

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Madam Speaker, I was absent for legislative business conducted after 3 p.m. on October 31, 2007, due to a family matter that required my personal attention. As a result, I missed rollcall votes 1025 and 1026.

Had I been present, I would have voted “nay” on rollcall vote 1025, final passage of H.R. 3920, the Trade Adjustment and Assistance Act of 2007.

In addition, I would have voted “yea” on rollcall vote 1026, a motion to instruct conferees to H.R. 3043, the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act of 2008.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the Chair appoints the following conferees on H.R. 3043:

Mr. OBEY, Mrs. LOWEY, Ms. DELAUR, Mr. JACKSON of Illinois, Mr. KENNEDY, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, Ms. LEE, Mr. UDALL of New Mexico, Mr. HONDA, Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota, Messrs. RYAN of Ohio, MURTHA, EDWARDS, WALSH of New York, REGULA, PETERSON of Pennsylvania, WELDON of Florida, SIMPSON, REHBERG, YOUNG of Florida, WICKER, and LEWIS of California.

There was no objection.

RESIGNATION AS MEMBER OF COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following resignation as a member of the Committee on Armed Services:

OCTOBER 31, 2007.

Hon. NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker, House of Representatives,
The Capitol, Washington, DC.

DEAR MADAM SPEAKER: This letter is to advise you that, effective today, I am resigning my seat on the House Armed Services Committee. I look forward to resuming my service on the Armed Services Committee when my term on the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence expires. I understand that I will retain my seniority on Armed Services for the duration of my leave.

Thank you for your assistance with this matter.

Sincerely,

JAMES R. LANGEVIN,
Member of Congress.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the resignation is accepted.

There was no objection.

138 DAYS, NO VETERANS BILL

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

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. Speaker, I come here today to continue my call on the leadership to move the Veterans appropriations bill forward.

As of today, we have gone 138 days in this Chamber with no action, no plan of action, and more importantly, no veterans bill. I am concerned that we have a \$4.4 billion increase in veterans health care collecting dust on someone’s desk in this very building. I suspect that there are many people here

today and watching at home who are also troubled as well.

I’m proud that the veterans issues are not partisan. They never should be. I am also proud to be a member of a bipartisan Veterans Committee. I am not proud, however, that we have gone this long into the year without a single appropriations bill.

I call on the leadership of the House to get on the stick, get past whatever reason or strategy that is holding this important bill up, and get a clean bill to the President so we can deliver this money to these heroes to whom we owe so much.

FISA

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

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, we’ve been here before. In the 1920s, America spied on its citizens and arrested thousands because they advocated for change. In the 1950s, America black-listed innocent Americans whose only crime was to run afoul of Senator Joe McCarthy. In the 1970s, America illegally spied on people in the civil rights and the Vietnam antiwar movements, including Dr. Martin Luther King.

The transgressions were so egregious that a courageous Senator Frank Church from Idaho led a search for truth and affirmation of freedom. In the end, the Congress passed FISA, the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act. FISA provides a swift and certain means for America to meet any threat without threatening America’s freedoms. But this administration seems it cannot defend America without demolishing America’s freedoms.

The President wants the Congress to undermine FISA with new legislation that would make it easy to spy on any American, just like the 1920s, the 1950s and the 1970s. These are not the good old days, and I oppose any attempt to use fear to subvert freedom.

We can keep America safe without sacrificing America in the process. I urge my colleagues to remember why FISA was created and why we should not neuter it in the near future.

TRADE AND GLOBALIZATION ASSISTANCE ACT

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, today the House passed the Trade and Globalization Assistance Act of 2007, and I was very proud to support this legislation. And I thank Chairman RANGEL and, of course, Chairman MILLER for their insight.

A couple of years ago, when we moved on the permanent normal trade relations with China, I worked with the then-Clinton administration to craft

an executive order that addressed the question of the loss of jobs when there was a trade bill. We thought that this particular executive order could lay the groundwork for providing for small businesses and those various sectors of the country that would lose their employment or their economic opportunity. Well, look at the trade imbalance now. This is a forthright bill that expands the opportunities for service workers, manufacturers, insists on enrollment opportunities, and it is a good start.

I don’t know what the journey will be on future trade bills, but America has to start standing up for its own workers, its own regions, and making sure that small businesses do not lose their economic opportunity simply because we want to engage in globalization. Globalization may be good, but Americans have to be protected, and I was very glad to vote for this legislation today.

□ 1745

AUTHORIZING THE CLERK TO MAKE CORRECTIONS IN ENGROSSMENT OF H.R. 3920, TRADE AND GLOBALIZATION ASSISTANCE ACT OF 2007

Mrs. McCARTHY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the Clerk be authorized to make technical corrections in the engrossment of H.R. 3920, to include corrections in spelling, punctuation, section numbering and cross-referencing, and the insertion of appropriate headings.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. YARMUTH). Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from New York?

There was no objection.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker’s announced policy of January 18, 2007, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

THE VIETNAM WAR REDUX

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, the first national protest demonstration against the Vietnam War occurred 40 years ago this month. About 100,000 Americans came to Washington in October 1967 to protest that foreign policy disaster.

Vietnam was a war of choice. We invaded a country that never attacked us. We sent our troops into the middle of a civil war that had nothing to do with us. We went to war in a country whose culture or history we did not understand. We had no exit strategy.

We went to war after Congress authorized the President to do so. We

found out later that the congressional resolution was based on false information supplied by the administration.

The Vietnam War divided our people. It led to the deaths of thousands of American troops and countless innocent civilians. It undermined our moral leadership in the world. We went to war alone. We were isolated from our allies. It was a propaganda victory for our enemies.

There is more, Mr. Speaker. We propped up an often corrupt government that couldn't figure out how to rule. We kept waiting for South Vietnamese troops to stand up so we could stand down. The Vietnam War squandered our Nation's treasure. It diverted us from solving our own domestic problems.

We said the war was all about spreading freedom. But the people of the country we invaded saw it as a foreign occupation. The occupation went on year after year. It passed from one administration to another. Our leaders kept telling us victory was just around the corner if we put more troops in. It devastated the country we were trying to save. It was a political, economic and moral catastrophe for America.

That was Vietnam. But it sounds exactly like Iraq. Today we are repeating the same terrible mistakes in Iraq that we made 40 years ago in Vietnam. Some of the Members of this House who support our occupation of Iraq lived through Vietnam. They have had 40 years to think about it. Yet they still miss the point. The doctrine of preemptive war is not suited to America because we are not warmongers. The American people do not believe in shooting first and asking questions later.

There is one other mistake we made back then that I hope we won't repeat, but I am afraid we will. The war in Vietnam spread to another country when we bombed Cambodia. Today, there is growing evidence that the administration is getting ready to spread the war in Iraq to another country. That would be Iran. About a week ago, the administration warned that Iran would face serious consequences if it proceeded on its current course. We all wonder what that means. Does it mean another round of shock and awe? Another country for our reckless leaders to bomb?

But the administration needs to consider the "serious consequences" that America will face if we attack yet another Middle Eastern country. Our occupation of Iraq has produced a fresh new crop of terrorists. Using military force instead of diplomacy to get Iran to act responsibly will certainly do the same.

In 1999, Mr. Speaker, when America was involved in Kosovo, the then-Governor of Texas said, and I quote him, "Victory means exit strategy, and it's important for the President to explain to us what that exit strategy is." That Governor of Texas is now in the White House. But he is not following his own advice.

The administration has no exit strategy for Iraq. So it is up to Congress to provide one. We must use our power, the power of the purse, to defund the war. Then we must fully fund the safe, orderly and responsible redeployment of our troops' withdrawal and the withdrawal of all military contractors. Then we must launch a vigorous regional and international diplomatic effort to bring peace to Iraq and help it rebuild.

A few years ago, the administration called for an initiative to improve Americans' understanding of history. Our leaders in the White House should start by learning the history of Vietnam.

THE RIGHTS OF THE INDIVIDUAL

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

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, I think it is wise from time to time that we in this House reflect upon our heritage, who we are and where we get our dignity as individuals in this country. As a former judge in Texas for over 22 years, I like to spend time in our schools, our elementaries, junior highs, high schools and even our law schools, discussing all aspects of the United States and our history. And I would often ask this question to the groups that I was talking to: "Where do we, as Americans, get our rights?"

Sometimes asking that question would cause people some concern that made them somewhat uncomfortable, especially the elites in our law schools. I would ask those questions to not only law professors but justices on our courts throughout the fruited plain.

But the answers would vary from the students. Some would say we get our rights from our parents. Others would say, well, we get our rights from the President. Even one student last week told me we get our rights from Harry Potter. But most of the kids that I would talk to and most of the professors I would talk to say, well, we get our rights as Americans from government.

All of those answers, I submit to you, Mr. Speaker, are wrong because we don't get our rights from any of those entities. We talk about our rights, we claim we have rights, but we never talk about where we get them. I think it would be easier to describe a story that occurred shortly after the Iron Curtain, as Churchill called it, came down, the Berlin Wall, the wall that separated East from West, freedom from slavery. When the wall came down, there were numerous political prisoners in Eastern Europe that were finally freed but put in prison by those oppressive governments for exercising what they believed to be freedoms. One was a Prague, Czechoslovakian student who had gone to prison for 7 years and was serving time because he was reading on the steps of Prague University a

forbidden document, a document that that Communist regime said that no one shall read in public.

I would like to read a portion of that document here tonight. He quoted someone from the United States. In that statement where he spent 7 years in prison, he stated, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, the pursuit of Happiness, that to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving the just powers from the consent of the governed."

Yes, Mr. Speaker, that Prague student who spent 7 years in prison understood where his rights came from. It was not from government, but it was from the Almighty, the Creator, as quoted in the Declaration of Independence that he chose to read and cost him 7 years of his freedom, that Declaration of Independence that was written and authored by Thomas Jefferson.

Of course that document was the status and the statement and the indictment against King George, not the people of England, but King George, the Government of England, for why the United States had a right to be a separate and independent nation. It was an indictment stating the causes, and finally the Constitution was the government that we set up to preserve the rights in the Declaration of Independence.

We get our rights from the Creator. Because if we get our rights from government, governments can take those rights away from us at any time government wishes to do so. Mr. Speaker, 49 of the 50 States have in their preambles a reference to the Almighty. Many of those preambles mention the fact that they get their rights in the States from the Creator.

The Bill of Rights in our Constitution limits government. Government does not have rights. Government has power. And government gets power from us when we choose to give up individual liberty and give up individual rights. Government has the power to control us and control our liberties only if we let it. So the Bill of Rights and the Constitution says government was set up to protect the rights that we have, those God-given rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. In fact, the ninth amendment to the Bill of Rights says there are more rights that aren't even listed in the Bill of Rights that we have.

Mr. Speaker, on the Jefferson Memorial down the street from where we all are is written a quote by Thomas Jefferson which says, "God who gave us Life gave us Liberty. Can the liberties of a nation be secure when we have removed a conviction that these liberties are the gift of God?"

Mr. Speaker, if we fail to acknowledge this legal principle of God-given rights, then we deny our heritage as Americans and our reason to be a free people.