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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable LISA MURKOWSKI, a Senator from the State of Alaska.

PRAYER

The guest Chaplain, Rev. Dr. Douglas John Waite, Deputy Chaplain of the Coast Guard, offered the following prayer:

Good morning, loving God of us all. We invite You here with us today as we deliberate about issues affecting Your people everywhere. We especially ask You to be with the former chaplain of the Senate, Dr. Lloyd Ogilvie, and his family in their grief and loss of his beloved wife Mary Jane.

We also request You to be with our forces who are in harm's way today. Grant wisdom to the leaders you appointed over them. Take those who have paid the ultimate price for freedom and safety into Your kingdom and comfort their families. Stand beside our terrorized prisoners of war. Bring them home safe and soon. Heal quickly those who have been wounded. Shield innocent civilians everywhere and cause a speedy end to war. Protect us all from terrorism at home and abroad.

Finally, Lord, we beseech You to enable the elected representatives of our democracy to seek Your guidance and direction so they may do Your will. We ask these things in Your mighty Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable LISA MURKOWSKI 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.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication

to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. STEVENS.)

The assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, April 10, 2003.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable LISA MURKOWSKI, a Senator from the State of Alaska, to perform the duties of the Chair.

TED STEVENS,
President pro tempore.

Ms. MURKOWSKI thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The acting majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. BENNETT. Madam President, this morning the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 11 a.m. Following morning business, the Senate may address any of the following items: The FISA bill, if unanimous consent can be reached; the PROTECT Act conference report; the digital technology bill; the nomination of Priscilla Owen to be a U.S. circuit judge; the BioShield bill; and any other conference reports that may become available. Therefore, Members should expect rollcall votes during today's session.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Democratic whip.

Mr. REID. Madam President, if I could, through you, ask the acting majority leader: All we know on this side is what we read in the newspapers and listen to on the news. Are we going to be able to work on the budget before we leave here, either today or tomorrow? Members are concerned some will leave. This is the most important vote

we have, it and the supplemental. We have a pretty good idea what is happening in the supplemental but less of an idea of what is happening on the budget. Does the acting majority leader have any information for this side of the aisle?

Mr. BENNETT. Madam President, I am not in a position to give any definitive answer to the Senator from Nevada. It is my understanding, however, that intense negotiations are going on with the chairman of the Budget Committee and other Senators who have an interest about the conference report. It is my understanding that an agreement has been reached and that a conference report will, in fact, be available to be voted on, if not late tonight, sometime tomorrow. But in the absence of any absolute word about that, I will simply put that in the category of rumors. They may be true rumors, but rumors nonetheless, that I can pass on as my best understanding.

I will, as a courtesy to the Senator from Nevada, and to the Senate, ask the majority leader to come forward with that information as quickly as it has been firmed up. But it is my expectation that there will be resolution of the budget situation before we go out for recess.

Understand, again, that is my personal expectation. That is not an official statement on behalf of the majority leader.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will now be a period for the transaction of morning business not to extend beyond the hour of 11 a.m., with the first 30 minutes to be equally divided between the Senator from Texas and the

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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Democratic leader or their designees, and the second 30 minutes to be equally divided between the two leaders or their designees.

The Senator from Texas.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Madam President, I want to open today by noting what we saw live from Iraq yesterday starting in the midmorning. It was truly uplifting to see what we hoped would be the end: The fall of Saddam Hussein, the cheering in the streets by the Iraqi people, the flowers for the American and British soldiers being thrown at the tanks by the Iraqi people.

We are admonished by the President and by the Pentagon that this is not over. There are still areas—in fact, there was a fire fight last night that was unexpected. There was one yesterday at the University of Baghdad. So it is not over.

But we know the end is very near, and we know the people of Iraq now understand that they are going to have the taste of freedom.

You could see it in their faces. You could see it in the tears coming down their cheeks. You could see it in the children reacting against the statue of the fallen Saddam Hussein.

I think we are at the beginning of the end or at the end of the beginning. We are seeing the light at the end of the tunnel, which is freedom for the Iraqi people and doing away with the many weapons that have been used in Iraq against its own people and that we feared would be used against ours.

I open by saying thank you to the American troops, the young men and women on the ground, who have fought so valiantly to make this happen. I could not be more proud today, after seeing what is happening in Baghdad and the reaction of the people and the message left by the U.S. troops on one of Saddam Hussein's palaces: "USA was here."

I hope in the days to come we will see more Iraqi people beginning to see what it is to be able to form a government and take control of their own country; to start creating jobs again and an economy that will allow them to have a democracy, free enterprise, and know what so many of us have grown up with and appreciated.

I thank the troops this morning. I want to turn over the management of our time to the Senator from Minnesota for the rest of this morning. He will also work with the Senator from Arkansas on the Democratic side to fill this time talking about the heroic and touching deeds that our troops have been doing in the field.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Minnesota.

Mr. COLEMAN. Madam President, what a glorious day yesterday was. I am privileged to follow my distinguished colleague from Texas who, as she reflects upon the joy that we all felt, expressed a real sense of pride in

the incredible work done by our fighting men and women, knowing that many of those who have lost their lives and those who have been prisoners of war came out of Texas bases.

For all of us there is always this mixed sense. We are filled with joy, pride and joy for the Iraqi people to be able to taste liberation and freedom in Iraq. But part of my tradition in the Jewish faith is that at the time of a wedding ceremony—a glorious day—we wrap a glass in a cloth. Then, at the end of the service, at this moment of the greatest of joy such as the great joy we experienced yesterday, the groom steps on the glass and breaks it.

Part of the sense of tradition is, in this time of joy and celebration, let us not forget that life has mixed blessings, and there are tragedies that have occurred and will occur. So as we celebrate the incredible joy of the liberation of Baghdad, let us not ever—and we will not certainly in these hallowed Chambers, certainly not in this country—forget the sacrifices that have been made by those who have given their last ounce of courage and the sacrifice of their lives for the freedom we witnessed yesterday.

Let us also understand that much work remains to be done. There will be more death. We will suffer more casualties. The liberation of Baghdad is, as my distinguished colleague from Texas said, perhaps the beginning of the end, but it is not the end.

While we eagerly anticipate the day when all of Iraq will be freed from Saddam's iron fist—and Tikrit, his enclave, is still not liberated, so there will be fighting ahead—it is important for us, in what we have done over the last few weeks, not to forget the sacrifice and bravery of the coalition forces still fighting to free northern Iraq.

I note that many are special operations soldiers, such as the skilled and fearless unnamed Minnesota man who was profiled so powerfully in an edition of the Star Tribune. And being a Senator from Minnesota, obviously, I have great pride in this unnamed Minnesotan. It is a story of a Minnesota combat air controller who had already spent more than 30 hours on the ridge line, directing close bomb attacks, with little sleep.

In the briefings we get in the morning, just the other day we had one of those soldiers come in, one of those operatives who talked about the 150 pounds of gear that they have, who talked about being on that line and directing in, with precision guidance, the airstrikes, to focus on the target, to minimize any harm to civilians who are right there.

This story chronicled the efforts, the skill, and the courage of one man—one unnamed man—a Minnesotan, but it drove home the devastating precision and prowess of our forces, a dramatic example of the remaining front line, of how the coalition has swept across Iraq in record time through the fearless

teamwork and efforts of men such as this.

I do not know whether, in the chronicles of warfare, any army has moved so quickly and moved so decisively, moved so precisely, as have our troops in what they have accomplished in a few weeks in Iraq.

I cannot share the name and the family of this brave Minnesota soldier at this time because the embedded reporter was not allowed to identify him, other than to mention that the 34-year-old air controller hails from near Park Rapids, MN, and loves fishing and snowmobiling back home, as many of us Minnesotans love fishing and snowmobiling. But the description of what this dedicated Minnesotan is doing so far from home serves as an inspiring, yet sobering, reminder of the dangers and challenges that still confront our forces.

A few passages from the story underscore the perilous conditions our Special Forces still operate under as they coordinate and choreograph the pinpoint air attacks that will ultimately lead to complete surrender, that will ultimately lead to the liberation of all of Iraq, that will ultimately lead to more stability in the Middle East, that will ultimately lead to a safer world for us here at home in America.

Let me talk a little about what is in that story:

Part cowboy, part choreographer, the Minnesotan stood in a bunker rife with scorpions early Tuesday morning and searched the sky. A U.S. fighter jet roared overhead for the third time in less than a half-hour. His casual tone masked his dangerous task of directing the aircraft to bomb Iraqi Republican Guard positions just a few thousand meters away.

The reporter continues:

As a combat air controller, he owned a 3-to-4 mile stretch of horizon that is the leading edge of a northern front only an hour from Baghdad—and moving closer.

If his team's position was not locked in by a pilot before the start of a bombing run, the five American operatives and three Kurdish reconnaissance scouts risked being the victims of friendly fire.

Their mission this night was to pound Hill 323, an 800-foot mound amid rolling hills where reinforced concrete bunkers protected Republican Guard troops and supplies.

The story goes on to vividly detail the rest of the operation, the extraordinary coordination between pilots providing air support and the Special Forces on the ground.

The unnamed Minnesotan is using the finest battlefield technology ever developed—infrared lasers that allow pilots to lock on to the position of friendly troops and target the location of enemy forces to a devastating and precise effect.

But that mission and unnamed Minnesotan also exhibited another remarkable trait that has been displayed to the entire world throughout this campaign; namely, patience and concern—the patience to make sure he got it right, that no civilians were unintentionally injured, and that his fellow soldiers were safe.