

last summer. Another more fundamental sign is the ongoing effort to build the closest possible strategic partnership between our country and the United States.

Romania is fully committed to forming and nurturing this special partnership. Democracy can only flourish in Romania and we can only become a more positive influence in the region if our role as a stabilizing force is acknowledged and supported by the United States and its allies. Romania is living proof that Eastern and Southeastern Europe are not doomed to a life of conflict. But we all have the duty to be on guard against hatred in any form.

Over the past year, Romania has proved that the occasional political storm matters less than having a sound political foundation that allows us to weather those storms. We have also learned that despite our profound and unflinching commitment to privatization and economic reform, it will be more difficult to rebuild the Romanian economy than we or our friends expected. We understand the need to balance our eagerness for speedy reform with the need to maintain social stability. We have been able to do this so far. Again, this is a tribute to our democratic institutions and the commitment of our people to those institutions. The next step is to speed up privatization while maintaining our social equilibrium.

All of these efforts, building the society, consolidating democratic institutions, reforming the economy, our contribution to the security of Eastern Europe would be more difficult without your assistance. But I can assure you they are well worth your efforts, as they do so much to advance peace and stability in such a vital part of the world.

As a representative of the American people, I want to thank you on behalf of my country for the friendship and help the United States has shown us.

The land of freedom, the land I spoke about a few minutes ago, is a unique place. It belongs to those who are willing to sacrifice for its attainment and its defense. It is a land your Founding Fathers conceived and the one envisioned by our own patriotic thinkers and fighters. It is the land of your brave military men and women, as it is the land of Romania's soldiers who volunteered to go to Albania, Angola, the Persian Gulf and Bosnia, in any country where peace is under attack. It is our challenge together, as allies and partners, to build the bridges to the next millennium from the Danube to the Potomac, from the Black Sea to the Pacific Ocean and beyond, wherever people believe in and fight for freedom.

I would like to close with a true story. One hundred and fifty years ago, a young Romanian who had fought for freedom in the 1848 revolution emigrated to America. His name was George Pomutz, which in Romanian

means "little tree." Once on American soil, he volunteered for Lincoln's Army and fought in some of the key battles of the Civil War, including Vicksburg and Atlanta. Our "little tree" went on to become a general in your Army and later an American diplomat, serving in Russia, where he helped negotiate the American purchase of Alaska. In 1944, long after his death, the Romanian community in the United States donated money to build a battleship, named for Romanian-American General George Pomutz. The ship named for the "little tree" served in peace and war, always a symbol of strength and vigilance. Over the decades, Pomutz' story attests to the common roots shared by our two people, the closeness of their souls, their love of freedom and their willingness to fight in its defense.

God bless America. God bless Romania. God bless the land of freedom.

JOINT MEETING DISSOLVED

The SPEAKER. The purpose of the joint meeting having been completed, the Chair declares the joint meeting of the two Houses now dissolved.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 46 minutes a.m.) the joint meeting of the two Houses was dissolved.

The Members of the Senate retired to their Chamber.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The House will continue in recess until 11:15 a.m.

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AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. EWING) at 11 o'clock and 17 minutes p.m.

PRINTING OF PROCEEDINGS HAD DURING RECESS

Mr. GIBBONS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the proceedings had during the recess be printed in the RECORD.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Nevada?

There was no objection.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Mr. Lundregan, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate had passed without amendment a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 3156. An act to present a congressional gold medal to Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela.

The message also announced that the Senate had passed with an amendment in which the concurrence of the House is requested, a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 2870. An act to amend the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 to facilitate protection

of tropical forests through debt reduction with developing countries with tropical forests.

The message also announced that the Senate agrees to the amendment of the House to the bill (S. 2282) "An act to amend the Arms Export Control Act, and for other purposes."

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain 15 1-minute speeches on each side.

THE BEANIE BABY CAPERGATE

(Mr. GIBBONS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GIBBONS. Mr. Speaker, as we all know, the President and his entourage just recently returned from a 9-day, taxpayer-paid, \$50 million trip to China. It appears that America's tough-talking trade representative, Charlene Barshefsky, has shunned and even ignored American trade law. My word, Mr. Speaker, we now have the Barshefsky Beanie Baby Capergate.

Apparently, the President's trade rep, who is supposed to know, who is supposed to understand, who is supposed to follow trade laws, was caught red-handed in China's unregulated back-alley Beanie-Baby black market. Barshefsky illegally acquired a boatload of Beanie Babies while in Beijing and tried to bring them back to the United States.

"Whoa, not so fast," said the U.S. Customs, since it is illegal to purchase these toys in China.

Well, what is next? I hope the Clinton Administration does not think that this is an even trade for the top-secret missile technology they just gave them. With a \$50 billion U.S. trade deficit, maybe the Chinese were secretly paying off the Clinton Administration with Barshefsky Beanie Babies.

I yield back to the American people any legal Beanie Babies not hiding in the White House.

PATIENT'S BILL OF RIGHTS

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, you ask the question, what do the American people want? Well, they want a real Patient's Bill of Rights, not the whiplash health care bill that Speaker GINGRICH and the Republicans want us to buy in. Whiplash? It comes real sharp, and when you get through, it hurts badly.

Our Patient's Bill of Rights guarantees a patient's right to see a specialist when they need to. It emphasizes the patient's and the doctor's rights and relationships. It guarantees that our

vulnerable patients will be able to choose their own doctors.

Yes, it bans the little parrots that are given to our doctors who say, "Don't give them any care to them; see them only for 10 minutes."

Do you know what the Republicans do? They do not allow you to choose your own doctor. They send women out of the hospital before 48 hours after they have had a mastectomy; and, yes, they keep asking you to pay for those high, high prescription drugs.

Americans want a real Patient's Bill of Rights, not the whiplash that comes quickly and hurts long. Support the Democratic Patient's Bill of Rights and get real health care reform, real managed care reform for America.

AMERICA VULNERABLE TO FOREIGN MISSILE ATTACK

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

Ms. DUNN. Mr. Speaker, the Preamble to the United States Constitution states that the Federal Government shall have the responsibility to provide for the common defense. Protecting our national security is, in fact, the first duty and the primary obligation of the President, our commander-in-chief.

But America is vulnerable today, vulnerable to a missile attack from abroad. It is a shame that it has taken nuclear blasts in India and Pakistan to convince American leaders that the time to act is now.

Many Americans are unaware of this, but if a missile were fired at an American city, the United States would be defenseless against it. This is a shocking realization when you consider that there are many nations that have the capability of reaching American soil with long-range nuclear missiles.

The potential threat to every child in America demands that we take decisive action to protect ourselves from the uncertainty that exists in the world today. It is time to honor our obligation to the Constitution and to the American people by building a missile defense system. No less than the security of our Nation and the safety of our children is at stake.

KEEPING WHAT IS ALREADY YOURS

(Mr. TIAHRT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TIAHRT. Mr. Speaker, this Congress intends to focus like a laser beam on an issue of particular importance to families. It's called tax cuts. Many Americans are moving ahead in these economic good times, but some families are having trouble making ends meet.

While the liberals believe that the way to improve the standard of living

of hard-pressed working families is to propose more job training programs and more Washington-directed education programs, the same ones which have failed miserably in the past, Republicans have a much better idea. Republicans want to help ordinary working families by letting them keep more of their own money. No need for theory or hopes that some day these Federal training programs will trickle down to real people. No, the Republicans can help families make ends meet, save for that first home or pay off those credit cards by giving them a tax cut.

Actually, the government would not be giving them anything. It would mean that the government would let people keep more of their own hard-earned money.

ACCEPTING RESPONSIBILITY FOR TEACHING MORALS AND VALUES

(Mr. TRAFICANT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TRAFICANT. Mr. Speaker, once in America, parents imparted their values and morals to their children. Today, it is out with parents, in with computers. Some even liken it to a Tower of Babel in each family room.

Check this out. Last month a woman gave birth on the Internet; and today two teenagers announced, through their attorney, no less, that they will surrender their virginity live on the Internet. Unbelievable. What is next? A late-term abortion? How about an on-line sacrifice to Satan, folks?

Beam-me-up.com.

I say it is time for these computer companies to shove their software up their hard drives live on the Internet.

One last thing, on a serious note. I believe America is in sad shape when computers begin to replace parents in passing down our morals and values.

I yield back any common sense left in the country.

FREEDOM AND PRIVACY RESTORATION ACT

(Mr. PAUL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Freedom and Privacy Restoration Act, which repeals those sections of the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 authorizing an establishment of Federal standards for birth certificates and drivers' licenses.

This obscure provision, which was part of a major piece of legislation passed at the end of the 104th Congress, represents a major power grab by the Federal Government and a threat to the liberties of every American, for it would transform State drivers' licenses into national ID cards.

If this scheme is not stopped, no American will be able to get a job, open

a bank account, apply for Social Security or Medicare, exercise their second amendment rights, or even take an airplane flight until they can produce a State driver's license that is the equivalent of conforming to Federal specifications. Under the 1996 Kennedy-Kassebaum health care reform law, Americans may be forced to present a federally approved driver's license before consulting their doctors for medical treatment.

My fellow colleagues, make no doubt about this, this is a national I.D. card. We do not need it. Please join me in an effort to stop it.

PLEDGE TO FULLY FUND THE E- RATE PROGRAM

(Mr. RUSH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. RUSH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to alert my colleagues to the growing threat to the E-rate program. This key provision of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 makes sure that our Nation's poorest children do not get left behind along the information superhighway by providing telecommunications services at a discounted cost to poor and rural schools and libraries.

To date, more than 30,000 applications for the program have been received, including over 200 in my district. As part of the Telecommunications Act, long distance companies agree to support the E-rate program through their contributions to the Universal Service Fund. In exchange, the industry has reaped billions of dollars in lower access charges and expanded market share. Now they want to renege on the deal.

Today I am calling on my colleagues to pledge their commitment to seeing that the E-rate program is fully funded. To pull the plug on full funding of the E-rate program is to further exacerbate the great digital divide between the haves and have-nots and will leave our children unprepared to move into the new millennium. Let us not let that happen.

SIGN EDUCATION SAVINGS ACCOUNT INTO LAW

(Mr. ROGAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ROGAN. Mr. Speaker, the Republican-led House voted overwhelmingly for Education Savings Accounts to give every American family the power to improve the educational choices for their children. Not every family today can afford a home computer or the SAT prep course, but through IRA-style Education Savings Accounts, Republicans hope to make these education expenses more available to children.

Who is in a better position to use this money to help improve our Nation's