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House of Representatives

The House met at 12:30 p.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. BRADLEY of New Hampshire).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
March 14, 2006.

I hereby appoint the Honorable JEB BRADLEY to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING HOUR DEBATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 31, 2006, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to not to exceed 30 minutes, and each Member, except the majority leader, the minority leader, or the minority whip, limited to not to exceed 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. DREIER) for 5 minutes.

ONE-YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF PASSAGE OF HOUSE RESOLUTION 135, ESTABLISHING HOUSE DEMOCRACY ASSISTANCE COMMISSION

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 1-year anniversary of passage of House Resolution 135, which established the House Democracy Assistance Commission. Upon the resolution's passage, 16 appointments were made, and I was honored to be appointed as chairman of this effort by Speaker HASTERT; and I

know that my colleague, DAVID PRICE, the ranking minority member, was equally honored to be appointed by Ms. PELOSI as the ranking minority member.

Mr. Speaker, as you know, the purpose of the House Democracy Assistance Commission is to strengthen legislatures in emerging democracies. In recent years, we have seen that the spread of democracy cannot be contained; but these new democracies have little experience in the actual practice of democracy. Over our 230-year history, we have learned that elections are relatively easy. It is the mechanics, practice, and procedure of democracy that is far more difficult.

Many fledgling democracies have a long history of authoritarian rule. The revolutions that sweep dictators and reformers in often center around charismatic leaders that, with popular support, secure the levers of executive power.

But as our Founding Fathers understood, the people's branch of government, the legislature, serves as the safeguard, ensuring that new leaders did not lead their nations back down towards a path of dictatorship. Acting as a check on executive power by conducting oversight and overseeing the national budget are necessary authorities for a parliament to exercise if democracy is to flourish.

Unfortunately, parliamentarians working in authoritarian systems often have no incentive or ability to learn about their rights and responsibilities as members of parliament. The commission has seen it in Georgia, where decades of Communist rule emasculated the parliament. We see it in Macedonia where Tito's rule and the Balkan wars made democratic rule impossible. We have seen it in Kenya, where the plague of African corruption has stalled democratic reform. We have seen it in Indonesia, where the strong-armed rule of Suharto reduced par-

liament to an afterthought. We have seen it in East Timor, the newest nation on the globe, which has no history of self-government, democratic or otherwise.

Mr. Speaker, the commission has or soon will travel to these places to provide peer-to-peer technical assistance to these legislatures at their request. We hope to soon be working in Afghanistan, Lebanon, Ukraine, and Iraq as well. America has long extolled the virtue of democracy to our neighbors abroad. Our commission allows the House of Representatives to do its part to keep democracy on the march.

We know that democracy remains a work in progress for all of us, but global progress requires that democracy works. It is our obligation to help new democracies by sharing the lessons that we have learned.

From Tbilisi to Dili, from Kabul to Nairobi, from Beirut to Baghdad, Mr. Speaker, stronger democracies make stronger allies; and through our work we will come closer to securing the undeniable right of freedom for all.

STANDING UP FOR A FREE NORTH KOREA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 31, 2006, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. STEARNS) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, the North Korean regime has the worst human rights record in the world. Citizens are denied the most fundamental freedoms in classic Communist fashion, the economy results in shortages and an ever-present threat of starvation.

Additionally, the regime has divided citizens into 51 classes. At least 7 million citizens, more than one-third of the population, are regarded as members of a hostile class, categorized as a potential threat to the existence of this regime. Members of this class are

□ 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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held in one of North Korea's 12 known prison camps. According to an MSNBC news report from January 2003, one of these prison camps is literally three times the size of Washington, DC. Meanwhile, the State Security Agency maintains at least 12 political prisons and about 30 forced labor and reeducation camps. There are also rumors of a series of underground camps. No one knows how many exist and, of course, how many prisoners are being held.

These Stalinist-style gulags await any citizen, even children, who dare to commit such crimes as reading a foreign newspaper, singing a foreign pop song, listening to a foreign radio broadcast, or making statements that could be interpreted as an insult to the regime. The camps combine starvation, hard labor and brutal and irrational punishments. In one camp, former inmates claim prisoners work in such hard conditions that 20 to 25 percent of the 50,000 prisoners die every year.

To leave North Korea without official permission is an act of treason. The Communist regime maintains a series of detention facilities along the border with the People's Republic of China for refugees forcibly returned. Pregnant women endure forced abortions or have their infants killed just after birth on the off chance that they were impregnated by Chinese men. Everyone is then interrogated to determine the extent of their exposure to the Free World, literally having the truth beaten out of them.

This determines whether the regime sends these refugees to a gulag facing certain death or to a gulag facing likely death. The massive mechanistic prison camp system, combined with the outlawing of immigration, has led many to refer to North Korea as "the world's largest prison camp." Jasper Becker, former Beijing bureau chief for the South China Morning Post, has estimated that Kim Jong Il and his father, Kim Il Sung, are responsible for killing over 7 million Koreans, 3 million civilians in the Korean war, 3 million by deliberate famine, and at least 1 million more political prisoners either executed or worked to death.

Mr. Speaker, even worse is the Free World's help that props up this regime. Since 1995, the United States has provided over \$1.1 billion, about 60 percent of it for food aid. About 40 percent was energy assistance through the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Corporation, KEDO, a multilateral organization established in 1994 to provide energy aid in exchange for North Korea's pledge to halt its nuclear program. The Bush administration finally shut down the KEDO program earlier this year, long after North Korea had publicly violated the agreement that secured KEDO energy payments in the first place.

Food aid to North Korea has also been an international humanitarian fraud. The Communist regime prevents donor agencies from operating in the country. The biggest suppliers of aid,

China and South Korea, do little or no monitoring of what happens to the food that they supply to this country. The world's food and humanitarian aid rarely makes it to those suffering in North Korea. Instead, it has been used to feed Kim Jong Il's million-man army, almost 1 million people in his security forces, as a preference for the Communist Party elite. No such aid should be allowed against North Korea demonstrates tangible progress to freedom and transparency. Now some people worry about the risk of confronting and destabilizing a hostile and heavily armed power. These people should know that no good policy comes without risk.

President Ronald Reagan did not coddle the Soviet Union, he did not offer to provide them the nuclear fuel they need to build nuclear weapons in the silly hope they would not build any. President Reagan took the struggle for freedom and democracy to the gates of the Soviet Union country itself.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 40 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until 2 p.m.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. SHIMKUS) at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer:

Lord God, You speak as one who whispers to a beloved. You speak to the heart. Yet Your people do not listen. Lord, you give us Your word as a gift, truly filled with promise, a binding secret. Yet Your people pay no attention.

You have created the ear to always be open. But from somewhere within, Lord, we choose not to hear. So self-absorbed are we, so noisy in imagination, so preoccupied, Your word cannot be taken in.

Claiming to seek the truth, we play with numbers and madly put spin on language, when all You require is that we face the truth, study with honesty long and hard, then with humble attention open ourselves completely to Your saving Word to guide our very next step into realistic truth.

Now surrounded by complex and conflicting situations, Lord, each of us cries out to You: "Speak, Lord! Your servant is listening." Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. 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 pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. PENCE) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. PENCE 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.

POOR JUDGMENT

(Ms. FOXX asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, in their rush to be against everything that President Bush is for, Democrats have once again given us reason to question their timing and judgment.

A resolution has been introduced in the Senate to censure the President for ordering the National Security Agency to intercept communications of suspected al Qaeda members or related terrorist groups.

Apparently, this offends Democrats so much that they seek to scold the President in the midst of the war on terror. To them I ask: How would you monitor terrorist operatives who move to this country, blend in, and wait to strike? Do you think they hang a shingle on their front door reading "Terrorist in Waiting"?

The NSA program is one that provides the speed and agility that is needed as we fight this new kind of war. We must adapt, because in this day and age, terrorists move faster than any court possibly can. A span of just a few hours could make the difference between life and death.

Mr. Speaker, we are not questioning the Democrats' patriotism, as they so often charge. We are, however, questioning their poor judgment. They are unwise in opposing what is clearly a vital tool against terrorist organizations and in allowing the censure resolution to the Senate floor which could damage the President as he fights this war on terror.

TRIBUTE TO EZRA KATZ

(Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize a south Florida leader for his widespread community involvement and his dedication to keeping alive the memory and the lessons of the Holocaust.

Ezra Katz has been the president of the Greater Miami Jewish Federation,