

opportunity together to ask questions. Some of those, as my colleague knows, were in closed session because we discussed security information.

I want to say to my friend that we were disappointed that we did not do that this morning. Both of our caucuses are partisan; they represent parties. We were disappointed that this briefing was given on a partisan basis. We do not think that is in the best interest of the country; we do not think it is in the best interest of this Congress.

Mr. Leader, I would urge you to, on behalf of your leadership, join with us in assuring that, A, we have a number of bipartisan briefings from the principals involved as to what is going on. Our public is concerned, my colleague's people, my people, very concerned about what is happening to our troops, very concerned about our success in Iraq. I say that, as my friend knows, as one of those who supported the effort, supported the funding of this effort. But all of us have to be concerned about the situation.

So I would ask the leader if he might comment on the fact that we have historically had under Democratic leadership, Republican leadership, bipartisan briefings. I would hope that we could continue to have such. As I say, I think it is in the best interest of the country.

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman yielding. I can appreciate his disappointment, but I need to point out to the gentleman that this is not limited to Republicans. The gentleman has already said that Dr. Rice would gladly brief his caucus. Just as the President meets with bipartisan leadership, he has meetings with bipartisan Members of Congress, he also has meetings with Republicans. And he has on occasion had meetings with Democrats. This is not limiting or closing out anybody. It is just in this particular case we invited the NSC director to speak to the Republican Conference.

We have had and have notified your leadership that bipartisan briefings will be held by the NSC director as bipartisan meetings, as the gentleman has pointed out, have been held by the Secretary of Defense, the Chiefs of Staff, the CIA, and many, many others. It is just an added briefing that we felt we wanted to have. And certainly, the NSC director made sure that the same courtesy was paid to the Democratic Caucus, and she is more than willing to come before the Democratic Caucus.

No one is trying to be shut out, but there are times when our caucus wants to talk to this administration and we ought to be allowed to do that as long as we get briefings and open briefings in a bipartisan way as well.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for that comment. I understand his observation. The gentleman will remember one of the most wrenching caucuses in which I participated was a bipartisan caucus after we tragically lost those 18 members of the

service when the Black Hawk went down in Mogadisho, Somalia. And as you may recall, it was extraordinary. I think we must have had 350 of our Members in HC-5 in which Secretary Christopher and Secretary Aspin came and reported to us on the situation on the ground.

I understand what my colleague is saying, and he certainly has that right; but I think that the fact that we can meet together to get information together so that we are all getting the same information and hear one another's questions, hear one another's concerns, which reflect the concerns of the 280 million Americans, many of whom have young people overseas, and some, as he knows, because he has met with them as I have that are not so young in the National Guard and Reserve, we think it would be useful to do that in a bipartisan way together so that we could all hear the same information and therefore be able to work together to assist in solving what is a very difficult problem, ensuring to the greatest extent we can the safety of our people and the success of our mission.

But I thank the gentleman for his observations.

ADJOURNMENT TO MONDAY, APRIL 26, 2004, AND HOUR OF MEETING ON TUESDAY, APRIL 27, 2004

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today it adjourn to meet at noon on Monday, April 26, 2004; and further, when the House adjourns on that day, it adjourn to meet at 12:30 p.m. on Tuesday, April 27, for morning hour debate.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

DISPENSING WITH CALENDAR WEDNESDAY BUSINESS ON WEDNESDAY NEXT

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the business in order under the Calendar Wednesday rule be dispensed with on Wednesday next.

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

There was no objection.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE HONORABLE NANCY PELOSI, DEMOCRATIC LEADER

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Honorable NANCY PELOSI, Democratic Leader:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
OFFICE OF THE DEMOCRATIC LEADER,  
April 21, 2004.

Hon. J. DENNIS HASTERT,  
*Speaker of the House,*  
*House of Representatives, Washington, DC.*

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to section 637(d)(1) of the HELP Commission Act (P.L. 108-199), I hereby appoint Mr. Lynn C. Fritz of California, Mr. C. Payne Lucas of Washington, D.C. and Mr. Jeffery D. Sachs of New York, to the Helping To Enhance The Livelihood Of People (HELP) Around The Globe Commission.

Best regards,

NANCY PELOSI.

SENATOR KERRY HAS THE SUPPORT OF VETERANS

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

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, throughout this Presidential campaign, we have heard from the Republicans repeatedly that they will not question Senator KERRY's patriotism. We all figured that was an empty promise, but it has been proven true in the well of this House this morning.

Several Republican Members came up and directly called into question Senator KERRY's patriotism based on his objections to the Vietnam War. And beyond that, we have even heard Republicans out on the airwaves questioning his service in Vietnam.

I do feel that there are many more important issues in this campaign that are legitimate to talk about. Senator KERRY has unbelievable support from veterans in this country. All 50 States have veterans for Kerry organizations that are strong and hard-working to support the Senator and, perhaps most tellingly, are the people who served with him in Vietnam. All of those people are supporting Senator KERRY regardless of their political stripes. Many are taking large chunks of personal time to go around and be supportive of him.

His record in Vietnam and his record afterwards should not be questioned, and it is being questioned by the Republicans. I think Senator MCCAIN said it best some time ago when asked about this and asked about Senator KERRY's protest against the war. He said that Senator KERRY's service in Vietnam fighting for our country more than gave him the right to protest the war if he thought it was wrong.

Senator KERRY honorably served this country in Vietnam, volunteered to serve, volunteered for combat duty, and he honorably upheld the traditions of this country when he came home and pursued his personal convictions to oppose the war. We should recognize that service.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BURNS). The gentleman will refrain