, we must attack both heroin and hashish in the narco-state that is Afghanistan.

OFFSHORE DRILLING AND GAS PRICES

(Mrs. MALONEY of New York asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the President announced that he is lifting the executive order that prevents Big Oil from drilling off of the treasured coastline of America.

What will this do to lower gas prices any time soon? Nothing. And nothing is exactly what the administration has been doing for the past 7 years as gas prices have nearly tripled.

By contrast, Democrats in Congress have been working on bringing down prices at the pump. We passed the first fuel efficiency standards in 32 years, and are supporting the movement to alternative fuels.

We want to help families now by releasing oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve and forcing big oil companies to start drilling on the 311 acres that are open for development now, or the 68 million acres that are under lease now for development.

Mr. Speaker, if domestic drilling can bring relief to American families, what are the big oil companies waiting for? Drill on those 311 acres and those 68 million acres under lease.

NATIONAL PAPERS FAVOR OBAMA

(Mr. SMITH of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the New York Times and the Washington Post are two influential national newspapers. Their articles are reprinted in hundreds of other publications, and television newscasts often repeat their stories.

I was curious how the Times and the Post were treating the two major party

presidential candidates, so I looked at their front page coverage. The results may be of interest to voters who expect fair and objective reporting.

From June 28 through July 14, the papers wrote far more stories about Senator OBAMA than Senator MCCAIN. And while most of the 15 articles about Senator OBAMA were positive, not a single one of the nine articles about Senator MCCAIN was positive. That is a huge slant in favor of Senator OBAMA.

Surely voters deserve balanced coverage of the presidential candidates. And surely the media has a responsibility to provide it.

BRING DOWN PRICES AT THE PUMP TODAY

(Mr. ALTMIRE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. ALTMIRE. Mr. Speaker, Americans everywhere are fed up with paying high gas prices. For 8 days, Americans have been asking President Bush to release oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, a move that has brought down prices at the pump in the past. But the President continues to say no.

In 1990, when the President's father withdrew oil from the reserve, the impact on prices was immediate, and they dropped 33 percent in 2 days. In 2000, President Clinton did the same, and prices fell before oil even hit the market. And in 2005, when this President Bush made the move, the price of oil dropped again.

Now the White House claims it won't lower prices but history proves that action to release oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve provides immediate relief to American consumers.

Mr. Speaker, when it comes to the pain our families are experiencing at the pump and in the economy today, there is simply no time to wait. Action is needed now, and we call on President Bush to stand up for consumers and utilize the Strategic Petroleum Reserve.

LIFT CONGRESSIONAL BAN ON ENERGY EXPLORATION

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, yesterday President Bush announced that he would be lifting the executive branch moratorium on offshore exploration for oil and natural gas. I applaud the President's actions.

House Republicans have offered a plan to expand offshore and onshore energy supply with conservation. This is part of our comprehensive approach to lowering energy prices and reducing our dependence on foreign oil.