

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES—Wednesday April 9, 2008

The House met at 10 a.m.

Dr. Carey D. Froelich, First Baptist Church, Baytown, Texas, offered the following prayer:

Holy and Gracious God, we bow before You in wonder and gratitude that You care about the affairs of mankind. Thank You for offering divine counsel and wisdom to these men and women to whom You have granted the privilege of governing.

Loving Father, empower each Member of this noble body with a vision of the common good. May the dynamic of partisan debate unify them in their resolve to serve our Nation as a whole. Grant to each participant the capacity and the courage to discern truth, to feel compassion, to recognize justice, and to act with integrity.

Lord, I pray that every servant in this House will recognize Your presence in this great Hall, and that all will experience the full measure of Your blessing as they conduct the affairs of our great Nation.

I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, the Wonderful Counselor upon whose shoulders the burden of governance has always rested. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

THE SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House her approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

THE SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. INGLIS) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. INGLIS 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

THE SPEAKER. The Chair will entertain up to 15 requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

REPORT INDICATES POLITICAL OBSTACLES AND UNLIKELY FUTURE PROGRESS IN IRAQ

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

Mr. WALZ of Minnesota. Madam Speaker, today House committees will hear from General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker about the supposed progress being made in Iraq and the need to keep 140,000 U.S. troops there indefinitely. As we listen to this testimony, it is important to remember what our Nation's true goals are and what true, lasting security actually means.

A new report out this week from the same experts who advised the non-partisan Independent Iraq Study Group concludes that political progress in Iraq is at best "slow, halting and superficial," and political fragmentation is "so pronounced" that we are no closer to leaving Iraq than we were a year ago. The experts predict that it could take at least 5 to 10 years to produce any real, measurable political reconciliation.

Madam Speaker, I would hope that President Bush would read this new report so that he could see how people outside his administration are viewing the situation in Iraq. Such sobering and nonpartisan assessment should serve as a wake-up call that we should not leave 140,000 troops in Iraq indefinitely while the Iraqis are doing virtually nothing to live up to their promises.

UNITED NATIONS SPEECH POLICE

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

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, free speech is under attack again. This time the so-called U.N. Human Rights Council passed a resolution encouraging the criminalization of freedom of expression by the U.N. chief spokesman on speech. Egypt and Pakistan proposed the anti-speech resolution. What it does is promote specific criminal restrictions on individuals in the world who criticize or make negative comments about Islam.

According to the International World Tribune, "Muslim countries have been demanding world limits on free speech ever since a Danish magazine published those not-so-flattering cartoons of Mohammad." So now the U.N. Human Rights Council wants to limit the human rights of free speech and religious discourse. Of course, this limit only applies to those who criticize one specific religion, Islam. Muslims are still permitted to bash Christians, Jews and Hindus.

Free speech cannot be limited because some group doesn't like what somebody says. That is what free speech means. The Human Rights Council was wrong when it surrendered to the Muslim speech police and passed this speech control resolution that advocates the criminalization of criticism of Islam.

And that's just the way it is.

CONGRESS MUST TAKE ACTION TO END THE WAR IN IRAQ

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

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, the President's representative from the military is on Capitol Hill urging us to continue to stay in Iraq, telling us to wait, don't leave.

What are we waiting for, until the cost of the war reaches \$6 trillion, so that our American economy goes totally bust, so that we don't have any more money for education or health care or housing?

What are we waiting for, for the casualties to get to 10,000 or 20,000 deaths of our service men and women?

What are we waiting for, for America to stand alone against the world?

It is time that we take a new direction. It is time that Congress regain its rightful role as a coequal branch of government. It is not appropriate for leaders in Congress to say, well, it is the administration's fault that the war continues, when in fact we have the authority to cut off funds.

Congress must take a strong stand and say no more funding; end the war, stop the occupation, close the bases, bring the troops home, set in motion an international peacekeeping and security force that comes in as our troops leave, work for a program of reconciliation between the Shiites, the Sunnis, and the Kurds, work for a program of repatriations, and stop trying to control the oil of Iraq.

BMW PROVIDING ECONOMIC SUCCESS IN SOUTH CAROLINA

(Mr. INGLIS of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. INGLIS of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, there are plenty of challenging news stories about the economy, and we in upstate South Carolina have had some of those experiences ourselves. It is worth celebrating some of the successes.