

The Supreme Court has a historic opportunity to return to the original intent and the meaning of the second amendment. The second amendment protects us. It's a fundamental and an individual right of law-abiding citizens to own firearms for any lawful purpose. Further, any law infringing upon this freedom, including the ban on self-defense and on handgun ownership, is unconstitutional.

Further, every study that's been done has shown that gun control provides absolutely no benefit in curbing crime. Rather, these types of restrictions only leave law-abiding citizens more susceptible to criminal attack. Other than law enforcement, only criminals have guns in the District of Columbia.

In fact, it was interesting, the community of Morton Grove, Illinois passed a ban on handguns. And then in response to that, a city in Georgia, Kennesaw, Georgia, passed an ordinance stating that every household should own a firearm. It was a very interesting social experiment.

And what happened? The crime rate in Morton Grove, Illinois skyrocketed. The crime rate in Kennesaw, Georgia plummeted. These bans do not protect anybody but a criminal.

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit correctly ruled that DC statutes are unconstitutional. I strongly believe that the ruling should and will be upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court.

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. I thank the gentleman. I understand we have 3 minutes. I thank him for his elaboration on the importance of one of the critical elements of the Bill of Rights, the second amendment. I am just referring now to the gentlelady from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX), knowing that we only have 3 minutes left. Does she have further? I think she does.

I yield her now such time as she may consume.

Ms. FOXX. I thank the gentleman from New Jersey.

The comments Mr. BISHOP made a little bit ago reminded me, when we were talking about the second amendment, that if you look again at the Bill of Rights, and you realize that every one of those issues, almost, was in reaction to what had happened during the war for independence, and just prior to the war for independence, with the actions on the part of England toward the United States. And I think that it is very important that we remember, again, the context in which those amendments were written, because the abuses of a national or Federal Government were very, very clear in the minds of the people of this country at the time that they worked on the Declaration of Independence, and they outlined their grievances there. And then, as they looked at the amendments to the Constitution, they did not want soldiers billeted in their homes. They did want the right to assembly. They did want the right to freedom of

speech. All of those things needed to be spelled out because of the abuses of power of the Federal Government.

Now, we have not seen that very much in our 200-plus-year history since the Constitution was adopted. But it's very important that we put it into the historical context that it was in at the time, and understand, again, that under the rule of the British Government, they didn't have those rights and those rights could be very easily abused. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to add that to the comments that I had made earlier.

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. Is there any time remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WELCH of Vermont). 30 seconds.

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. In the concluding 30 seconds, I again thank the gentleman from Utah and the gentlelady for her comments as well. And as we continue this elaboration, education on the Bill of Rights and the overall Constitution, I hearken back to the gentleman's comments from Texas and the gentleman from Georgia, that we should all ask the seminal and basic question for whatever we do here in this Congress and of course in the Presidential election that is coming up as well when they make all the promises to us across the country. Is what they're proposing to do, is it in the Constitution?

STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF THE NATION OF TURKEY

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

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, as the global war on terror continues, it is more important than ever that our Nation secures strategic partners in fighting the scourge of radical Islamic terrorism. The nation of Turkey is just such an ally. It has proven to be a committed ally in the fight for freedom and democracy. Turkey has worked side by side with the United States to make strides in our struggle against the forces of terror.

Turkey is also a nation that is in the midst of a tremendous political and economic transformation. Its economy has seen almost unprecedented economic growth in recent years, and is a shining example of the power of the market to spur investment, raise living standards and promote stability.

During Turkish President Abdullah Gul's visit to Washington this month, I had the privilege to meet with him and hear his speech to the American Turkish Council about the economic and democratic promise his nation holds. He told the story of Turkey's remarkable growth and reforms over the past few years. Turkey's successes are a story of the power of freedom, democracy and economic growth.

Turkey is an important ally that will play a strategic role in the future peace and prosperity of a volatile re-

gion. It is more important than ever that we hear the voices of Turkish leaders and understand their visions for Turkey's future.

SPEECH DELIVERED BY H.E. ABDULLAH GÜL, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY, ON JANUARY 9, 2008

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, it is a pleasure for me to address such a distinguished audience.

At the outset, I would like to thank American-Turkish Council for providing me with such an opportunity.

I would also like to thank the Council and its members for their invaluable contributions for advancing the economic and commercial ties between Turkey and the United States. I expect ATC to continue its efforts in this regard.

Turkey and the United States have been enjoying a robust partnership of a strategic nature. This solidarity is important not only for our two nations. It is also important for preserving peace, security and stability in a wide geography.

Yesterday, in the White House, President Bush and I have confirmed our commitment to consolidate this valuable relationship.

Ladies and gentlemen, since the end of the Cold War, Turkish-American relations have been undergoing a transformation in line with changing global dynamics. Within this context, it is crucial that our trade and economic relations should be elevated to the level of our political and military ties.

Although our trade volume increased from \$6.3 billion to \$11 billion in 2006, these figures are still far from reflecting the potential of our two countries. Already numerous business relations exist between our two nations. But there is a vast and still growing opportunity for so many more.

As members of the business and investment community, your contributions to this goal will be invaluable.

Today, I will briefly dwell on Turkey's European Union bid, recent economic transformation, the near-term outlook for the Turkish economy and Turkey's main focus areas for the coming years.

I would like to start with Turkey's relations with the European Union. Turkey's accession process is critically important for us.

We are fully committed to doing all that takes to become an EU member because we believe the steps required are in themselves beneficial to Turkey.

Turkey's reform efforts are poised to regain momentum. The Program for Alignment with the European Acquis envisages the completion of our harmonization process by 2013. We appreciate the continued strong support of the U.S. Administrations for our E.U. bid.

Thanks to economic and political reforms of the past few years, the Turkish economy has experienced its fastest sustained growth in more than 80 years.

Despite the recent slowdown, the medium outlook for growth remains strong. Turkey is already the 6th largest economy in Europe and 17th in the world. Our GDP was about half a trillion U.S. Dollars in 2007.

The target is to make Turkey the world's 11th largest economy by the year 2023. Foreign direct investments have averaged to a mere one billion US dollars per year during the 1980-2002 period. This figure has jumped to 10 billion in 2005, 20 billion in 2006, and around 20 billion US dollars last year.

The United States ranks fourth among the countries that invest in Turkey. In 2006, American companies invested approximately five billion Dollars in Turkey. An increase in this figure in the coming years will allow American companies to make use of Turkey's potential.

The boom in FDI inflows is no accident. It reflects the improvement in Turkey's business climate and its growth potential. In World Bank's "Doing Business Survey", Turkey has jumped from 91st to 57th place. Turkey's main focus areas over the coming years will be:

- (1) implementing the social security reform and introducing a universal health insurance scheme,
- (2) streamlining and liberalizing the energy sector, while ensuring supply security,
- (3) accelerating privatization with key companies on the agenda,
- (4) enhancing the labor market and mitigating the financial and non-financial costs on registered employment,
- (5) fighting effectively against the informality,
- (6) improving the intermediation role of the financial sector.

I believe, undertaking these reforms will pave the way for a more competitive and more efficient business environment in Turkey. I would also like to remind you that the economic and political reform process in Turkey have gone hand in hand. I am confident that they will proceed hand in hand.

Ladies and gentlemen, a few years ago, we only had a road map. Today, we have results.

Turkey has made significant progress in achieving economic and financial stability over the past few years. We are committed to preserving the gains and building on the success. Turkey is a land of opportunities and we are open for business.

I firmly believe that Turkey provides ample opportunities to reach out to Eurasia and the Middle East. Both Turkish and American private sector entities should consider joint investment and business opportunities that they can successfully embark upon in different regions.

Turkey's close historic, cultural and social ties with the Balkans, South Caucasus and the Central Asia could provide comparative advantages to these joint ventures.

Cooperation on energy will bring a new strategic dimension to our bilateral relations. Such cooperation will also help in further deepening of Turkish-American relations.

To the extent American companies invest in technology in Turkey, their contributions for peace and stability in the region will grow.

Turkey has a flourishing economy. As Turkish economy grows, the opportunities it presents grow as well. I trust that businessmen such as yourselves will seize these opportunities, thereby enabling our economic and trade relations to develop further and for our bilateral ties to become even closer.

Thank you.

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THE STATE OF THE ECONOMY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. WALZ) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. WALZ of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, in coming today on the first day back in this new session, the second session of the 110th Congress, I wanted to take a little bit of time to reflect on some of the changes that happened in this Congress but also more importantly to look towards the future and look at the priorities that this new Congress is bringing.

It's very apparent that myself and my 43 Democratic colleagues were

brought to this House, the reason we were sent here was to change the way business has been done. It wasn't about maintaining a status quo. It wasn't about talking about issues that weren't relevant to their lives. It was very apparent that at least in my district of southern Minnesota that they chose to send a schoolteacher without political experience to Congress to speak about those issues that were most on their minds, to talk about the issues of economic equality, to talk about the issues of true national security, to talk about the issues that were going to impact their children for generations to come.

And in doing so, they sent several loud and clear messages to us. And I think first and foremost, as I'm joined with some of my other freshman Democratic colleagues, it was very apparent to many of us that we were sent here to talk about those issues in a manner that was about effectiveness. It was not about ideology. It was not about espousing to have a firm belief or the firm understanding that we had all the answers. The belief was to work together, to work with the experts, to work with local elected officials and come up with some of the most pressing solutions.

And I think many of us understood during our campaigns and the time that we've been here in Congress, it's not surprising to anyone, and my colleagues tonight will talk about these things, they didn't need to see a poll to understand that Americans were becoming very nervous with the state of the economy.

They were told over and over and over again by this administration that they were living in the best economy America had ever seen, and they would quote facts and figures like the gross domestic product and things like that. And when I would talk to my constituents in southern Minnesota, they would come up with something that was very insightful. They would say, I don't know. It's very possible that the GDP is growing, but that's not filling my gas tank; and, I don't know about you, but college is becoming more expensive; and, I'm concerned about heating oil prices this fall; and, I'm concerned that what's happening with the economy is not moving any closer to addressing those issues that I care most about.

They were concerned about the loss of their jobs. They were continuously told that this global economy and these trade agreements that we were working on would grow these wonderful jobs, wonderful prosperity, and what they continued to hear in the news was global corporations making record profits as we saw real wages for working Americans sink.

They were told that this great awakening of the global economy would be so helpful to them, and then they would open up their gas bills for heating and find out that they were having trouble making ends meet. They were

told that this great global economy would bring a lasting prosperity to them, and they were receiving lay-off notices or many of the other ills that had come with it.

I think many of us understood, and not denying that there is a global economy, there is a need for an interconnectedness, but it needs to be based on some solid principles that benefit those vast majority of Americans.

So I think as we get ready to talk about some of those priorities we get ready to talk about what this Congress can do and what this Nation should do to make sure that our economic prosperity is not limited to a small slice of the population, and in fact, it's limited to the slice of the population that quite honestly isn't producing that well.

Americans over the last 5 years have got a record that I think they can be very proud of. Their productivity levels are as high as any Nation in the world. The thing that becomes a disconnect on that is, as that productivity levels went up, their real wages went down. At the same time, they watched CEO salaries and corporate profits reach an all-time high. And that disconnect is breeding that sense of anxiety amongst the public, and I think there's some things that this Congress can do and will do to address those needs and to put policies forward.

I have a couple of interesting statistics that I think Americans should know. First and foremost, on December 21, President Bush, giving a speech on the economy, was clear to stress how strong this economy is. And in fact, his outgoing economic policy adviser said, We just don't see the reason the economy won't continue to expand. Had I been a reporter in that room or a Congressman there, I might have asked, For who will it expand? And the issue or the answer to that is not for the working middle class.

We see 47 million Americans without health care. I think a more telling statistic is this. I came to this Congress as a high school teacher. I was lucky to have years of experience and advanced degrees that put me a little further on the pay scale. Had I been a first year teacher teaching high school in southern Minnesota, I would have started at just around \$32,000 a year. My share of the premium for family health care coverage would have been \$7,200 a year right off the top of that. And this is an issue that would expand that 47 million into another possibly 50 million that are on the verge of being unable to pay for it.

So we have issues of health care costs. We have issues of energy costs. We have issues of tuition and those types of things. And as this Congress came to session, those are the issues we were talking about, making college more affordable, addressing the issue of moving into renewable energies and passing CAFE standards to make our automobiles reach that level of efficiency that will help working class families.