

last couple of months and we are going to do this next week is not going to solve the problem. It's only going to make it worse.

□ 1430

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Ms. SCHWARTZ) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. SCHWARTZ addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

H.R. 104

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

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday this country saw a marvelous event that occurs every 4 years, which is the inauguration of a President of the United States who was elected by the people and who assumes power because of the vote of the people. That is the essence of democracy and what America is foremost at, not revolutions, not juntas, but elections, the rule of law and not terror or violence.

Just as we celebrated that great event with more people than ever here in Washington to witness it, it is important that we reiterate to the American public that we are a Nation of laws and not a Nation of men. It is for that reason that I joined with the chairman of the Judiciary Committee, JOHN CONYERS, as a cosponsor of H.R. 104, which seeks to set up an independent commission to investigate the Bush administration policies for having a claim of unreviewable war powers, for actions they took or might have taken that did damage to the United States Constitution and to the laws of this Nation. No person is above the law, no person should be considered above the law, and a commission of this sort is important to fulfill the duties of the Congress, which is an independent and separate branch of government, and to see if laws were violated.

There are many Americans that feel that there were violations of the law by the administration in the process of leading us to the war in Iraq and information that was given or not given to this Congress, that the PATRIOT Act and uses of that PATRIOT Act in investigating Americans and listening to phone conversations or interrupting other messages without securing subpoenas or going through the proper due process also violated the law.

In the Judiciary Committee we looked at several of these violations. We tried to subpoena individuals such as Harriett Myers and Karl Rove, and they rejected compliance with subpoenas. This is another area where we need to go forward, and we need to see that when a congressional committee issues subpoenas, that they are responded to by the executive and not under some blanket executive power.

Harriett Myers, a private citizen, refused to comply. Karl Rove also refused to comply.

Torture, as used and defined in international law, was used by this administration. Attorney General Designate Eric Holder stated that water boarding is torture; and the former Vice President Dick Cheney said that they used water boarding and seemed somewhat boastful of it.

Again, if we use these type of tactics of torture of people detained without due process in particular, but with due process or not, we subject our own soldiers to such treatment, and that is a danger and a violation of the international laws that we should not allow.

It is important that we look into the activities of the Justice Department that were politicized during the days of Alberto Gonzales and others. Monica Goodling told us in the Judiciary Committee, after being given a grant of immunity, that partisan associations of candidates played a role in the hiring of career officials in Justice. And the Justice Department's Office of Inspector General and Office of Professional Responsibility issued a joint report, concluding the Bush Department of Justice officials violated departmental rules and Federal law in considering political affiliations for the hiring of career attorneys.

There are many areas for investigations. I hope that the Congress will pass H.R. 104, and allow us to look into these and guarantee the American public that we are a Nation of laws and not a Nation of men, and, regardless of the position you hold, you are held to standards.

Just behind me there are words carved into the desk of the Clerk, and they include "justice." There is liberty, there is justice, there is tolerance, and other virtues. Justice is the highest.

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

(Mr. PAUL addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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

(Mr. DEFAZIO addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

IRAQI CHRISTIANS FACE EXTINCTION

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

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, "The Christian owner of a car repair shop was killed execution-style in Mosul, police said Saturday, raising concerns about

the possibility of new attacks against religious minorities in the northern city." This chilling excerpt was taken from a recent AP story, which went on to say that the attack "followed a pattern of violence and intimidation that sent thousands of Christians fleeing from their homes in Mosul this fall."

This is not the first time that we have seen targeted killings. We need to look no farther than the 2008 kidnap and murder of Archbishop Rahho of Mosul, an Assyrian Christian of the Chaldean Church, or Youssef Adel, an Assyrian Christian priest who was fatally shot in a drive-by attack in April of 2008.

These high-profile killings are indicative of wider-scale persecution and fear experienced by this suffering community. The numbers tell the story.

According to the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, Iraqi's Christian population has fallen from as many as 1.4 million in 2003 to between 500,000 and 700,000 at present. The report says that, "While Christians and other religious minorities represent only approximately 3 percent of the pre-2003 Iraqi population, they constitute approximately 15 percent and 20 percent of registered Iraqi refugees in Jordan and Syria respectively, and Christians account for 35 and 64 percent, respectively, of all registered Iraqi refugees in Lebanon and Turkey." What we are witnessing here is the tragic extinction of an age-old faith community.

The patriarch Abraham came from a city in Iraq called Ur. Isaac's bride, Rebekah, came from northwest Iraq. Jacob spent 20 years in Iraq, and his sons, the 12 tribes of Israel, were born in northwest Iraq. A remarkable spiritual revival as told in the book of Jonah occurred in Nineveh. And the events of the book of Esther took place in Iraq, as did the accounts of Daniel in the Lion's Den.

For months, I unsuccessfully urged the Bush administration to develop a comprehensive policy to address the unique plight of Iraq's struggling ethno-religious minorities, specifically the Christian community. We have pressed for one person in the embassy to work on these. The Religious Freedom Commission has also asked for things like this, but now we are seeing that the creation and filling of this position must be, must be, among Secretary Clinton's first priorities.

In July of 2008, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops Migration & Refugee Services said this about the minority religious community: "These groups, whose home has been what is now Iraq for many centuries, are literally being obliterated, not because they are fleeing generalized violence but because they are specifically and viciously victimized by Islamic extremists and, in some cases, common criminals."

These minority communities face marginalization or even extinction. U.S. policy must reflect the unique political and security reality of these minority communities. I urge Members of

Congress, and I want to compliment Congresswoman ESHOO from California who has been very active on this, but other members, to weigh in with the newly confirmed secretary and ask her to take dramatic action to save the Iraqi Christians.

An article in Christianity Today by Philip Jenkins described what is happening in Iraq this way: "What we are seeing then is the death of one of the world's greatest Christian enterprises."

Just this week a delegation of Chaldean bishops urgently appealed to Pope Benedict XVI for the church to create a strategy to prevent Christians from leaving the region. I urge people of faith to stand, and I urge Members of Congress to press the secretary to appoint one person to deal with this issue.

And, lastly, I say where, where; oh where, oh where is the church? Oh where, oh where is the Christian church in the West when the Christians in Iraq are being slaughtered?

[From the Associated Press]

CHRISTIAN KILLED IN NORTHERN IRAQI CITY

(By Sameer N. Yacoub)

BAGHDAD.—The Christian owner of a car repair shop was killed execution-style in Mosul, police said Saturday, raising concern about the possibility of new attacks against the religious minority in the northern Iraqi city.

The body of the 36-year-old man, who was shot in the head, was found Thursday, according to police and hospital officials, speaking on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to talk to the media.

Another Christian man, an engineer in the city's water department, was kidnapped in early January but was released four days later after his family paid a \$50,000 ransom.

Nobody claimed responsibility for the killing or the kidnapping, but they followed a pattern of violence and intimidation that sent thousands of Christians fleeing from their homes in Mosul in the fall.

Bassem Balu, an official with the Democratic Assyrian Movement, sought to maintain calm, saying the motives for this week's killing were not yet known. The movement is the largest Christian party.

"For the time being, I do not think that this will slow the return of the Christians to Mosul," he said. "I hope that this murder won't signal the start of a new campaign against the Christians in Mosul."

Some Mosul residents have filtered back since the fall exodus, but others remain with relatives in the safer countryside or have sought refuge in neighboring Syria despite government pledges of financial support and protection.

Reflecting the continued fear, Christian candidates running for the Jan. 31 provincial elections have not been campaigning in Mosul but were limiting their activities to Christian areas outside the city.

Saad Tanyous, one of the candidates seeking a seat on the provincial council, said Christians were not even putting posters on the walls in Mosul.

Christians have frequently been targeted amid the fierce sectarian fighting that broke out after the 2003 U.S.-led invasion, although the attacks have ebbed with a sharp drop in overall violence.

Churches, priests and businesses of the generally prosperous, well-educated community have been attacked by militants who

denounce Christians as pro-American "crusaders."

In an exodus which began after the 1991 Gulf War and escalated dramatically after the U.S.-led invasion in 2003, Iraq has lost more than half its Christian population of some 1 million.

The body of Paulos Rahho, the Chaldean Catholic archbishop of Mosul, also was found in March following his abduction by gunmen after a Mass.

Mosul, 225 miles northwest of Baghdad, remains one of the most dangerous cities in Iraq despite security gains.

Gunmen also killed two Iraqi soldiers on a foot patrol in the city Saturday afternoon, police said.

Tensions have been rising ahead of the provincial elections, which are aimed at more equitably distributing power and stemming support for the insurgency.

Haider al-Idadi, a Shiite lawmaker from Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki's Dawa party, condemned Friday's assassination of candidate Hashim al-Husseini south of Baghdad.

"This crime should not go unpunished and we call upon security forces to chase the killers as soon as possible and put them on trial," he said, calling for stepped-up protection for candidates.

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

(Mr. SHERMAN addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

SUNSET MEMORIAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. FRANKS) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. FRANKS of Arizona. Mr. Speaker, I know that another legislative day has come to an end and that sunset approaches fast in Washington, DC. So tonight, I want to stand before this House with what I call a Sunset Memorial.

You see, it is January 22, 2009, in the land of the free and the home of the brave. And before this sunset today in America, almost 4,000 more defenseless unborn children were killed by abortion on demand. That is just today, Mr. Speaker. That is just today, 36 years to the day from Roe versus Wade. That is more than the number of innocent lives lost on September 11th in this country, but it happens every day.

It has now been exactly 36 years to the day since the tragedy called Roe versus Wade was first handed down. Since then, the very foundation of this Nation has been stained by the blood of almost 50 million of its own unborn children. Some of them, Mr. Speaker, cried and screamed as they died. But because it was amniotic fluid going over the vocal cords instead of air, we couldn't hear them.

All of them had at least four things in common, Mr. Speaker. First, they were just little babies who had done nothing wrong to anyone. And each one

of them died a nameless and lonely death. And each one of their mothers, whether she realizes it or not, will never be quite the same. And all the gifts that these children might have brought to humanity are now lost forever, Mr. Speaker.

Yet, even in the glare of such tragedy, this generation still clings to a blind invincible ignorance while history repeats itself over and over again and our own silent genocide mercilessly annihilates the most helpless of all victims, those yet unborn.

Mr. Speaker, perhaps it is time for those of us in this chamber to remind ourselves of why we are really all here. Thomas Jefferson said, "The care of human life and its happiness, and not its destruction, is the chief and only object of good government." The phrase in the 14th Amendment capsulizes our entire Constitution. It says, "No state shall deprive any person of life, liberty, or property without due process of law."

Mr. Speaker, protecting the lives of our citizens and their Constitutional rights is why we are all here. The bedrock foundation of this republic is that clarion declaration of the self-evident truth that all human beings are created equal and endowed by their creator with unalienable rights, the rights of life and liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

Every conflict and battle our Nation has ever faced can be traced to our commitment to this core self-evident truth. It has made us the beacon of hope for the entire world, Mr. Speaker. It is who we are. And yet today, another day has passed, and we in this body have failed again to honor that foundational commitment. We have failed our sworn oath and our God given responsibility as we broke faith with nearly 4,000 more innocent American babies who died today without the protection we should have given them.

So, Mr. Speaker, let me conclude this part of my remarks, this sunset memorial, in the hopes that perhaps someone new who heard it tonight will finally embrace the truth that abortion really does kill little babies; that it hurts mothers in ways that we can never express; and that it is time we stood up together again and looked to the Declaration of Independence; and, that we remember that we are the same America that rejected human slavery, and marched into Europe to arrest the Nazi Holocaust; and, we are still the courageous and compassionate Nation that can find a better way for mothers and their unborn babies than abortion on demand.

And, Mr. Speaker, it is such an appropriate time to discuss these things. Only a few hours ago, probably no more than 200 yards from this well, President-Elect Barack Obama put his hand down on the same Bible that Abraham Lincoln was sworn in and took his oath to the Presidency, and he took an oath that made him President Obama. And I just would remind the country somehow that we need to ask ourselves