

church was the source of America's nascent greatness. And it should really come as no surprise that from the high steeples and the rows of pews have come some of America's greatest figures and most defining moments.

Chief among them was on March 23, 1775. It was a full year before the Declaration of Independence would be signed in Philadelphia. The seeds of revolution were sown in Virginia. The midnight hour of British tyranny was approaching, forcing the leaders of that Commonwealth to choose their course. The debates were fierce and divided. Some argued for revolution; others for a more diplomatic outcome.

In St. John's Church in Richmond, Virginia, the leaders met again to decide the people's fate, and a fiery orator named Patrick Henry rose from his chair. Murmurs and whispers greeted him. He was known for his lively speeches, entertaining visitors and leaders alike. But the opposition was growing increasingly uncomfortable with his claims and his call for liberty at any cost.

Patrick Henry's speech began like an approaching storm. His words grew with intensity and power. "Besides, sir, he said, we shall not fight our battle alone. There is a just God who presides over the destinies of nations, who will raise up friends to fight our battles for us. The battle, sir, is not to the strong alone, it is to the vigilant, the active, and the brave." And then, with growing momentum, he concluded, "Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God. I know not what course others may take, but as for me, give me liberty or give me death." This was, in fact, the rhetorical shot heard around the world.

For Patrick Henry, the church was the natural place to say such words. He grew up listening to the passionate teachings of traveling preachers. He studied their movements and tone. He watched as they swayed audiences towards belief.

But religion for Henry was not a side-show or politics, or something to be left to the pulpit. He knew true belief transformed lives, inspiring the heart and steeling the will. He said, "It cannot be emphasized too strongly or too often that this great Nation was founded not by religionists, but by Christians."

Patrick Henry would go on to be Governor of Virginia five times, and was instrumental in drafting its first constitution. But in all his experience, he grew more and more to believe in the importance and the centrality of the Christian faith.

Let us close with the words of Alexis de Tocqueville, who would write some 50 years later of the experiences of the Revolution that, as was the case with Patrick Henry, "Christianity is the companion of liberty in all its conflicts, the cradle of its infancy and the divine source of its claims."

Mr. Speaker, may we ever remember that from the fire of faith comes the future of freedom.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. NORTON. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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

(Mr. NETHERCUTT addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

CHILD NUTRITION

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

Mr. HINOJOSA. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to speak about a serious problem that is affecting the health of our children. I am talking about childhood obesity.

In his recent "Call to action to prevent and decrease overweight and obesity," the surgeon general found that in 1999, over 13 percent of children ages 6 to 11 and 14 percent of adolescents ages 12 to 19 years are overweight. Nationwide, the number of overweight children has tripled over the last two decades.

This has led to a staggering increase in children with Type 2 diabetes, a disease that normally affects senior adults. Sixty percent of obese children ages 5 to 10 have at least one risk factor for heart disease, and 25 percent have two or more factors.

As obese children grow up, they are likely to remain obese as adults, and continue to be at risk for a variety of health problems. If we are to reverse this trend, parents, schools, and the government must work harder to address this problem early, before our children's health is affected.

I want to commend two organizations in my congressional district that are doing just that. The Region One Education Service Center in Edinburg, Texas, and the Texas School Food Service Association have taken the lead in working with our schools to improve nutrition and encourage physical activity to reduce childhood obesity.

Our schools are working hard to reverse this trend toward obesity. Many schools that eliminated physical education programs are reinstating them.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to show that there is a great need for improvement in school meals, with this poster. Our schools are working hard to reverse the trend, as I said earlier. Thanks to the work of the Texas Food Service Association and the National Food Service Association, between 1991

and 1998, there has been a significant trend toward lower levels of fat and saturated fat in school meals. More schools serve low-fat milk and provide healthful food choices in the school cafeterias.

Despite these successes, there still is work to be done. While school breakfasts are close to meeting all Federal nutrition standards, many of the school lunch programs still do not meet Federal nutrition guidelines.

The school meal programs also face competition from vending machines and fundraising food sales at schools that encourage children to skip the more nutritious school meal and eat snacks and sodas that are full of fat, salt, and sugar. Despite their good efforts, our schools cannot do it all. Parents need to take responsibility, and the Federal Government has to do its part.

I urge my colleagues here in Congress to join me in cosponsoring H.R. 2129, the Better Nutrition for Schoolchildren Act of 2001. This bill will give the U.S. Department of Agriculture the authority to extend nutrition guidelines to every food product in our schools, including those outside of the cafeteria.

As we look towards next year's reauthorization of the Child Nutrition Act, I hope that we in Congress will be a partner, not a hindrance, in improving the health and nutrition of our schoolchildren. Our children deserve no less.

Again, I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to join me in cosponsoring H.R. 2129, and let us pass this legislation.

VIOLENCE IN THE MIDDLE EAST

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

Mr. FOLEY. First, let me commend the House, Mr. Speaker, for its passage of the very, very important retirement security bill today, the Pension Security Act of 2002. I state emphatically, the bill brings about some necessary reform.

My best quote, if you will, relative to this important legislation is, if it is good enough for the brass, it ought to be the same for the middle-class workers. So hopefully we have leveled the playing field, provided some protection, and it is well overdue. I commend the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN) for his outstanding efforts on leading us in this direction. He has been working on this for years.

This is not as a result of Enron, but it certainly has been aided and abetted by that scandal that took place in Texas, so I am thrilled we are able to pass it to the floor today.

Let us turn our attention to a very serious issue that is confronting the world, if you will, and that is what is going on in the Middle East.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to reiterate my strong support for Israel. There is no escaping the mire of violence that

has taken such a horrible toll in the Middle East. All of us wish collectively that peace would come sooner rather than later for the Israelis and the Palestinians. But in the interim, we must look past the graphic images being broadcast on the nightly news and fully appreciate why the United States has such a stake in what is happening there.

Israel has been a strong, true partner of the United States, anchoring our policies in the Middle East. A strong, true partner, I want to underscore those important words. Whatever second-guessing anyone might have over tactics, Israel must have the ability to protect itself and its people in what has become a dangerous and hostile everyday environment.

From its inception, Israel, which is the most stable democracy in the region, has shown strength and resolve in the face of adversity. The war of terrorism that has increasingly been waged against it has become untenable and inexcusable. Both Israelis and Palestinians now live in a constant state of fear, a fear that their lives may end in a restaurant, an open-air market, or simply crossing the street.

Let me underscore, this is not between military personnel on each side, this is about average citizens, men, women, and children, going about their daily lives, being blown up in the streets of these cities. Before September 11, few Americans could imagine such fear. Even after September 11, it remains hard to envision living our everyday lives with the ghost of death almost hovering. Yet, this is what Israel faces and Israelis face every day.

Since the new wave of terrorism has swept over the land, this is what many Palestinians also face. Yet, the Palestinian leadership continues to escalate the violence, plunging the region further into chaos.

We have a moral obligation to both the Israelis and the Palestinians to forge ahead for peace, but we also must keep in mind that many of Israel's enemies have sworn to destroy the country of Israel. They hate Jews. The Jihad, the Islamic Jihad, the Hezbollah, the Hamas are all desperate to destroy others because of their ethnicity or religious belief.

For Americans, the shells that fall in the Middle East impact us here close to home. Just as the carpenter would not start building a home on a soft sand foundation, we cannot hope to defeat terrorism at home and abroad when terrorism in the Middle East undermines the very foundation of peace we seek to achieve.

This has certainly not been lost on my constituents, many of whom have mothers and fathers, sisters and brothers, cousins, aunts, uncles, and friends in Israel. It should not be lost on anyone who recognizes that the United States cannot fight a successful war against terrorism unless and until the Arab world in general and the Palestinians in particular join us in seeking

peace, not war in the guise of Jihad, and certainly not in martyrdom.

It is a troubling time for us, it is a troubling time for them, and I urge that we all work collectively in support of Secretary Powell's visit there on behalf of the President of the United States. I think it is clear that we must do all we can to achieve peace, but it has to be a just peace for all.

I have often felt that if average Israelis and Palestinians could meet together and sort this out, they probably would. I have very little confidence in Mr. Arafat. I have very little confidence. He attempts to show a good face and smiling demeanor when he talks peace in the United States, as he has many times, and then he goes back home and straps a rifle to his waist and swaggers around and insists that he has no interest in dealing with Israelis, in order to keep his job.

It is about time we stopped worrying about keeping our jobs and started worrying about saving lives. I urge all sides to begin immediately, before more deaths take the innocent.

□ 1700

MIDDLE EAST PEACE AND STABILITY

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

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I wish to say this past week I have called on President Bush to request an emergency meeting of the United Nations security council for the purpose of enforcing a peacekeeping or enforcement action in the Middle East.

In the past few months the world has witnessed a frightening increase in the level of violence in the Middle East. In this 21st century, which we had hoped would be a century of peace, our children have watched on television over 2,000 more people killed in this unnecessary fighting between the Palestinians and Israelis. We have seen lives and neighborhoods destroyed. We have seen children blown up and shot. We have seen the hope for peace diminished. Innocent Israelis and Palestinians have been literally caught in the crossfire of violence.

To date, as many as 1,400 more Palestinians and 500 more Israelis have died. The situation is clearly out of control.

I applaud President Bush's demands that Israel and the Palestinian Authority step back from one another. But the Israelis have refused to comply with the President's demand and the Palestinians have refused to comply with the President's demand.

What happens in the Middle East is crucial to U.S. interests. What happens in the Middle East is crucial to the United States's war against terrorism. What happens in the Middle East is crucial to our economy. The Bush ad-

ministration's initial policy of disengagement for almost an entire year was ill conceived. But with Secretary Powell's mission to the Middle East, we have some indication that the administration realizes how important it is to put the full weight of our diplomatic and foreign policy apparatus behind the search for peace.

The United Nations should approve a peacekeeping or an enforcement action that is international in scope, because if the two sides can be separated and a situation created for dialogue, the world may have an opportunity to move forward.

A U.N.-supported force, after bringing down the level of violence, could help provide for regional stability that is necessary for preserving the State of Israel's continuing right to exist and establishing an independent Palestinian state.

Americans, I suppose, could ask, Why are we there? Is it because of regional stability, or is it because of our own oil interests? Let me reference a complicating factor and urge Americans to think domestically what we can do here at home also to contribute to a solution.

U.S. dependence on imported petroleum remains our chief strategic vulnerability. We watch gas prices going up again, and we see the recession we are beginning to pull out of being triggered perhaps again because of a 20 percent increase in gas prices here at home. Too often our dependence on imported petroleum, including from places like the Middle East, have served as proxy for our foreign policy.

I will insert into the RECORD this week important articles written in USA Today, which the headline reads, "Gas Prices Up 20 Percent and Rising," and its relationship to what is going on in Iraq, in spite of the embargo, providing us with a minimum of 8 percent of the petroleum that we import into this country every day.

I will also supply for the RECORD articles from the New York Times of yesterday talking about the missing energy strategy of the Bush administration.

We have got to get serious here at home. Over half the petroleum we use is imported from very unstable places. It is time for America to become energy independent.

And an article from the Times on Tuesday talking about Venezuela: "Venezuela Woes Worsen as State Oil Company Calls Strike." This is going to impact prices here at home as well.

Who or what is leading our foreign policy? Are we promoting democracy or securing international oil interests as our primary goal? Americans here at home need to demand a declaring of energy independence.

The U.S. Energy Department headed by Spencer Abraham reported this week that consumers can expect no relief at the gas pump before fall and predicted that the average price of regular unleaded gas to be \$1.46 between now