

□ 1030

PROGRESS IN IRAQ

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

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, yesterday when Democrat leader Howard Dean said that the war in Iraq is unwinnable and Senate Democrat presidential candidate JOHN KERRY said that American soldiers in the dark of the night are terrorizing Iraqi women and children, I scratch my head in absolute disgust and disappointment. The party of Scoop Jackson has apparently been now completely hijacked by Cindy Sheehan and Michael Moore.

I went to Iraq last week, and I wish that Mr. Dean and Mr. KERRY would go to Iraq and talk directly to our soldiers. Here is what I found, and incidentally, I went with a bipartisan group, three Democrats, three Republicans. We found troop morale high, a great deal of enthusiasm for the mission. No equipment shortages. From tissue to toilet paper, our troops are well equipped. We found that they were very engaged in the mission and that the Iraqi security forces each day were getting more and more of the territory under their control.

We found enthusiasm for the December 15 election, 228 different political parties already offering candidates. A lot of progress is being made. Everything is completely different than the pessimism and the continuous criticism and the Vietnam-era radicalism expressed by Mr. KERRY and Mr. Dean. I would invite those two to go over there and see for themselves before they send such discouraging signals to our troops in action.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 4340, UNITED STATES-BAHRAIN FREE TRADE AGREEMENT IMPLEMENTATION ACT

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 583 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 583

Resolved, That upon the adoption of this resolution it shall be in order without intervention of any point of order to consider in the House the bill (H.R. 4340) to implement the United States-Bahrain Free Trade Agreement. The bill shall be considered as read. The bill shall be debatable for two hours equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Ways and Means. Pursuant to section 151 of the Trade Act of 1974, the previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill to final passage without intervening motion.

SEC. 2. During consideration of H.R. 4340 pursuant to this resolution, notwithstanding the operation of the previous question, the Chair may postpone further consideration of the bill to a time designated by the Speaker in consonance with section 151 of the Trade Act of 1974.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LATOURETTE). The gentleman from Washington (Mr. HASTINGS) is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to my good friend the gentleman from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

(Mr. HASTINGS of Washington asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 583 is a closed rule providing for 2 hours of debate in the House, equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Ways and Means.

The rule waives all points of order against consideration of the bill. It also provides that pursuant to section 151(f)(2) of the Trade Act of 1974, the previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill to final passage without intervening motion.

Lastly, section 2 of the resolution provides that during consideration of the bill, notwithstanding the operation of the previous question, the Chair may postpone further consideration of the bill to a time designated by the Speaker in consonance with section 151 of the Trade Act of 1974.

Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 583 provides for the consideration of H.R. 4340, a bill to implement the United States-Bahrain Free Trade Agreement, in accordance with trade measures negotiated under the Trade Promotion Authority.

Former United States Trade Representative Robert Zoellick signed the United States-Bahrain Free Trade Agreement on September 14, 2004. Under the agreement, all bilateral trade and consumer and industrial goods will be duty free, and 98 percent of U.S. agricultural exports will be duty free. Tariffs on the remaining products, such as alcohol and tobacco, will be reduced to zero within 10 years.

It is important to highlight that labor obligations are included at the core of this agreement, and they meet objectives set out by Congress. In addition, Bahrain has introduced labor reform laws to make its laws fully consistent with the International Labor Organization.

The United States must recognize the fact that 96 percent of the world's population resides outside of our country. That 96 percent represents a marketplace for U.S. goods and services that we cannot reach without proper trade agreements.

My home State of Washington is one of the most trade-dependent States in the Nation, and our economy depends on free and fair trade. From high-tech to agriculture, and from manufacturing industries to other businesses, Washington State and our Nation is in

a position to benefit from having more trading partners.

Mr. Speaker, the United States-Bahrain Free Trade Agreement Implementation Act would be the fourth trade agreement reached between the United States and a Middle Eastern country and is an integral part in creating a Middle East free trade area.

This agreement is important in bringing stability to the Middle East region and sending a strong signal to countries in that region about the benefits of closer economic and political ties with the United States. Approving this agreement is another step in the right direction toward integrating fair trade policies and economic reforms with our national security interest in supporting a more stable and prosperous Middle East.

Both House Resolution 583 and H.R. 4340 were reported by their respective committees by a voice vote. Accordingly, I urge my colleagues to support House Resolution 583 and the underlying bill.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from Washington State (Mr. HASTINGS) for the time, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Sometimes these rules cause confusion when there are two Mr. HASTINGS managing the rule. So in advance, Mr. Speaker, I am sure that my good friend and I want to make sure that there is no confusion.

Mr. Speaker, my good friend and colleague has already pointed out the closed rule we are working on today is mandated by the fact that we are dealing with a trade agreement. So I take no issue with the type of rule, on this specific occasion.

However, as I said to Chairman DREIER last night, along with closed rules, trade agreements by our rules are supposed to come to the House floor with 20 hours of debate. I do recognize the limiting aspect with reference to the rule, and this trade agreement is permitted 2 hours.

Chairman DREIER pointed out, rightly I believe, that this U.S.-Bahrain trade agreement is one of the most noncontroversial agreements of this kind to come before Congress in a long time, and as I said, that may be so, but it is also not the point that I wish to carry.

We have had several more controversial trade deals come before the House in recent years where we were also given 2 hours of debate time. More recently, we saw that in two trade agreements. Trade deals should come to the floor under the 20 hours of debate that the law prescribes. If only 5 hours or 5 minutes is what is necessary to pass the bill, so be it, but I see a bad precedent being set. I ask my friends in the majority to let the House work its will, not so much on this bill, but certainly any other in the future that comes before us.

As to this specific trade agreement, as I have already said, it comes to the floor with the support from the administration and both parties in Congress. While I seriously doubt that free trade with the tiny island nation of Bahrain is going to be the rising tide that lifts our flagging economy, after all, trade with Bahrain accounts for only .03 percent of our total trade activity, I also will not try to stand in the way.

It should be noted, however, that despite its small size, Bahrain runs a trade surplus with the United States, joining most other countries in the world. So, what this agreement does is give us one more country the opportunity to sell more of its goods and services here, even more cheaply than it already does. Maybe one day soon, Mr. Speaker, we will find a country that the United States will run a surplus with, instead of the other way around. One can only hope.

I do have one other very serious concern with Bahrain, Mr. Speaker. Until recently, Bahrain continued to enforce the primary aspect of the Arab League boycott against Israel, which bars imports of Israeli-origin goods.

Simply put, the United States should not trade, and certainly not enter into free trade agreements with, nations that discriminate against America's closest and most trusted Middle East ally.

The kingdom of Bahrain now says they will relent. The kingdom now says that it 'recognizes the need to dismantle the primary boycott of Israel and is beginning to achieve that goal.'

Let us be crystal clear, Mr. Speaker. This change of heart is purely economic, and it happened just in the last month. I suspect that it has nothing to do with the fact that an economic embargo based on religion is wrong and an affront to basic human rights.

The fact that the country's parliament has rejected, in the last 6 weeks, the lifting of the embargo, and the kingdom has made it clear that it is not normalizing relations with Israel only further proves my point.

Whatever the reason, I am thrilled that Bahrain will work to end the long-standing ostracism of Israel by its neighbors. It is past time.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I would just advise my friend, I appreciate his opening remarks and respect the work that he does in international affairs, but I have no requests for time and I am prepared to yield back if the gentleman is.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from Washington, and I yield back the balance of our time.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The previous question was ordered.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

□ 1045

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER
PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LATOURETTE). Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote is objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken later today.

HONORING PILOTS OF COMMERCIAL AIR CARRIERS WHO VOLUNTEER TO PARTICIPATE IN FEDERAL FLIGHT DECK OFFICER PROGRAM

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 196) honoring the pilots of United States commercial air carriers who volunteer to participate in the Federal flight deck officer program.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 196

Whereas after the tragic attacks of September 11, 2001, Congress enacted legislation authorizing volunteer pilots of United States commercial air carriers who participate in the Federal flight deck officer program to use lethal force to defend the flight deck of an aircraft against acts of terrorism;

Whereas a volunteer pilot in the Federal flight deck officer program must undergo rigorous psychological screening and a background investigation, as well as complete an intense training curriculum;

Whereas volunteer pilots in the Federal flight deck officer program provide a significant deterrent against potential acts of violence or terrorism in United States airspace, are an essential layer of security for the Nation's flying public, and are a key factor in restoring confidence in the Nation's air transportation system;

Whereas volunteer pilots in the Federal flight deck officer program devote personal time and finances to maintain a high standard of proficiency in the use of firearms and techniques for addressing emergencies in flight; and

Whereas volunteer pilots in the Federal flight deck officer program, at great personal risk and with no compensation or recognition, are dedicated to the protection of the flight deck, thereby providing an additional layer of protection to the aircraft, passengers, and cargo from acts of terrorism, such as the possible use of the aircraft as a weapon of mass destruction against people on the ground: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That Congress—

(1) recognizes that volunteer pilots in the Federal flight deck officer program are the consummate quiet professionals and embody what is best in our national character;

(2) applauds volunteer pilots in the Federal flight deck officer program for taking a stand against those who would seek to harm the United States through acts of terrorism in the air; and

(3) expresses appreciation to volunteer pilots in the Federal flight deck officer program on behalf of all citizens of the United States for the ongoing contribution of these pilots to the security of the Nation and its air transportation system.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New Mexico (Mr. PEARCE) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. COSTELLO) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Mexico.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on H. Con. Res. 196.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, House Concurrent Resolution 196 recognizes and applauds the volunteer pilots in the Federal Flight Deck Officer program. It is an opportunity to show our appreciation for those brave pilots who are committed to protecting Americans against another act of terrorism not only at huge personal risk but with no compensation or recognition.

I appreciate Chairman MICA's leadership in establishing and supporting this program. I am proud to represent the district where the Federal flight deck officer training occurs. Chairman MICA visited this program with me last year. These are superb assets at Artesia, New Mexico, which include two 727s all lined up and allow real simulated training for the Federal flight deck officers. I also toured the facility with Department of Homeland Security Secretary Chertoff just in the last month.

We should speak for a grateful Nation for the selfless contribution these pilots make to providing a critical layer of protection to the aircraft, passengers, and cargo from acts of terrorism.

Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MICA) control the remainder of my time and that he be allowed to yield time to other Members in consideration of this resolution.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. MICA. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. COSTELLO. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Chairman MICA for introducing this resolution honoring the pilots who participate in this Federal Flight Deck Officer program. As the ranking member of the Aviation Subcommittee and a co-sponsor of this resolution, I believe these volunteer pilots deserve to be honored and recognized for their continued and dedicated service.

Ten months after the tragic September 11 attacks, I and over 300 Members of this body voted to authorize volunteer commercial pilots to carry handguns. At the time, arming pilots was a controversial idea, yet the House