

The leadership here is just ignoring it. It is like they hope that if they ignore the problem long enough, maybe it will go away. Maybe they will wake up, just like my kids hope that the next day something that happened that they did not like the day before will not be true when they wake up, like so many of us do. But the worst nightmare is that when something bad happens, when you wake up the next day, you cannot make it go away just by a night's sleep or ignoring it. It does not work that way. We have to be responsible. That is the whole way we need to deal with this Social Security problem. Problem, not crisis.

We have a problem, but we need to be responsible and take the time that we need to address the problem and do it right. We did not create this problem overnight, and there is no miracle solution; there is no instantaneous solution to this problem. The President has already acknowledged that privatization does not even solve the problem. We need to make sure that we get privatization off the table so we can all sit down together, just like they did in 1983, and find a bipartisan solution that we can all be comfortable with, or at least that the majority can be comfortable with, because we will probably not get everybody. But the majority is willing to come to the table, it is just that the President needs to let go of an untenable proposal that the vast majority of the people do not support. It is time to let it go, Mr. President.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, the gentlewoman is right. We say this to make sure that the Members and also the American people understand 110 percent what we are dealing with here. We could have both been halfway home by now; but we have taken the opportunity because this is a pivotal time in history as we start looking at Social Security the way it is now and the way that it could be in the future.

I read those medicare prescription drug estimates that were given to us officially in this House to serve as an example of the misinformation that takes place under this dome and the misinformation that is given to Americans. I talk a lot about the Potomac two-step, but when it comes down to Social Security and you have one out of six Americans that depends on this thing as it relates to the 48 million that is out there, you cannot help but think that if you are serving in a body where the discussion is taking place, not only in the halls, but in the newspapers, you cannot help but say in the future, when folks look back and they say, well, what happened in the 109th Congress and what role did you play to stop it?

□ 1845

I am proud to say, boldly and with a chestful of air, the fact that the Democratic leadership and Members that sit on this side of the Chamber are sleeping with their fists balled up ready to use any tool verbally possible and

power-wise to be able to educate and to be able to have town hall meetings with some 300, well now 400-plus town hall meetings that have taken place on this side of the aisle.

And I can tell you that if someone showed up and said that they support privatization, they can come in the town hall meeting. They are not saying, okay, you need to go over here and you need to wait outside, because you are going to ask a question that we do not want to answer right now.

We are saying, bring it on. We want to answer those questions because we have the prima facie evidence to show that what the President is talking about is not necessarily going to benefit Social Security as we see it today. So we fight for those individuals that have sent us up here to deal with that.

Last point, and Congresswoman, we have about 3 minutes left. I want to close. I want you to make your closing comments, then we will yield back our time. But, it is important that we keep up the fight. And I want to commend some of my Members on the Republican side of this aisle that are saying, no, I am not going to vote to privatize Social Security.

I want to let them know that as a Member of this House, I commend them for that, but the American people have a role to play too. They have to hold us accountable. If they do not hold us accountable, then the question will be asked of them, what were you doing when all of this was happening? Did you call your Congressman or -woman? Were you involved? Did you write? Did you do op-eds to the editor? What did you do?

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. I agree with you. I am ready to stand and fight and make sure that the security remains in Social Security.

And, you know, just to close my portion of this out, the illustrative thing that I want to leave people with is we are both under 40; that is why we are here. Our generation, my friends, your friends, most of them when we chat with them when we are out to dinner, and we ask them whether they think Social Security is likely to be there for them when they retire, it is almost universal that the answer is no.

In 37 years, 36 years, let us say 2041, we are going to be 74 years old. You and I are 3 weeks apart. And I am 3 weeks younger, I might add. We are going to be 74 years old.

Now, when I learned that, I was amazed because I really was one of those people. Social Security will be there, even if we do nothing, which is not what we are advocating. We are advocating take a little slower approach. Let us make sure that we keep the security in Social Security.

In 46 years, the outlying date for which insolvency is less likely to occur, we will be 84 years old. Now, that is well within the number of years, 20 years after retirement, that we can ensure that Social Security will be there for us.

What we have to do is we have to stand with our feet firmly planted on the ground and say you have taken this country this far, no further.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Yes, you are right. And Congresswoman, I am going to thank you for being an active Member within the 30-something Working Group and all the input, even when we are not on the floor in the discussion that we have on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, I want to make sure that Members are fully informed about the fact that Leader PELOSI is out doing what she is doing. She will be speaking at Columbia University next Tuesday to young people on the issue of Social Security in New York. It is important that we continue to share this information.

SUPPORT FOR THE IRAQI PEOPLE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BOUSTANY). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from California (Mr. DREIER) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, let me say that I again thank both of my colleagues earlier for yielding to me. And I would invite them to stay and participate if they would like, and I will be happy to yield to them at any point.

I know it is now 10 minutes of 7:00 and you would probably like to go. I would be happy to yield to my friends.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. We always appreciate your love and appreciation. Anytime we come before the Rules Committee, we would love to have our amendments passed in your committee.

So I would just say that and then humbly walk out of the Chamber.

Mr. DREIER. I am happy to say to my friend, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MEEK), that as you know, we were particularly proud of the work product we have had over the last 2 days. Of the 30 amendments that were made in order, we saw 22 of those amendments made in order offered by colleagues on your side of the aisle.

And we continue to try to do everything we possibly can to ensure a free-flowing debate on a wide range of issues. And obviously the existence of these Special Orders does create an opportunity to do just that. I thank you all very much for being here.

Mr. Speaker, I have taken this time out this evening to talk about a very important mission which took place over the Easter District Work Period with a number of our colleagues. And I am very pleased to be joined here in the Chamber by my very good friend, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. GINGREY), who was a member of this delegation.

It also included, this was a rules committee trip, it included the vice-chairman of the Rules Committee, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART); the chairman of the ethics committee who is also a member of the Rules Committee, the gentleman

from Washington (Mr. HASTINGS); and our friend from Ft. Lauderdale, we had three Floridians actually, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS of Florida); and we had another Floridian, as I said, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. CRENSHAW).

So this 6-Member delegation specifically went during a 12-day period, during that district work period to the Middle East. We went to a grand total of eight countries plus the Palestinian territories.

And on this trip, Mr. Speaker, we were able to go into Iraq and visit the different regions in Iraq. We went to Fallujah, the Shia area. We went into Baghdad, the Sunni area, and then we went to Kirkuk in the north which is the Kurdish area.

And we had a chance to visit with our troops. We had a chance to meet with people who have been able to be among those 8½ million Iraqis who on January 30 of this year, for the first time in half a century, participated in free and fair elections. And we were able to see the struggle that is going on.

Now, of course we continue to get tragic news from Iraq. This morning we got the report of 12 people who were tragically killed, a contract helicopter went down. We have had a number of our Marines killed in recent days.

Just this past week, a very good friend who worked with my chief of staff, Brad Smith, who was in Iraq during the month of January last year, she was a relief worker there, was tragically killed. So, Mr. Speaker, we continue to have very, very tragic news that has come from Iraq. And we regularly see reports of these tragedies.

But the thing that was so incredible for this delegation, and I know repeatedly for colleagues of mine who have had the chance to go to Iraq, is that it has shocked many, including yours truly, someone who was a strong supporter of the President, but believed that maybe looking at the January 30 elections, it might not have happened just right, so we might have considered delaying that election.

Well, thank God President Bush and Prime Minister Blair and other international leaders, and leaders in Iraq, it was a mixed view in Iraq, but thank God that they went ahead and insisted on holding that election. Because they had a 58.5 percent turnout, as I said 8½ million Iraqis finally exercising the right to begin the process in this election of the 275-member transitional national assembly.

And they elected this national assembly. They have put together a government within the past couple of weeks. And we in our meetings had the chance to meet with the now new prime minister; he had not been selected by the transitional national assembly at the time, Ibrahim Jaffari.

We met with the interim prime minister, who is no longer prime minister, but was just for the third time yesterday a target of an assassination attempt, that being Iyad Allawi, the man

who delivered a phenomenal address to a joint session of Congress here. And we, as I said a moment ago, also got to see many of our troops, the courageous men and women in uniform.

And as I said, Mr. GINGREY is here with us on the House floor, but our entire delegation had the chance to stand before a large group of Marines led by my very good friend, Colonel Mike Shupp, who was there and was one of the key leaders in last November's battle of Fallujah, and to see the dedication and the resolve of our men and women in uniform is something that is inspiring to all of us.

Mr. Speaker, to me, one of the most amazing things from having witnessed what we did in Iraq, is that we found President George W. Bush was absolutely right. He was absolutely right when he referred to the fact that by encouraging the effort to rid the Iraqi people of Saddam Hussein and move in the direction of free and fair elections, which, remember, many skeptics all over the world, including here in the United States, said could never happen, how in the world could the Iraqi people actually choose their own leaders?

Well, the fact that President Bush insisted on doing that, he was right when he said that the example that we will see in Iraq will spread throughout the region. Well, I have to admit I was not quite as sanguine as he about this. I, of course, as everyone did, hoped that this would be the case, but I did not have the degree of certainty that President Bush obviously had.

And I am so gratified that President Bush was absolutely right. And I am able to provide this report, because along with visiting Iraq, this great example that we have now seen based on what took place on January 30, we have seen in country after country, people indicating, leaders indicating that movements towards political pluralism, the rule of law, the development of very important democratic institutions is on the move. It is on the move today.

Now, on this trip, as I said, as well as visiting Iraq, we went to Egypt. And in Egypt we had a wide range of meetings with leaders in that country, including the new prime minister, who for the past 8 months has served as prime minister, Prime Minister Nazif. And he referred to the fact that under President Mubarak a decision has been made to actually modify what is called article 76 of the Egyptian Constitution. That is an interesting irony that it is article 76, because we all know what an important number that is in this history of the United States of America: 1776, the year that we declared our independence.

But the change in article 76 in Egypt created an opportunity for President Mubarak to establish a chance for multi-candidate elections for the first time in Egypt. We know that there have been very bold, wonderful dynamic and strong military leaders in Egypt, Gamal Abdel Nasser, who was obviously a very, very strong leader.

The world remembers in the early 1980s when that dynamic very, very, very bright leader, Anwar Sadat, who had been a leader in the region, was brutally assassinated, and now we for the last 2 decades have seen Hosni Mubarak as president. All of those people, all of those people military leaders in Egypt.

But, when we met with Prime Minister Nazif, he made it clear to us that the country is now moving for the first time ever towards multi-candidate elections, that, again, a very encouraging sign for us. He in fact went to the extreme of saying they today regularly have to violate the Constitution of Egypt, it is understood that they have to violate the Constitution of Egypt. Why? Because he described it as a socialist constitution, the constitution which was obviously wrought out of the era of the Soviet Union; and it is a constitution which clearly needs to be rewritten, as they acknowledged to us, and it is something that clearly will take place.

He also, this is Prime Minister Nazif, referred to the fact that bold moves towards economic liberalization are taking place. In fact, one of the things that struck us was the fact that in Egypt they have just reduced the top rate, the top corporate tax rate from 42 percent to 22 percent, knowing that that is very important towards encouraging economic growth.

□ 1900

They also are looking for their comparative advantage economically. What is it that they are doing in Egypt?

We had the chance, my friend, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. GINGREY) and I and the rest of our delegation, to visit something known as the Smart Village where many of the high tech companies that are based here in the United States have established new operations. In fact, the great leader of Microsoft, Bill Gates, had dedicated a Microsoft facility in this Smart Village just outside Cairo, Egypt. And so we, I believe, saw many, many great things come from that visit.

We also visited with the defense minister. It was very impressive to see this individual, who is obviously a strong military leader, indicate when asked the question, what would it be like, would it be possible for a nonmilitary leader to actually be elected president of Egypt? And his response was, if the people of Egypt elect a nonmilitary leader, so be it; that is the way it will be. Another sign that was very, very encouraging in that country.

We also had the chance to visit Jordan. In Jordan we met with the deputy prime minister who is providing great leadership in the area of economic and political reform in the country. But we also had a chance to meet with King Abdullah II. And we know that he has worked diligently to try to bring about a resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian question.

He, as a Western-educated individual, is someone who has worked a lot to provide leadership on human rights issues for all in the Middle East. And in our meeting he referred to the fact that Jordan at that moment was not in the forefront of political liberalization in the region. He said to us that in 6 months we will be in touch and he assured us that Jordan will, in fact, be in the forefront.

And I was happy to see that just a week or two ago he removed over half of his cabinet and is obviously on the road towards creating the kind of political liberalization to go hand in hand with the very important economic liberalization that he has already pursued. We have been part of that, of course, by virtue of our having established a U.S.-Jordan free trade agreement. So we are very, very excited to see the things that took place there and are continuing to take place there.

We also had the chance to visit Israel and the Palestinian territories. Mr. Speaker, we all know what a challenge that has been for years and years and years, and we have seen attempts made to try and bring about a resolution. We happen to be in the Knesset just as they completed the vote on what was called disengagement. It was a referendum on the government and it has to do specifically with the disengagement, the removal of 3,000 settlers from Gaza. And it was a vote that by a two-to-one margin, nearly two-to-one margin prevailed for the Sharon government and an indication that great steps are being made towards the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian issue.

We also went to Ramallah in the Palestinian territories and met with a number of the leaders there, Hanan Ashrawi, a woman who has been one of the great proponents of women's rights and a leader in the Palestinian area. We met with the opponents of Mahmoud Abbas, Mr. Barghouti, and we talked about the challenges that exist in the relationship and the fact that on January 9 of this year 1 million Palestinians participated, following the death of Yasser Arafat, in this free and fair election, which is again an indication that we are seeing great progress made in that region.

One of the most moving experiences we had, of course, was when we went to Beirut, Lebanon. And in going to Lebanon, Mr. Speaker, we were literally there on the heels of the tremendous uprising that we saw take place, probably 6 weeks ago at this point, when on one occasion a quarter of a million young people and other Lebanese gathered in what is now known as Martyr Square. And on another occasion a million people gathered in Martyr Square. Why? To protest the fact that for 3 long decades the Syrians have basically thrust themselves into and controlled Lebanon. And we know that there has been great civil strife in Lebanon in the past, but we have witnessed the Syrian involvement which has been so extraordinarily great in that area.

Well, we stood at the graveside site of Rafik Hariri, who tragically was assassinated and we stood with students who said to us that they felt as if they had been in jail. And they said, We are in the process of breaking from this jail and we today are willing to give our lives to ensure that the people of Lebanon will be free of Syrian control.

They were inspired by a couple of factors. The efforts that the United States and the Coalition forces put together to allow the opportunity for the people of Iraq to be free of Saddam Hussein and to see 8.5 million of them participate in their election, coupled with again, the tragic assassination of the revered former Prime Minister, Rafik Hariri. These events led to this huge uprising.

I am very happy to report that this afternoon, or this morning, I met with the deputy chief of mission, our deputy chief of mission in Beirut. He was here in town, Chris Murray, and he talked about the reports that we have seen about 95 percent of the Syrian forces including the intelligence operation, along with the military leaving Lebanon, and he felt very strongly that by the end of April we will see all of the Syrian forces out of Lebanon.

The law calls for an election to be held by the 31st of May. And we were there encouraging that election to take place. We are happy to get the report that every indication that we have is that the elections in Lebanon will, in fact, take place. And it was a great experience, a wonderful one, and very inspiring to see these courageous human beings.

We met with opposition members of parliament who were there, including a man called Mr. Hamadeh, who 6 months ago was nearly killed, and you could still see the burns on his face from a terrorist attack that he had suffered. But he was willing to stand up for the cause of freedom in this country. Mrs. Mouawad, who is the widow of a former prime minister who, in 1991, had been assassinated, and a wide range of very dynamic leaders who are looking forward to a strong future in Lebanon.

Now, one of the questions that exists is the commitment of the United States and the international community for the future of Lebanon because it is clear that over the past several few decades we have had a mixed record there in dealing with encouragement of support for the people of Lebanon. And I am very happy to say that this administration and the United States Congress will stand proudly with the people of Lebanon as they pursue this goal of greater self-determination, free of Syrian control.

Mr. Speaker, it is important to note that this is all in the interest of our national security. This is all in the interest of the national security of the United States of America. President Bush has said time and time again, democratically elected leaders in countries do not attack others. If we can

see more democracy take place throughout the world, it is obvious that we will diminish the kind of threat that has existed for the United States of America.

As we encourage economic growth in country after country, I am convinced that we will see a diminution in the attraction that many young people, who are hungry, have towards international terrorism. In fact, I remember talking to a number of people who said if we had a percentage point or two of economic growth in Pakistan and Afghanistan, we might have avoided what took place on September 11 because many of the people who were involved in terrorism are seeking economic opportunity in so doing.

Not all. I am not so naive as to believe that all are, but many people are attracted because they have nothing else to do and no economic opportunity.

So as we encourage the economic and political liberalization that is taking place today in the region, it clearly will play a big role in focusing on stability in that long troubled part of the world; and at the same time it will play a big role in ensuring our national security and the security of the neighbors throughout that area.

Now, as I said, I was joined on this trip by five of my colleagues, and it is after 7 o'clock and we finished a very long night last night working on the energy bill. We finally completed that this afternoon. I am very happy to be joined by a distinguished member of the House Committee on Rules, who was a very important part of this delegation.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to yield to my friend from Marietta, Georgia (Mr. GINGREY) at this time.

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman chairman for yielding to me.

As he mentioned at the outset of his remarks, I was one of a group of six Members primarily from the Committee on Rules, we affectionately called it CODEL Dreier, and we had an opportunity really to visit these 8 countries and the Palestinian West Bank as well. But I think more than anything else what we did in visiting those countries is to let the people in the Middle East, and this was almost exclusively a Middle Eastern trip, to let them know that we are their friends, to let them know that we are willing to reach out and to help solve the myriad problems in the Middle East. Mr. Speaker, there is no question that there are plenty of them.

We are of course continuing to try to help the Iraqi people as they build their own government and stand up their military so they can defend themselves. They want democracy. They have had a taste of it. So at these many places that we stopped you could see it just sort of blossoming, blooming. And they seemed very, very appreciative that we would meet and listen.

We did a whole lot of listening, Mr. Speaker; we did a little bit of talking.

We had some formal sessions, but mainly I think it was a great experience for us, but it was a great experience for them as well, as I say, to see Members of Congress.

It is not the easiest place in the world to get to. It is certainly not what you would call a vacation paradise, like some folks would go on spring break down to Panama City or some of the beautiful beaches in our country. It was not anything at all like that, of course.

But on one of the last days of our trip, Mr. Speaker, we were actually on the island of Cyprus and had an opportunity there to visit what they call the Green Zone. It is a separation, demarcation, almost like the DMZ, frozen in time since the uprisings between the Greek Cypriots and the Turkish Cypriots in 1974, I think.

But we discussed that separation, that division, the fact that they had recently had a referendum where one side, the north, the Turks were very much in favor of unification per the Kofi Annan plan from the United Nations. And the Greek Cypriots were, I think, 70 percent voted in opposition to that. But we had an opportunity to visit, to sit down, and just right across the table from the President of Cyprus, President Papadopoulos.

And as the chairman said, we also had an opportunity to meet with the Turkish Cypriot leader and let them know that we are concerned and we care about what is going on with that, I guess you could call it the "Gateway to the Middle East."

□ 1915

So there were so many things like that, almost like each day was another opportunity, and certainly, not the least of which as the Chairman has just pointed out, the time we spent in Lebanon and visiting that grave site of former Prime Minister Hariri and the poignant, very sad, but most important, opportunity to meet and talk with his widow. I thought that was a unique opportunity for the group and I appreciate the gentleman from California (Chairman DREIER) for arranging that.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, if I could reclaim my time, I would say to my friend, if we look at what it is that so many of these young people, in Lebanon especially, stood for, there clearly was, as I was saying, a direct correlation between what is taking place in Iraq and what it is that we are now seeing take place there; the idea of seeing in country after country people saying if they can do it, then we can, too.

Now, Lebanon is a nation that has had a long history of democracy. It has been a tradition there for many, many decades, but obviously, when they have struggled with this control from Bashar al-Asad and Syria for such a long period of time and his father before that, Hafiz al-Asad, we need to do everything we can, and the United States played a big role in leading in

the United Nations Security Council the passage of Resolution 1559 which called for the complete withdrawal of Syrian forces.

I will never forget just looking into the eyes of these young people who were there saying, We are willing to die to make sure that the people of Lebanon can be free of the kind of tyranny that has been inflicted on us. Of course, we have continued to see terrorist attack after terrorist attack. Just a couple of days before we were there, there was a huge explosion in the printing factory the Saturday before we went in, and we decided it was very important for us to go anyway so that we could encourage these people and let them know that the international community stands behind them today and this immediate struggle but will be with them for the long pull as they do move towards these elections.

One of the things that I am very happy about is that we in the Congress have just played a role in helping in Lebanon, and it will be in other countries, with the establishment of a new commission, the Democracy Advisory Commission, that we are going to have that will provide a chance for Members of the United States House of Representatives to directly work with our counterparts and newly-elected parliaments in other parts of the world, and obviously, Lebanon will, I believe, be a very important part of that as they begin this rebuilding effort.

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, if the chairman would yield for a minute, there was certainly an opportunity to meet with those students in Beirut. Actually, they were in a tent city and had been there protesting the Syrian involvement in Lebanon, and they came up to us. It was fairly early in the day. They probably just came out of the tents where their living conditions were not so great. They were unshaven, but as the Chairman pointed out, just to look in their eyes, just to look in that deep feeling that we could see, it just came through, loud and clear. They care so much to have democracy and freedom: freedom of speech, freedom of the opportunity to vote, and freedom from outside interference with their country. The Lebanese are very proud, proud people, as the chairman pointed out, and that was a very important moment for me.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I think it is also important to note that on this trip we also had an opportunity, as we were coming back, to stop and report to our counterparts in the European parliament as we went to Brussels, Belgium. Actually, I spoke about this the other day here on the House floor, Mr. Speaker, when I introduced a resolution calling for negotiations for a U.S.-EU free trade agreement.

One of the things that we have found is we were reporting to European parliaments about the importance of this, the developments that we are seeing in the region, and they were very encouraged. Of course, a number of these

countries had been strong opponents, very strong opponents to our effort that had taken place in the Middle East and in Iraq.

I will never forget the dinner that we had in Brussels when a socialist member of the European parliament from Lisbon, Portugal, stood up, and he was proud to be a socialist. We obviously disagreed on a wide range of issues, but what he said was that in watching both the inaugural address and the State of the Union message delivered by President Bush, in which he talked about the struggle for freedom in Iraq and other parts of the world, that he had never been more proud to hear a statement from a President of the United States, and he had never been in such strong agreement or as inspired by a statement of the President of the United States as he was by the statement from President Bush. In that meeting that we had in Brussels, we were able to get into a number of very important issues with the Europeans that impact the United States.

First and foremost, and one of the main reasons that I wanted to stop in Brussels to meet with members of the European commission and European parliamentarians was that we wanted to ensure that we would not see the European Union lift the arms embargo on the sale of weapons to the People's Republic of China. I have been very gratified and I know it was not just our effort because President Bush and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice had very successful trips. The President had one trip. Secretary of State Rice has had three trips to Europe since she has become Secretary of State, talking about the need to ensure that there is not a lifting of the arms embargo. I am happy to see that since we were there and since these other efforts have been put into place that our European allies have decided not to lift the arms embargo on the transfer of these weapons.

We have other trade disputes that exist over the issue of Airbus, some other measures that were put into place by the Europeans, and it is my hope that we can begin negotiations on a European Union-U.S. free trade agreement that will allow us to address many of these concerns that are understandable and have been there.

Mr. Speaker, I would be happy to further yield.

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, as the gentleman will recall, as the chairman led this delegation, as he just mentioned, in Brussels, that opportunity to meet with the European commission and the EU, as well as visit NATO, which was a very good experience, but we took an opportunity to let the European Union know, as the gentleman from California (Chairman DREIER) pointed out, how strongly we do feel about being in opposition to them lifting that arms embargo, particularly in light of the fact that in just a very recent session of their people's Congress, they voted unanimously an anti-secession law which basically says that it is

illegal for the Republic of China, Taiwan as we know it, to leave their country and they are still part of the mainland, according to this law.

So we wanted to make sure, and I think the chairman did an excellent job in his one-on-one discussion with several leading members of the European commission, of how important it was to us for stability in that region, for stability in the Middle East. I mean, I think that was, of all of the diplomatic things that we were able to accomplish, and there were many on this 10-day trip, but I thought that was real significant.

Mr. DREIER. Well, I thank my friend for his contribution. I want to say that he was very helpful in that effort as well.

Mr. Speaker, I would just like to say that as we look at where we are headed in the future, it seems to me that we have gotten to the point where there is an understanding that freedom, economic freedom and political freedom, are interdependent. We need to do everything that we can to encourage people to choose their own leaders, to live under the rule of law, and at the same time, we need to encourage economic opportunity for people all over the world.

One of the things that we have learned from this trip that we took is that it is a God-given right and it is something that everyone aspires to. The arrogance that has existed in the past, believing that somehow, some people may not be educated enough or have an understanding or they may be tied to some tribe or some other entity, and so the notion of thinking that they might be able to play a role in choosing their own leaders is extraordinary arrogance on the part of people who hold that view, because I believe that every single person on the face of the earth should have that opportunity to be able to choose their own leaders, to be able to seek economic opportunity for themselves.

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, if the chairman would yield, this is such an important point that the chairman is making, and I hope my colleagues are listening because that reaching out, as I have said earlier, that is so important. I do not think anybody could do it any better than the gentleman from California (Chairman DREIER), and this delegation showed them that we are very much willing to open our arms and our hearts and our support of the people in the Middle East in realizing, as the chairman pointed out, that they want to grasp hold to a little measure of that peace and liberty that, quite honestly, people in our country, Members of Congress as well, sort of fall into the trap of taking that for granted. It is not something to be for granted when we go to these countries, and we realize that they only have a very small measure of it. So I thought that was extremely beneficial.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, the gentleman is absolutely right, and when

one thinks about the lives that have been lost, the more than 1,500 lives that have been lost in Iraq, the lives lost in Afghanistan and the American lives lost throughout history, and of course, the coalition forces in our entire struggle in the global war on terror, all of this that has taken place is geared towards ensuring the safety and security of the American people, and that, again, it is in our interest to encourage and pursue these kinds of developments.

So I would like to just close by expressing my appreciation to my friend from Marietta who not only went on the trip but stayed into Thursday evening for us to have a chance to talk about this important mission, but I also want to express my appreciation to all of our colleagues who took time out from this traditional district work period to make sure that we continue to pursue and encourage the cause of freedom and stability throughout the world.

So I thank my friend for his participation, and I thank our colleagues and I thank the American people, Mr. Speaker, for the strong support that they have provided in our quest to ensure that we win this global war on terror and expand political pluralism and freedom for peoples throughout the world.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Ms. WOOLSEY) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. SCHIFF, for 5 minutes, today.
 Ms. WOOLSEY, for 5 minutes, today.
 Mr. CUMMINGS, for 5 minutes, today.
 Mr. BROWN of Ohio, for 5 minutes, today.
 Mr. DEFAZIO, for 5 minutes, today.
 Ms. KAPTUR, for 5 minutes, today.
 Mr. MELANCON, for 5 minutes, today.
 Mr. LIPINSKI, for 5 minutes, today.
 Ms. NORTON, for 5 minutes, today.
 Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. JONES of North Carolina) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. FOLEY, for 5 minutes, today.
 Mr. PRICE of Georgia, for 5 minutes, today.
 Mr. SHUSTER, for 5 minutes, today.
 Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, for 5 minutes, April 26 and 27.
 Mr. FEENEY, for 5 minutes, today.
 Mr. DAVIS of Kentucky, for 5 minutes, today.
 Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, for 5 minutes, today.
 Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida, for 5 minutes, today.
 Mr. MCHENRY, for 5 minutes, today.

SENATE ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

The SPEAKER announced his signature to an enrolled bill of the Senate of the following title:

S. 167. An act to provide for the protection of intellectual property rights, and for other purposes.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 7 o'clock and 28 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until Monday, April 25, 2005, at noon.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

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

1709. A letter from the Acting Administrator, AMS, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule — Pistachios Grown in California; Establishment of Continuing Assessment Rate and Reporting Requirements [Docket No. FV04-983-2 FR] received March 4, 2005, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

1710. A letter from the Congressional Review Coordinator, APHIS, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule — Citrus Canker; Quarantined Areas [Docket No. 05-005-1] received February 28, 2005, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

1711. A letter from the Congressional Review Coordinator, APHIS, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule — Agricultural Bioterrorism Protection Act of 2002; Possession, Use, and Transfer of Biological Agents and Toxins [Docket No. 02-088-4] (RIN: 0579-AB47) received March 18, 2005, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

1712. A letter from the Director, Office of Legislative Affairs, Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, transmitting the Corporation's final rule — Community Reinvestment Act Regulations (RIN: 3064-AC82); Department of the Treasury, Office of the Comptroller of the Currency [Docket No. 05-XX] (RIN: 1557-AC86), Office of Thrift Supervision [No. 2005-06] (RIN: 1550-AB91); Federal Reserve System [Regulation BB; Docket No. R-1205] received April 5, 2005, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Financial Services.

1713. A letter from the Legal Advisor/Chief, Wireless Telecom. Bureau, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting the Commission's final rule — Amendment of Part 22 of the Commission's Rules To Benefit the Consumers of Air-Ground Telecommunications Services [WT Docket No. 03-103] Biennial Regulatory Review — Amendment of Parts 1, 22, and 90 of the Commission's Rules; Amendment of Parts 1 and 22 of the Commission's Rules To Adopt Competitive Bidding Rules for Commercial and General Aviation Air — Ground Radiotelephone Service [WT Docket No. 05-42] Application of Verizon Airfone Inc. for Renewal of 800 MHz Air-Ground Radiotelephone License, Call Sign KNKG804 (File No. 0001716212) Received March 18, 2005, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.