

fans throughout the world. All Minnesotans and Gophers hockey fans everywhere are very proud of this team, and we congratulate our national champions.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FERGUSON). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. KAPTUR addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

SUPPORTING THE ISRAELI OCCUPATION OF THE WEST BANK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. WELDON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WELDON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak to the issue of the terrible violence that has been wracking the Middle East over the recent weeks, and I rise to speak in support of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank.

I believe very strongly that the primary purpose of government, above and beyond all other issues, is to protect the safety and the security of the people that they represent. This is very, very clear to us here in the United States, where following the attack on the World Trade Center, on the Twin Towers, our government has focused on the need to strengthen our national defenses, to strengthen our border security, to give the FBI and the CIA the tools they need to defend our Nation.

□ 2030

It is irrelevant to talk about so many of these other important issues that we wrestle with, like education, like reducing taxes on the American families; it is irrelevant to talk about these things if our people are dying in the streets. But yet, this is exactly what has been going on in Israel in recent weeks.

During the holy week time period, Christianity was celebrating Easter and the Hebrew people were celebrating the Jewish holiday of Passover, and people all over the world were shocked to see over and over and over again, day after day, another suicide bomber blowing himself up, blowing herself up, and, in many cases, killing dozens of people around them; the most horrific acts of violence, killing innocent men, women, children, leaving those who survived these explosions frequently with grotesque and horrible injuries that will take years and maybe be impossible to fully recover from. This is the situation that the leadership in Israel, Prime Minister Sharon, the Knesset, the Government of Israel were wrestling with, and by occupying the West Bank, they have done the right thing. They have moved the conflict away from the Israeli people, away

from the citizenry, and into the Palestinian areas, which is where these suicide bombers were coming from.

I believe that it would be wrong for the Israeli Government, it would be wrong for Ariel Sharon to withdraw from the West Bank until, and only until, they can be certain that they can maintain the safety and the security of the Israeli people in this kind of environment.

I would like to just say in closing that the process, the peace process that has led ultimately to the creation of the beginnings of a Palestinian state in the West Bank was always predicated on the belief, at least on the part of the American people, that the PLO was striving, was working towards having peaceful coexistence with the Israeli people. But I must say, I do not believe that was ever the agenda. Indeed, I was shocked, I was amazed to recently read an interview that Yasar Arafat, the leader of the PLO, recently gave to the Arab television network, with Al-Jazeera. He is quoted as saying, "We defend not only Palestine, the Arab Nation, and not only the holy Islamic and Christian places, but also men of freedom and honor all over the world. This is our destiny. This is a divine decree. Let those far and near understand, none among the Palestinian people or Arab nation will be willing to bow and surrender, but we will ask Allah to grant martyrdom, to grant martyrdom." He repeated it twice.

He then went on to say, "To Jerusalem we march, martyrs by the millions. To Jerusalem we march, martyrs by the millions, to Jerusalem we march, martyrs by the millions," and he went on to say it again. Through the course of what was a 5, 10 minute interview on this Arabic television station, he went on to call for martyrs by the millions.

Now, this is not news to many people who have been following the career of Yasar Arafat. Indeed, he goes on radio every day in the Palestinian territories calling for the destruction of the Israeli state, calling on more people to come forward to martyr themselves for the cause of destroying the Israeli state, to push, as he likes to say, the Jewish people into the sea.

We will never have peace in the Middle East until Yasar Arafat, the Palestinian people, agree to give up the type of horrific, unspeakable violence that they have been inflicting upon the citizens of Israel. The Israeli defense forces need to continue this effort to root out the fundamentalist Islamic terrorists that are occupying the West Bank, and they should not withdraw.

GENERAL MUSHARRAF'S REFERENDUM

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FERGUSON). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I come to the House floor this evening to dis-

cuss Pakistan's self-proclaimed President, General Pervez Musharraf's plan to hold a referendum in Pakistan on April 30 to extend his presidency for 5 years. Mr. Speaker, I am very disappointed by the steps General Musharraf is taking to extend his military rule and to further bar democracy in Pakistan.

In October of 1999, General Musharraf came to power in Pakistan when he overthrew the elected government of former Prime Minister Sharif. In June of 2001, 20 months following his coup, Musharraf declared himself the President of Pakistan. At that time, Musharraf claimed that his presidential declaration was an initial step towards promoting democracy in traditionally dictatorial Pakistan. But, Mr. Speaker, I felt that based on his past actions, including the dissolving of the national assembly, or parliament, and four provincial assemblies, the reality was just the opposite.

We are faced with a similar situation today in that Musharraf is simply paying lip service to democratic rule by holding this referendum on April 30. Besides Musharraf's continued steps towards extending dictatorial rule in Pakistan, there are several other aspects of holding this referendum that I find problematic.

From what I understand, a referendum to extend Musharraf's rule by 5 years is illegal and unconstitutional under Pakistan's constitution. Their constitution mandates that both houses of parliament must elect the President. In addition, after the 1999 coup, Musharraf was bound by the constitution to restore democracy in Pakistan by October of 2002, this year. But clearly these propositions were false.

As a result of Musharraf's blatant disregard for constitutional law, there has been opposition to the referendum within Pakistan. The 15-party Alliance for the Restoration of Democracy, which includes the country's two main parties, has been vocal about Musharraf's unconstitutional means to remain President. In addition, there has been public backlash against the referendum plan from Pakistan's leading newspapers, major Islamic parties, and the 54-nation Commonwealth of Britain and its former colonies.

The leaders of the opposition party in Pakistan attempted to hold a rally against the referendum, which led to the arrest of dozens of their leaders by the police. The arrest of these leaders caused major concern because not only is Musharraf proceeding with an unlawful referendum, but he is also barring leaders of the opposition party to publicly protest. Although a ban on rallies has been in effect in Pakistan to quell Islamic extremist rallies, it is unacceptable that Musharraf is allowing the ban on rallies to apply to a rally in opposition to his presidential referendum.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to also discuss Pakistan's human rights record, which clearly exemplifies that stripping citizens of the right to protest

against an unlawful referendum is just the tip of the iceberg. A recent report by the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan indicated that respect for human rights in Pakistan is afforded to few and that women and children in particular experience tremendous violence and discrimination.

These facts provide a glimpse of the social conditions in Pakistan. However, other human rights violations such as limited press and religious freedom, torture and killings by the police and lack of free and fair elections are also evidenced in the report.

Although Musharraf has been an ally to the United States in the war against terrorism, we cannot forget that he is the dictatorial leader of Pakistan and that he is not in fact the duly elected President. The political, social, and economic situation in Pakistan is bleak. This fragile country can only be improved by a democratic leader who will represent the interests of Pakistani citizens. It is unsettling to think of the negative repercussions of 5 more years of rule under Musharraf, given the current majority of opposition and given the current lack of basic human rights afforded to Pakistanis.

URGING SUPPORT FOR RESOLUTION TO INFLUENCE MEXICO TO REJECT OPEC AFFILIATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. GEKAS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GEKAS. Mr. Speaker, soon after the tragic attacks on our institutions on September 11, as everyone knows, our economy began to sink, to plummet to depths that we could not have foreseen. While we were struggling to right our ship, as it were, the OPEC nations decided, before the end of the year, before the end of 2001, to cut oil production, which would have the natural consequence of rising prices at the gas pump here in the United States and elsewhere. This was an insult added to injury to have our former allies, like Saudi Arabia and Kuwait who are part of OPEC, to make certain that prices would rise at the gas pump in the midst of an economy that was being severely hurt by what had happened at the World Trade Center and at the Pentagon and in Pennsylvania.

Imagine my surprise then when, we all know that OPEC has to depend on the non-OPEC nations to go along with their guidelines, their decisions on oil production and pricing, et cetera; imagine my surprise, my pleasant surprise when I learned that Mexico, for instance, was not going to join with OPEC in this drastic decision that they made.

Well, that was good news for the United States on two fronts: one, that Mexico, our neighbor to the south, was sticking with the United States in its hour of economic peril and, in effect saying to OPEC, no thank you, they will not go along with the price-setting

and oil production cuts that OPEC proclaimed. Imagine my next round of surprises when not too long after that, Mexico, in a meeting with Venezuela, decided to jump back into the OPEC pool and there again indicate to the world that they were going to join OPEC in the cutting of oil production, thereby having the effect of rising prices at the gas pump.

Now, this is the same Mexico that said that they would not join with OPEC. Now they have decided to stick with OPEC; and in doing so, they slapped us right in the face, because the cut in production of 100,000 barrels per day, or cut of availability to the United States of that 100,000 barrels a day, was an ingredient that caused the rise of prices that we saw in March of 15 to 17, and some places higher than that, 17 to 20 cents a gallon over a short period of time, and more to come, because the normal period for rising prices, the summer season, is already upon us.

Well, I have introduced a resolution just today which would call upon the President and the administration to again approach our OPEC allies, as they were, they were allies, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia; as a matter of fact, we came to their aid, we came to their side against an aggression by Iraq. We are asking the administration to convince or to try to convince those allies of ours whom we saved in that particular period of time to produce what is needed for the consumption in the world without regard to setting prices and to cutting production to artificially raise prices while, at the same time, the resolution calls for extra efforts to convince our neighbor to the south, Mexico, not to join with OPEC.

Mr. Speaker, the Mexican economy and the Mexican-American border which we share, all of that depend on a strong American economy. The Mexican economy itself depends on the American economy. Can my colleagues imagine that they would take steps to cause rises in the prices at gas pumps? We must convince them that they should renounce joining with OPEC now and forever and to remain with the United States in a hemispheric system to become an economic engine of its own. We do not need OPEC if Mexico would simply deal with the United States in oil production.

So this resolution calls for an important foray into Mexican-American relations, strictly with respect to the OPEC cartel and the insistence of Mexico to go along with OPEC. We cannot tolerate that.

So whatever comes by way of oil production, if the United States and Mexico can cooperate one on one in the production of oil and in the market, sale and pricing of oil, the American economy will be better off and, therefore, so will the Mexican economy. I ask for Members to join in this resolution.

TRIBUTE TO NATIONAL CHAMPIONS MARYLAND TERRAPINS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, as the boxing great Muhammad Ali once observed, "Champions are not made in gyms. Champions are made from something they have deep inside them, a desire, a dream, a vision."

Thus, it is with great pride, Mr. Speaker, that I rise tonight, a 1963 graduate of the University of Maryland at College Park and a current member of the University system's Board of Regents, to congratulate the men's basketball team and a fellow alumnus, Coach Gary Williams, for realizing their dream 8 days ago: winning the 2002 national championship, the first in the university's long history.

□ 2045

Too often perhaps, Mr. Speaker, we imbue athletic competition with a seriousness beyond its significance. However, anyone who watched these 12 Terrapins this season observed the qualities that carried them to the mountaintop: hard work and determination, teamwork and skill, and an unbending will to win that allowed them to overcome virtually every obstacle. Those are lessons for life as well as success in sports.

After the Terrapins had won their game with the Indiana Hoosiers in the title game on April 1, Washington Post columnist Thomas Boswell wrote, "This was not just a great Maryland team. In time, it will be seen as a champion among champions."

Who could argue with that? There was the school record for wins in a season, 32, the fourth consecutive season with 25 wins or more. There was the undefeated home record of 15-0 at Cole Field House in the last year of play in Cole Field House. What a way to end a run.

There was the second straight appearance in the Final Four and the ninth straight appearance in the NCAA Tournament under Coach Williams, and there was the first Atlantic Coast conference regular season championship in some 22 years.

The path to preeminence, however, of course was not paved with ease. There was a heartbreaking loss to Duke University in the Final Four last year. There was a season opening loss and an unexpected defeat in the ACC tournament this year. There was personal hardship off the court, as well.

The national championship, Mr. Speaker, was never a coronation. The Terrapins faced and defeated perennial basketball powerhouses Kentucky, Connecticut, Kansas, and then Indiana. Collectively, those teams won over 15 national titles.

In hindsight, it was fitting to win the championship on that road. Difficulty and adversity vest victory with an even greater sense of accomplishment. No