

Could I inquire of my colleagues how many 5 minutes they are going to ask?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair cannot predict how many 5 minutes are going to be coming up. The Chair would intend to extend courtesy to all Members on the floor to request 5 minutes.

Mr. DORNAN. Well believe me, a robust, wide open, freewheeling debate in the world's greatest legislature, I will not object to any unanimous-consent request.

Mr. Speaker, I withdraw my reservation of objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from West Virginia.

There was no objection.

□ 1300

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from West Virginia [Mr. WISE] is recognized for 5 minutes.

CONCERNS REGARDING IRAQ

Mr. WISE. Mr. Speaker, I am going to speak about Hurricane Fran, but I want to take just a moment to address some of the concerns that have been addressed concerning Iraq.

I happen to be one of the most ardent supporters of the War Powers Act. I have been frustrated that Presidents of both parties have disregarded it in years past. Be that as it may, I think this situation that the President is in is difficult enough already.

I note with interest that a previous speaker talked about President Bush going to the United Nations six or seven times. That is true. There was a vote in Congress. That was over a 6-month period, as we slowly built troops up to a 500,000 person level.

In this case, we have surface-to-air missiles winging at our airplanes during the last couple of days. We have Saddam Hussein drawing direct provocations, lines in the sands. I do not remember, in the case of an immediate action, I do not remember President Bush or President Reagan coming to Congress to announce in advance the details of how they are going to invade Grenada, perform the air raid on Libya, or invade Panama, all actions which received bipartisan support. I suggest that may be the reason Congress has not received a full briefing today on the details about what probably will be upcoming military action in Iraq.

Later on, of course, there does need to be full explanation. I, too, watch with concern, as much as anyone else. I also know the Commander in Chief needs some flexibility.

Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about Hurricane Fran because, Mr. Speaker, as that storm has devastated so much of our east coast, as it certainly has eight counties, actually more than that, a number of counties in West Virginia. Governor Caperton requested a disaster assistance declaration from President Clinton. I backed up that request. I am happy to say the WhiteHouse acted immediately. Now eight counties in West Virginia, as well

as a number of others across the east coast, are now in a federally declared disaster area.

People should know, Mr. Speaker, that this means that the full range of Federal Emergency Management Agency programs are available today as we speak to the residents of all those declared counties. So what I have encouraged my constituents to do is immediately to call the toll free number, the FEMA, Federal Emergency Management Agency toll-free number of 1-800-462-9029, because they can begin the application process right now, Mr. Speaker. They can start that going. They do not have to wait to speak to anybody personally.

Also, Mr. Speaker, I have gotten a lot of questions about, well, if I were in a flood before, and we have had four now in West Virginia in the last 9 months, if I was in a disaster area during the last year, do I file again? And the answer, Mr. Speaker, is yes. Anyone who was hit by Fran in West Virginia is in one of the declared disaster counties needs to call that toll-free number, once again identify themselves, the county they are in, and begin immediately to receive that assistance.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency is going to be offering, Mr. Speaker, the same assistance as in past floods: disaster housing assistance for those who need it, special crisis counseling for those with special needs, unemployment assistance to those who have been put out of work by the flooding, special loans for homeowners, renters, and business owners to repair or replace damaged property, tax assistance through programs from the IRS, the State and local governments. This is crucial, Mr. Speaker, that people begin this process now.

It is likely that FEMA will set up throughout the State of West Virginia several disaster relief centers where people can walk in and receive personal assistance. I urge, though, Mr. Speaker, that people not wait for that, but call that toll-free number.

There is something else constituents can do as well, Mr. Speaker. That is, if they have suffered damage and they have a lot of debris, they should document that damage as much as possible through photographs, videotaping, whatever means possible. In some cases, the National Guard is going to have to pick that debris up, or others will have to pick that debris up and get it out of the way, so it is important to document that.

Mr. Speaker, there have been an incredible number of sagas of heroism during the last few days. You cannot say enough about the National Guard, the Red Cross, the Salvation Army, the volunteer fire departments, the emergency services operations, both State- and county-wide.

There are so many tales of heroism: The elementary school principal in Moorefield, who came beseeching the Governor to get her school back up and running so they lost as few days as pos-

sible, to bring stability back to people's lives; the contractor in Hardy County who worked himself to exhaustion and a trip to the hospital trying to shore up the levee to make sure that damage was minimized.

So many tales: Other contractors donating equipment throughout the area to help try and stave off the damage caused by the flooding; the Hampshire County junior high students who went door-to-door taking water to people. Mr. Speaker, there are so many tales that relate, once again, how people pull together in the best spirit of West Virginians.

We have another digging out to do, Mr. Speaker, but happily, FEMA has responded quickly, and now what I urge people to do is to take advantage of that, even if they have another claim in from a previous flood, and we have had far too many this year in our State, but even if they have a claim in, they need to call, Mr. Speaker, that toll-free number of 1-800-462-9029 and begin that process of digging out.

UNITED STATES REACTION TO ACTIONS IN IRAQ

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Missouri [Mr. TALENT] is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. TALENT. Mr. Speaker, I wanted to address briefly the incidence and pattern of behavior with regard to our reaction to Saddam Hussein's latest actions in Iraq, and I want to preface it by saying that I have defended the President's decisions in Missouri with my constituents. I think it is important, given the history we have had with Saddam Hussein, to show him that the action we clearly regard as aggressive and the world regards as aggressive not be something he can get away with easily.

This is the kind of person who keeps pushing and keeps pushing until he is stopped. It is better to try to stop him, to stop him at the early stages, rather than to wait until you have some kind of a general conflagration.

I felt the President was right in responding. I did not want to second-guess the particular tactics that he chose. However, I think it is also important to be sensitive now to the kinds of concerns that my friend, the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. WELDON] raised with regard to the fact that we are no longer dealing with a single response to a single incident.

We are now dealing with a chain of responses, an ongoing pattern of behavior, and a policy that is being developed, a policy that involves ongoing and perhaps intermittent but ongoing military strikes. Even apart from the legalities of the War Powers Act, it would, it seems to me, to be both prudent and, as a matter of comity, an important thing for the President to consult at least with the bipartisan leadership.

My understanding is that this has not been done. The longer this goes on,

the more questions are going to be raised about it, the more important it will be to have unity within the Congress and the country as a whole.

I do not understand, completely apart from the politics, completely apart from the War Powers Act, I do not understand why the President would not want at least on a quiet basis to be consulting and informing the bipartisan leadership of the Congress better than he has. It would, it seems to me, be a prudent thing to do.

Mr. WELDON. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. TALENT. I yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

Mr. WELDON. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague and friend for yielding to me.

Let me just state, in response to the previous gentleman who spoke, nobody questions the United States responding to air strikes against our planes protecting the no-fly zones. No one is questioning that.

We are not asking the President to come in. That was an original, original action as a result of the U.N. resolutions that were passed and the cooperative nations supporting our action agreed to establish no-fly zones. No one in this body is questioning whether or not we can respond if the Iraqis fire missiles at our planes protecting those no-fly zones. But that is not what we are talking about now.

First of all, even though those no-fly zones were a result of the U.N. resolutions, they have now been changed. The definition lines have been expanded. Now we are sending over F-117's for other strikes, for deep-strike bombing strikes. We do not know what this new mission is because it was not in the original U.N. resolutions, which is the reason why we are there in the first place.

The point we are making, Mr. Speaker, is we have a whole new set of issues now that appear to not even be consistent with the U.N. resolutions, appear to be far beyond the original mission that was a multinational effort, and which the Congress has not been consulted on. The urgency is that as we adjourn today, this weekend our young pilots are flying F-117's over, to apparently be based in Kuwait. I think we should at least know that.

I am a strong supporter and friend and defender of Kuwait, but I would like to know if that, in fact, is the case, and if they are in Kuwait, is this going to be their base of action? If they are there, why are they not placed in one of the airfields we are currently involved in in Saudi Arabia? Is it because, as the media are saying, that the Saudis have turned us down? None of these questions have been answered.

Mr. Speaker, mark my words, if there is a casualty of an American, we are going to hold this President accountable. We are talking about our kids. We are not trying to disrupt what the President wants to do or interrupt his foreign policy. But there is a role con-

stitutionally for this Congress to be involved in, and that has not occurred.

I thank my friend for yielding.
Mr. TALENT. It leads me to wonder, Mr. Speaker. I think there would be very strong support on both sides of the aisle for any plausible plan to respond on an ongoing and consistent basis to the depredations by Saddam Hussein. I know I would be very receptive to that.

I repeat, I have been defending the President. I wondered at the time when this was occurring why the press was so interested in my comments back home. I think it was because, here I was a Republican defending what the President was doing, but I thought his response was very appropriate.

If we are having difficulty getting the Saudis to go along, we know we have had difficulty getting the Europeans to go along, all the more important that we be consulted here, and that we be able to act in a united way between the executive and legislative branches.

I am not saying this, inviting the President to come in, so we can step on what he is trying to do. I think probably we would be supportive if it was a reasonable plan. But if he does not do that then certainly he exposes himself to the criticisms.

MEMBERS SHOULD NOT BRING POLITICS INTO SENSITIVE FOREIGN POLICY DECISIONS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina [Mr. HEFNER] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HEFNER. Mr. Speaker, I have served for many years on the Committee on Appropriations. It is interesting to come here and see history rewritten, history changed.

I remember many years ago when, and the gentleman just made a statement, and certainly I do not want to see the blood of one American boy lost, made the statement if we lose one person, we are going to hold the President of the United States accountable. We lost 240 people in Lebanon to a terrorist strike, and we did not hold President Reagan responsible for this, because we thought he was working in the best interests of the United States.

But we have had the Republicans absolutely not supporting the situation in Bosnia, which is an uneasy peace, but there is peace in Bosnia now. There are not grandmothers that are being shot and children shot, they are going back to school. In Haiti, they opposed the mission in Haiti, and so far it has not been perfect, but it is working.

This is, in my view, politics at its crassest, and to me, it is unbecoming of this body. Certainly Saddam has to be the most ruthless dictator in the history of mankind, that would rank right along with Genghis Khan and people of that stripe. And certainly the President of the United States has an awesome responsibility. I do not know

what all the problems are in getting cooperation with our allies, but that has always been a problem.

I remember a few years ago when they wanted to close the Persian Gulf, they threatened to close the Persian Gulf, the Iranians. We could not get permission from the Saudis to even fuel in their ports, but we went and unilaterally, unilaterally kept the Persian Gulf open because it was a source of oil for the free world.

So to get into politics on something that is as sensitive as the situation in Iraq in my view goes beyond the political arena.

LAUDING FEMA'S RESPONSIVENESS IN RECENT NATIONAL CRISES

Mr. HEFNER. A couple of other things I would just like to mention here on my time. I would like to congratulate and thank a government agency. They do not get many pats on the back. But FEMA has been one of the most responsive agencies in my memory, not only because North Carolina was hit so hard with Fran, but all across this country, in Oklahoma and all over this country, FEMA has really been an exemplary agency of the Federal Government. I think we owe them a real salute because of the great work they have done.

One other area I would just like to touch on. I do not want to get into the business of being hostile, but I remember many years ago in this House when Jim Wright was Speaker, on a daily basis in this well Special Counsel was called for, and the now Speaker of the House, on a daily basis was in this well making accusations and saying this was the most corrupt Speaker in the history of this Congress, calling for a Special Counsel and special investigations.

We got to the bottom of all of these things, the book deals and what have you, and we voted. Even Democrats defected, we did not stonewall. We voted to support a full investigation. We voted when that investigation was finished to bring it before this body.

We have spent \$500,000 for the Independent Counsel to go out and supposedly to interview people and get at the facts. I think the thing that bothers me is, I do not know what transpired before he went in and began to talk to these people in different institutions. What bothers me, I guess, and I do not know and I am not making an accusation, but if his instructions were, you go and interview these people, find out what the facts are, but you do not draw any conclusions, you do not make any suggestions, you just get the information and you put it in this document and you bring it back and give it to us and we will decide, if that is the case, if that be the case, in my view that is an absolute tame dog with no teeth, and it is it is an absolute travesty.

It seems to me that the American people need an explanation.

I would think that the Speaker of this House would like for his name, his