

Iraq, had an historic election of representatives to write a constitution. It drafted and approved its constitution, and now today, because of the efforts of so many military members, including the 56th, that area elected its first true representatives to lead a democratic form of government.

There are those who have said it is a quagmire in Iraq and it is a mistake for us to be there. Some made these statements because of personal heartache. Some, on the other hand, were made from partisan political motivation, and some from disdain for our president and a desire to see his efforts fail, even though it risked world stability and national security.

But our soldiers were there. They know they have done a great thing. They have seen the admiring faces of Iraqi children that were never present in Vietnam. They have heard gratitude from many there in Iraq, our soldiers have. We have not heard as much here.

They not only fought, protected and defended, the 56th, for example, built a school and other important infrastructure improvements. They also saw the frantic efforts of terrorists who were terrified that democracy and the people will begin to rule over them and their oppressive dictatorial ways. They kept many terrorists occupied there, rather than here in America.

Some say that the freedom, democracy and liberty they were fighting for and the evil they have fought against simply was not worth it. My friends, it is worth it, and they are our heroes. They and their families have sacrificed for us, and we are grateful.

My friend from Lindale, who is also a Texas Aggie and a citizen soldier, Colonel Brown, is an American patriot. He and his distinguished command Sergeant Major Chambliss led a band of great American patriots, and they led them well.

The quote from the 1800s by philosopher John Stewart Mill certainly applies to our present situation. He said, "War is an ugly thing, but not the ugliest of things. The decayed and degraded state of moral and patriotic feeling which thinks that nothing is worth war is much worse. The person who has nothing for which he is willing to fight, nothing which is more important than his own personal safety, is a miserable creature and has no chance of being free unless made and kept so by the exertions of better men than himself."

Those who have been serving in Iraq and Afghanistan and in harm's way on our behalf are some of the better people of whom Mills spoke.

Today was just an incredible day in Iraq. That for which we have been hoping and fighting happened. The Iraqis elected their first elected officials who will preside for the next years to come. There have been threats this year against any Iraqi who voted on. Those Iraqis who stuck their fingers into the ink knew they were readily identifiable for two to three weeks to any terrorist

that wanted to kill them. What courage. We have voters here who will not even go out if it sprinkles or rains, and yet they were willing to risk the threat of death. They are not out of the woods. They can see the home lights though glowing from where they have gotten.

It was particularly distasteful though that so many had stepped up their screaming and their histrionics to "pull out now." Have you wondered why the surrender call became so shrill just weeks and days before this historic election? Many of those knew if things went too well, the President's numbers might go up, the Republicans' numbers might go up. So, some had good motives, some did not. They risked the national security.

Now, because of the work of our heroes in Iraq, a great thing happened today, and we are grateful. May God comfort those who have paid with the sacrifice of a loved one in our Nation's defense. May God bless our defenders, our champions, our servicemembers. God bless their efforts and keep them safe. And through their valiant efforts may God continue to bless our America.

To those in Iraq, I say I look forward to seeing you in just a couple of days.

TRIBUTE TO SENATOR WILLIAM PROXMIKE

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

Mr. KIND. Madam Speaker, early today the people of Wisconsin and this great Nation lost a great public servant, and I lost a good friend and a political hero, Senator William Proxmire. Senator Proxmire passed away at the age of 90 after a long and courageous battle against Alzheimer's.

I had the great fortune and honor to intern for Senator Proxmire after my junior year in college. He was to me all that is good and decent about public service. I valued his counsel and advice when I became a Member of the United States Congress. During his 32 years in the United States Senate, Senator Proxmire epitomized what a good public servant should be about; hard work, dedicated, principled and accountable to the people he represented.

He was famous back home in Wisconsin for two things: Shaking a lot of hands and giving out a monthly Golden Fleece Award for the most ridiculous expenditure of taxpayer dollars. I am still amazed even today when people come up to me to share their favorite Proxmire story. I swear everyone living in the State of Wisconsin during Senator Proxmire's years in office had the opportunity to shake his hand at some sporting or other public event or on the main street of their hometown.

He was tireless when it came to representing the people of Wisconsin, and tireless traveling around the State to give people a chance to meet their

United States Senator. He did it so well that in his last couple of election campaigns, he actually spent more money returning campaign contributions than he spent in his entire reelection campaign. He is probably the last person from a past political era who could do that in light of the mud-slinging and the attack ads that, unfortunately, exemplify modern campaigns.

Also as an intern, I had fun investigating some of Senator Proxmire's famous Golden Fleece Awards for wasteful government spending. Senator Proxmire was talking about fiscal responsibility before it became fashionable. Because of it, he was not the most popular guy in D.C. during those years, given the attention he would draw to wasteful programs or projects.

I am sure he would be disappointed today to see the breakdown in fiscal management of taxpayer dollars and the return of large budget deficits that jeopardize our long-term economic and military strength, and I am also sure he would be disappointed today seeing the number of ethical and criminal investigations surrounding public officials in our country.

He was a person above reproach. He believed that those involved in public service owed the people of this country a higher standard of ethical conduct, and he exemplified that conduct each and every day.

His greatest regret in office he once said was his initial support for our involvement in Vietnam. His greatest accomplishment was the ratification of the Anti-Genocide Treaty. For 19 years, Senator Proxmire delivered a daily speech on the floor of the United States Senate about the need to ratify a treaty against genocide. He found it amazing that the leader of the free world would be one of the last countries to ratify the Anti-Genocide Treaty, rather than being one of the first. But he persevered in reminding his colleagues of the moral imperative to do, and he finally ratification of the treaty shortly before his retirement in 1989.

Senator Proxmire also would deliver a speech on the Senate floor about the need to stop the proliferation of nuclear weapons throughout the world which he viewed as potentially the ultimate genocide of human race.

People back home in Wisconsin viewed him as a maverick because he called it the way he saw it. He believed in standing up for the little guy and treating everyone decently and fairly. He believed, as many of us do today, that there is too much big money in government and too much influence of large special interests affecting the public's agenda. He was a strong advocate for getting the big money out of politics and he supported campaign finance reform.

His marriage to Ellen Proxmire was a true partnership in every sense of the word. Ellen and the family endured the demands and sacrifice of public life and were by Bill's side during the difficult years battling Alzheimer's. Through

their courageous battle, they helped open the eyes of many people about the urgent need to find a cure for this horrific disease before the national tidal wave hits our country in future years due to our aging population.

Much of what I learned about being an elected official I learned from Bill Proxmire. That is why I am proud to call myself a Proxmire Democrat. His legacy will endure, whether it is the call for greater fiscal responsibility with the people's money, or leveling the playing field in politics for people who work hard and play by the rules.

My thoughts and prayers are with Ellen and the entire Proxmire family. I hope they find some peace and comfort in the knowledge that Senator Proxmire touched many lives. He was loved by many, and he will be missed.

May God bless Senator Proxmire and take him into His care.

THE DAWN OF A NEW DAY IN IRAQ

Mr. GINGREY. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to speak out of order.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. GINGREY. Madam Speaker, I feel honored this evening as we approach the midnight hour here in Washington to realize that it is the dawn of a new day in Iraq. The sun is coming up almost as we speak, and I raise my hand and my index finger in symbolic fashion to salute the 10.5 million people who went to the polls in that historic election on December 15.

Madam Speaker, listen to what some of the Iraqi people have had to say about how they feel about the vote that was cast yesterday. "This day is revenge for Saddam." Kurdish voter Chiman Saleh, whose two brothers were killed by Saddam's forces. The ink-stained finger after he voted.

"The time has come to build Iraq with our own hands and to use the great wealth that God has granted to Iraq, to rebuild Iraq so that we can turn our poverty into wealth and our misery into happiness." Prime minister al-Jaafari.

Finally, from the Associated Press, some good news: "So many Sunni Arabs voted that ballots ran out in some places. The strong participation by Sunnis," the backbone of the insurgency, Madam Speaker, "bolstered United States hopes that the election could produce a broad-based government capable of ending the daily suicide attacks and other violence." From the Associated Press. Good news indeed.

Madam Speaker, listen to what General George Casey, the Multinational Force Commanding General in Iraq,

said today: "The Iraqi people have had a great day. It is their third national poll this year: January 30th elections for the Transitional National Assembly, 8.5 million people voted; October 15th national referendum on the constitution, 10 million people voted on. December 15th elections for a permanent assembly, 10.5 to 11 million people voted, and many, many Sunnis. Voter turnout was high. We expect it to be at or above the October level. Turnout in the Anbar Province in western Iraq, the most violent part, the Sunni stronghold, is suspected to have increased fairly substantially over October. There was low violence across Iraq. We expect it to be at or below the October level. The Iraqi Security Forces performed wonderfully to maintain security at the polling sites. The high sentiment was set this morning when Iraqis swiftly repaired damage from an improvised explosive device at a polling place and that polling site was still open at 7 o'clock in the morning."

Listen to this, Madam Speaker, from General Casey. "Three years ago, Saddam Hussein was still tyrannizing the Iraqi people. The accomplishments of the Iraqis and the Coalition since then have been unprecedented, even in the face of a ruthless and a resilient insurgency. They include the transition to sovereignty, elections for a transitional government, a peaceful transition from the interim to the transitional government, the drafting and approving of the constitution, the building of Iraqi Security Forces to more than 200,000, and today, the elections for a permanent assembly."

Madam Speaker, as we close out, I just want to say that this is also a great day for those 2,175 soldiers, men and women, who have given their lives, 15,000 others who have been severely injured, and 30,000 or more innocent Iraqi people, many of them women and children, who have given their lives for this cause. This is a great day.

This gives some peace and comfort, I am sure, to the Brown family of Atlanta, who gave their son Tyler, a First Lieutenant, in this battle, as he was killed in action; and the Johnson family of Armuchee, Georgia, in my district, when Joe and Janet gave their precious son Justin.

At least some comfort will come to these families at this time of Christmas when everybody else is celebrating and they have a certain sadness in their heart that will never go away. They will know that their sons did not die in vain, that this is the success that they were fitting and dying for. God bless them, God bless the Commander-in-Chief, and God bless America.

RECALL DESIGNEE

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

OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, December 15, 2005.

Hon. Karen Haas,
Clerk of the House,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MADAM CLERK: Pursuant to House Concurrent Resolution 1, and also for purposes of such concurrent resolutions of the current Congress as may contemplate my designation of Members to act in similar circumstances, I hereby designate Representative BLUNT to act jointly with the Majority Leader of the Senate or his designee, in the event of my death or inability, to notify the Members of the House and Senate, respectively, of any reassembly under any such concurrent resolution. In the event of the death or inability of that designee, the alternative Members of the House listed in a letter placed with the Clerk are designated, in turn, for the same purposes.

Sincerely,

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

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair announces that on December 15, 2005, the Speaker delivered to the Clerk a letter listing Members in the order in which each shall act as Speaker pro tempore under clause 8(b)(3) of rule I.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 4 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 8 of rule XII, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

5688. A letter from the Acting Director, Defense Procurement and Acquisition Policy, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department's final rule — Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement; Information Technology Equipment — Screening of Government Inventory [DFARS Case 2003-D054] received December 5, 2005, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Armed Services.

5689. A letter from the Acting Director, Defense Procurement and Acquisition Policy, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department's final rule — Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement; Contract Modifications [DFARS Case 2003-D024] received December 5, 2005, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Armed Services.

5690. A letter from the Acting Director, Defense Procurement and Acquisition Policy, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department's final rule — Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement; Contract Administration [DFARS Case 2003-D023] received December 5, 2005, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Armed Services.

5691. A letter from the Acting Director, Defense Procurement and Acquisition Policy,