

second amendment in the constitutional right to bear arms with any desire and need to carry an automatic weapon. I would support my law enforcement officers, the peace of our community and peace of this Nation over any gun manufacturer any day. Come out and show yourself. We are the truthsayers in the place. I ask for a debate on the assault weapons ban, and I ask for it to be extended.

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

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

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

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

WHY THE CAPITAL LOOKS LIKE A BEWILDERED CITY UNDER ATTACK

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

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I thought I ought to come to the House floor this evening to explain my understanding of why the capital looks like a bewildered city under attack. The Members have not seen the worst of it yet because we have not all come to the House during rush hour or left the House during rush hour.

The District was put under an orange alert while Members were away. I am fully appreciative of the reasons for the orange alert after the IMF and World Bank were seen as targeted places. I am a member of the Select Committee on Homeland Security. I believe strong action was necessary. What we see around the House and the Senate are the primitive protections, if we can call them that.

Checkpoints, a street closure of the only street for all intents and purposes leaving from this part of the city to the transportation hub of the region, Union Station, rail, light rail, buses, Metro, this is what you would expect if we were under attack. If you get a red alert, there is nothing more to do. So we have to ask ourselves, was this necessary, was there an alternative?

Let me be clear, New York has been under an orange alert since 9/11. While very special precautions were taken during the Republican convention, and I would hope so, no major street in New York City has been closed to traffic.

During the recess I had meetings with all the security officials, Mr. Livingood, Mr. Pickle, Chief Gainer, to ask what was going on and to see

whether or not we could offer some alternatives. With me also was the administrator of the District of Columbia representing the Mayor of the District of Columbia.

The first thing I asked was, do we have a citywide plan, a coordinated, citywide security plan to protect the Nation's Capital. Astonishingly, we do not. Each sector operates on its own. The Capitol Police here in the House and the Senate, that is one sector. The White House sector, through the Secret Service, the Federal agencies, that is another sector. Finally, the Metropolitan Police Department, on whom all are dependent, no coordinated plan. So on 15th Street, right by Treasury and the White House, no security checkpoints, no street closures, because the Secret Service made a calculated, analytical decision that you did not need it, that the risk was not such that you needed to close whole streets or even use checkpoints. Why are we having checkpoints here?

I believe that Mr. Livingood and the Capitol Police will shortly be forced to do the sensible thing, not to abolish the necessary checkpoints, but to look at what they say are the vehicles that concern them, larger vehicles like limousines, like SUVs, but they are peering into each and every car so that there is going to be traffic, as the Mayor says, all the way to Delaware. It is all the way, all the way to Maryland. Mind you, the entire region is going to be affected. Many people are avoiding the area so they are clogging up 395 and downtown.

The gentleman from Ohio (Chairman NEY) and I have spoken. He believed on his own motion that there needed to be a citywide coordinated plan. He has said he wishes to have a task force with all of the players at the table. That is the only way we are really going to be secure.

We have submitted alternatives that came out of these meetings, checkpoints of the kind I just described where you, in fact, let most cars go by, but you do, in fact, stop those of a particular size. Open First Street. We have an alternative. Use checkpoints on First Street. Then narrow First Street with barricades so that cars can only go to and fro after being checkpointed. There is no way in which that does not provide the kind of protection that is needed for Dirksen and Russell, which are on each side.

Above all, let us get down to technology. They used some low technology for the first time, tested some low technology for the first time after the orange alert that had to do with manipulation of traffic lights.

I am asking Members to call my office, to let me know what their experience has been with the checkpoints and with the closure of First Street. Some of you are going to be absolutely exasperated. There are over 20,000 employees, 440 Members of the House, 100 Members of the Senate, but I need your feedback as we try to find new ways.

At the moment we are dealing with 19th century ways to protect the Nation's Capital. They would have used checkpoints and barricades 100 years ago. I think we can do better than that. We do not want the people's House and the Senate to look like an armed camp. We must protect this place not only symbolically, but because this is where the greatest government in the world is, and this is where 600,000 people live.

We have all of the resources that come with innovation because we are Americans. That spirit of innovation is not being shown around this Capitol. I need Members to come forward. Let me know what is happening so that we can compel improvements and make this House and the Senate look like the people's Congress again.

□ 2100

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KING of Iowa) laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

Washington, DC, September 7, 2004.

Hon. J. DENNIS HASTERT,
The Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, I have the honor to transmit a sealed envelope received from the White House on September 7, 2004 at 4:50 p.m. and said to contain a message from the President whereby he transmits a copy of a Proclamation he has issued entitled, "To Modify the Generalized System of Preferences and for Other Purposes".

With best wishes, I am
Sincerely,

JEFF TRANDAH, *Clerk of the House.*

TO MODIFY THE GENERALIZED SYSTEM OF PREFERENCES, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES (H. DOC. NO. 108-211)

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following message from the President of the United States; which was read and, together with the accompanying papers, without objection, referred to the Committee on Ways and Means and ordered to be printed:

To the Congress of the United States:

Pursuant to section 502(f) of the Trade Act of 1974, as amended (the "1974 Act"), I am writing to inform you of my intent to designate Iraq as a beneficiary developing country for purposes of the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP).

I have considered the criteria set forth in sections 501 and 502 of the 1974 Act. In light of these criteria, I have determined that it is appropriate to extend GSP benefits to Iraq.

GEORGE W. BUSH.
THE WHITE HOUSE, September 7, 2004.

A FURTHER MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A further message from the Senate by Mr. Monahan, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed without amendment a bill of the House of the following titles:

H.R. 5005. An act making emergency supplemental appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2004, for additional disaster assistance.

MAJOR TOPICS IN THIS FALL'S ELECTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. OSBORNE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. OSBORNE. Mr. Speaker, there seem to be three major topics which will be determining factors in this fall's elections, and these are: the conflict in the Middle East, the economy, and values in cultural issues. I will attempt tonight to discuss each one of these areas, hopefully in a somewhat accurate, factual, and dispassionate manner. I will start with the situation in the Middle East.

One thing that we often notice as we watch the nightly news is relatively little discussion of Afghanistan; and by almost any measure, Afghanistan has been a major success. The Taliban has been removed from power, the Soviet Union left Afghanistan after several years of war, unable to conquer the Taliban; and we took them out in a matter of weeks with a loss of roughly 100 troops. The terrorist training camps have been destroyed. Terrorist funding in Afghanistan has been largely disrupted, and the terrorist leadership has been rendered largely ineffective throughout that whole country, which is roughly the size of Texas. The country is reasonably stable and has been stabilized with a very small coalition force of approximately 15,000 troops, again in a country the size of Texas.

This is a remarkable achievement. The Loyal Jurga, the constitutional convention, has been accomplished. Even with all of the rival warlords and tribal factions, they did come up with a constitution that is pro-democracy and seems to represent all factions within the country. So it was a remarkable achievement.

Karzai is certainly a very effective leader. They will have general elections on October 9, and certainly Karzai will have some opposition. But if he is elected, and I think that he will be, we will have a very powerful ally. And I think most people would have to say that this was an almost unheard of accomplishment in a period of a little over a year and a half. So Afghanistan has been a truly amazing accomplishment and one that I think that we can be very pleased with.

There are still some negatives there. There still is somewhat of an opium

crop, and that has to be dealt with. A few hundred Taliban and al Qaeda forces are still active, but most have been driven back into the mountains.

Iraq, of course, is another subject; and we have heard that discussed by two or three other speakers on the House floor this evening. There is no question that there is a great deal of controversy about weapons of mass destruction, and there is no question that some of the intelligence that we have received regarding weapons of mass destruction has not been accurate.

I would say that most of the Members of this House at one time or another were invited over to the Pentagon, and we went over in groups of 10 or 15 or 20 or 30, and we were shown aerial reconnaissance photos of Iraq. Most of these were satellite photos. They were remarkably clear. You could read a license plate from outerspace because of the clarity. We were told, and I believe that the people giving us the briefing absolutely believed what they were saying, that this building here was where anthrax was being created, this was where foot and mouth disease was being experimented with, these trucks were going here, and these ammunition dumps were here and so on.

The problem was that our intelligence on the ground was very ineffective. We were relying heavily upon Iraqis for our information, and many of those Iraqis had an axe to grind. They wanted to get rid of Saddam Hussein; and, therefore, whether they deliberately did it or not, I do not know, but obviously some of the information that we received was not very accurate. So this has been certainly a major concern.

However, Great Britain, the Soviet Union, and most U.N. countries had very similar intelligence, and that is why we had 17 United Nations resolutions based on the assumption that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction. So this was certainly not a miscalculation that was done by the United States alone.

One of the main difficulties that we had was that intelligence spending in our country was cut during the 1990s; and, as a result, the expenditures on intelligence were roughly cut in half, and that certainly reduced our capabilities. So there is plenty of blame to go around, and many people have been busy pointing the finger over the last several months. However, the key issue at this point is not what happened in the past, but where do we go from here.

While I was in the Middle East, I had a conversation with a young captain from Nebraska, my home State, and this young man's name was Christ Ferdico; and he said two things that made sense to me. First of all, he said, you know, it is better that we fighter terrorists here in the Middle East than fight them in the United States. So he was saying that by being on offense, we have occupied the terrorists' attention and resources, and there is no question

that we have. Some people have said we have made the world a more dangerous place. But, obviously, the financial resources, the military resources, a lot of the planning has been diverted from this country and other countries to the conflict in the Middle East, so we have not had an attack in this country since 9/11. It does not mean we will never have another attack, but it certainly means that we have, to some degree, diverted some of the attention from this country.

The second thing this young man said to me which I found to be interesting and I believe to be true, he said, I hope the American people do not lose patience. We tend to be a very impatient Nation. We want our problems solved yesterday. We sometimes do not want to pay a very great price to achieve something. And so the impatience of the American people certainly is a concern. Again, we heard some of that debate earlier from some of the other speakers.

We have lost at this point approximately 1,000 soldiers in Iraq. One is too many, and every one of those soldiers from my district that have been lost I have attempted to call their wives, their husbands, their parents and talk to them personally. It has been very interesting because I thought at some point I would run into bitterness or run into acrimony. Certainly there was sorrow, but there was also pride in every one of those phone calls. Every one of those families said, you know he really believed or she really believed in what he or she was doing. They were really proud of the effort, and we are very proud of them and their willingness to sacrifice.

In the Civil War, Mr. Speaker, we lost roughly 400,000 troops. At Antietam it was 20,000 in one day. During World War II there were approximately 450,000 soldiers who died. In Korea, roughly 50,000. In Vietnam, 60,000. In those two conflicts we really do not have much to show in any way by way of accomplishment. That is not true with this particular conflict that we are involved in today.

So, again, I do not want to in any way minimize the sacrifice of those 1,000 soldiers; but it is important historically to keep this in perspective in terms of what has been accomplished and in terms of the loss of life, which has been relatively small when you look at all of the wars that have been fought over the history of our Nation.

A few months ago, I talked to soldiers in Afghanistan, in Kuwait, and in Iraq. We visited the hospital in Ramstein, Germany, Landstuhl, where most all of the casualties, the seriously injured troops from the Middle East were taken, and then more recently here at Walter Reed. I was really amazed at how positive they were. Some had been seriously injured. Some had even lost limbs, arms or legs. The prevailing sentiment was that they wanted to get back to their units.

Now, many of them would not be able to do that. And I thought at some point