

murder to gain instant entry to Paradise was so foreign to our own values and consciousness that it did not create in us the concern for the Marines' safety that it should have . . . In the weeks immediately after the bombing, I believed the last thing we should do was turn tail and leave . . . Yet, the irrationality of Middle Eastern politics forced us to re-think our policy there." Shortly thereafter Reagan withdrew the Marines from Lebanon, and no more Americans were killed in that fruitless venture.

Too bad our current foreign policy experts don't understand the "irrationality of Middle Eastern politics." By leaving Lebanon, Reagan saved lives and proved our intervention in the Lebanese war was of no benefit to Lebanon or the United States.

Reagan's willingness to admit error and withdraw from Lebanon was heroic, and proved to be life-saving. True to form, many neo-cons with their love of war exude contempt for Reagan's decision. To them, force and violence are heroic, not reassessing a bad situation and changing policy accordingly.

One of the great obstacles to our efforts in Iraq is pretending we're fighting a country. We wrongly expect occupation and "democratization" to solve our problems. The notion that the Iraq war is part of our retaliation for the 9-11 attacks is a serious error that must be corrected if we are to achieve peace and stability in the Middle East and security here at home.

We must come to realize that we're fighting an ideology that is totally alien to us. Within that ideology the radical Islamists and the traditional tribal customs are in conflict with more moderate and secular Muslims. We're seen as intruding in this family feud, and thus serve the interests of the radicals as we provide evidence that they are under attack by Western crusaders. With each act of violence the hatred between the two is ratcheted upward, as fighting spreads throughout the entire Muslim world.

Ironically, this fight over religious values and interpretations in the Middle East encourages a similar conflict here at home among Christians. The conservative Christian community too often sounds militantly pro-war. Too many have totally forgotten the admonition "blessed are the peacemakers." This contrasts with the views of some Christians, who find pre-emptive war decidedly un-Christian. Though civil, the two Christian views are being more hotly contested every day.

A policy that uses the religious civil war within the Muslim faith as an excuse for remaking the entire Middle East by force makes little sense and will not end well. The more we fight and the more we kill the greater the animosity of those who want us out of their family feud—and out of their countries.

It's clear the Christian conservative turnout was critical to the President's re-election. Though many may well have voted for the family/moral values touted by the President and mishandled by Senator KERRY, most agree with the Christian Right that our policy of pre-emptive war in the Middle East is not in conflict with pro-family and pro-life values. This seems strange indeed, since a strong case can be made that the conservation Christian Right, those most interested in the pro-life issue, ought to be the strongest defenders of peace and reject unnecessary pre-emptive war.

Here are a few reasons why conservatives ought to reject the current policy of pre-emptive war:

1. The Constitution is on the side of peace. Under the Constitution—the law of the land—only Congress can declare war. The President is prohibited from taking us to war on his own.

2. The Founders and all the early presidents argued the case for non-intervention overseas, with the precise goals of avoiding entangling alliances and not involving our people in foreign wars unrelated to our security.

3. The American tradition and sense of morality for almost all our history rejected the notion that we would ever deliberately start a war, even with noble intentions.

4. The Christian concept of just war rejects all the excuses given for marching off to Iraq with the intention of changing the whole region into a western-style democracy by force, with little regard for the cost in life and limb and the economic consequences here at home.

5. America faces a \$7.5 trillion national debt that is increasing by \$600 billion per year. Fiscal conservatives cannot dismiss this, even as they clamor for wars we cannot afford.

6. History shows the size of the state always grows when we're at war. Under conditions of war, civil liberties are always sacrificed—thus begging the point. We go hither and yon to spread our message of freedom, while sacrificing our freedoms here at home and eating away at the wealth of the country.

7. Those who understand the most important function of our national government is to provide strong national defense should realize that having troops in over 100 countries hardly helps us protect America, secure our borders, or avoid alienating our allies and potential enemies.

8. The best way to prevent terrorism is to change our policies, stop playing crusader, and stop picking sides in religious civil wars or any other civil wars. "Blowback" from our policies is not imaginary.

9. Promoting true free trade and promoting prosperity through low taxes and less regulation sends a strong message to the world and those interested in peace and commerce.

10. A policy of free exchange with other nations avoids the trappings of the new isolationists, who influence our foreign policy with the generous use of sanctions, trade barriers, and competitive currency devaluations. They are only too willing to defer to the World Trade Organization and allow it to dictate our trade and tax policies.

Conservatives who profess to uphold the principle of right-to-life should have little trouble supporting the position of the Founders and the Constitution: a foreign policy of "peace and commerce with those who choose and no entangling alliances."

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

(Mr. BROWN of Ohio 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 the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. NORTON addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extension of Remarks.)

#### 108TH CONGRESS

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

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, the 108th Congress is coming to a close. The Congress has essentially finished its work, although we may reconvene, hope springs eternal, and move an intelligence reform bill before Christmas arrives. But, in essence, we are done with much of what we have come to do.

Before we adjourn for rest and reflection with family and friends on Thanksgiving, I thought it would be helpful to reflect on what we have to be thankful for in the 108th Congress, and it is much.

I begin my remarks with two ancient references, one from the sacred texts of the Bible where one generation spoke to another, words of admonition in leadership with these words, "be strong and courageous and do the work." The Founders of this country in 1787 in that summer in Philadelphia crafted these words that are essentially a mission statement for the government of the United States, stating that we the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, ensure domestic tranquility, provide the common defense, promote the general welfare and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves in our prosperity, do ordain and establish this Constitution.

Mr. Speaker, I would argue, against both of those timeless standards, the 108th Congress has excelled. We have been strong and courageous and done the work. We have provided for the common defense. We have promoted the general welfare, and we have secured the blessings of the liberty for ourselves in our posterity.

In the area of providing for the common defense, it scarcely seems that it was just 2 years ago, but in this Congress, following on the heels of having given the President the authority to confront the menacing dictatorship in Iraq, Operation Iraqi Freedom was launched, and Congress was there to support our troops, provide the resources they needed to get the job done in a stunning victory in the spring of last year, but also financing reconstruction in the War Supplemental Appropriations Act and providing our troops the resources that they need to finish the hard work of liberty in the streets of Baghdad and Fallujah.

We have also seen freedom come to other countries like Afghanistan, that elected its first national leader in its 5,000 year history of the region.

We saw daylight come to the regime of Mohammad Khadafi, who responded to U.S. and coalition action in other theaters in the Middle East to give up his weapons of mass destruction program, and in a multilateral way we