

DISPENSING WITH CALENDAR WEDNESDAY BUSINESS ON WEDNESDAY, JUNE 8, 2005

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the business in order under the Calendar Wednesday rule be dispensed with on Wednesday, June 8, 2005.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Georgia?

There was no objection.

MEMORIAL DAY

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I wanted to take this opportunity to thank America's veterans and to offer my sympathy to those families that will experience for the first time and for many, many times the difficulty of Memorial Day, for they are the families that are now suffering the loss of a loved one who has fallen in battle or in the service of his or her country.

Today, we had the honor of traveling to Arlington Cemetery, as I said earlier, to place the wreath of honor in honor of women who have fallen in battle. The good news about America is that in times of conflict, however we may disagree on the policy, we are united behind the men and women who leave their homes and leave their families and leave all that they love to be able to serve this country.

My sadness, however, is that there are so many that are coming back in caskets covered and draped by the American flag. And so I think it is extremely important that on this Memorial Day, we are united in our honoring and our admiration and our affection for those who have lost their lives in Iraq and Afghanistan.

May God bless them, God bless their families, and God bless the United States of America.

COMMUNICATION FROM INSPECTOR GENERAL, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KUHL of New York) laid before the House the following communication from Steven A. McNamara, Inspector General, House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, May 16, 2005.

MEMORANDUM

To: Hon. DENNIS HASTERT, Speaker of the House.
Hon. TOM DELAY, Majority Leader of the House.
Hon. NANCY PELOSI, Minority Leader of the House.
From: STEVEN A. McNAMARA, Inspector General.
Subject: Notification of Resignation and Retirement.

Please accept my offer of resignation, as the Inspector General for the U.S. House of

Representatives, effective May 30, 2005. This date will also be my effective date of retirement from Federal Service.

It has been an honor to serve the House as the Inspector General for the last five years. My goal, and that of my staff, has been to help the House achieve the best use of all the dollars it spends, increase efficiencies, and ensure the health, safety, and security of Members, staff, and visitors. Through the combined support of the House Leadership, the Committee on House Administration, and the hard work of my staff, I believe we have helped the House accomplish its administrative goals.

Now, after slightly more than 35 years of Federal Service, I look forward to a new chapter in my life; the pursuit of a hobby and business venture as a kayak instructor and kayaking guide.

Once again, it has been a great honor to serve the House of the Inspector General for the last five years. It has been a fulfilling and rewarding experience!

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

INTRODUCTION OF REDUCING CRIME AND TERRORISM AT AMERICA'S SEAPORTS ACT OF 2005

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

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, along with the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. COBLE), chairman of the Judiciary Committee's Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security, I am pleased to introduce the Reducing Crime and Terrorism at America's Seaports Act of 2005.

There are 361 seaports in the United States that serve essential national interests by facilitating the flow of trade and the movement of cruise passengers, as well as supporting the effective and safe deployment of U.S. Armed Forces. These seaport facilities and other marine areas cover some 3.5 million square miles of ocean area and 95,000 miles of coastline.

Millions of shipping containers pass through our ports every month. A single container has room for as much as 60,000 pounds of explosives, 10 to 15 times the amount in the Ryder truck used to blow up the Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City. When you consider that a single ship can carry as many as 8,000 containers at one time, the vulnerability of our seaports is alarming.

Each year, more than 141 million ferry and cruise ship passengers, more than 2 billion tons of domestic and international freight and 3 billion tons of oil move through U.S. seaports. Millions of truck-size cargo containers are off-loaded onto U.S. docks. Many seaports are still protected by little more than a chain link fence and, in far too

many instances, have no adequate safeguards to ensure that only authorized personnel can access sensitive areas of the port. If we allow this system to continue unchecked, it is only a matter of time until terrorists attempt to deliver a weapon of mass destruction to our doorstep via ship, truck or cargo container.

New reports by the Government Accountability Office, Congress' investigative arm, fault both the Customs-Trade Partnership Against Terrorism and the Container Security Initiative. C-TPAT allows international shippers to get quicker clearance through Customs in exchange for voluntary security measures. But the GAO said that the U.S. Customs and Border Protection's vetting process was not thorough enough. It found that only 10 percent of the certified members had been validated through an actual physical inspection by the Agency. The rest had been certified by paperwork applications.

As part of the recently passed Homeland Security authorization bill, the House took some important steps to improve the screening of cargo by expanding the Container Security Initiative and refocusing it, based on risk. But the truth is that not every container can be inspected, and we need to use other tools at our disposal to deter those who would use our seaports as a point of attack until we can inspect or somehow verify each container. Strengthening criminal penalties, as Chairman COBLE and I are proposing with this bill, is one way we make our Nation's ports less vulnerable.

The Reducing Crime and Terrorism at America's Seaports Act of 2005 will fill a gaping hole in our defense against terrorism and make American ports, passengers and cargo safer. Our bill is substantially similar to bipartisan Senate legislation introduced earlier this year by Senators BIDEN and SPECTER and supported by other key members of the Judiciary Committee, including Senators DIANNE FEINSTEIN and ORRIN HATCH. The Senate version of this legislation has been reported favorably by the Senate Judiciary Committee and is awaiting action by the full Senate.

Our bill makes common-sense changes to our criminal laws and will help to close security gaps confronting our ports. The amendment will make it a crime to use a vessel to smuggle terrorists or dangerous materials, including nuclear material, into the U.S., impose stiff criminal penalties for providing false information to a Federal law enforcement officer at a port or on a vessel, and double the sentence of anyone who fraudulently gains access to a seaport.

Our bill would also directly access several immediate threats by increasing penalties for smugglers who misrepresent illicit cargo. It would also bridge specific gaps in current Federal law by making it a crime for a vessel operator to fail to stop when ordered to

do so by a Federal law enforcement officer.

Mr. Speaker, America's ports remain vulnerable and this Nation needs a multifaceted strategy to secure them and to deter those who would harm this country. The Reducing Crime and Terrorism at America's Seaports Act of 2005 is part of that strategy.

I urge my colleagues to join Chairman COBLE and me by cosponsoring this legislation.

□ 1615

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KUHL of New York). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. GUTKNECHT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. GUTKNECHT addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. NORWOOD. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take my Special Order at this time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Georgia?

There was no objection.

BORDER CONTROL AND AMNESTY

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

Mr. NORWOOD. Mr. Speaker, this month a bill to grant amnesty to illegal immigrants was introduced in the United States Senate.

I think we should send a very clear message to the other body not to waste their time or ours on any bill dealing with the status of illegal immigrants until we first secure our borders.

What good does it do to try to address the problems of 11 to 16 million people who are here illegally if we do not address the gaping wound that allowed them in this country to start with?

The majority of illegals simply walk across our woefully undermanned 2,000-mile border with Mexico. We could deport them back to their country of origin, and millions would be pouring back across that same border within hours. We could turn our backs on justice and the rule of law and declare everyone here as now to be legal. Within hours we would have millions more illegal immigrants walking across that same border, encouraged by the fact that they could laugh at our laws with impunity.

Either extreme, or anything in between, is pointless while we let our border continue to bleed. Trying to defend 1,951 miles of border against 4 million illegal immigrants a year with just 10,817 border patrol officers is a mathematical impossibility.

This month Customs and Border Protection Commissioner Robert Bonner

told the House Committee on Government Reform that we could secure the border, that we could secure the border, with an additional 50,000 auxiliary officers. That figure is in very close agreement with the draft field research by the Immigration Reform Caucus that was reported this week by the Washington Times, CNN's Lou Dobbs, and Fox News, which estimates 36,000 auxiliaries may accomplish the same purpose.

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger of California and Janet Napolitano of Arizona, Bill Richardson of New Mexico, and Governor Rick Perry of Texas can order their National Guard, with support from other States through the National Guard Bureau, to secure their section of their border today. We have already authorized the Secretary of Defense to pay the cost of that deployment in last year's Defense Authorization Act. In addition, we are bringing home 70,000 Federal troops from around the world, where they have been guarding other nations' borders for the past 60 years. A simple executive order from the President would allow them to relieve our National Guard and have 20,000 men and women to spare.

All it takes, Mr. Speaker, is will. We have the manpower and we have the money.

Mr. Speaker, on May 5 the American people responded to a Zogby nationwide poll on this issue. They approve using Federal troops to secure our border by a 53 to 40 percent margin. They approve using State and local law agencies to help secure our border by an 81 to 14 percent margin. They oppose an amnesty plan like that proposed in the Senate by a 56 to 35 percent margin.

This week, after the border patrol draft reported by caucus investigators was released, CNN online polls were running 92 percent in favor of using our military to control our borders. In response, the Mexican Government this week spoke out against us securing our border with our troops.

The American public demands we do so.

Now is the time for every Member of this body to choose whose side we are on.

SMART SECURITY AND THE NEED FOR AN IRAQ PLAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, it is time for Congress to take a good, hard look at the role the United States is playing in Iraq and whether or not it is in our national interest to maintain a military presence.

We need to acknowledge the fact that Iraq's insurgency is growing in strength, not diminishing, and that the very presence of 150,000 American troops on Iraqi soil appears as though they see us as occupiers that actually

unites the growing collection of insurgent forces.

Since our military presence actually encourages further fighting, this war will continue as long as U.S. troops remain in Iraq. That is why Congress must accept the fact that we cannot possibly bring our involvement in Iraq to any kind of successful conclusion through military means.

Yesterday, during consideration of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2006, I offered an amendment urging the President to develop a plan for the withdrawal of troops from Iraq. Surprisingly, this was the first time the House has formally debated the possibility of withdrawal from Iraq. We were allotted only 30 minutes for the debate: 15 minutes on my side, 15 minutes on the side opposing my amendment. But it is no surprise, of course, the amendment was defeated. But in spite of that, it is clear that the Congress is starting to get serious about a plan for leaving Iraq. 128 Members, including five Republicans, voted for this amendment.

But there is much more work to do, Mr. Speaker. The Iraq war has now raged on for more than 2 years, and we are no closer to winning this conflict than we were when President Bush declared an end to major combat operations under an arrogant banner declaring "Mission Accomplished."

Despite this lack of progress, the war has exacted a deeply troubling human and financial toll. In just over 2 years of war, more than 1,600 American soldiers and an estimated 25,000 Iraqi innocents have been killed. The Pentagon lists the number of Americans wounded as just over 12,000. But that does not take into account even the invisible wounds many of our soldiers will be bringing home and have already brought home, the painful mental trauma they have contracted from months and years of fighting. When accounting for these psychological injuries, the number of wounded jumps to nearly 40,000.

To date, Congress has appropriated more than \$200 billion for military operations in Iraq, despite little to no oversight as to how these funds are going to be spent, which has allowed \$9 billion in reconstruction funds to just vanish from the coffers of the Coalition Provisional Authority, which was the American governing body that managed Iraq until the year 2004.

Given what is at stake here, do the American people not deserve a plan? Do our brave men and women, who are selflessly sacrificing their lives, not to mention their arms, legs, for a war that we should not be in in the first place, not deserve a plan?

Let us not forget that the legislative branch is constitutionally mandated to oversee expenditures from our National Treasury. Instead of allowing fat-cat war profiteers like Halliburton and its subsidiary, Kellogg, Brown and Root, to line their pockets as war profiteers, it is time Congress started fulfilling our responsibility.