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Senate

The Senate was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Monday, March 22, 2004, at 12 noon.

House of Representatives

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 17, 2004

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. BASS).

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
March 17, 2004.

I hereby appoint the Honorable CHARLES F. BASS to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer:
Lord, be with the American people as they pray today for all who witness for You in this world.

We ask You to be with all those who serve the public in roles of government, military service, homeland security, and neighborhood protection.

May all leaders of religious faiths, businesses, communities, and families be blessed with courage, perseverance, and hope.

May teachers, preachers, scientists, and artists bring the light of wisdom into the darkness of this age.

Remove evil from the sight of children. Calm every fear.

Fill everyone with the knowledge of Your presence here, now, and forever.
Amen.

THE JOURNAL

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

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Texas (Mr. NEUGEBAUER) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. NEUGEBAUER 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.

IRAQ LIBERATION HAS BROUGHT THE HOPE OF FREEDOM TO MIL-LIONS

(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, 1 year ago this Friday the historic liberation of the Iraqi people from Saddam Hussein's vicious tyranny began. Thanks to the leadership of President George W. Bush and the courage of our military with coalition partners, Iraqis no longer fear Saddam's torture chambers and executions. Instead, millions enjoy the hope of freedom and democracy.

Today, Iraqi women have the freedom to participate in government and chil-

dren are going to newly renovated schools. Decades of neglect by Saddam are being reversed in record time as health clinics, water sources, electricity and sanitation are being restored throughout the country.

Most importantly, the world no longer lives under the constant threat of a madman who harbored and supported terrorists.

After World War II, we helped rebuild Germany to assist it from becoming a breeding ground for communists, and we were successful. Today we are rebuilding Iraq to assist it from being a breeding ground for terrorists, and we will be successful in protecting American families.

In conclusion, God bless our troops. And we will never forget September 11.

U.S. POLICY IN IRAQ DEFINED

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, the House is about to consider H. Res. 561, which represents another missed opportunity for this body. The war in Iraq defined and drove United States' policy for the last 2 years. While there are legitimate questions about whether we are as a world safer today than we were a year ago, this resolution ignores the real question of how safe the world would be, if we had done it right.

While there was never a doubt about the U.S. winning the war, this administration ignored the cost of winning the peace. Our young men and women in

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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uniform pay the price every day in Iraq for that failure.

Yes, we need to support; yes, we need to unify; yes, we need to indicate our appreciation for our troops; but more important, we need to learn from this experience. How do we improve our intelligence and our military execution so that our soldiers are not unnecessarily put in harm's way in the future? Our families at home and our troops overseas deserve for us to do it right.

THE TOTALITARIAN GULAG IN CUBA

(Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida, Mr. Speaker, exactly 1 year ago, taking advantage of the attention of the world on the liberation of Iraq where U.S. Armed Forces and coalition forces eliminated a dangerous madman from power, that formerly oppressed country, the Cuban dictator 90 miles from the United States utilizing that cover of attention on Iraq, commenced a campaign to throw dozens of peaceful pro-democracy activists, librarians and economists and journalists and students and workers and others into the totalitarian gulag where they joined the thousands of others who languish as political prisoners in that enslaved island.

Mr. Speaker, each day we must remind the world of the existence of the totalitarian gulag 90 miles from the United States. We must demand the release of each and every political prisoner on that island. We must not rest until they are all free.

REGARDING IRAQ RESOLUTION

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

Mr. MCDERMOTT, Mr. Speaker, I rise to talk about the Iraq resolution that I will vote "no" on today.

Republicans would like us to say America is safer. I wish that were true, but it is not. We have only to look at what happened in Spain to be reminded. Terrorism threatens America today just as much as terrorism threatened America before we invaded Iraq.

Make no mistake, I wholeheartedly support the U.S. soldiers. My support does not stop at the Iraq border, nor is my support bounded by political party. I regularly visit troops at Walter Reed Hospital, and I urge every Member to do so. They are the best soldiers and they make America proud.

I would like to pass a resolution praising our soldiers, but this Republican resolution is meant to legitimize a position the administration cannot defend at home or abroad. Look at the Spanish election. We have lost soldiers. We continue to lose them. We have lost credibility. And we have found nothing.

This is not worthy of a victory lap. I will not sing the praises of the Bush doctrine.

SHALLOWATER HIGH SCHOOL STATE CHAMPIONS

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

Mr. NEUGEBAUER, Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Shallowater High School State champion boys and girls basketball teams. Within the span of 1 week, the Shallowater boys teams followed the girls in an elite list of State basketball championships. This is an unprecedented victory for the school which can only be attributed to pure hard work and dedication.

In a rare moment in Texas State championships, both the girls and boys basketball teams won a State title. The Mustangs from Shallowater executed a 47-45 overtime victory over Argyle, thus winning the class 2A boys championship game. Just a week earlier, the Fillies, the girls team from Shallowater, triumphed over Aubrey with a dramatic 44-37 win and captured the girls 2A State championship game.

This is no small feat for a rural community high school like Shallowater to achieve what it has in this past week. These students have shown exemplary performance and proven what a commitment can do.

Shallowater is the home of champions. The players, Coach Chuck Darden, and Coach Ray Morris will go down in history as the folks who put their town in the spotlight through determination and hard work.

SALUTE TO THE GREY BERETS

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

Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to all of our men and women in harm's way in Iraq and our Operation Iraqi Freedom, but in particular to focus on the Grey Berets Special Operation Forces Weathermen.

Although the war had not commenced as of this date a year ago, already for weeks on the ground many brave soldiers from these forces had infiltrated Iraq, had set up meteorological operations and were communicating to our pilots, to our Air Force, to our Navy, our Marines and Army the critical weather information necessary for a safe, a death-free, as much as possible, and a successful invasion of Iraq and the liberation of the Iraqi people.

Tonight, the Weather Channel Network will feature a 1-hour special on these brave men and women who went into harm's way before battle began, who hid, who worked, who got the data, and made sure our pilots, our Navy, our Marines, and Air Force had the information they needed.

I commend these brave Grey Berets. I commend the Weather Channel Net-

work for paying special tribute to them on this day.

IRAQ'S INTERIM CONSTITUTION

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

Mr. STEARNS, Mr. Speaker, on the 1-year anniversary of the war in Iraq, I rise to applaud the Iraqi civil leaders who last Monday on March 8 signed the interim constitution, the Transitional Administrative Law. With the adoption of this law, the governing council has taken a historic step forward towards a democratic Iraq. It took only 12 months, Mr. Speaker, to defeat Saddam Hussein and transition to an interim constitution.

Now, my colleagues, it took 6 years for the first State in the Union, Delaware, to ratify our Constitution, and several more years before the original 13 finally ratified.

Iraq is moving at a much faster pace. One year ago, the naysayers said we did not have enough forces in place to defeat Iraq's military. Naysayers said we could never find Saddam Hussein; and naysayers doubted that we could get Kurds, Shia, and Sunni Muslims to agree on anything.

Mr. Speaker, 1 year later the naysayers are wrong.

IRAQ REPLACES NEW HAMPSHIRE IN PRIMARY

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

Mr. OBEY, Mr. Speaker, I am so excited by what I just heard that I expect that we will fully see Iraq replace New Hampshire on the Presidential primary circuit before long.

PERMISSION TO REVISE AND EXTEND ON HOUSE RESOLUTION H. RES. 557, RELATING TO LIBERATION OF IRAQI PEOPLE

Mr. OBEY, Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to extend my remarks and include extraneous material during the House debate on the Iraqi resolution later today.

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

There was no objection.

CELEBRATING AGRICULTURE IN WESTERN IOWA

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

Mr. KING of Iowa, Mr. Speaker, I rise today not only because of St. Patrick's Day but because it is also National Agriculture Week. Iowa ranks number one in the Nation in corn, soybean, pork and egg production, and second in total