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House of Representatives

The House met at 9 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. KAGEN).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
February 13, 2007.

I hereby appoint the Honorable STEVE KAGEN 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 25 minutes, and each Member, except the majority leader, the minority leader, or the minority whip, limited to not to exceed 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate extend beyond 9:50 a.m.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) for 5 minutes.

TURKISH THREATS TO U.S.— GENOCIDE RESOLUTION

Mr. PALLONE. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise this morning to share my concerns regarding the Turkish government's threats to retaliate against our country if the U.S. Congress adopts a resolution affirming the Armenian genocide. These shocking threats have been issued in response to the recent introduction of the Armenian genocide

resolution, H. Res. 106. This measure seeks to affirm the U.S. record on the Armenian genocide by recognizing it as a historical fact. It also praises the American record of opposition to this tragedy which is marked by courageous diplomatic protests and unprecedented American relief efforts for the survivors of this crime.

Senior Turkish government officials have warned that if Congress ever considers this resolution, they will cut off supply access for our forces serving in Iraq. In fact, Turkish Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul told Vice President DICK CHENEY that the U.S. must, and I quote, calculate the costs of losing Turkey.

Such a brazen threat to interfere in U.S. military operations is absolutely unacceptable. I am outraged that the Turkish government would put the lives of soldiers at risk in the pursuit of its desperate campaign to deny the systematic slaughter of 1.5 million Armenians. This extremist behavior is known as blackmail in my book and it should be publicly and forcefully rejected as such. Clearly, Turkey is no friend of the United States.

As an American, I am deeply offended that another country is seeking to dictate where our Nation stands on core moral issues. Especially a country that claims to embrace democracy, yet has a longstanding history of abusing minorities, intellectuals and the principle of freedom of expression. As a Member of Congress, it is extremely troubling that a foreign government is meddling in our Nation's legislative process through threats and intimidation. This is the most dramatic intervention of a foreign government in U.S. congressional affairs and it has been going on for much too long.

Mr. Speaker, senior Bush administration officials, rather than outright rejecting these outrageous intimations by the Turkish government, are passing them on to Members of Congress as

justification for not supporting the Armenian genocide resolution. The Bush administration is showing no courage on this issue, instead giving Turkey a free pass on their efforts to deliberately reject the truth. They seem to go to any lengths, including having soldiers call into their Representatives in fear of their lives, to deny the Armenian genocide simply because Turkey demands that they do so.

Mr. Speaker, the Armenian genocide resolution already has 175 cosponsors. I am certain that if Members of this House were given the opportunity to vote on this resolution, we would pass it overwhelmingly. Congress should be allowed to reaffirm what we all believe and know to be fact, and that is that genocide was orchestrated by the Ottoman Empire in 1915 to exterminate its Armenian citizens.

Reaffirming the Armenian genocide is a matter of conscience. It is my hope that this Congress will rebuke any warnings against the United States by Turkey and consider legislation on the Armenian genocide.

IRAQ WAR RESOLUTION

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

Mr. GOHMERT. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, apparently we are going to start today on debate of a resolution, the meat of which simply indicates, Resolved by the House of Representatives that Congress and the American people will continue to support and protect the members of the United States Armed Forces who are serving or who have served bravely and honorably in Iraq; and Congress disapproves of the decision of President George W. Bush announced on January

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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10, 2007 to deploy more than 20,000 additional United States combat troops to Iraq.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the record has been clear. The new commander for Iraq, General Petraeus, has had hearings and has now been confirmed unanimously by the Senate. The outgoing commander of Iraq, General Casey, has had hearings and has now been confirmed as the new chief of the United States Army unanimously. Both commanders and their subordinate commanders have indicated that these additional troops are needed.

We hear talk that we are supporting our troops, but basically the message to the troops is, Yes, with our lips we say we support you but with all of our actions we say, We don't believe a word you say. We don't think you know what you're talking about. We don't want to give you what you say is necessary to protect yourselves and to win the day in Iraq.

There are no proposed solutions in the resolution that we will debate this week, no proposed fixes, nothing proposed to help anybody. It just says, We disapprove, we don't agree with the generals, the commanders, those who are in the theater, those that have come from the theater who are on active duty.

Now, you will always have some retired generals and commanders who are not happy that they are retired and who will take their pot shots, but here again there are no new solutions, no new efforts in Iraq. The Democratic Party does not propose to change anything. So this resolution, I guess, could be more properly categorized as stay the course, stiffen the enemy, start our collapse, because when you say to the world and to all of our enemies, We don't believe our commanders, we don't believe they know what they're talking about, we don't believe they know what they need, we're not going to have any new solutions, what you are doing to the enemy, you are stiffening their resolve. Materials that have been found in Iraq have indicated just that, that the Americans don't have the stomach, they ran from Vietnam, they didn't keep their commitments to the people of South Vietnam. Even after the Paris Accord, they did not keep their commitment. The new larger Democratic Congress in 1975 even cut off all the funds and millions of people in Southeast Asia lost their lives. In 1979 while I was stationed at Fort Benning, we were attacked. It was an act of war. And we did nothing. We begged to have our hostages returned. We did nothing. And those are the kind of things that the enemy goes back to in saying, we don't have the stomach to do this. In 1983 when our barracks was bombed in Beirut, we withdrew. In 1993 when the World Trade Center was attacked, we did virtually nothing on the international front. Then throughout the nineties, the attack of the USS Cole, Mozambique, Somalia, Africa, time and again, time and again we

showed we didn't have the resolve. This must be the time we stand firm, tell our enemy, We will defeat you, we have nothing but solutions. This resolution, the stay the course, stiffen the enemy, start our collapse resolution, is not the way to go. I hope our fellow Members of this House will do the right thing. We will try something new. We will try to help the troops. We will give them what they ask. The Democratic stay the course, stiffen the enemy and start our collapse resolution is not a solution.

IRAQ WAR RESOLUTION

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

Mr. HALL of New York. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Indeed, as my colleague from across the aisle says, there are many of us, citizens and Members of this House, who do not believe our Commander in Chief, and we have good reason not to believe him. I wish it were not so.

After President Bush announced his escalation of the war, I said that he owed the American people an honest explanation as to why he thinks this surge will succeed when previous efforts have failed. Unfortunately, the President decided to stay the course and to begin the escalation before either House of Congress had a chance to consider it. Instead of providing a new comprehensive strategy to turn the tide in Iraq, President Bush offered the same tired rhetoric. Rather than engage in an important discussion with the American people, his loyalists prevented the Senate from debating this crucial matter.

Fortunately for us, such obstruction will not occur in this Chamber and the House will begin to take up this important debate this week. As a new Member of the House, I feel it is my responsibility to ask serious questions of our President who refuses to take this institution seriously. I ask my colleagues to join with me, to not try to score cheap political points but to push this administration and its supporters in Congress for real change in the direction of our Iraq policy. Our men and women in uniform, who have done everything that has been asked of them, deserve no less.

So I ask the President why this Congress should support his proposal to send 20,000 more troops into harm's way when his own former Iraq commander, General Abizaid, said it is not needed? Why should we support it when the Prime Minister of Iraq has himself expressed no support? And why should we support it when the American people have shown that they actively oppose the President's policy towards Iraq?

From the very outset, this administration has been wrong at every step of this war.

The administration led us into an unnecessary war with flawed or manipulated intelligence. Wrong.

This administration went to war without enough troops to win the peace. Wrong.

This administration gave no-bid contracts to its friends and political allies, locking out other countries who might have helped us and indeed locking out the Iraqis. Wrong.

President Bush stood on the deck of the USS Abraham Lincoln on May 1, 2003 and said, "Major combat operations in Iraq have ended. In the battle of Iraq, the United States and our allies have prevailed." Wrong.

This administration literally took piles of cash, flying pallets of millions of dollars from the U.S. mint to Baghdad, into a war zone, and lost billions of dollars of taxpayer money. Wrong.

Now this administration wants us to blindly place our faith and the lives of 20,000 more of our troops in an Iraqi government that has failed to meet every security obligation it has pledged. Sadly, once again, this President is wrong. And no amount of presidential wrongs is going to make the situation in Iraq right.

Last fall's National Intelligence Estimate concluded that the President's policy in Iraq is creating more terrorists than it is eliminating. Nothing in this policy will change that. Three thousand one hundred twenty-four American service men's and women's lives have been lost in Iraq as of yesterday. Three thousand one hundred twenty-five will not make it right.

It is time for a new strategy in Iraq. It is time to start to bring our brave men and women who have fought so courageously back home. By turning Iraq over to the Iraqis, we will force their government to fight for their own security. Al Qaeda in Iraq will lose their mission and be less likely to inflame the Sunni-Shiite conflict. And Iran and Syria will have to work for calm rather than sit in the shadows and stir the insurgency.

Mr. President, it is time for a new path for the United States and Iraq. This nonbinding resolution reflects the will of the American people. It is an important first step but only a first step. I look forward to working with my colleagues as we seek to untangle this disaster the administration has brought upon us all. Together, we can begin to repeal this tragic blunder and undo the damage done to our military, to our country, and to our standing in the world.

IRAQ WAR RESOLUTION

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

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

You know, I think we must be debating two different resolutions here