



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 110th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 153

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2007

No. 22

House of Representatives

The House met at 10:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
February 6, 2007.

I hereby appoint the Honorable HENRY C. "HANK" JOHNSON, Jr. to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING HOUR DEBATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2007, 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 Georgia (Mr. PRICE) for 5 minutes.

ORWELLIAN EARMARKING

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, in his novel, 1984, George Orwell presents this concept of doublethink, which is defined as, "The power of holding two contradictory beliefs in one's mind simultaneously and accepting both of them."

I come to the floor today, Mr. Speaker, to review the repetitive lack of openness and accountability that we have seen on this House floor over the last month. Time and again, this new majority has governed on the premise that if you simply just say it, it will

become true. It is Orwellian doublethink, an amazing concept.

They believe that if you simply just say you are lowering drug prices, poof, it's done, ignoring the reality that prices really won't be lowered and fewer drugs will be made available to our seniors.

They believe that if you just say you are implementing all of the 9/11 Commission's recommendations, it changes the fact that the bill that was passed here on the floor doesn't reflect the totality of those recommendations.

They believe that if you just say you are cutting interest rates in half for college students, it doesn't matter that in reality you've pulled a bait-and-switch, with the rate cut lasting just 6 months.

Mr. Speaker, saying it doesn't make it so. And Democratic doublethink does a disservice to this Nation.

Now this makes for great talking points and great press releases, but yields very little for the people back home. Rather than bold policy initiatives, people are starting to realize that the Democratic agenda has been more pop than fizz. And now, Mr. Speaker, the Democrats are using this Orwellian newspeak, doublethink, in regard to spending Americans' hard-earned tax dollars.

On December 11 of last year, 2006, the two chairmen of the Appropriations Committee in the House and Senate, OBEY and BYRD, said, and I quote, "There will be no congressional earmarks in the joint funding resolution that we will pass." No earmarks. But sadly, once again, the facts just don't match the promises. Democratic doublethink is alive and well.

The majority used a loophole in the House rules to include millions of dollars of earmarks by simply saying that there were none. Clause 9 of rule XXI of the House rules says that it shall not be in order to consider a bill or joint resolution unless the chairman of each

committee of initial referral has a statement that the proposition contains no congressional earmarks. So the chairman of the Appropriations Committee, Mr. OBEY, conveniently submitted to the record on January 29 that prior to the omnibus bill being considered, quote, "does not contain any congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits." But, in fact, Mr. Speaker, this omnibus spending bill that the Democrats passed last week contained hundreds of millions of dollars of earmarks. Democrat doublethink.

If we follow this Democrat policy as long as you submit to the record that there are no earmarks, you can feel free to just load up any appropriations bill with as many earmarks as you like with absolutely no accountability.

Their actions completely violate the spirit of our earmarking rule, designed to bring greater transparency to our spending process. Rather than take the new rule seriously, the Democrat majority has used this sly interpretation that essentially allows for unlimited earmarks. In this new Democrat majority, if you just close your eyes and say there are no earmarks, miraculously millions of dollars of earmarks are wasted on things like rain forests in Iowa.

This isn't the type of open and honest government that our constituents expected in this Congress. Mr. Speaker, this doublethink is unacceptable to the American people, who work hard every day to provide for their families only to have Washington throw away their money, unsupervised, on pork projects.

There was a positive and honest and principled alternative to this spending injustice. Republicans offered an alternative eliminating these earmarks and targeting funds for military housing and drug enforcement. Our friends on the other side of the aisle chose to ignore it and throw money at their pet earmark projects.

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.



Printed on recycled paper.

For 12 years our colleagues on the other side blamed Republicans for every ill under the sun, and now that it is their time to govern, they hide behind bumper sticker and press release politics. Never before has such an enormous amount of taxpayer money been spent so quickly, over \$400 billion in one hour.

If our friends on the other side of the aisle truly desired to clean up earmarks and bring greater transparency to our spending, why would they then make this their first act? Their actions simply don't match their rhetoric. The American people expect more than a wink and a nod that they have gotten so far from this Democrat majority. Democrat doublethink does a disservice to our Nation.

In George Orwell's 1984 Doublethink Newspeak, he said that the lie always was one step ahead of the truth; but the American people are catching up, Mr. Speaker. Just saying something doesn't make it so.

IT'S TIME FOR A NEW DIRECTION IN IRAQ

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2007, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor with some observations about Iraq, but I must comment on the presentation I just heard from my friend from Georgia.

You know, Mr. Speaker, independent observers agree that Democrats have moved quickly and aggressively to implement what we said we were going to do in the first 100 hours. I find it disingenuous that our friend was talking about somehow the Democrats not dealing with its commitment on earmarks, and mentioning the rain forest in Iowa. Mr. Speaker, again, independent observers agree that Mr. OBEY and Mr. BYRD did bring forward a clean continuing resolution that didn't have any new earmarks. It killed the earmarks that had been set aside in the failed budget of the Republicans in the last session of Congress.

What my friend is talking about, the rain forest in Iowa, was an earmark from several years ago, a Republican earmark, I might say, from several years ago. And now he is suggesting that as we have moved forward to clean up the budget mess left by the Republicans, failing to meet their commitments to produce budgets in a timely fashion, that we didn't go back and surgically remove earmarks that they had scattered throughout the budget for years. Well, I'm sorry. With all due respect to George Orwell and my friend from Georgia, I think that is doublespeak. We did what we said we were going to do. The CR has come forward without earmarks, and we have put in place a much more transparent process so people will know who is doing what on whose behalf.

But, Mr. Speaker, I came to the floor today to make a few comments about the situation in Iraq. There is much ado in the other body to work to catch up with the reality on the ground in Iraq and where the American public is. This is not the time just to oppose escalation of more troops in Iraq. We find that the 21,000 that the President referred to is actually going to mean 50 additional thousand when you put all the support in. It is time for Congress to deal in a comprehensive fashion with what we need to do to make the best of this tragically mismanaged situation, a war of choice that we didn't have to do, sadly mismanaged by the administration. It is time for Congress to rediscover our war powers with Iraq, and even more important, the saber rattling that is directed now towards Iran. It is time for us to rediscover the power of the purse, not provide an open-ended bank account, but tighten down the resources that are provided by Congress to the administration, and to rediscover oversight where there are daily reminders in every major newspaper of where Congress in the last few years has frankly been missing in action.

To be able to advance those goals in a comprehensive fashion, I have introduced new directions for Iraq. It sets forth goals for United States policy, supporting the Iraqi people, preventing greater violence, reestablish our international credibility and military readiness, and focusing on real national security threats. It calls not for escalation, but prohibiting the escalation without specific congressional approval, and for the redeployment of troops from Iraq to be completed in approximately 1 year.

It calls for the United States to forswear the establishment of permanent bases in Iraq, as well as U.S. control over Iraq's oil infrastructure and economic policies. It redirects United States reconstruction funding from large foreign contractors to Iraqi-owned businesses to help create jobs in Iraq. It instructs the President to nullify contracts where any company has not fulfilled an Iraq reconstruction contract, and to recover lost funds.

We ought not to just stop the fraud in terms of the contracting, but we ought to aggressively punish war profiteering, encouraging Congress to investigate and the Attorney General to aggressively prosecute profiteering and fraud.

It requires a regional diplomatic initiative because ultimately it is going to require diplomacy on the part of the United States and all of the surrounding countries to be able to turn this around.

I strongly urge my colleagues to look at the New Direction For Iraq Act of 2007 as a comprehensive way to change the situation in Iraq.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair

declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 43 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess until noon.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order at noon.

PRAYER

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

Creator of the stars in the heavens and all upon Earth, the winter sun You let shine upon our Nation is a great gift for which we give You thanks.

In the midst of cold winds and uncertain and sometimes disastrous weather patterns, the consistent warm rays of light fall upon the good and the bad, the believers and unbelievers alike. Gradually, the days are already growing longer but like the movement of Your grace often unnoticed.

Lord, You are ever-present, especially to those most in need. Show Your mercy to the most vulnerable, the children, the poor, the elderly, the homeless. We command them to You 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 her approval thereof.

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

Mr. WALDEN of Oregon 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.

PRESIDENT BUSH UNDERESTIMATES NUMBER OF TROOPS AND AMOUNT OF MONEY NEEDED FOR TROOP ESCALATION PLAN

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

Mr. WALZ of Minnesota. Madam Speaker, last week, the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office released a report saying that President Bush is understating the number of troops and the amount of money needed to move forward with his troop escalation plan.

While the President claims he plans to send 21,500 troops to Iraq, the Congressional Budget Office says the number will be as high as 48,000. As any soldier like myself knows, that to put a