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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m.

Dr. Carey D. Froelich, First Baptist Church, Baytown, Texas, offered the following prayer:

Holy and Gracious God, we bow before You in wonder and gratitude that You care about the affairs of mankind. Thank You for offering divine counsel and wisdom to these men and women to whom You have granted the privilege of governing.

Loving Father, empower each Member of this noble body with a vision of the common good. May the dynamic of partisan debate unify them in their resolve to serve our Nation as a whole. Grant to each participant the capacity and the courage to discern truth, to feel compassion, to recognize justice, and to act with integrity.

Lord, I pray that every servant in this House will recognize Your presence in this great Hall, and that all will experience the full measure of Your blessing as they conduct the affairs of our great Nation.

I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, the Wonderful Counselor upon whose shoulders the burden of governance has always rested. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House her approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. INGLIS) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. INGLIS led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The Chair will entertain up to 15 requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

REPORT INDICATES POLITICAL OBSTACLES AND UNLIKELY FUTURE PROGRESS IN IRAQ

(Mr. WALZ of Minnesota asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. WALZ of Minnesota. Madam Speaker, today House committees will hear from General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker about the supposed progress being made in Iraq and the need to keep 140,000 U.S. troops there indefinitely. As we listen to this testimony, it is important to remember what our Nation's true goals are and what true, lasting security actually means.

A new report out this week from the same experts who advised the non-partisan Independent Iraq Study Group concludes that political progress in Iraq is at best "slow, halting and superficial," and political fragmentation is "so pronounced" that we are no closer to leaving Iraq than we were a year ago. The experts predict that it could take at least 5 to 10 years to produce any real, measurable political reconciliation.

Madam Speaker, I would hope that President Bush would read this new report so that he could see how people outside his administration are viewing the situation in Iraq. Such sobering and nonpartisan assessment should serve as a wake-up call that we should not leave 140,000 troops in Iraq indefinitely while the Iraqis are doing virtually nothing to live up to their promises.

UNITED NATIONS SPEECH POLICE

(Mr. POE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, free speech is under attack again. This time the so-called U.N. Human Rights Council passed a resolution encouraging the criminalization of freedom of expression by the U.N. chief spokesman on speech. Egypt and Pakistan proposed the anti-speech resolution. What it does is promote specific criminal restrictions on individuals in the world who criticize or make negative comments about Islam.

According to the International World Tribune, "Muslim countries have been demanding world limits on free speech ever since a Danish magazine published those not-so-flattering cartoons of Mohammad." So now the U.N. Human Rights Council wants to limit the human rights of free speech and religious discourse. Of course, this limit only applies to those who criticize one specific religion, Islam. Muslims are still permitted to bash Christians, Jews and Hindus.

Free speech cannot be limited because some group doesn't like what somebody says. That is what free speech means. The Human Rights Council was wrong when it surrendered to the Muslim speech police and passed this speech control resolution that advocates the criminalization of criticism of Islam.

And that's just the way it is.

CONGRESS MUST TAKE ACTION TO END THE WAR IN IRAQ

(Mr. KUCINICH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, the President's representative from the military is on Capitol Hill urging us to continue to stay in Iraq, telling us to wait, don't leave.

What are we waiting for, until the cost of the war reaches \$6 trillion, so

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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that our American economy goes totally bust, so that we don't have any more money for education or health care or housing?

What are we waiting for, for the casualties to get to 10,000 or 20,000 deaths of our service men and women?

What are we waiting for, for America to stand alone against the world?

It is time that we take a new direction. It is time that Congress regain its rightful role as a coequal branch of government. It is not appropriate for leaders in Congress to say, well, it is the administration's fault that the war continues, when in fact we have the authority to cut off funds.

Congress must take a strong stand and say no more funding; end the war, stop the occupation, close the bases, bring the troops home, set in motion an international peacekeeping and security force that comes in as our troops leave, work for a program of reconciliation between the Shiites, the Sunnis, and the Kurds, work for a program of repatriations, and stop trying to control the oil of Iraq.

BMW PROVIDING ECONOMIC SUCCESS IN SOUTH CAROLINA

(Mr. INGLIS of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. INGLIS of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, there are plenty of challenging news stories about the economy, and we in upstate South Carolina have had some of those experiences ourselves. It is worth celebrating some of the successes.

On March 10, BMW announced an additional \$750 million expenditure at their Spartanburg, South Carolina, plant, bringing their total investment to \$4.2 billion. They will add 500 employees to the 6,300 already there and 1,500 employee jobs will be added among the suppliers. Those suppliers, by the way, have invested \$2.1 billion in South Carolina and have 12,000 employees.

It is very exciting to have this kind of news. It is also exciting to see the technology that BMW plans to employ in Spartanburg. They are going to bring clean diesel for the first time to the United States. It is going to be in the brand new X-6, all of which will be made in Spartanburg, South Carolina.

That car will also get 30 miles per gallon. Frank-Peter Arndt, their board member, explained that even at 125 miles an hour on the autobahn, the X-6 with the deep clean diesel will get 30 miles per gallon. It is a wonderful success worth celebrating.

HONORING AND CONGRATULATING THE BROWARD COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT IN FLORIDA

(Mr. KLEIN of Florida asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and congratulate

the Broward County School District in Florida for leading the Nation in National Board Certified Teachers. Currently, Broward County has a total of 1,307 National Board Certified Teachers, up 270 teachers from last year. This is truly a testament to the dedication of teachers in Broward County to improving the quality of education in their classrooms.

National Board Certified Teachers are among the most advanced and highly qualified teachers in our country. By pursuing this high degree of certification, the teachers of Broward County have demonstrated their commitment to elevating and improving instruction in their schools. They will also join the tens of thousands of other teachers from across the country in an effort to improve student achievement nationwide.

I strongly believe that teachers have one of the most difficult and thankless jobs in America. However, the work they do is so critical to the success of our future generations.

As a parent, I would like to personally thank the teachers of Broward County for their dedication to the teaching profession. The knowledge and skills that they have developed in earning this certification will benefit students for generations to come.

I would also like to congratulate the members of the School Board of Broward County for this tremendous accomplishment. Broward County has truly raised the standards for teacher certification in school districts across the country.

ASTONISHING REVERSALS BEING ACCOMPLISHED IN IRAQ

(Mrs. BLACKBURN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, this is an important week here as we are hearing the updated assessments from General David Petraeus and Ambassador Ryan Crocker.

Under the leadership of General Petraeus, our troops in Iraq have accomplished an astonishing reversal in a nation that was on the road to crippling ethno-sectarian violence just 18 months ago. One of the statistics that we are seeing is that these ethno-sectarian killings are down 90 percent. And with the security provided by coalition troops, the Iraqi parliament is now learning how to work as a parliament as a legislative body to negotiate and to cooperate.

By passing their 2008 budget this February, the Iraqis demonstrated their commitment to bolstering security gains by working toward reconciliation, stability, and economic growth.

The people of a Muslim state in the heart of the Middle East have rejected violence and extremism, they have cast their lot with the modern world and they have chose freedom. It is significant, Mr. Speaker.

BAD JOB NUMBERS SHOW THE NEED FOR A SECOND ECONOMIC STIMULUS PACKAGE

(Mr. WILSON of Ohio asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. WILSON of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, American families are facing real hardships as news of the slowing economy continues to make headlines. The latest troubles came with the release of the March job numbers, the fact that 80,000 people lost their jobs last month. This was not only the third straight month of job losses, but it also was the worst in the last 5 years.

Clearly, Washington must do more to stimulate the economy and assist middle-class families. Already this year, working in a bipartisan way, the Democratic Congress enacted an economic stimulus package that will give families in real need relief by providing recovery rebates starting this next month, raising loan limits for mortgages, and backing the Federal Housing Administration.

This is a good start, but it can't be the end of our efforts to reverse the negative impact of 7 years of failed economic policies.

Mr. Speaker, we did earlier this year what Democrats need to do, and that is pursue commonsense solutions to what our problems are and help get our economy back on track, create jobs, and speed assistance to families that are struggling.

BRINGING AN END TO HATEFUL SPEECH IN THE MIDDLE EAST

(Mr. PITTS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, the Middle East Research Institute, which monitors extremist media, recently reported on a disturbing children's production that aired on Hamas TV. The program, aimed at a child audience, depicted a little boy who accuses President Bush, along with Israel, of killing his family. In the show, the boy proceeds to take out a sword and stabs the President to death. This is a children's program.

There is little chance for peace in the Middle East if the young minds of the region are polluted with this type of hatred and violence. Many young people in the region are being exposed to similar messages in their school textbooks.

I commend the Council of Religious Leaders in the Holy Land, religious leaders from the Jewish, Christian, and Muslim faith who are working together to counter this type of hate speech and violent message, and they do it with moral authority. We need more brave leaders like those on the Council if we are going to create a condition for peacemaking in the Middle East.