

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. BLACKBURN). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

REINSTATE ASSAULT WEAPONS BAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mrs. MCCARTHY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York. Madam Speaker, assault weapons go back on to our streets in 84 days. These weapons of war mow down our police officers and destroy families every day.

Just last week, an SKS assault rifle, and this is what it looks like, mowed down three police officers in Alabama and killed them. The SKS can fire up to 35 rounds per minute and pierce police body armor. Montgomery Police Chief John Wilson confirmed that the vests that the officers wore offered almost no protection against this high-powered assault rifle.

Fifty-eight-year-old Carlos Owen, with 26 years on the force and nearing retirement, never had a chance. He and two of his fellow officers died in a hail of bullets.

But that has not stopped the National Rifle Association from engaging in their old dirty tricks. The NRA Web site says data from police experts must be deliberately avoided by those pushing assault weapons bills. Actually, the data is pretty clear on assault weapons. In one of every five police-officer killings, an assault weapon is the choice.

The NRA is so blind to the truth on assault weapons that they are also engaged in a smear campaign against Jim and Sara Brady. The Brady's "error"? Telling the truth about President Reagan's former support for the assault weapons ban in a television interview. The NRA called their interview "shameless" and "deliberate misinformation."

As we continue to remember President Reagan, I would like to set the record straight on his contributions to gun safety. The importation of rapid-fire shot guns was first outlawed under President Reagan.

In 1994, he joined former Presidents Ford and Carter in calling on Congress to pass the assault weapons ban.

During the close vote on the assault weapons ban that year, President Reagan made calls to undecided Members urging for a "yes" vote.

The ban passed by two votes, and at least one Member said Reagan's call prompted him to vote "yes."

President Reagan knew the importance of keeping military-style weapons off our streets and out of our communities.

The assault weapons ban is a commonsense law that almost all Ameri-

cans, gun owners included, do support. It is unfortunate that the NRA feels more strongly about firing up its membership than telling the truth.

Let me say this: each day that comes closer to having this assault weapons ban expire is each day we come closer to seeing deaths in our communities and on our streets. I have never tried to do anything to take away someone's right to own a gun, but I do know assault weapons do not belong on our streets. That is a responsibility that all Americans, in my opinion, and gun owners should take upon themselves.

The American people can do something about this. They can contact their Congressman, their Senator, and certainly the White House. President Bush has promised to sign the assault weapons ban if it gets on his desk. We know that this Congress has to have the bill up on the floor so we can have a vote on it before it will ever get to the President's desk.

I am asking the President for his help. I am asking him to start calling on the Members of Congress, as President Reagan did, and let us get this assault weapons ban in place. Let us make sure our police officers are not put into more risk than they already have to be in.

When we talk about possible terror cells in this country, do we actually want gangs, drug dealers, possibly terrorists being able to get assault weapons? This is not what America is. Assault weapons belong in the hands of only our military. They are guns that are used to mow down people as fast as possible. Why do we need these guns? Let us not forget the large-capacity clips. Right now, under the ban, clips are only supposed to hold 10 bullets. If this ban goes back to the way it was, we can have 35, we can have 50, we can have 100, whatever the clip will hold. That is not where we want to be.

I strongly urge the American people to get involved in this.

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM OF SPEECH

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

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. Madam Speaker, I am again on the floor tonight because in this country, the greatest Nation in the world, our ministers, priests, rabbis, and clerics cannot have the freedom of speech to talk about the policies and political issues of the day.

The history on that is simple. Prior to 1954, any minister, priest, rabbi, or cleric who wanted to speak freely about the politics or the moral or the policy issues of the day, they could do so without any threat from the Federal Government. Well, in 1954 Lyndon Baynes Johnson put an amendment on a revenue bill going through the Senate that basically said that if you are a 501(c)(3), you may not have any type of speech that could be interpreted as

being somewhat of a political nature or a moral political nature.

I have problems with this, Madam Speaker, simply because the Constitution of the United States of America, the first amendment says that any individual, church, or any individual has the right to speak freely of whatever should come to their mind that they feel like they should mention to their fellow citizen or to a congregation. Again, if this was 1953, Madam Speaker, I would not be on the floor of the House, because there would be no problem. This whole problem came about in 1954. I do not want to go much into that history as I do want to go into the present.

Let me read the first paragraph of a pastoral letter from Bishop Sheridan, Colorado Springs, a Catholic bishop in Colorado. Three weeks ago he wrote a three-page letter. I just want to read one paragraph:

"Dear brothers and sisters in Christ. This coming November, Americans will participate in one of the most important national elections in recent history. The President, Senators, and Congressmen who are placed in office by our votes will serve at a time in which issues that are critical to the very survival of our civilization will be at the top of the political agenda. As we prepare for these elections, I consider it my duty as your bishop to write to you about these matters so that you might go to the polls this fall with a well-informed conscience."

Madam Speaker, I say that, and I am not going into any more of the letter, it is a three-page letter; but I will tell my colleagues that all this bishop did was to remind the parishioners in his diocese, the teachers of the church, and not only the church, but of Jesus Christ.

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And that is all he did. But because he did this, he did not say Democrat or Republican, he did not say liberal or conservative, but he talked about pro-life issues.

Mr. Speaker, because he did that, Barry Lynn of the Americans for the Separation of Church and State, filed a complaint against this Bishop. Where is America going? Where is America going when a minister, a priest, or Rabbi or a cleric can not speak freely, which is a first amendment guarantee by our Constitution.

I am not going to go into the letter by Mr. Lind, but I will tell you that basically what he did is to chastise this Bishop because he spoke about the pro-life issues which are very important to our church. And I happen to be a Roman Catholic. I would say this if this was a minister, I would say this if it was a rabbi, they should have the freedom of speech that was guaranteed until 1954.

In addition to that, I want to also recite from Alex de Tocqueville, who came to America in 1830 and he loved America, this new republic, this freedom that we enjoy, and he talked

about the beauty that God had blessed us with, this natural beauty. But what he was really was encouraged with, and I want to read this, "But not until I went to the churches of America and I heard her pulpits flamed with righteousness did I understand the secret of her genius and power. America is great because America is good. And if America ever ceases to be good, America will cease to be great."

Mr. Speaker, there is also another quote that I think goes back to Jeff Jacoby with the Boston Globe that I read back in 1995, my first year in the United States Congress, when he said that religion can survive in the absence of freedom, but freedom without religion becomes dangerous and unstable.

And what I am seeing happening in this country today bothers me greatly. When I think about the young men and women that are dying in Afghanistan and Iraq, they are dying so the Iraqi people can have freedom, and yet in this great Nation known as America, our priests, our preachers, rabbis and clerics cannot have the first amendment rights.

Let me share a quote with you from Floyd Flake. Floyd Flake, Mr. Speaker, was one of the finest Members of this United States House of Representatives. He is a minister in New York City. And I want to read this for you very quickly. It is a letter about the bill I put in to return freedom of speech to our churches and synagogues. He says, "I praise God for the stand that you have taken to defend the first amendment rights of houses of worship. It is unjust that churches and clergymen and women are unfairly targeted when they exercise their rights as American citizens. I am pleased to offer my whole-hearted support with sincere prayer for passage of this important and liberating legislation."

Mr. Speaker, I will close, but I want to say that I hope that the colleagues of mine in this House will join me in returning the first amendment rights to our churches, our synagogues and our mosques.

I close by asking God to please bless our men and women in uniform and their families and my God continue to bless and help save America.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 4613, DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2005

Mrs. MYRICK, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 108-559) on the resolution (H. Res. 683) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 4613) making appropriations for the Department of Defense for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2005, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

THE ADMINISTRATION'S FAILURE TO DESTROY A TERRORIST CAMP

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, last week the independent 9/11 Commission said it found "no credible evidence to substantiate the charge that there was a relationship between Saddam Hussein and Iraq and 9/11. We have no credible evidence that Iraq and al Qaeda cooperated on attacks against the United States." Yet, 2 days later, Vice President CHENEY said that, in fact, that was not true, that there were long established ties with al Qaeda.

Now, of course, Vice President CHENEY has quite a distinguished record as Vice President. He was the gentleman of 3 years ago said during the energy crisis in the western United States that those of us who thought there was market manipulation were really pretty stupid, and this was just market forces at work and there was no manipulation of the market. And Enron was a wonderful and upstanding company. Of course, now Enron officials, one after another, are going to jail, and hopefully Ken Lay will be criminally indicted this week. But the Vice President waxed eloquent there as he did here.

He also has said that deficits do not matter despite the fact we will borrow \$700 billion against our future and obligate Americans for generations to pay that money back. He says that does not matter perhaps because his tax policy that he and the President envision says that only wage earners and salary earners will repay that and the wealthy and those that you normally associate with and corporations will not pay. But, nonetheless, he said again trying to raise the old saw about this relationship perhaps because although he told us that he knew exactly where the weapons of mass destruction were, he failed to point any of the U.S. troops, the inspectors or anybody who has been in Iraq for the last year and a half to that exact spot where he knew those weapons were located.

So it is a continuing attempt at obfuscation. The one thing they point to does have a kernel of truth, and they point to terrorist Abu Musab Zarqawi. He is a really bad guy. He has been behind more than 700 terrorist killings in Iraq it is estimated, a mastermind.

In June 2002, the United States intelligence service located Mr. Zarqawi and they said he had set up a weapons lab in Kirma, in northern Iraq. He was producing ricin and cyanide. The Pentagon drafted plans and asked the Bush administration to take out Mr. Zarqawi. The Bush administration said no.

Then we went 4 months later, and this is all from a report by Jim Miklaszewski, a correspondent for NBC news. Four months later, Intelligence showed that Zarqawi was planning to

use the ricin in attacks in Europe. The Pentagon drew up a second strike plan. The White House again killed it. This is a quote from a former national security member, "People were more obsessed with developing the coalition to overthrow Saddam than to execute the President's policy of preemption against terrorists."

Then finally the threat turned real in January. Mr. Zarqawi's group, a number of them were arrested in London and they had a ricin lab which was directly connected to the lab in northern Iraq. This was a part of the country Saddam Hussein did not control. The Kurds controlled that area undercover of U.S. air power. So Saddam Hussein did not control this area. And, again, the United States flew over it every day. In fact, we might remember that Colin Powell famously pointed to it when he made his presentation to the National Security Council and said there are terrorists in this camp training in an area where we control the air space and we fly over it every day. But we did not take it out.

And because the Bush administration was more obsessed with building its coalition of the willing, worried that countries some of those the new Europe might fall off from our coalition, those who sent five, ten, or 15 troops to the coalition, if we took out this terrorist camp, they did not do it. And U.S. troops and many others have died because this administration failed to take out that terrorist camp on the three occasions when the Pentagon asked them to do it because they were so obsessed with pursuing a war against Saddam Hussein and his non-existent weapons of mass destruction. Now, he was a bad guy in the world and we are well quit of him, hopefully permanently quit of him soon.

But the point is when this administration turned its eyes away from al Qaeda, and turned its eyes away from the terrorists, and refused to take out Zarqawi, they were making a grave error and people have died because of that error.

FAST FACTS ON THE SPENDING ISSUE

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

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Mr. Speaker and Members, I rise tonight to talk about our budget, the Federal budget and enforcing that budget. Now, I came here with Mr. JONES and others with a fairly large class back in 1995 we were elected to Congress. And I will never forget one of the first meetings we were invited to was held by some of the top economics folks here in Washington and folks from the Congressional Budget Office. And they told us at that meeting that if we did not get serious about balancing the budget, we forget now that back throughout most of the 1980s, we were running deficits exceeding \$200