

the history of the great State of Texas. Today, March 2, marks Texas Independence Day; and on this day 174 years ago, Texas declared its independence from Mexico and its dictator, Santa Anna.

In 1836, in the small farm village of Washington-on-the-Brazos, 54 Texians—as they called themselves—gathered to do something bold and courageous: they signed the Texas Declaration of Independence from Mexico and once and for all declared that the people of Texas do now constitute a free, sovereign and independent republic.

As these determined delegates met to declare independence, Santa Anna and his 6,000 enemy troops were marching on an old beat-up Spanish fort, a mission that we call the Alamo. There, Texas defenders stood defiant and stood determined. They were led by a 27-year-old lawyer by the name of William Barrett Travis. The Alamo and its 187 Texians were all that stood between the invaders and the Republic of Texas. And behind the cold, dark, damp walls of that Alamo, Commander William Barrett Travis sent the following letter to Texas requesting aid. Here is what this appeal said in part:

“To all the people of Texas and Americans throughout the world, I am besieged by a thousand or more of the enemy under Santa Anna. I have sustained a continual bombardment and cannon fire for over 24 hours, but I have not lost a man. The enemy has demanded surrender at its discretion, otherwise the fort will be put to the sword. I have answered that demand with a cannon shot, and the flag still waves proudly over the wall.

“I shall never surrender or retreat. I call upon you in the name of liberty and patriotism and everything dear to our character to come to our aid with all dispatch. If this call is neglected, I am determined to sustain myself for as long as possible and die like a soldier who never forgets what is due his honor and that of his country. Victory or death.”—William Barrett Travis, Colonel, Texas Army.

After 13 days of glory at the Alamo, Commander Travis and his men sacrificed their lives on the altar of freedom. However, those lives would not be lost in vain. Their determination did pay off, and because heroes like Travis, Davy Crockett and Jim Bowie held out so long, Santa Anna's forces took such great losses they became battered and demoralized. As Travis said, “Victory will cost them more dearly than defeat.”

The Alamo defenders were from every State and 13 foreign countries. They were black, brown, and white. Their ages were 16 through 67, and they were all volunteers. They were mavericks, revolutionaries, farmers, shopkeepers, and freedom fighters; and they came together to fight for something they believed in: freedom and independence.

□ 1930

General Sam Houston, in turn, had the time he needed to devise a strategy

to rally other Texas volunteers to ultimately defeat Santa Anna in the Battle of San Jacinto on April 21, 1836.

The war was over, and the Lone Star flag was visible all across the broad, bold, brazen plains of Texas.

Texas remained a nation for 9 years and claimed land that now includes part of New Mexico, Oklahoma, Colorado, Kansas, Wyoming, even up to the Canadian border.

In 1845, Texas was admitted to the Union by only one vote when a Louisiana Senator changed his mind. By treaty with the United States, Texas may divide into five States, and the Texas flag is to fly even with the U.S. flag and not below it.

So, today, we remember that Texas was a glorious nation once and won freedom and independence because some fierce volunteers fought to the death for liberty over tyranny.

One of my grandsons is named Barrett Houston in honor of Travis and General Sam.

In Colonel Travis' final letter from the Alamo, he signed off with 3 words: God and Texas, God and Texas, God and Texas.

Mr. BARTON of Texas. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. POE of Texas. I will yield.

Mr. BARTON of Texas. As a sixth-generation native Texan, I want to commend you for honoring Texas Independence Day, March 2, the 174th birthday of the Republic of Texas. I commend you for the fine work that you do, not just for your constituency in the Houston area, but for the entire State and America.

God bless you, Congressman POE.

Mr. POE of Texas. In reclaiming my time, thank you.

And that's just the way it is, Mr. Speaker.

NO WINNERS IN THE NUCLEAR ARMS RACE

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

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, there is no greater security threat in the world than the continued development and proliferation of nuclear weapons. A single nuclear strike has the power to destroy the planet and to obliterate the human race.

The headline in Sunday's New York Times read, “White House is rethinking nuclear policy.” Boy, did it need some rethinking.

After years of a grossly irresponsible nuclear strategy, we should all be grateful that the Obama administration seems poised on this issue to put us on a course toward peace and global security.

It appears that the President is prepared to dramatically reduce the size of the U.S. nuclear stockpile. All accounts are that there will be no development of new nuclear weapons on his watch. That includes the unnecessarily

dangerous, expensive, and wasteful “bunker buster”—the pet nuke of the previous administration. While his predecessor thumbed his nose at the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, President Obama is sincere about honoring our multilateral obligations.

Not all the news is that encouraging, however. The emerging White House strategy looks like it will include an increased reliance on missile defense systems, which have proven themselves to be a failure and a waste of taxpayer money for going on 30 years now. Most ominously, there appears to be some reluctance in the White House to adopt a “no first use” policy. In other words, we would not specifically rule out the possibility of a preemptive nuclear strike. This should terrify all of us, Mr. Speaker, because it takes only a single nuclear attack to unleash untold human suffering, the likes of which the world has never seen.

What possible national security objective could be served by using weapons that could wipe out civilization?

I encourage the White House to be bold in its pursuit of a world free of nuclear weapons. Specifically, I want to see the administration adopt the principles of the “NO NUKES” resolution that I have introduced in this Congress—“NO NUKES,” which stands for Nonproliferation Options for Nuclear Understanding to Keep Everyone Safe.

The resolution specifically declares that the United States would not use nuclear weapons first, regarding them as a deterrent against attack until their eventual complete elimination.

The resolution also calls for more aggressive multilateral negotiations toward disarmament, greater cooperation with Russia toward dismantling Cold War nuclear warheads, a reaffirmation of the moratorium on nuclear testing, and a ban on weapons in outer space.

Nuclear nonproliferation is one of the pillars of the Smart Security approach that I have been advocating from this Chamber for years, Mr. Speaker. “Smart Security” means using more brains and less brawn to keep America safe. It treats war only as a last resort. It demands that we stop equating security with aggression or belligerence. It advances our security goals through humanitarian rather than military means—more development aid, more diplomacy, more conflict resolution, and a more vigorous commitment to stopping the spread of nuclear weapons.

There can be no winners in the nuclear arms race. We cannot afford to get this one wrong. I hope our President treats this issue with the urgency and the sensitivity that it deserves. Nothing less than the life of every man, woman, and child on Earth is at stake.

THE DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
AND MARINE CORPS

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

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank 370 Members of the House of Representatives for joining me in an effort to rename the Department of Navy to be the Navy and Marine Corps.

I would also like to share with the House that last Thursday was a very exciting day for this effort, the reason being that Mike Blum, a Marine Corps League executive director, was the MC at a news conference that was attended.

One of the speakers was United States Marine General Tony Zinni.

Senator PAT ROBERTS, from the Senate, introduced an identical bill to the bill H.R. 24, which 370 Members cosponsored.

Also in attendance to speak was General Al Gray, a former commandant of the United States Marine Corps.

There was a very impressive young man from Texas, Sergeant Eddie Wright, a marine veteran and Bronze Star recipient, who lost both hands in combat in Iraq in 2004. Despite his injuries, he became a Marine Corps hand-to-hand combat instructor. He later retired and is now a defense contractor. Sergeant Wright explained the importance of teamwork between the Navy and Marine Corps because he said at the news conference, if he had not had the Navy corpsman there, he would not have been living today to appear at the news conference, calling for this relationship to be publicly respected—the Navy and Marine Corps.

There also was a father, Dick Linn, whose son, Karl, was killed in Iraq in 2005.

Tracy Della Vecchia, the MarineParents.com founder and executive director, was there. Her Web site has over 130,000-plus members. It provides support for parents of marines. She also spoke on behalf of this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, the purpose of this news conference was to announce the national spokesman. The national spokesman was also in attendance, and he spoke as well—Lee Ermey, known as the “Gunny,” a Golden Globe-nominated actor and marine veteran. Ermey is host of the History Channel’s “Mail Call” and “Lock N’ Load with R. Lee Ermey.” He is a star of major films, including “Full Metal Jacket,” “Dead Man Walking,” and “Toy Story.” Lee Ermey has become the national spokesman, and he intends to help us try to convince the Senate to accept three words: “and Marine Corps.”

Mr. Speaker, I submit for the RECORD letters from IKE SKELTON, chairman of the Armed Services Committee, and also from Ranking Member BUCK MCKEON.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ARMED
SERVICES,
Washington, DC, January 26, 2010.

Hon. WALTER JONES,
House of Representatives, 2333 Rayburn House
Office Building, Washington DC.

DEAR WALTER: I wanted to take this opportunity to commend you on your continuing campaign to redesignate the Department of the Navy as the “Department of the Navy and Marine Corps.” Since 2001, you have worked tirelessly to bring about this change, and I am proud that, as Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, I have included it in the Chairman’s mark of the National Defense Authorization Acts of Fiscal Years 2008, 2009 and 2010. I regret, however, that the Senate has not been as receptive to your effort, and so far, we have been unable to carry this provision into a Conference Report, and then into law.

Walter, your dedication to this matter has been steadfast, and I commend your sincere desire to recognize the men and women of the United States Marine Corps in this way. Hopefully, 2010 will be different. With over 360 co-sponsors of your bill H.R. 24, this effort has real momentum behind it, and I will be pleased to support its consideration on the House Floor and, of course, again carry it as part of the Chairman’s mark of the national defense authorization bill for Fiscal Year 2011.

Very truly yours,

IKE SKELTON,
Chairman.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ARMED
SERVICES,
Washington, DC, February 3, 2010.

Hon. WALTER B. JONES,
2333 Rayburn House Office Building, Wash-
ington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN JONES: It is with great pleasure that I join you and Chairman Ike Skelton in the effort to redesignate the Department of the Navy as the Department of the Navy and Marine Corps. For the past eight years, I have worked with you to see this become a reality. Now is the time to move forward. Through blood and sacrifice, the United States Marine Corps deserves such recognition and I hope that this year it becomes a reality.

As you are aware, the House version of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) has carried this language since 2001. However, the Senate has yet to agree to our position in order for this change to take effect. Today, more than 360 members of the House have agreed with us that this change is necessary to reflect the true role of the Marine Corps within the Department of Defense, as a coequal with the Navy. I look forward to pushing this effort with you when it reaches the House Floor in the spring as a stand-alone measure and will continue to support the language in the FY11 NDAA.

Thank you for your steadfast dedication to this effort.

Sincerely,

HOWARD P. “BUCK” MCKEON,
Ranking Member.

In the letters from the chairman and ranking member, they state that they will bring this bill to the floor sometime in April as a suspension bill, will pass it on the floor, and will send it to the Senate. Then it will be up to the Senate to do what they will. Hopefully, they will understand what Senator ROBERTS said. All we are asking for are three words: “and Marine Corps.”

Mr. Speaker, before I close, Dick Linn, who lost his son in Iraq in 2005, received condolence letters. He brought

this up. I happen to have these three posters of fallen heroes from Camp Lejeune. They are marines who have died. Mr. Linn said that he was so disappointed and that, when he received these condolence letters, he was so proud of his son, who was a marine. I’ll show you what he received.

Mr. Speaker, you can see on this letter—it’s a blowup—the Secretary of the Navy, Washington, D.C., Navy flag. Nothing. There is absolutely nothing about the Marine Corps. Yet, the young man who died and many others who have died who were also marines received the same kind of letter, and there was nothing about the Marine Corps except in the body of the letter.

If this should become law—and I hope that the Senate will see the need for this, the need to recognize the Marine Corps and to say, Thank you, Marine Corps. You are one part of the fighting team, the Navy and Marine Corps. This is what it would have said:

The Secretary of the Navy and Marine Corps, Washington, D.C., with the Navy flag and the Marine flag. That’s what it should be. I want to say before I close, Mr. Speaker, that the Navy and Marine Corps are one fighting team. They should be represented in name as one fighting team, Navy and Marine Corps.

Mr. Speaker, I want to close, but as I always do close with my heart aching for all who have given their lives for this country in Afghanistan and in Iraq, I ask God to please bless our men and women in uniform and for God to please bless their families.

God, please, in your loving arms, hold the families who have given a child dying for freedom in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, I ask God to please bless this House and Senate that we will do what is right in the eyes of God.

I ask God to please bless the President. Give him wisdom and strength to do what is right for this country.

Three times, I will ask God: God, please, God, please, God, please, continue to bless America.

SHAMELESS EXPLOITATIONS OF
THE FILIBUSTER

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

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, today, I am saddened as I rise in support and on behalf of the American people who do not believe that the fate of the Nation should be subject to the whims of just one single individual Senator.

The Senate filibuster was first used in 1837, and for more than a century, it has been used very sparingly and as a last resort. Even as recently as the 1960s, when the filibuster was used to obstruct historic civil rights legislation, it was used to block legislation in less than 10 percent of major bills, but a rule change in the 1970s opened up