

¶11.27 RECESS—5:40 P.M.

The SPEAKER pro tempore, Mr. COMBEST, pursuant to clause 12 of rule I, declared the House in recess at 5 o'clock and 40 minutes p.m., until approximately 8:40 p.m.

¶11.28 AFTER RECESS—8:40 P.M.

The SPEAKER called the House to order.

¶11.29 JOINT SESSION TO RECEIVE A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

The Sergeant at Arms announced the Vice President and Members of the Senate, who entered the Hall of the House and took seats assigned them, the Vice President taking the Chair to the right of the Speaker.

Whereupon, pursuant to House Concurrent Resolution 16, the SPEAKER called the joint session of the two Houses to order.

The SPEAKER announced the appointment of Messrs. ARMEY, DELAY, BOEHNER, COX, DICKEY, HUTCHINSON, GEPHARDT, BONIOR, FAZIO, Mrs. KENNELLY, Mr. THORNTON, and Mrs. LINCOLN, as members of the Committee on the part of the House to escort the President into the Hall of the House.

The Vice President announced the appointment of Messrs. DOLE, LOTT, COCHRAN, MACK, NICKLES, D'AMATO, THURMOND, INHOFE, THOMPSON, DASCHLE, FORD, MIKULSKI, KERRY, ROCKEFELLER, BREAU, REID, KERREY and DORGAN, as members of the committee on the part of the Senate to escort the President into the Hall of the House.

The Sergeant at Arms announced the ambassadors, ministers, and charges d'affaires of foreign governments, who entered the Hall of the House and took seats assigned them.

The Sergeant at Arms announced the Chief Justice of the United States and Associate Justices of the Supreme Court, who entered the Hall of the House and took seats assigned to them.

The Sergeant at Arms announced the Members of the President's Cabinet, who entered the Hall of the House and took seats assigned to them.

The President of the United States at 9 o'clock and 8 minutes p.m., escorted by the committees of the two Houses, entered the Hall of the House and, at the Clerk's desk, delivered the following message:

Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, Members of the 104th Congress, my fellow Americans. Again we are here in the sanctuary of democracy and once again our democracy has spoken. So let me begin by congratulating all of you here in the 104th Congress and congratulating you, Mr. Speaker. If we agree on nothing else tonight, we must agree that the American people certainly voted for change in 1992 and in 1994. As I look out at you, I know how some of you must have felt in 1992. I must say that in both years, we did not hear America singing, we heard America shouting. And now all of us, Republicans and Democrats alike, must say we hear

you. We will work together to earn the jobs you have given us. We are the keepers of the sacred trust, and we must be faithful to it in this new and very demanding era.

Over 200 years ago our founders changed the entire course of human history by joining together to create a new country based on a single powerful idea: We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights, and among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

It has fallen to every generation since then to preserve that idea, the American idea, and to deepen and expand its meaning in new and different times, to Lincoln and to his Congress, to preserve the union and to end slavery; to Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson to restrain the abuses and excesses of the Industrial Revolution, and to exert our leadership in the world; to Franklin Roosevelt, to fight the failure and pain of the Great Depression and to win our country's great struggle against fascism; and to all our presidents since, to fight the Cold War. Especially I recall two, who struggled to fight that Cold War in partnership with Congresses where the majority was of a different party. To Harry Truman, who summoned us to unparalleled prosperity at home and who built the architecture of the Cold War, and to Ronald Reagan, who we wish well tonight and who exhorted us to carry on until the twilight struggle against communism was won.

In another time of change and challenge, I had the honor to be the first President to be elected in the post-Cold War era, an era marked by the global economy, the information revolution, unparalleled change and opportunity and in security for the American people.

I came to this hallowed Chamber two years ago on a mission, to restore the American dream for all our people and to make sure that we move into the 21st Century still the strongest force for freedom and democracy in the entire world. I was determined then to tackle the tough problems too long ignored. In this effort I am frank to say that I have made my mistakes, and I have learned again the importance of humility in all human endeavor. But I am also proud to say tonight that our country is stronger than it was two years ago.

Record numbers of Americans are succeeding in the new global economy. We are at peace and we are a force for peace and freedom throughout the world. We have almost 6 million new jobs since I became president, and we have the lowest combined rate of unemployment and inflation in 25 years. Our businesses are more productive, and here we have worked to bring the deficit down, to expand trade, to put more police on our streets, to give our citizens more of the tools they need to get an education and to rebuild their own communities.

But the rising tide is not lifting all boats. While our Nation is enjoying peace and prosperity, too many of our people are still working harder and harder for less and less. While our businesses are restructuring and growing more productive and competitive, too many of our people still cannot be sure of having a job next year or even next month. And far more than our material riches are threatened, things far more precious to us: Our children, our families, our values. Our civil life is suffering in America today. Citizens are working together less and shouting at each other more. The common bounds of community which have been the great strength of our country from its very beginning are badly frayed.

What are we to do about it? More than 60 years ago at the dawn of another new era, President Roosevelt told our Nation new conditions impose new requirements on government and those who conduct government. And from that simple proposition, he shaped a New Deal, which helped to restore our Nation to prosperity and defined the relationship between our people and their government for half a century. That approach worked in its time, but we today, we face a very different time and very different conditions.

We are moving from an industrial age built on gears and sweat, to an information age demanding skills and learning and flexibility. Our government, once the champion of national purpose, is now seen by many as simply a captive of narrow interests, putting more burdens on our citizens rather than equipping them to get ahead. The values that used to hold us altogether seem to be coming apart.

So tonight we must forge a new social compact to meet the challenges of this time. As we enter a new era, we need a new set of understandings, not just with government, but, even more important, with one another, as Americans.

That is what I want to talk with you about tonight. I call it the New Covenant. But it is grounded in a very, very old idea, that all Americans have not just a right, but a solemn responsibility to rise as far as their God-given talents and determination can take them, and to give something back to their communities and their country in return. Opportunity and responsibility, they go hand in hand. We can't have one without the other, and our national community can't hold together without both.

Our New Covenant is a new set of understandings for how we can equip our people to meet the challenges of the new economy, how we can change the way our government works to fit a different time, and, above all, how we can repair the damaged bonds in our society and come together behind our common purpose. We must have dramatic change in our economy, our government, and ourselves.

My fellow Americans, without regard to party, let us rise to the occasion. Let us put aside partisanship and petti-