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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. CAPUANO).

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,

February 14, 2007.

I hereby appoint the Honorable MICHAEL E. CAPUANO to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,

Speaker of the House of Representatives.

PRAYER

The Reverend Carl Toti, Senior Pastor, Trinity Church, Lubbock, Texas, offered the following prayer:

Let's welcome God's presence into our hearts and into this place.

"I lift my eyes up to the hills, where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and Earth."

Father, hear our prayers. "If My people, called by My name, will humble themselves, pray, and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, forgive their sin, and heal their land."

We pray this Nation will return to the faith exhibited by men and women who trusted God, forged a Nation out of wilderness, raised families guided by standards from Your Word, and established a Nation that presently is the rival of the entire world. May the same standards be raised high by these leaders You have placed over us. May integrity and wisdom guide them to make decisions that please You.

Father, shield our military troops protecting our freedoms around the world. May godly decisions be made concerning them.

Lord, we ask that You would guide and bless our Representatives as they advance our Nation.

I pray in the name of my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.
Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

Mr. TIM MURPHY of Pennsylvania 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.

WELCOMING PASTOR CARL TOTI

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

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have Pastor Carl Toti with us today delivering the opening invocation for the United States House of Representatives.

Pastor Toti currently serves as the senior pastor of Trinity Church in my hometown of Lubbock, Texas. He is a graduate of Rhema Bible Training Center. He has also earned a master's degree in theological studies from Vision University in Ramona, California.

Just as Pastor Toti speaks to diverse audiences through his ministry, so does he today speak to a diverse audience here in our Congress. Although Members of this body come from different parts of the country and varying beliefs, I hope his words will unite and guide us all today as we conduct the business of the people of the United States of America.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain 15 one-minutes per side.

VOTE AGAINST THE ESCALATION OF TROOPS

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. Even as the House debates the continuation of the failing Bush policies in Iraq, Vice President DICK CHENEY, the chief architect of the Iraq strategy, is beating the drums for a new war, a war with Iran.

On Sunday, we had unidentified sources saying that the highest levels of the Iranian Government have directed use of weapons that are killing U.S. troops. No information was provided to substantiate the charge; administration officials yesterday deflected requests for more details, even as they repeatedly implied Tehran's involvement. It may or may not be true, but they have got a pretty bad record on intelligence. And now MG Peter Pace, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said yesterday that he has no information indicating Iran's government is directing the supply of lethal weapons to Shiite insurgent groups in Iraq. It sounds like the Iraq war intelligence all over again, phony intelligence leading us down the path to disastrous involvement.

This has to stop. We start by voting against the escalation of the Bush policies in Iraq and begin to chart a new course.

STAFF SERGEANT RICHARD ROSE, USAF

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

Mr. HAYES. Mr. Speaker, there are many heroes fighting the global war against terrorists, and many from the Eighth District of North Carolina. But today I rise to pay tribute to one hero

□ 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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in particular. Today I am proud to recognize Air Force Staff Sergeant Richard Rose, son of Robyn Rose of Laurinburg, North Carolina.

Staff Sergeant Rose, a member of the 1st Combat Camera Squadron at Charleston Air Force Base, served as a Joint Combat Camera photographer with the Multinational Division in Baghdad from May 18 to September 18 of 2006.

During this time, Sergeant Rose was attached to several Army units, documenting their daily missions and contributing over 1,000 images of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Sergeant Rose primarily shoots with his camera lens, but that changed last summer. During a mission with the 101st Airborne Division Air Assault Unit, insurgents began firing at an Explosive Ordnance Disposal Team which was clearing roadside bombs nearby.

Richard quickly responded by returning fire with his M4 rifle, which allowed the Explosive Ordnance Team to move to safety. His efforts are credited with helping to save the lives of 56 servicemembers during the attack, and his bravery in this firefight earned him the Bronze Star.

I ask that you join me in congratulating Sergeant Richard Rose on being awarded the Bronze Star in defending our Nation in the war against terrorists. Pray for their safety, and pray for victory against these terrorists.

MEMBERS WHO SUPPORT TROOP ESCALATION NEED TO EXPLAIN HOW WE PROTECT THE TROOPS

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

Mr. STUPAK. Mr. Speaker, this week the House is conducting the most important debate of this Congress, whether Members will support the President's plan to send 21,500 more troops to Iraq. I oppose the President's plan, and during this debate I am hoping that those who support the escalation of the war can answer a couple of questions.

First, if the President is allowed to move forward, how do we guarantee these troops have the protective armor they need? Earlier this month we learned that troop escalation would create logistical hurdles for both the Army and Marines, which are already short thousands of vehicles and armor kits. Members who support the President's plan need to explain how do we provide the troops the equipment they need.

Members who support the plan also need to explain where do we come up with the additional troops that will be needed to support 21,500 combat troops. The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office estimates as many as 48,000 troops may be required to implement the plan.

Mr. Speaker, these are questions that supporters of escalating the war in Iraq

should ask before they vote to escalate the war in Iraq.

NONBINDING RESOLUTION IS NOT THE WAY TO GO

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

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, the war in Iraq is the front line in the war on terror. We know this because the terrorists tell us it is so. In poll after poll, the American people tell us they fully believe that what happens on the front line in Iraq affects their security every single day.

You know, the Democrats have every right to disagree with the President's plan, but a nonbinding resolution is not the way to go. It sends a message of no confidence and no support to our troops in the field, weakening their morale while encouraging and emboldening the enemy.

Our men and women in harm's way are fighting the insurgents and they are fighting the battle of ideas every day, not only in Iraq but in 30 different countries around this globe. They know that what we have to do is continue to win in that battle, and they don't have time to fight the war of public opinion in this country, which is what some of my colleagues in this House would seek to have them do.

The Democrats have no alternative plan; they have no way forward. I welcome a responsible debate on this war, but let's make sure that we keep the focus on encouraging our troops, freedom, prosperity and ideas, and that we not encourage those who seek to do us harm.

ALBERT BRYAN, SR.

(Mrs. CHRISTENSEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, while we were here at work, his family, my prior coworkers at the Department of Health, my friends and community said farewell to a beloved son, Albert Bryan, Sr.

His sudden passing caught us all off guard, but that was often his way. Never one to call attention to himself, despite his good looks, tall stature and significant presence, he was unassuming and gentle, with a generous spirit.

Whether it was as a senior officer at one of our banks or as PTA president at the Pearl B. Larsen Elementary School our children attended, or whether it was as an administrator of the Charles Howard Health Facility or co-owner of a favorite watering hole, or whether it was as the devoted son, husband, father, grandfather who was always about family, he was the best there was.

Born and raised in St. Thomas, but living much of his adult life on St. Croix, he accomplished the impossible in bringing the two islands together,

especially through the camaraderie of the Cruzan Gentlemen of his current home and the Gentlemen of Savaan, where he spent his early life.

Bert was my coworker, supporter, confidant and friend. I will miss him, as all who knew him and loved him will. He gave a lot to everyone that he touched as he passed this way. We are grateful for his life, a life he lived fully and well.

My family, staff and the Congress of the United States extend our heartfelt sympathy to his wife, children, grandchildren and his entire family. May he rest in peace.

TRUST THE TROOPS

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

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, this nonbinding resolution is really a nonsensical political statement. It would deprive the generals and the troops of the reinforcements they desperately need.

How would you feel if you were an American soldier in Iraq and Congress passed this resolution? It is like telling you to fight with one arm tied behind your back, and that is no way to defeat a terrorist. Let's trust the men and women in uniform who are sacrificing their lives to protect ours.

There is a reason there has been no terrorist attack on America since 2001. It is not because some want to second-guess our military, it is because our troops want to win.

FAST TRACK

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

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, it is time to get off the fast track of lost jobs and on the right track for our American workforce.

In these very Chambers I hear that we just need to fix labor provisions and trade agreements and do a side deal on fast track and then the problem is solved. This is simply not good enough.

I ask my fellow Democrats that this is a time to sound the alarm on fast track. Fast track hamstring Congress' ability to fix our broken trade policies.

The midterm elections show that most Americans understand that our current trade policies have failed.

Over 3 million American manufacturing jobs, one out of every six manufacturing jobs, have been lost during the fast track era. The U.S. trade deficit has exploded as imports have surged. U.S. wages stagnate as trade deficits soar, displacing good U.S. jobs.

Fast track trashes the checks and balances that are essential for our democracy. It is time to get Congress on the right track in the new majority. It is time for a new direction as we deal with trade agreements.