

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time I have here, does the gentleman have a sense on the specific Select Committee on Global Warming and the Environment, or whatever it might be called, when that issue may come to the floor as a question?

Mr. HOYER. Well, if it is included in the House Administration funding resolution, and I am not saying that it will be, it may be in some other vehicle. But, if it did, that usually comes middle of March, late March, so that the committees can have a sense of what their funding capabilities are.

Mr. BLUNT. I thank my friend for that information. I am sure that all of our Members, as they hear the news about the ability to work in their districts on Friday, will be hoping to be on a plane Thursday night or Friday morning. I am not sure that I listened carefully to your sense of what would be the end of the day on Thursday since we would not be here on Friday. I am sure you said that, but if you would repeat.

Mr. HOYER. I don't think I said a time on Thursday. As you know as well, perhaps better than I do over the last years, particularly as you were the leader, you cannot always predict the time frame. But I would hope on Thursday we would get out at a reasonable hour to facilitate Members returning home.

Mr. BLUNT. Would you expect that the Thursday schedule would meet the standard that we have been trying to set on the Friday schedule, if we can at all?

Mr. HOYER. Yes.

Mr. BLUNT. That is all I need to know.

Mr. HOYER. Let me retract that because I don't want to make a rule on that.

Mr. BLUNT. I understand.

Mr. HOYER. I want to have Members be very clear. If we are able to do our work within the time frame of Thursday, it may well be a late Thursday. When I say late, 5, 6, 7 o'clock Thursday, as opposed to 1 or 2 o'clock. So I maybe answered too quickly on the Friday schedule. Because on Friday we very definitely will be trying to get out, as I have said, no later than 2 o'clock and as close to 1 as we can. That gives us 4 hours. As you know, we have agreed that we will go in at 9. So that gives us 4 hours of legislative time to work on Fridays.

Committees, as I might tell my friend, you might be interested, the Government Operations Committee will be having hearings on Friday of next week, notwithstanding the fact that we are not here. So not only are they working at home, but there also will be people working here in Washington, notwithstanding the fact that we are not on the floor.

Mr. BLUNT. I would also like to say, Mr. Speaker, as it might make that answer easier for the future, I did not mean in any way to set a standard for future weeks. But I was thinking in

terms of this week, looking at 2 days of suspensions, 1 day of a bill that we have had on suspension before, even though it would have a rule, that I would think it would not be an unreasonable goal for us to set to get our, particularly our west coast Members, on the way home on late Thursday afternoon, rather than having to wait until Friday morning.

But I would also assume, having done both of the jobs you have held in the last few months, that there will be times when we will not necessarily need to be here on Friday, but to meet that goal we may have to work late enough on Thursday that many Members would not be on Thursday flights. I clearly understand that.

Mr. HOYER. I don't want to prolong this, but I do want to say that the gentleman is correct in terms of, that is why I answered glibly and quickly. So I think the gentleman may be correct. I don't want to pledge that, but he may be correct because of the factors that he has pointed out.

I would say, in closing, that I know there has been some, joviality is a kind word, about what Mr. DREIER mentioned in the schedule getting out at 3 o'clock in the afternoon.

But I will say with all due respect to my friend, notwithstanding that joviality, we believe that the last 3 weeks in terms of what this House has done in terms of its ethical standards, in terms of dealing with the safety of Americans in the 9/11 bill, in terms of dealing with the minimum wage, energy, dealing with college costs, dealing with prescription drugs and dealing with stem cell research, dealing with passing a CR that has funding for work that sat on the tarmac, if you will, and never got off the ground to the President for approximately 14 months or 13 months. We believe that we have provided a schedule in which we have done very substantial work. We hope the American people are pleased with that, and we continue to try to do that.

Mr. BLUNT. I thank the gentleman for yielding back.

I know many of my colleagues on the floor assume that yielding that time gave you a good chance to talk about the last few weeks, and there are things to talk about. But I am sure you are getting plenty of discussion from all of the Members of the House, including the Members of the majority, about the schedule. I think that the determination for next week, which I believe would have been the first 5-day week we have had scheduled to work all 5 days, I think the determination of next week shows the leader's willingness to look at the facts of the week, rather than to be pinned down to a standard that doesn't necessarily let the Members do all of the work they need to do in the various places they need to do it. I am glad to see that change.

DISPENSING WITH CALENDAR WEDNESDAY BUSINESS ON WEDNESDAY NEXT

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the business in order under the Calendar Wednesday rule be dispensed with on Wednesday next.

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

There was no objection.

NO PLAN FROM DEMOCRATS

(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, I rise today to ask my colleagues on the other side of the aisle for their plan for winning the war on terror and for the current situation in Iraq. The only things that we have heard from Democrats has been criticism.

I also want to point out an article in today's Wall Street Journal and insert the entire article in the RECORD. The article is entitled, "Progress in Baghdad"; and it says, Capitol Hill has probably been too busy running for political cover to notice, but the last few days in Iraq have actually featured good news, as the government seems to be making some progress on key political and security issues.

And it ends with, the Bush administration has itself made many mistakes trying to micromanage Iraq's political development, but it now seems to understand that it is fated to deal with the Shiite-led government it has. Congressmen who are sincere in wanting to take the Iraq issue off the table in 2008 could help by showing a similar combination of resolve and humility.

I think we need the resolve and humility to say that we are there for victory and that failure is not an option.

[From the Wall Street Journal]

PROGRESS IN BAGHDAD

Capitol Hill has probably been too busy running for political cover to notice. But the last few days in Iraq have actually featured good news, as the government seems to be making some progress on key political and security issues.

One step forward is that Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki has won parliamentary backing for his Baghdad security plan. This means the elected representatives of Iraq's Shiites, Sunnis and Kurds remain capable of compromise and are willing to give the new strategy a chance to work.

There's also evidence that the Baghdad plan is having an effect. Yes, al Qaeda bombs targeted the Shiite Ashoura holiday as expected. But there are also widespread reports of Sunni jihadists fleeing the capital in anticipation of a crackdown. Prime Minister Maliki has already started moving against Shiite militias, which might explain an apparent drop in sectarian violence. No one should get overconfident, but clearly the bad guys are taking the joint U.S.-Iraqi effort to pacify the capital seriously. Meanwhile, the weekend saw an encouraging performance by the Iraqi security forces who took control of the Najaf area only about a month ago. Acting on their own intelligence, Iraqi police

and a battalion from the Eighth Army Division confronted a radical Shiite sect calling themselves the Soldiers of Heaven who had reportedly planned to assassinate mainstream Shiite clerics, including the moderate Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani.

Some observers are trying to spin this battle as a defeat for the government, because the first Iraqi units on the scene had to call for reinforcements and for American air power. But the fact that Iraqi forces were able to pre-empt the attack on Najaf before it began, and that everyone involved was able to coordinate the operation and soundly defeat the enemy makes it sound like a success to us. Hundreds of the insurgents were killed, compared to a handful of Iraqi and U.S. troops. This may well be a model for how U.S. troops might play a supporting role down the road—assuming Washington gives them a chance to get Baghdad under control first.

For the moment at least, Iraq seems to be inching in the right direction. After a week of Western lamentations about the gracelessness of the Saddam hanging, it became clear that the primary effect of the execution was to enhance Prime Minister Maliki's stature in Iraq. Mr. Maliki, in turn, is using that political capital. The last thing he needs is to have his efforts undermined by votes of no-confidence in Washington—or meddling by Congressmen with “benchmarks” who pretend to know better than he does how to deal with the most difficult issues, such as how best to marginalize Moqtada al-Sadr.

The Bush Administration has itself made many mistakes trying to micromanage Iraq's political development, but it now seems to understand that it is fated to deal with the Shiite-led government it has. Congressmen who are sincere in wanting to take the Iraq issue off the table in 2008 could help by showing a similar combination of resolve and humility.

Let's unite.

IN SUPPORT OF THE CONTINUING RESOLUTION'S PASSAGE

(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 think it is important for us to reflect on the last couple of hours of debate, and I call it fixing of the fiscal calamity that occurred over the last year when this body and the majority of my friends on the other side of the aisle failed to complete our funding responsibilities.

Today, we passed a vigorous CR, and I think it should not be interpreted as a negative, but we should look at the positives that we will be able to provide, if you will, the continuing of funding and get immediately into, one, the emergency supplemental but also the appropriations process. \$3.6 billion now goes extra to our veterans, many of them returning from Iraq for their health care.

The change in the section 8 for many that are not being housed because of a faulty formula, we now can provide housing for many in our community. And, yes, an enhanced funding for scientific research. The ability for our agencies to reprogram their dollars. Many of us will be working, for instance in my district, I will be working

to ensure the funding of the Texas Southern University Laboratory School through the Department of Housing; and, yes, we will be working to get NASA funding by redeploying or to redistribute those funds.

This is a good CR. The agencies can work with it. Make sure the agencies work right on behalf of the American people.

CONGRATULATING ROSWELL HIGH SCHOOL ON THEIR CHAMPIONSHIP SEASON

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

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, today, I proudly rise to honor and congratulate some spectacular student athletes from Georgia's Sixth District. This past month one of our hometown high schools brought home the State football championship.

After an inspired season that united our community, Roswell High School awed all of Georgia with their first State football title in 36 years; and because of the passion and commitment and intensity shown by the players, coaches, classmates and the community alike, this season will forever be marked in history.

The Roswell Hornets won the 5A State championship in what was an extraordinary example of both skill and athleticism. These talented young men showed what is possible with hard work and unyielding determination.

These student athletes will always cherish the memory of this season. The players, their families and their classmates who cheered them on will always look back to the 2006 season as a source of pride, accomplishment and satisfaction. Roswell High School learned more than how to win a championship this last year. They learned what happens when everyone comes together in pursuit of a dream.

I know that the House of Representatives joins me in congratulating Roswell High School from Roswell, Georgia.

REAUTHORIZE THE SAFE AND SECURE COUNTY AND RURAL SCHOOLS ACT

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, well, today Congress passed a continuing resolution making up for some of the problems created by the Republican majority not getting their work done, but they did not get another crucial piece of work done, the reauthorization of the Safe and Secure County and Rural Schools Act. If that is not reauthorized, if that is not funded in short order, over 4,400 rural schools in 40 States will lose funding, 780 rural counties will lose funding for roads, county officials will be forced to lay off critical public safety, rescue, law enforce-

ment and other employees. In my State alone, there will be up to 1,000 people losing their jobs beginning quite soon.

Congress must act and soon. We will soon request that the leadership put in the emergency supplemental, money to fund for 1 year the Safe and Secure County Rural Schools Act to give the authorizing committees time to put in place a full 7-year reauthorization suitably offset with other funds.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

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

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

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

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

□ 1630

HRANT DINK'S FINAL ARTICLE

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

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, about a week and a half ago, a courageous journalist by the name of Hrant Dink was murdered outside of his newspaper office in Istanbul. I would like to read today some of the comments that he made in his last newspaper article Agos on January 19, the day that he was shot dead.

He wrote, “At first, when an investigation was launched against me for insulting Turkishness, I did not feel troubled. This was not the first time . . .

“I had complete trust in what I'd written and what had been my intentions.

“Once the prosecutor had the chance to evaluate the text of my editorial as a whole, not that single sentence, which made no sense by itself, he would understand that I had no intention of insulting Turkishness and this comedy would come to an end. I was sure of myself. But, surprise! A lawsuit was filed.

“In covering every hearing, the newspapers, editorials and television programs all referred to how I had said that the blood of the Turk is poisonous.