

more connected. Again, it is a relationship that goes back to World War I, when U.S. troops, the first group that arrived in the expeditionary force in World War I, actually fought under an Australian general, John Monash. Obviously, that carried through during World War II, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region.

In Vietnam, they were our ally, one of the few that actually fought with our country during that conflict; and, obviously, in the Middle East, Australian troops have been part of, again, operations, to this day, between the two countries in terms of the fight against ISIS and others.

When we were in Australia, again, the situation that I think is most urgent and something I really think all of us need to pay attention to is that the environment in the Indo-Pacific region is changing dramatically.

We now have a leader in the country of China, Xi Jinping, who has declared himself President for life and who has openly and brazenly basically signaled that he is prepared to disregard all international rules-based order, which has really been the foundation of that region since the end of World War II, whether it is maritime law, where, again, they are building islands totally in violation of maritime law, or whether it is a claim of the Nine-Dash Line, which is a territorial claim far out into the South China Sea and the East China Sea.

Again, what is happening there is egregious. It is harmful in terms of safe passage and open lanes of maritime traffic in the region. They obviously are engaged in an unprecedented military buildup, again, developing missile technologies that put surface ships of both countries and others in the region at great risk.

So we have a lot of work to do.

Rare earth minerals, which, again, China dominates. They have a virtual monopoly. Everything from our cellphones to aerospace and maritime equipment require the use of that.

Western Australia, in particular, has deep deposits of rare earth minerals, and it is time for our two countries to work together to create a different supply chain that does not rely totally on the country of China to make that happen.

What we also heard was that the best way that our country can move forward is to really, I think, point to what makes us most attractive in the world today, which is our embrace of democracy, free speech, openness, and generosity.

Again, those are policies which we heard loud and clear from our colleagues in the Australian Parliament that they are looking to America, which has been the leader since the end of World War II, to promote, that type of international rules-based order.

That is really the question of the day for this administration, which is in a go-it-alone trade war with China. Again, they have got the symptom

right, which is that China's behavior is egregious and malign, particularly in terms of the trade practices that they engage in, but the question is: How do you push back? How do you execute a policy that should be multilateral, collaborative with our allies, to make sure that the World Trade Organization actually has real teeth in terms of enforcing egregious violations that China has been engaged in in terms of intellectual property and government involvement in terms of trying to capture different markets like solar panels and many, many others?

So, again, I just want to say to our friends in Australia that they are welcome in this country. We look forward to, again, a very rich and strong alliance moving forward. The coequal branch of our government in Congress is part of that message and part of that policy.

Again, we look forward to many years of productive work together based on common values as well as common interests and, obviously, the embrace of democracy for the region and for the rest of the world.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 21 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

PRAYER

Chaplain Major General Steven Schaick, U.S. Air Force, The Pentagon, Arlington, Virginia, offered the following prayer:

Loving God, we ask forgiveness for all the times we forget things that bear remembering. Sometimes we forget that when Sam Johnson's F-4 was shot down and 7 years of torture ensued, he credits prayer, holy scripture, and Your undeniable presence for his survival, release, and his becoming a U.S. Congressman. And sometimes we forget that when Tech Sergeant Bell was raped by a man she once considered a friend, leaving her with hopelessness and thoughts of suicide, You, O Lord, raised her up to become one of our most amazing noncommissioned officers.

Lord, Your fingerprints are seen on every sortie, every mission, and on the precious lives of every airman, past and present. And so today we can say "happy birthday" with humble gratitude.

We pray Your continued blessing on our United States Air Force, which

today celebrates its 72nd birthday. We pray also Your blessings upon these Halls of Congress and on our United States of America.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House her approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. WILSON) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

WELCOMING CHAPLAIN MAJOR GENERAL STEVEN SCHAICK

The SPEAKER. Without objection, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. COLLINS) is recognized for 1 minute.

There was no objection.

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Madam Speaker, today is a great day. It is the birthday of the United States Air Force and for those of us who serve. I rise today to recognize not only that birthday of the Air Force but to have the great and distinct honor of having Chief of Chaplains Steve Schaick, as we have just heard, to be here. I have the privilege of also calling him my boss because I am in the Air Force as well. He is a chaplain, and he is the top of my chain. He is there for a reason. He exemplifies what a chaplain means and how they serve in our Air Force.

Throughout our country's history, men and women have awaited and answered the call of duty, accomplishing each mission with valor. Today, we acknowledge the men and women who have taken to the skies to defend our country as members of the United States Air Force.

As a chaplain in that United States Air Force Reserves, I have had the privilege to minister and work with airmen since 2002. Their courage and integrity both at home and abroad are unmatched, and Chaplain Steven Schaick is a testament to that courage and integrity.

Chaplain Schaick is a native of Oshkosh, Wisconsin. He enlisted in the United States Air Force in 1976, serving for 4 years as an F-15 integrated avionics component specialist. He is endorsed by the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., and was commissioned in the Air Force Reserves as a chaplain candidate in 1985 and into the Active Duty chaplaincy in 1988.

Chaplain Schaick has served three different major commands as a staff