

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-Idabi, 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

again, why do we respect Abraham Lincoln the way we do? Why have we made a monument to him down at the Potomac River? Because, you see, generations from now they will still be talking about Barack Obama putting his hand on the Lincoln Bible.

□ 1445

And I think that the significance of it and the symbolism is powerful beyond words. But many voices will also ask, did he hold in his heart those same truths that Abraham Lincoln held in his heart when he put his hand on the Bible? And when he found the courage as President of the United States in the days of slavery and the humanity within himself to reach out to slaves that the Supreme Court said were not human and that the tide of public opinion didn't recognize as protectable under the law, I can say to you, Mr. Speaker, this is one Republican that somehow hopes that history will find that Barack Obama found an epiphany in his own heart and soul and recognize that these little unborn children look to him now for help. And I hope that somehow he can recognize that just as Abraham Lincoln was a good steward of the deliverance and the hope that was so necessary to protect innocent life in the days of slavery, that somehow Barack Obama will understand that it is now in his place to have the hope and deliverance in his own heart for these little unborn babies.

Mr. Speaker, I hope if nothing else that at least the President now can remember that the Bible in which he laid his hand, the pages beneath his hand, had the words written in red, inasmuch as you have done unto the least of these My brethren, you have done it unto Me.

It is still not too late for us to make a better world and for America to be the one that leads the rest of the planet, just as we did in the days of slavery, from this tragic genocide of murdering 4,000 of our own children every day.

Now, Mr. Speaker, as we consider the plight of the unborn on this 36th anniversary of Roe v. Wade, maybe we can each remind ourselves that our own days in this sunshine of life are all numbered and that all too soon each one of us will also walk from these Chambers for the very last time. And if it should be that this Congress is allowed to convene on yet another day, may that day be the day when we will finally hear the cries of innocent unborn children. May that be the day when we find the humanity, the courage and the will to embrace together our human and our constitutional duty to protect these, the least of our tiny little American brothers and sisters, from this murderous scourge upon our Nation called "abortion on demand." It is January 22, 2009, 36 years to the day since Roe v. Wade first stained the foundation of this Nation with the blood of its own children. This, in the land of the free and the home of the brave.

Now, Mr. Speaker, since it is January 22, and since we have made a great transition in this country, I feel as if it is also appropriate for me tonight to say some words in tribute to one George Walker Bush who had the courage, the commitment and the compassion in his soul to stand up for these little babies who couldn't stand up for themselves. A few days ago, George Bush made his last Presidential speech. When he had finished, he graciously wished the Nation and the next President success. He said good night. And then he asked for God to bless America and all Americans. And he walked down the steps from the podium in the hall in the White House as President of the United States of America for the very last time.

And President Bush may be gone from us now, but there will always be so many of us who deeply honor him, as I try to here this moment, for the man he is and the President he has been to America.

As with many great Presidents, it will take a broader and more developed perspective of history for most to truly comprehend the purpose and impact of the Bush administration. Mr. Speaker, I believe history, if it's unbiased, will be very kind to George Bush, not only because of his achievements, but because of the obstacles that he overcame.

In his Presidency, George Bush faced the catastrophic disaster of September 11, the deadliest terrorist attack or any other enemy attack against America in her entire history. He faced the calamity of Hurricane Katrina, one of the five deadliest storms to ever strike American soil. And then President Bush faced a worldwide financial crisis demonstrated by the largest 1-day drop in the Dow Jones in the history of the Nation.

Now, Mr. Speaker, any sane mind knows President Bush did not cause any of those disasters to happen. And any honest mind knows that his response to those disasters was due to trying to do what he truly thought was the right thing for the country instead of what was right for him politically.

There are, indeed, so many tangible threads to the noble legacy of President George W. Bush. President Bush, first of all, gave gallant and unwavering leadership to America, to our military forces and freedoms's march in the world. The men and women in our Armed Forces were honored to call President Bush their Commander in Chief. He implemented the largest reorganization of our national security apparatus in the history of our country. And for 7 years, the deadly 9/11-scale terrorist attacks against our country that all the experts said would follow September 11 were prevented.

The American people may never fully know the number of attacks on America that were thwarted because of the intelligence gleaned under the leadership of President George W. Bush. We may never know how many lives have

been spared because, in those uncertain and fearful days following 9/11, President George W. Bush had the courage to defend us all from the virus of jihadist terrorism, whose proponents believe it is the will of God for America to be wiped from the face of the Earth.

Mr. Bush proactively protected America by taking the fight to the terrorists. He dismantled their networks and toppled two dangerous regimes in Afghanistan and Iraq. Their collective population of 50 million now live in a freedom that they have never known before. How can any of us forget the blue-tipped fingers on the hands held high in celebration by millions of Iraqis who had voted for the very first time in their lives in a nation that has not known freedom since before it was called Babylon, Mr. Speaker? I truly believe one of the great legacies of President Bush will be the kindled light of liberty in the eyes of those who once recognized that their future could only be an ever darkening, hopeless oppression. And now they are free.

Throughout his war on terrorism, and our war on terrorism, President Bush often had to walk like a knowing lion, like a knowing lion, Mr. Speaker, through the chattering of hyenas and endure the incessant insults and thoughtless criticisms of those whose vision only reached to the selfish partisan advance of the moment. But if those critics do not devour themselves in the meantime, Mr. Speaker, some day they may face the bared teeth of an enemy that will make us all wish the lion still walked among us.

But because President Bush did not capitulate to the voices of surrender and appeasement to terrorists, some of which came from this very Chamber, Mr. Speaker, today victory in Iraq has come, and a beachhead of freedom in the Middle East has been gained. And if that beachhead is maintained and protected in the days ahead, it may serve to inspire liberty in other nations in the Middle East and turn the whole of human history in freedom's direction, that because George Bush was once President of the United States of America.

President Bush was willing to fight, not because he hated what was in front of him, but because he loved what was behind him. He loved America. He loved freedom. And he loved the innocent.

Mr. Speaker, he was indeed a man of deep, abiding conviction and compassion. He launched the PEPFAR initiative, the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, and treating malaria victims which has brought lifesaving treatment and care to more than 10 million people worldwide, mostly mothers and their babies, who would otherwise never have had it. Mr. Speaker, I personally saw his tears when he looked at the pictures of children born in Third World countries with their faces severely deformed. I saw his tears again when he stood in the White House and watched John

Roberts be sworn in as Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court because he knew, Mr. Speaker, that the Constitution and its protections of the basic human rights of life, liberty and property for all of God's children would be safe in the hands of Chief Justice John Roberts.

Mr. Speaker, I believe the noble and faithful legacy of George Bush will be borne for generations to come by the judicial fidelity of John Roberts and Sam Alito to the plain and timeless meaning of the United States Constitution. Posterity will never be able to thank him enough.

President Bush also advocated fearlessly for human rights and for religious freedom for the literally one-third of the world's population that lives under oppression and human rights abuses. He doubled funding for veterans and worked to protect free trade and enacted the largest tax relief in an entire generation. He supported numerous successful democratic revolutions in countries such as Lebanon, Ukraine and Georgia, all in the belief that the surest hope for peace and the protection of human dignity is still through liberty inherent to every person.

And Mr. Speaker, even though, as we talked about earlier, unborn children could never vote for George Bush, he stood unequivocally for their right to be born and to one day walk in the warm sunlight of freedom in America like the rest of us.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there are many reasons I will remember President George W. Bush. I will remember him for his courage. I will remember him for his patriotism, for his love of freedom, for his thankful heart and his commitment to human dignity and protecting, once again, those innocents that could not protect themselves. I will remember him because he vowed to keep us safe, and he did. I will remember him because he saw the greatness in America. And the greatness of America always lived in his own heart. I will remember him because he recognized that indeed there is a good and evil in this world. I will remember him because he rejected the liberal intelligentsia's posture that there was moral equivalence between murdering innocents to advance an ideology and liberating the innocent to advance freedom. I will remember him because he had both courage and conscience. And moreover, he had the courage to follow his conscious. I will remember him because he brought honor and dignity to the White House. I will remember him as a man who loved and honored his Savior, his wife Laura, his daughters Jenna and Barbara, his mother and father and brothers, his entire family. He loved his family with all of his heart, Mr. Speaker. And I will remember him for loving and holding the entire human family as his very own.

But the most touching thing I will forever remember him for, Mr. Speaker, was his tender and compassionate

heart toward those whose only plea was mercy. It is something that God remembers about him, too, Mr. Speaker.

Like George Bush, Winston Churchill was used of God to protect the world from falling under the sway of a hateful ideology for what might have been generations. In the election that followed, the voters turned Churchill out of office. And when the press asked him, now what do you think, Mr. Churchill? He spoke words that I hope can speak to the heart of President Bush.

Mr. Churchill said, the only guide to a man in this life is his conscience; the only shield to his memory is the rectitude and sincerity of his own actions. And it is very imprudent to walk through this life without that shield, because we are all so often mocked by the failure of our hopes and the upsetting of our calculations; but with this shield, no matter how the fates may play, we march always in the ranks of honor.

And Mr. Speaker, like Winston Churchill, in the hearts of so many of us, George Bush will always march in the ranks of honor.

Now there are so many things I wish I could say directly to this President as he honorably steps away from public life and embraces the next great task God has for him on this Earth. Mr. Speaker, if I could just talk to him face to face, I think I would just say something like this, I would say, Mr. President, I encourage you to remember that popularity has been and will always be history's pocket change. It is courage, it is courage and love for humanity that are history's true currency, and these will always be the transcending hallmarks of your Presidency.

Mr. Speaker, I would say, thank you, Mr. President, for protecting the citizens of the United States from the dangers of jihadist terrorism. I would say, thank you, Mr. President, for protecting my two little babies, Joshi and Gracie. Thank you that they will live in a brighter, more hopeful future because you were once President of the United States. And then, Mr. Speaker, I would simply say to him, Mr. President, don't worry too much about America. You left us strong in so many ways, in the ways that really count. And I hope you will remember the words quoted by one of the wisest and most loving and noble Presidents as he spoke of America in the last line of his own inaugural address. He said, an angel still rides in a whirlwind and directs this storm.

God keep you forever, sir.

That is what I would say to him, Mr. Speaker.

And with that, Mr. Speaker, I would like to yield to Congressman MIKE PENCE for such time as he may consume.

(Mr. PENCE asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PENCE. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, it is very humbling to follow words of such eloquence and passion. But I will do my best in a few minutes. The old book says if you owe debts, pay debts; if honor, then honor; if respect, then respect.

And when I heard that the gentleman from Arizona had organized a modest tribute to the 43rd President of the United States today on the House floor, I felt this was such a moment to pay a debt of honor and gratitude to a man with whom I did not always agree and as I sometimes would joke at home, he almost always noticed.

□ 1500

The time as a freshman I opposed the President's signature legislation, No Child Left Behind, the time I and other Republicans opposed other signature bills like the Medicare prescription drug entitlement, this was a President who would let you know when he had a difference of opinion, but always respectfully and never spitefully.

So I stand here today not as a vacuous apologist for George W. Bush. I have occasionally been referred to as a thorn in the flesh to the Bush administration, being a cheerful conservative on Capitol Hill who was fighting against big government spending during the Bush years, but I come here today, among other cherished colleagues, like the gentleman from Iowa, simply to say I truly believe that this Nation owes a debt of gratitude to George W. Bush.

I am struck, and I expect I will quote with attribution the gentleman from Arizona's missive about popularity being the pocket change of history. It is a wonderful line because it is my judgment, as Mr. FRANKS just suggested, that when the fullness of time arrives and the American people are able to see the contribution of this good and decent man in the context of history, they will know that George W. Bush served this Nation with integrity and with courage and was in effect the kind of President that America needed during such a time as this.

And I say that, and I told the President not long ago that it was one of the greatest privileges of my life that the first 8 years of my career in public service would coincide with his 8 years in the White House. I sensed a little emotion in his eyes when I said that, and the bear hug that followed gave evidence of it. But again, it was not because I always agreed with this President. It was because I saw when it mattered most, George W. Bush did what he thought was right, regardless of what the polls said, regardless of what may have been in his personal interest.

I want to cite two specific examples and then close with a word about the fundamental character of the Presidency and what character means to the office.

The two occasions that will always be burned into my mind because I lived

them, I was here that day and in those days, were in effect a day in September 2001 and another day in the latter days of 2006 and early 2007.

In September 2001, I scarcely need to say to you, Mr. Speaker, or anyone looking in about the service this President rendered to America. In what at least matched her darkest hour, as the buildings fell, as the smoke was still rising from the Pentagon, as I had made my way home to hug my small children at our residence in Arlington, Virginia, and had worked my way back into this closed city for official meetings, as I crossed the 14th Street bridge, the two Marine One helicopters blew past me maybe 50 feet off the deck, and our President went back to the White House that day. Shoulders back, he stood tall. A few days later he would literally stand amidst the rubble of September 11 at Ground Zero and drape his arm over a firefighter and speak into a bullhorn words that would echo American resilience around the world, and the Nation was no longer afraid.

I won't add any more to that because it seems to me in that moment when my great grandchildren look back at these times, more than any other aspect of George W. Bush's career, he will be judged in that moment and he will not be found wanting.

You talk about approval ratings, I think it was following that moment that a man who left office as one of the least popular Presidents in our history was for a time the most popular President in American history. But I can assure you, having spoken to him about it privately, none of that mattered to him. It didn't matter to him that he was unpopular. He did what he thought was right for the American people, and he did it with courage.

The second instance, and then I will close. I was called over to the White House, I believe it was in early 2007. His party has just experienced devastating losses in the midterm elections. A few of us who survived were invited over to the White House for a meeting with the President. Everyone who was anyone in the punditocracy of this town thought that the President would announce a retreat from Iraq.

The President called myself and about 15 other Members into the Cabinet Room, members of the Foreign Affairs Committee and the Armed Services. He looked at us across the table and said I have counseled with this general I am going to put in charge. His name is Petraeus. He says he has a new idea about how we can put things back together in Iraq. And he said I am going to give him what he is asking for, and I am going to put him in charge because, and he said words I will never forget, "I've decided not to lose."

As I told the President personally a year later, I believe in the fullness of time when the history of this time is written, that will go down as one of the most courageous decisions by an Amer-

ican President in a time of war. All public opinion suggested, all of the polling, rather, that was out, suggested a majority of Americans were ready to get out, regardless of the cost. Let it go to seed, forget about the sacrifices that have been made, but this President decided not to lose. And he looked for a way to make it work and he went to the American people. And as is undeniable today, the surge worked.

I believe the gentleman from Iowa recently mentioned that more people have died in accidents in Iraq since last summer than have died in combat-related violence. Is it still a dangerous place; certainly. Are there challenging days ahead; of course. Is there lethal enemy there and in the region; yes. But it is not the way it was in 2006, and that is because of the character and resilience of this man.

So on those two occasions we saw character. I believe, even though I disagreed with the President on the bailout last fall and again today on the floor, I disagreed with the spending record, in those moments, the character that shown through was a service to the Nation, and my family was safer as a result.

Last thought. It has been a long time since the 1990s and people forget how embarrassed the American people were by what happened in the Oval Office by the predecessor of this President. And I have no desire to revisit the sordid and lurid tales that were displayed before our children during the last administration. But to me, the essence of the Presidency is character, and George W. Bush showed the courage of his convictions in defending this country and he also showed through his fealty to his wife, through his integrity in office, the administration of what it is to provide good and decent government and to be an example to the American people and to our families and our children. For that we owe him a debt, and I am pleased to rise today to pay some small amount toward that.

Mr. FRANKS of Arizona. I thank the gentleman from Indiana.

I yield to the gentleman from Iowa.

Mr. KING of Iowa. I thank the gentleman from Arizona. It is an honor to stand here. And I reflect upon the time that Bob Hope and Sammy Davis, Jr., and others were on Johnny Carson's program. George Gobel was sitting there, and he looked around at the famous folks that were on either side of him, and he had this look of discomfort on his face. And finally he uttered: Did you ever think that the whole world was a tuxedo and you were a pair of brown shoes?

Well, I am the brown shoes here on this floor today. As I listened to Mr. FRANKS and Mr. PENCE, MIKE PENCE who inspired me through the lens of the C-SPAN camera well before I came to this Congress, and TRENT FRANKS who has continued to inspire me on a daily basis since I did arrive in this Congress with him in January of 2003.

We are here today, and it is a great privilege, Mr. Speaker, to address you

and continue with the subject, and that is, let me say, the capping of some of the contemporary dialogue on the history of the Presidency of George W. Bush and the things that he has done and contributed.

Now some have said and called for a long period of honeymoon in this new administration because that's what we do in a free country. Well, it is what we should do in a free country, respect for the office, reverence, the sense of a new beginning. However, that is not something that George W. Bush ever experienced, was not one minute of a honeymoon.

From the moment that the polls closed on election night, the churning began. And in the morning it carried on for 37 days while we sorted out, through a recount process and a Supreme Court, both the Florida Supreme Court and the United States Supreme Court came forth with rulings from all of those days that unfolded, 37 days, President Bush has been under attack from the left, that developed a visceral hatred for him that I could never connect with any rational thought process. I just couldn't track the logic. So that has been an anchor that he has had to drag and deal with. That was, I think, the hyenas that were referenced by Mr. FRANKS, how this lion walked among them.

I am here to say thank you to President Bush for the things that he has done when he has had his steady hand on the till of leadership, and especially with our national defense.

I wasn't here in this town on September 11, 2001. I came the next Congress, not that one. I was here for the beginnings of the liberations of Iraq. I was here for more completion of the buildup in Afghanistan. I have made six trips to Iraq and two to Afghanistan. I have engaged myself in our foreign policy as much as I can possibly do so. I have looked at the 50 million people between Iraq and Afghanistan that breathe free today that had not breathed free before and would unlikely have ever breathed free if it had not been for the solid, bold, courageous leadership on the part of President Bush, our Commander in Chief, who said our enemies will hear from us soon, and they did.

I know there were Iowa guard troops on the ground in Afghanistan, as well as many others, who guarded the polling places and guarded the pathways to the polling places in a land on real estate that had never seen an election before. Today, they have a government that is elected of, by, and for the people, controlled by the people. It is a long pathway to see Afghanistan where we would like to see it. But, Mr. Speaker, it is positioned today in such a fashion that we can see some light at the end of that tunnel and we can define the people in Afghanistan as free and in control of their own destiny, however precarious it might be with the enemies from without who are infiltrating within.

We need to continue to face those enemies with the vigor and the courage and the patriotism and the nobility that our military from Commander in Chief on down have done so each and every day since the beginning of the operations in Afghanistan.

In Iraq, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to make this statement. This statement is a general thank you to our Commander in Chief who issued the order to liberate Iraq and sent troops in March 19, 2003, and that is, Mr. President, I have looked at the metrics in Iraq and I have examined the statistics that come from there.

□ 1515

I have evaluated the benchmarks that were imposed upon the President, Mr. Speaker—and with regard to the President, whom I hope catches this message—that the 18 benchmarks that were imposed upon the President—and he had to essentially sign the bill in order to maintain the funding to continue the operations—those 18 benchmarks, Mr. Speaker, 16 of them are all completely or substantially achieved.

The 17th benchmark is provincial elections, which are scheduled for—and we have no reason to believe they won't come off like the two previous elections in Iraq and the ratification of the constitution in Iraq—that date is January 31, just a few days from now. When that date is achieved, we will be able to say, analytically and objectively, 17 of the 18 benchmarks set by this Congress have been all completely or substantially achieved. The remaining benchmark is one that couldn't be possibly achieved in the time frame that we have had, and that is the one that sets up the Iraqi Security Forces to be completely independent from U.S. coalition support. That means no communications, no intel, no logistics, and no munition support coming from the United States other than that that they would write a check for and buy from us on the marketplace or the world. That's not something that you can do in a day or week or month or a year, Mr. Speaker; it's something that takes years to stand up a military that has that capability.

There are 609,000 Iraqis today in uniform stood up defending the security in that country, and they've done so in such a fashion that sectarian deaths in Iraq that were so serious that they numbered on a monthly basis more than 2,000 in a single month—and I take you back to about December of 2006, I believe that number was about 2,300 sectarian deaths—and as the surge began and unfolded, those sectarian deaths wound down to the point where there was a point last May where they actually were so low that they were statistically insignificant. Today, the sectarian deaths have been reduced by at least 90 percent.

Mr. Speaker, American deaths in Iraq. If you have a son or a daughter that is serving in Iraq today or are concerned about their safety—and this

gives no solace to the people who have lost family members there, that solace we offer to them in our prayers—but statistically, as we have troops that are deployed to Iraq, they have been, since the first day of July of last year, at greater danger of being killed in an accident than by the enemy. That has held up from the first day of July on, it stands today, and I pray it will stand for a long time. And I would like to see those numbers of course get to zero. But whenever you have men and women and machines moving, there are accidents. We lose an average of 510 Americans a year on-duty deaths, 510. That's in greater numbers now than the incidents of death in Iraq due to the enemy.

So we have made a lot of progress in the country. The Iraqis are governing much of their own country. The provinces that they have taken over the security have been significant. And additionally, we have handed over the security of the Green Zone to the Iraqis on the first day of January, and it hardly made the news.

Mr. Speaker, we have won the war in Iraq. George Bush's courage did that, the decision he made did that. When he got advice from his Joint Chiefs of Staff, the advice, which was, "we can achieve this victory, Mr. President; the advice that we have is let's redeploy from there." And the political advice was, "declare victory and retreat from Iraq." That was the echo of the incessant advice that came from the political advisors. And the military advisors didn't say "declare victory," they just simply said, "let's deploy out of there, we can't win this war."

President Bush looked for a way. And I sat in the Oval Office when he pointed at the picture of Abraham Lincoln and he said, Abraham Lincoln went through seven generals before he found his general. I've not been there yet, I think I've found my general, General Petraeus. The leadership that it took to have the courage to declare for victory in the face of all the advice for defeat echoes in me on this day with the leadership that it took for Abraham Lincoln, when every member of his cabinet, when called together to ask for their advice on whether to sign the Emancipation Proclamation, every member of the Cabinet said, Mr. President, no. Don't sign it because you don't rule over the slaves. You can't free the slaves because we don't occupy the south. They do. They will decide whether or not the slaves are free and they're not going to be released.

Mr. President, the next Cabinet member said, we have people fighting for the Union that don't care about slavery. You're sending a message that they won't like. So don't sign the Emancipation Proclamation. I could go on with a series of reasons or excuses, but in the end, after every Cabinet member said to Abraham Lincoln, don't sign the Emancipation Proclamation, President Lincoln said, "Well, gentlemen, the I has it," and he signed

the Emancipation Proclamation. And today, we give great honor to the liberation of the people who were created in God's image, all of them, those born and those not yet born, because Abraham Lincoln understood the sanctity of human life.

President Bush made a similar decision when he said we are going to declare for victory in Iraq and we are going to go forth with a surge. It took that same kind of courage in the face of advice to the contrary, and today we see Iraqis milling the streets in relative freedom, building their country together. And it is a country that I couldn't even go to a place like Ramadi or Fallujah a year and a half ago because it was too dangerous, even with security. But I've been back to those places and walked the streets of each of those towns and heard the Mayor of Fallujah declare, "We are a city of peace."

There is a victory achieved in Iraq, and it's a victory that George W. Bush deserves credit for. And this is also a man with a profound moral understanding of when his life began, at the instant of conception. And he has faced this issue with a number of big decisions in the Oval Office, decisions that had to do with the executive order that supports the Mexico City policy that forbids U.S. taxpayer dollars from being extorted from our pro-life citizens—of which I am one—to fund abortion services in foreign countries. That's an executive order that's balanced precariously perhaps on the desk of President Obama today. This man who called out for unity may not be doing so if he signs that executive order.

President Bush supports the Mexico City policy. It has protected millions of lives around the world and has protected the conscience of American taxpayers. President Bush burned many hours examining the embryonic stem cell research and finally decided the existing lines would be allowed to be utilized, but there would be no new lines that would interrupt innocent human lives with U.S. taxpayer dollars. It was a difficult and careful decision that he made. It has protected the lives of many little embryos. And I have held some of those snowflake babies in my arms—yes, they are people, they're warm, they're bubbly, they giggle, they laugh, they love just like the rest of us, having been frozen for 9 years as an embryo. President Bush understood that. There is a real humanity in this man. This is a pro-life President.

And right now, I can tell you that he's our last pro-life President so far, the most recent pro-life President. This is the man who appointed Justices Roberts and Alito, which resulted in justices that understand the text and the original understanding of the Constitution, who ruled to uphold the ban on partial birth abortion which has saved lives in America, and it is one legislative victory that we have here.

And this is the 36th anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*. It is a profound time. So I want to say, in conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I want the message to be echoed to President Bush, thank you for the people in Iraq and Afghanistan, that they can go to the polls and vote and breathe free air and direct their national destiny and become our allies in this quest for freedom, the right of every man and every woman and every person to be free, the right to life that every man and every person has. And I ask, Mr. Speaker, that the President also be thanked for his stance for life and freedom.

I yield back to the gentleman from Arizona and thank him for his indulgence.

Mr. FRANKS of Arizona. I thank the gentleman from Iowa.

Mr. Speaker, it has been an absolute honor to serve with STEVE KING in this body. He and I came in as freshmen a little over 6 years ago. And time has a way of getting away from all of us, but I just want him to understand what a hero I think he is.

Today has been sort of a remembrance of heroes. We've talked a lot about George Bush, we've talked a lot about Abraham Lincoln. In a sense, it is so appropriate to do that on January 22, isn't it? Because we are reminded that, just as America was used after 6,000 years of rampant slavery in the world, we were the ones that had a moral conflict with it. And yes, we had a little disagreement called the Civil War over it, but we were used of God to change this tragedy of slavery, and now it is at least discredited all over the planet. And I believe that this country will be the country that will lead the world to discredit this tragic practice of killing our children before they're born.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I would just suggest, on this January 22, 2009, that all Americans remember what makes us special. And what makes us special is because we once held these truths to be self-evident: That all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. And that to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. That's what made us special once. And if we look back to those great foundational truths that made us the greatest Nation in the world, our best days are still to come.

God bless George Bush. God bless Abraham Lincoln. God bless every little unborn child trying to come to this country and to walk in the freedom of American liberty. And God bless America.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas (at the request of Mr. HOYER) for today on account of illness.

Mr. TANNER (at the request of Mr. HOYER) for today on account of eye surgery.

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:)

Ms. WOOLSEY, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. EDWARDS of Maryland, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. NORTON, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. SCHWARTZ, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. DEFazio, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. KAPTUR, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. SCHIFF, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. SHERMAN, for 5 minutes, today.

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

Mr. PAUL, for 5 minutes, today.

Mrs. MYRICK, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. WOLF, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Member (at his request) to revise and extend his remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. COHEN, for 5 minutes, today.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. FRANKS of Arizona. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 3 o'clock and 25 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Friday, January 23, 2009, at noon.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

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

212. A letter from the Under Secretary for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department's Green Procurement Program Strategy, pursuant to Section 888 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008; to the Committee on Armed Services.

213. A letter from the General Counsel (OFHEO), Federal Housing Finance Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Freedom of Information Act (RIN: 2590-AA05) received January 14, 2009, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Financial Services.

214. A letter from the General Counsel, Federal Housing Finance Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Flood Insurance (RIN: 2590-AA09) received January 14, 2009, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Financial Services.

215. A letter from the Program Manager, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's final rule — Office of Public Health and Science: Institutional Review Boards; Registration Requirements (RIN: 0940-AA06) received January 15, 2009, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

216. A letter from the Chief of Staff, Media Bureau, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting the Commission's final rule — In the Matter of Amendment of Section 73.622(i), Final DTV Table of Allotments, Television Broadcast Stations, (Grand Island, Nebraska) [MB Docket No.: 08-213] (RM-11500) received January 14, 2009, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

217. A letter from the Under Secretary for Industry and Security, Department of Commerce, transmitting notification that the Department intends to impose additional foreign policy controls on reexports to Iran and exports and reexports to certain parties pursuant to Executive Order 13382; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

218. A letter from the Senior Procurement Executive, GSA, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department's final rule — Federal Acquisition Regulation; Federal Acquisition Circular 2005-30; Introduction [Docket FAR 2009-0012, Sequence 1] received January 14, 2009, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

219. A letter from the Senior Procurement Executive, GSA, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department's final rule — Federal Acquisition Regulation; FAR Case 2004-038, Federal Procurement Data System (FPDS) [FAC 2005-30; FAR Case 2004-038, Item I; Docket 2008-0001; Sequence 6] (RIN: 9000-AK94) received January 14, 2009, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

220. A letter from the Senior Procurement Executive, GSA, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department's final rule — Federal Acquisition Regulation; FAR Case 2000-305, Commercially Available Off-the-Shelf (COTS) Items [FAC 2005-30; FAR Case 2000-305; Item II; Docket 2000-0001; Sequence 1] (RIN: 9000-AJ55) received January 14, 2009, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

221. A letter from the Senior Procurement Executive, GSA, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department's final rule — Federal Acquisition Regulation; FAR Case 2001-004, Exemption of Certain Service Contracts from the Service Contract Act (SCA) [FAC 2005-30; FAR Case 2001-004; Item III; Docket 2007-0001, Sequence 6] (RIN: 9000-AK82) received January 14, 2009, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

222. A letter from the Senior Procurement Executive, GSA, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department's final rule — Federal Acquisition Regulation; FAR Case 2008-003, Public Disclosure of Justification and Approval Documents for Noncompetitive Contracts-Section 844 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008 [FAC 2005-30; FAR Case 2008-003; Item IV; Docket 2008-0001, Sequence 08] (RIN: 9000-AL13) received January 14, 2009, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

223. A letter from the Senior Procurement Executive, GSA, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department's final rule — Federal Acquisition Regulation; FAR Case 2006-023; SAFETY Act: Implementation of DHS Regulations [FAC 2005-30; FAR Case 2006-023; Item V; Docket 2007-0001; Sequence 8] (RIN: 9000-AK75) received January 14, 2009, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

224. A letter from the Acting Director, Office of Personnel Management, transmitting the Office's final rule — Prevailing Rate Systems; Redefinition of the Buffalo, NY, and Pittsburgh, PA, Appropriated Fund Federal