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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m.

The Reverend Ted A. Hartley, Pastor, Farina United Methodist Church, Farina, Illinois, offered the following prayer:

O gracious and loving Creator God, we exist by Your power and we exist for Your glory. Bring justice to our courts, wisdom to our government, guidance to our schools and love to our homes. Inspire the minds of all persons to whom You have committed the responsibility of government and leadership in our country. Give to them the vision of truth and justice, that by their counsel all nations and people may work together. Give to our government passion for justice and strength of self-control that we may use our liberty in accordance with Your gracious will. Thank You, God, for the balance of our legislative and executive and judicial branches of government and the women and men who serve this great Nation with love and dedication. Bless us, God, but as You bless us, may we be a blessing to others. All honor and glory is Yours, now and forever. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

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

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. WELLER 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.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate agreed to the following resolution:

S. RES. 481

Whereas Jacob Chic Hecht served as a special agent in the United States Army Intelligence Corps;

Whereas Jacob Chic Hecht served the people of Nevada with distinction from 1983 to 1989 in the United States Senate;

Whereas Jacob Chic Hecht served as United States Ambassador to the Bahamas from 1989 until 1994;

Resolved, That the Senate has heard with profound sorrow and deep regret the announcement of the death of Jacob Chic Hecht, former member of the United States Senate.

Resolved, That the Secretary of the Senate communicate these resolutions to the House of Representatives and transmit an enrolled copy thereof to the family of the deceased.

Resolved, That when the Senate adjourns today, it stand adjourned as a further mark of respect to the memory of the Honorable Jacob Chic Hecht.

The message also announced that the Senate has passed a bill of the following title in which concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 879. An act to make improvements to the Arctic Research and Policy Act of 1984.

The message also announced that pursuant to section 214 of title II, Public Law 107-252, the Chair, on behalf of the Majority Leader, appoints the following individual to serve as a member of the Election Assistance Board of Advisors:

Wesley R. Kliner, Jr. of Tennessee.

RECOGNIZING REV. TED HARTLEY AS GUEST CHAPLAIN

(Mr. SHIMKUS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Reverend Ted

Hartley, Senior Pastor of Farina, Illinois United Methodist Church as today's guest chaplain.

Rev. Hartley is a native of McLeansboro, Illinois and served as a pastor for 14 years. In addition to serving in towns such as East Peoria, Charleston, Virden and Abingdon, Illinois, Rev. Hartley has also preached the gospel in places such as Zimbabwe, Moscow, throughout Europe, Japan and China.

He has been an outspoken and integral advocate for fostering race relations and ecumenical work. Rev. Hartley is a graduate of Southern Illinois University at Carbondale and is a well-known Salukis fan. He attended seminary at Garrett Evangelical and Methodist Theological School in Ohio.

Accompanying him today is his son, Chris, an 18-year-old college student who is poised to become a future American Idol with his band Noxious, as well as Matthew Metcalf.

I am honored to have Rev. Hartley share his prayer with us today, and thank Father Coughlin for giving him and Farina, Illinois an opportunity of a lifetime.

ETHNIC GENOCIDE IN BURMA

(Mr. PITTS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, yesterday demonstrations in over a dozen countries, including the U.S., U.K., Thailand and Japan took place demanding that the U.N. Security Council take action to stop the violence in eastern Burma.

I join them today in speaking out against the brutal military dictatorship of Burma. The thugs of Rangoon are on an all-out rampage. Since March the Burmese military dictatorship has forced over 15,000 Karen tribal people from their homes.

☐ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., ☐ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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This map shows more than 2,800 villages. All of these dots are villages that have been destroyed, and hundreds of thousands of people displaced since 1996. These photos point to the awful plight of the displaced persons.

There are numerous reports documenting the systematic tracking, torturing, the killing of many of the Karen tribe in the recent weeks. But ethnic genocide is occurring in Burma.

On December 16 the U.N. Security Council held its first-ever briefing on Burma. At the briefing, U.N. Secretary General Annan indicated that the Security Council should get involved in Burma.

But mere talk is not enough. The U.S. should lead an effort to pass a resolution on Burma and the Security Council.

The world knows what is happening. If the international community does not act, we are complicit in their atrocities.

NATURAL DISASTERS

(Mr. BLUMENAUER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, as we have seen this week in the news, it is not just the Gulf Coast that is at risk for flooding and other natural disasters. Indeed, it is the whole Nation.

The Governors of Maine, Massachusetts and New Hampshire have all declared states of emergency due to flooding from torrential rains. Four thousand residents in Merrimack County, Massachusetts are just now starting to return to homes filled not just with water but with sewage.

Florida has declared an emergency as well due to wildfires. Residents of Edgewater, Florida were evacuated when a wildfire broke out south of Daytona Beach. Eight thousand acres and several homes were burned.

Hurricane season officially starts the first of next month, with researchers at Colorado State predicting as many as five intense hurricanes this year, with the chance of one striking the gulf coast at least 50 percent.

When less than half the States require even comprehensive plans to deal with natural disasters, one asks, is it going to take another whole summer of fires, hurricanes, and other such disasters for the Federal Government and States to take simple, commonsense steps to protect communities? We can start today in our Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.

MEDICARE PART D ENROLLMENT ACTIVITY

(Mr. FOLEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. FOLEY. Mr. Speaker, as of midnight, May 15, 90 percent of seniors had prescription drug coverage, despite the warnings and threats from the other side of the aisle. They threatened, they

scared seniors in robocalls, paid for by people who have prescription drug coverage, telling them too confusing, too difficult, not adequate.

Let me tell you something. The very people that were raising a ruckus and scaring seniors are the ones that are on this floor that do have prescription drug coverage paid for by the taxpayers.

Union groups that are paying for these robocalls urging seniors to be panicked, well, these are the seniors that got us through the Depression, World War II, Vietnam. These are the people that have fought for the values of this country. And they are being insulted daily by the rhetoric that somehow they can't figure out how prescription drugs work.

I am embarrassed by the conduct of others. But I am proud that Palm Beach County and people in the 16th District of Florida knew enough to be able to sign up and now are receiving valuable needed coverage on prescription drugs.

QUESTIONING THE PRESIDENT'S BORDER PLAN

(Mr. EMANUEL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, it seems the President has found a new use for the Guard, dealing with his Presidency.

On Monday the President announced his intention to send 6,000 National Guardsmen to secure the border. Never mind that his budget cuts the National Guard by 17,000, and that the Guard has been stretched to the breaking point by the war in Iraq.

Never mind that the President's own budget this year fails to provide adequate funding for new border agents, and never mind that Michael Chertoff, the head of Homeland Security, thought this was a bad idea just 6 months ago.

In December 2005 Michael Chertoff told Bill O'Reilly, "The National Guard is not trained for the border mission."

Now it is an election year, the President's poll numbers are down, so the President has decided to deploy the Guard, regardless of what his own budget and the Homeland Security Director has said.

This is an election year, of course. Michael Chertoff is now changing his tune. "What the President did last night was to put on the turbo chargers in dealing with and focusing on this illegal immigration effort that we have got, on a comprehensive basis."

Mr. Speaker, I have been in politics a long time. I have seen my share of political gestures. Having failed to do anything on immigration for 5½ years, the President has decided to act with just 5½ months to go before election day.

It is time for a change. It is time for new priorities.

IRAQI TANK BRIGADE TAKES CONTROL OF TAJI

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, the American Forces Press Service recently reported that only 7 months ago, the Iraqi 2nd Brigade of the 9th Mechanized Division had no personnel, weapons, uniforms, housing or tanks.

Since January, members of the U.S. Army's 7th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment, have served as mentors, coaches and battle partners to the Iraqi Brigade. While fighting together against terrorists on the streets of Iraq, they have formed a strong partnership and greatly improved the brigade's ability to protect the lives of citizens and create a civil society in Iraq.

Today, the 2nd Brigade is now ready to defend 150 square kilometers of the region. As these brave Iraqi soldiers begin to fulfill this important responsibility, I believe we should recognize this clear sign of progress in Iraq. I am especially proud of the U.S. troops who trained and equipped Iraqis to serve their own country. By confronting terrorism in Iraq we are protecting American families at home.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September 11.

PLAN B FOR MEDICARE PART D

(Mr. BISHOP of New York asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BISHOP of New York. Mr. Speaker, just because the Medicare enrollment deadline has passed and the President refuses to extend it, those of us who voted against a shortsighted Medicare bill and opposed this past Monday's deadline will not fade quietly away.

We will continue to fight for seniors who need more time to choose a plan that is right for them. We will fight the punitive lifetime tax on the elderly and disabled who, through no fault of their own, have yet to sign up for a plan.

And here is the ultimate irony. While the President and congressional Republicans never met a tax cut they didn't like, including more dividend and capital gains tax cuts for the already very comfortable, corporate tax holidays for extra-territorial income, they are imposing a new tax on one of the most vulnerable segments of our population: seniors.

Medicare part D works just fine for the pharmaceutical companies and big business HMOs, but it is not working for those seniors who have yet to sign up for a plan and who will have to pay for it for the rest of their life.

Mr. Speaker, it is long overdue that we fix this program. We need a plan B for part D.