

Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. ENGLISH), the sponsor of this bill.

Mr. ENGLISH. Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege to be here, and I particularly want to thank the chairman and thank the committee for having moved this resolution forward so quickly.

It is a real honor to be able to participate in an action which would recognize the value of the long public service that Jim Merry provided as a community leader and as a member of the State legislature, serving in his last 2 years as chairman of the local government committee and also my colleague at the same time that I was serving in Congress.

This was a great experience for me because during my career as a staffer in the State legislature, I had an opportunity to work with Jim Merry in that capacity, and I saw him from a number of different angles. Jim Merry was the kind of legislator that I think Mr. Jefferson had in mind when he considered that our legislatures would be populated with individuals who were citizen politicians. Jim Merry came by his interest naturally. His father had been a State representative in Crawford County during the 1950s and early 1960s, and Jim had been a borough councilman, had been head of the chamber of commerce, and was enormously active in his community.

When the seat came into play in 1980, Jim ran and in something of an upset won the seat and quickly made it his own. It was a seat that straddled the Erie and Crawford County lines, and a lot of diverse communities; but he reached out everywhere he went. He was a fine legislator, an active community member. He was a great gentleman. The thing that I think is his greatest legacy is, although he was a man of his party, he was a very active Republican. At no time did I ever see him become rancorous about his politics. He worked well with people on both sides of the aisle. He was always committed to finding a way of getting things done and putting that over party politics. Particularly important, he always treated every individual with a great deal of deference.

As someone who learned a lot from Jim Merry, it is a real privilege to be able to play a role in honoring him by renaming the post office in the community that he long represented, Linesville, Pennsylvania, where his family still is, where he was a lifelong resident, after him in recognition of that great community contribution.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the Members, and ask for a "yea" vote.

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Speaker, I have no other requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 981.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof)

the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

□ 1300

SECURING BLESSINGS OF PROVIDENCE FOR PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES AND OUR ARMED FORCES

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 153) recognizing the public need for fasting and prayer in order to secure the blessings and protection of Providence for the people of the United States and our Armed Forces during the conflict in Iraq and under the threat of terrorism at home.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 153

Whereas the United States is currently engaged in a war on terrorism in response to the attacks of September 11, 2001;

Whereas the Armed Forces of the United States are currently engaged in a campaign to disarm the regime of Saddam Hussein and liberate the people of Iraq;

Whereas, on June 1, 1774, the Virginia House of Burgesses called for a day of fasting and prayer as an expression of solidarity with the people of Boston who were under siege by the enemy;

Whereas, on March 16, 1776, the Continental Congress, recognizing that the "Liberties of America are imminently endangered" and the need "to acknowledge the overruling Providence of God", called for a day of "Humiliation, Fasting and Prayer";

Whereas, on June 28, 1787, during the debate of the Constitutional Convention, Benjamin Franklin, convinced of God's intimate involvement in human affairs, implored the Congress to seek the assistance of Heaven in all its dealings;

Whereas, on March 30, 1863, in the midst of the Civil War, Abraham Lincoln, at the bequest of the Senate, and himself recognizing the need of the Nation to humble itself before God in repentance for its national sins, proclaimed a day of fasting, prayer and humiliation;

Whereas all of the various faiths of the people of the United States have recognized, in our religious traditions, the need for fasting and humble supplication before Providence;

Whereas humility, fasting, and prayer in times of danger have long been rooted in our essential national convictions and have been a means of producing unity and solidarity among all the diverse people of this Nation as well as procuring the enduring grace and benevolence of God;

Whereas, through prayer, fasting, and self-reflection, we may better recognize our own faults and shortcomings and submit to the wisdom and love of God in order that we may have guidance and strength in those daily actions and decisions we must take; and

Whereas dangers and threats to our Nation persist and, in this time of peril, it is appropriate that the people of the United States, leaders and citizens alike, seek guidance, strength, and resolve through prayer and fasting; Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That it is the sense of the House of Representatives that the President should issue a proclamation—

(1) designating a day for humility, prayer, and fasting for all people of the United States; and

(2) calling on all people of the United States—

(A) to observe the day as a time of prayer and fasting;

(B) to seek guidance from God to achieve a greater understanding of our own failings and to learn how we can do better in our everyday activities; and

(C) to gain resolve in meeting the challenges that confront our Nation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. STEARNS). Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks on the resolution under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

House Resolution 153, introduced by the distinguished gentleman from Missouri (Mr. AKIN), recognizes the public need for fasting and prayer in order to secure the blessings and protection of Providence for the people of the United States and their Armed Forces abroad due to the armed conflict in Iraq and the threat of terrorism here at home.

Mr. Speaker, our great Nation is at battle overseas with the vicious regime of Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein. The mission Operation Iraqi Freedom aims to dislodge Hussein and his top advisers from power, eliminate weapons of mass destruction from the Iraqi military's arsenal, and free the Iraqi people from Hussein's awful dictatorship. This conflict can lead to a wonderful improvement in the lives of all Iraqi people. The risks of this conflict, however, are terribly significant to all American citizens.

In Iraq, the threats to our remarkable servicemen and women are many. The Iraqi soldiers' resistance may include the deployment of chemical and biological weapons, not to mention the lethality of Iraq's military's conventional weapons. Here at home, the Federal Government has launched Operation Liberty Shield to increase domestic security due to the danger of terrorist attacks within our borders.

This combination of threats to Americans across the globe make passage of this resolution essential and meaningful. Since the birth of our Nation, Americans of all backgrounds, faiths and creeds have especially recognized the value earned from prayer, reflection, sacrifice and humility during times of national crisis.

Mr. Speaker, for these reasons, I urge all Members to support the adoption of House Resolution 153. I thank my colleague from Missouri for introducing this extremely relevant and valuable measure.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, the resolution before us calls on the American people to fast

and pray for the United States and the Armed Forces fighting the war in Iraq. Anytime there is any conversation or notion or discussion of a religious nature, there are bound to be different people who have different thoughts and ideas about it. Different people worship different forms of supremacy. As mothers and fathers, sisters and brothers, friends and neighbors, and most of all as a peace-loving people, we seek and hope for a quick resolution to the conflict in Iraq.

All those who believe in a supreme being, whether it be God, Jehovah, Allah, Buddha or whether people call their belief Prince of Peace or Rose of Sharon or Lily of the Valley, to me it does not really matter. What matters is that people believe in the supremacy of a being. They believe in the coming together. They believe in a force that is more powerful than anything that we have been able to actually discern or see. It is something that is one of the mysteries, in many ways, of life but a part of the hope that people have, part of the faith.

And so I rise in support of this resolution. I urge that we pray for the men and women who are giving of themselves each and every day, who even may or may not return. I would urge passage, then, of this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH).

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I have the greatest respect for the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) and the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS) and understand the spirit in which they come forward to support this resolution.

Considering the dynamics of this war, I would just like to urge a note of caution here, Mr. Speaker; and the note of caution is that this resolution may be seen by some as an attempt to inject religion into this war at a time when some of America's enemies abroad are asserting that this is indeed a war about religion.

I know that the intentions of the sponsors are to ask for the blessings of Providence upon our troops. I think that all of us support the troops. Some of us do not support the mission.

Pope John Paul II, greeting a group of Polish pilgrims in Vatican City on March 5, 2003, said, "I ask all of you for this prayer and fasting. May these be concrete gestures of the involvement on the part of those who believe in the mission to remind the world that it is never too late for peace."

I think that it would be very constructive as this House proceeds in deliberating resolutions of this type if an appeal was made not only for the success of those who work for this country under the flag of this country in fields far from home, as soldiers in combat, I think it would be constructive if this House also in this resolution or in another resolution would agree that it is never too late for peace.

I also think that aggressive war is not consistent with prayerful aspira-

tions. The golden rule, which represents an even higher calling than this resolution, do unto others as you would have them do unto you and love your neighbor as you would love yourself, I think is instructive in guiding us to be quite cautious about passing a resolution that would easily be interpreted as sanctioning aggressive war.

So I reluctantly come here to offer this note of caution, knowing full well that Members who have proposed this are very good people, they are good Americans, they are patriotic Americans, and we all care about our troops.

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I would like to read this resolution, and I think it is pretty clear what it says:

Recognizing the public need for fasting and prayer in order to secure the blessings and protection of Providence for the people of the United States and our Armed Forces during the conflict in Iraq and under the threat of terrorism at home.

Whereas the United States is currently engaged in a war on terrorism in response to the attacks of September 11, 2001;

Whereas the Armed Forces of the United States are currently engaged in a campaign to disarm the regime of Saddam Hussein and liberate the people of Iraq;

Whereas, on June 1, 1774, the Virginia House of Burgesses called for a day of fasting and prayer as an expression of solidarity with the people of Boston who were under siege by the enemy;

Whereas, on March 16, 1776, the Continental Congress, recognizing that the "Liberties of America are imminently endangered" and the need "to acknowledge the overruling Providence of God", called for a day of "Humiliation, Fasting and Prayer";

Whereas, on June 28, 1787, during the debate of the Constitutional Convention, Benjamin Franklin, convinced of God's intimate involvement in human affairs, implored the Congress to seek the assistance of Heaven in all its dealings;

Whereas, on March 30, 1863, in the midst of the Civil War, Abraham Lincoln, at the behest of the Senate, and himself recognizing the need of the Nation to humble itself before God in repentance for its national sins, proclaimed a day of fasting, prayer and humiliation;

Whereas all of the various faiths of the people of the United States have recognized, in our religious traditions, the need for fasting and humble supplication before Providence;

Whereas humility, fasting, and prayer in times of danger have long been rooted in our essential national convictions and have been a means of producing unity and solidarity among all the diverse people of this Nation as well as procuring the enduring grace and benevolence of God;

Whereas, through prayer, fasting, and self-reflection, we may better rec-

ognize our own faults and shortcomings and submit to the wisdom and love of God in order that we may have guidance and strength in those daily actions and decisions we must take; and

Whereas dangers and threats to our Nation persist and, in this time of peril, it is appropriate that the people of the United States, leaders and citizens alike, seek guidance, strength, and resolve through prayer and fasting: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That it is the sense of the House of Representatives that the President should issue a proclamation—

(1) designating a day for humility, prayer, and fasting for all people of the United States; and

(2) calling on all people of the United States—

(A) to observe the day as a time of prayer and fasting;

(B) to seek guidance from God to achieve a greater understanding of our own failings and to learn how we can do better in our everyday activities; and

(C) to gain resolve in meeting the challenges that confront our Nation.

Mr. Speaker, I think the resolution speaks for itself. It is a resolution that I think all of us can support with humility and grace and a love for our great Nation.

I would just remind the Members of this Chamber that the medallion that is directly facing the Speaker is the medallion of Moses. We have been guided by his laws for many years.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. STRICKLAND).

Mr. STRICKLAND. Mr. Speaker, I came to the Chamber today to speak on this resolution. I intend to vote for it and support it, but there were some comments that I think are relevant regarding this resolution.

I am a little troubled that we would presume to tell the American people what they should do to secure the blessings and protections of Providence. It just troubles me that it begins by saying we recognize the public need for fasting and prayer in order to secure the blessings and protections of Providence. I really think that is a theological conclusion, a theological belief. It just causes me some difficulty.

I think that each of us in our own way have an understanding of how to pray and why we should pray, but it also bothers me that we would pass this resolution without considering it as serious as it is. I would hope, and I am going to make three suggestions related to those of us who in a few moments may be voting on this resolution, that we do three things.

□ 1315

That we commit ourselves during this day of fasting to go without food,

that we not ask the American people or suggest the American people should do something that each of us as individuals do not do ourselves. I would also suggest that on that day we should forego any political fundraising at which food may be served or consumed; and, thirdly, I would suggest that those of us who would vote for this resolution would ask our leadership to close the Members dining room during that day. I think if we vote for this resolution, we should take it seriously. We should follow its dictates, and we should do what we are asking each of the American citizens to do. I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I do not have any other speakers; so I would say, in closing, I would state that I am a strong believer in the first amendment. I believe in prayer, fasting. I believe that we should pray not only for our troops but that we pray to end this conflict as quickly as it could possibly be ended and as peacefully as it could be ended. I pray that the loss of life would be diminished as much as possible and that people who are fighting from the United States as well as those from other countries and other nations would have the power of an Almighty supreme force invoked so that all of us can escape this effort with as much hope, peace, and possibility as we can. I urge support for this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I would like to thank the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) for his very thoughtful words and comments, and just to remind Members again that the most operative words in this resolution are what we resolve, that we designate a day for humility, prayer, and fasting for all people of the United States and call on all people of the United States to observe the day as a time of prayer and fasting, to seek guidance from God to achieve a greater understanding of our own failings to learn how we can do better in our everyday activities, and to gain resolve in meeting the challenges that confront our Nation.

I believe that resolve is so in line with the spirit of what our Founding Fathers did in years before.

Mr. Speaker, I yield as much time as he may consume to the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. AKIN), who was the presenter of this resolution. I thank him for that.

Mr. AKIN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman very much for his remarks and for a moment to talk about something that is so much a pattern of America's history.

If we go back to the early days of our system of republics, we go back to the time in 1774 when there was a day of fasting and prayer that was called by the Virginia House of Burgesses. That was where Patrick Henry, of course, made his famous speech.

But I think perhaps historically one of the more amazing incidents occurred the next year, 1775, where the Governor of Connecticut called his State to a time of fasting and prayer for the people of Boston and the people of Massachusetts. He coincidentally called that time of fasting and prayer for the month of April on the 18th day. As it turned out, that was the exact day that the Redcoats left Boston in search of John Hancock and the weapons that they thought were being stored in Concord, Massachusetts, and the War of Independence began.

That continues along. In fact, we had FDR, even going back to World War II time, talking about the fact that this is a war, really defending the idea that everybody should have equal rights because God gives them those equal rights. That was FDR making that comment in World War II. So we have a long history of a Nation that, when we get into an armed conflict, to turn to God and to ask His support and to humble ourselves before Him.

That actually, though, if we think about it logically, is very consistent with the very purpose and cause of what America has always been about. If we really think about what is it that is the glue that defines America, what holds us together as a people, it is that belief that there is a God who grants to all of us certain basic and unalienable rights, the right to life, the light to liberty, the right to pursue the dream that God puts into everybody's heart. So we do not believe that that is just an American right, but that is something that is for all people everywhere, and it is that belief that has propelled our soldiers onto the battlefield and made us to stand strong in the face against many different types of tyrants, just as we are even at this day.

So it is with these thoughts and these sentiments that we once again turn back to our traditions and to our history and ask and implore the Almighty God to watch over us, to remind us of our faults and places where we need to change our ways but also to strengthen us and to encourage us and help us to prevail because we do know, in fact, it is true that all people everywhere should have life and liberty and be allowed to pursue the dreams of their own hearts.

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I have no other speakers, and I want to thank, before returning the balance of my time, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. AKIN) again for introducing this important resolution and also the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) for his thoughtful comments and support.

I urge all Members to support the adoption of this measure.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LINDER). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 153.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 2:15 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 1 o'clock and 22 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until approximately 2:15 p.m.

□ 1416

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. TERRY) at 2 o'clock and 16 minutes p.m.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 2 o'clock and 17 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

□ 1732

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. BASS) at 5 o'clock and 32 minutes p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on the remaining motion to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote is objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

Any record vote on the postponed question will be taken tomorrow.

CONCERNING TREATMENT OF MEMBERS OF ARMED FORCES HELD AS PRISONER OF WAR BY IRAQI AUTHORITIES

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 118) concerning the treatment of members of the Armed Forces held as prisoner of war by Iraqi authorities, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows: