

and noon for legislative business. We will consider additional bills under suspension of the rules. A complete list of those bills, Mr. Whip, will be available later this week.

On Wednesday and Thursday, the House will meet at 10 a.m., and on Friday the House will meet at 9 a.m.

On Wednesday King Abdullah of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan will address a joint meeting of the House and Senate.

We will consider under a rule several important pieces of legislation from the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee that will help clean our environment and create jobs: H.R. 700, the Healthy Communities Water Supply Act; H.R. 720, the Water Quality Financing Act; and H.R. 569, the Water Quality Investment Act. We also will take up the committee funding resolution.

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for that information.

Does the gentleman know, would we expect to see the supplemental in the Appropriations Committee next week and on the floor at some time after that?

Mr. HOYER. I think that is our expectation.

Mr. BLUNT. And do we know when the draft of that might be available?

Mr. HOYER. I don't know. It is being worked on, and I don't know when that will be available.

Mr. BLUNT. With the 3-day rule, I suppose it could be available as early as tomorrow for a Monday/Tuesday effort before the committee.

Mr. HOYER. I don't want to make a representation because I don't know the answer to that and don't want to misrepresent it.

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. Speaker, on the bills the gentleman mentioned, I know this week we had a second open rule of the Congress. It was an open rule for the second time on a bill that in the last Congress passed unanimously.

I wonder if the gentleman has a sense of the rules on these upcoming bills and what they might look like.

Mr. HOYER. I really don't. But I want to make two observations. First of all, we are 100 percent of the number of open rules that we had in the last Congress where we had one. We have now had two.

With respect to open rules, I know that, in talking to Mr. FRANK, he intends to bring some bills to the floor under an open rule. And we have been urging Members to have, if not open rules, structured rules. As you know, we have had some structured rules contemplated as well, offering amendments, allowing, obviously, amendments from your side as well as from our side.

□ 1600

And we want to make sure that we have the opportunity to consider views from both sides of the aisle. So we hope to do that. I cannot represent to you how many open rules there are going to be.

And I understand what the gentleman is saying about the fact that these bills were supported by large numbers, and in the latter case by all Members, but that doesn't mean that they were necessarily perfect. And amendments were offered, as the gentleman knows, and we took 7 hours, I believe, on the one that was of very little controversy 2½ or 3 weeks ago.

Mr. BLUNT. I thank the gentleman for that observation. I would just say that we actually might have had more open rules in the last Congress if it occurred to us that we could use the suspension calendar as one of our opportunities to do that.

Under the rules of the Congress in the Congressional Budget Act, the Budget Act calls for us to have adopted a budget by April 15. Do you have any sense of when the budget will be submitted by the Budget chairman, and whether or not we are working toward that statutory deadline and can possibly make that deadline.

Mr. HOYER. Unfortunately, I don't have the record of the last 12 years right in front of me.

Mr. BLUNT. Actually, we made the deadline one time in 12 years, and two times in the 30 years of the budget rule.

Mr. HOYER. I was thinking that was probably the case.

Having said that, it is Mr. SPRATT's hope, and he is working towards meeting those deadlines.

Now, as you know from experience, the plans, as difficult a process as putting together a budget is, sometimes do not meet expectations. However, I will tell you that it is my intention and Mr. SPRATT's intention to try to meet those deadlines. And at this point in time we are scheduled to meet those deadlines.

Mr. BLUNT. And to meet that deadline, I assume Chairman SPRATT must be working on a draft budget to be submitted in the next couple of weeks.

Mr. HOYER. That is correct.

Mr. BLUNT. That is helpful.

On the issue of the rules of the House, Mr. Leader, as I understand the rule that sometimes we were able to frankly use and sometimes we weren't, on the rule that we always referred to as the Gephardt rule that was initially put in the rules by Mr. Gephardt when he was the majority leader, if there is a budget resolution adopted by both Houses, that budget resolution vote on the conference becomes the vote on raising the debt limit. I wonder what the majority's plan is on that. Do we intend for that to continue to be the case, or will we expect a vote on the debt limit at some time?

Mr. HOYER. We, of course, on this side, call it the Hastert rule, because after you criticized it roundly for a long period of time, you adopted it.

Let me say seriously; there is no alternative to increasing the debt limit. Both sides pretend that there is. There is not. The administration, if the debt limit is to be extended, is going to re-

quest a level to which they would like it increased. Frankly, your side of the aisle, you were not here at the time, I tell my friend, but regularly voted against increasing the debt limit, almost unanimously, in large numbers. It was obviously an effort to try to make it appear that our Members alone were responsible for raising the debt. That was not an honest representation, in my opinion, because we passed bills with Republican votes which resulted in that, whether they were appropriation bills, tax bills, whatever economic bills they were.

So in answer to your question let me say this: We obviously adopted your rules, as you recall, at the beginning of this session. So rule XXVII was a rule that you had in place at the time that you were in the majority. We adopted your rules, and we are pursuing that under those rules.

Mr. BLUNT. I thank the gentleman for that.

Also, as we look back into the recent history of the House, I had actually never heard the rule referred to as anything before but the Gephardt rule. But the Gephardt rule, or the Hastert, whatever rule you want to call it, only applies if you actually have an agreed-to budget. And so on more than one occasion in the 12 years we were in the majority, we didn't have, and a couple of times, didn't produce an agreed-to budget by both bodies. And I don't remember anybody on your side of the aisle helping increase the debt limit either. So this is an area where both parties have played over the years a role of you didn't help us, we're not going to help you.

Mr. HOYER. I think my friend is correct on that. And that is why I started my remarks with really the Congress, if it is going to be responsible on either side, Republican or Democrat, has a responsibility to set the debt limit so that the United States of America meets its obligations, whether it is to our own people on Social Security, whether it is meeting a payment on our debt to foreign countries, whether it is simply funding our government and keeping services to our veterans and everybody else that we vote to give services to, we need to do that.

I agree with you. And I would hope at some point in time, frankly, both parties can get together and say look, this is something that we need to do. And frankly, whether it is the Gephardt rule or the Hastert rule, essentially that is what both sides were doing so that it could not be, I don't want to say demagogue, but misrepresented as agreeing that we ought to have that debt level.

Now, I think almost everybody disagrees with the rate at which we have been going into debt, and the fact that we have borrowed 94 percent of our operating funds that we have borrowed from foreign governments over the last 6 years. I think there is probably nobody that thinks that is a good policy.

But the underlying policies that drive that are really what is at issue.

But I agree with the premise of the gentleman that both sides of the aisle have tried to hold the other responsible for the debt. On our side, frankly, we disagreed with the fiscal policies that were being pursued, which, as you know, we think took us from a \$5.6 trillion surplus to now a \$3 trillion deficit in the last 6 years. We tried to make that point through that vote. But the gentleman's basic premise I think is absolutely correct. There really isn't an option of when we get to the debt limit, we either ought to stop spending money, reduce very substantially our entitlement obligations, or we have no alternative but to raise the debt.

Mr. BLUNT. Reclaiming my time, I would say that it is a challenge, the budget is a challenge. We look forward to the solutions that the chairman brings forward and having that debate on the budget, having that debate on the size of the debt. We hope we can get to a budget that is balanced in 5 years without a tax increase. I am sure that will be one of the many topics that we will be discussing over the next few weeks as the budget progresses.

As I said earlier, the earliest possible access to at least a draft of the supplemental will be helpful to us. And we hope that the majority will work with us to get that supplemental draft to us as soon as possible so that we can begin that important debate that will be on the floor I don't think next week, because clearly, the time would not allow that, but hopefully as soon as the week after that, and we look forward to that debate.

ADJOURNMENT TO MONDAY, MARCH 5, 2007, AND HOUR OF MEETING ON FRIDAY, MARCH 9, 2007

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 12:30 p.m. on Monday next for morning hour debate; and further, when the House adjourns on Thursday, March 8, it adjourn to meet at 9 a.m. on Friday, March 9.

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

There was no objection.

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.

AUTHORIZING THE SPEAKER TO DECLARE A RECESS ON WEDNESDAY, MARCH 7, 2007, FOR THE PURPOSE OF RECEIVING IN JOINT MEETING HIS MAJESTY KING ABDULLAH II BIN AL HUSSEIN, KING OF JORDAN

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that it may be in order at any time on Wednesday, March 7, 2007, for the Speaker to declare a recess, subject to the call of the Chair, for the purpose of receiving in joint meeting His Majesty King Abdullah II Ibn Al Hussein, King of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

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

There was no objection.

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 New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

THE IRAQ WAR

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, it is getting to the point where I am almost afraid to pick up the newspaper every morning because day after day, there is more grim news out of Iraq and the Middle East. More revelations about the scandalous mismanagement of this war and its aftermath. More evidence that the current administration is jeopardizing our national security.

There has been a lot of rhetoric here on Capitol Hill about who supposedly does and does not support the troops. I personally believe we should call a moratorium on "support the troops" demagoguery until the conditions at Walter Reed Hospital finally reach the level that our veterans deserve.

It is positively disgraceful, Mr. Speaker. After risking life and limb for our country, our soldiers are sent to a moldy, rodent-infested facility where they receive inadequate care. And today, we read that Walter Reed officials were aware of problems and heard complaints, but largely ignored them.

The squalid living conditions of Walter Reed are just one symptom of a completely ineffective and unaccountable bureaucracy. According to the Washington Post, nonEnglish speaking families have a difficult time getting the information and services they need.

One mother of a soldier said, "If they could have Spanish-speaking recruits to convince my son to go into the Army, why can't they have Spanish-speaking translators when he is injured?" Her point is telling. It appears that our government is very eager to sign you up, but much less enthusiastic about communicating with you once you have been shot down.

Meanwhile, conditions in the Middle East are rapidly deteriorating. The most disturbing recent news is that the Taliban and al Qaeda, remember, they are the ones who bear direct responsibility for 9/11, these folks are on the rebound and they are stepping up the violence in Afghanistan. They are so emboldened that they launched a suicide bomb attack right outside the Air Force base where the Vice President was staying during his recent trip to the region.

Curiously, that same Vice President seems to think it is those of us who want to end the Iraq occupation that are validating the al Qaeda strategy. That was the line he used in attacking our Speaker last week. Well, I think the Vice President isn't in a position to throw stones, Mr. Speaker. First of all, al Qaeda didn't have anything to do in Iraq until the administration launched its pre-emptive strike nearly 4 years ago. Furthermore, it was this administration that had bin Laden sound off at Tora Bora and let him get away. And it is this administration that has taken its eye off the ball in Afghanistan, diverting resources from a nation-building project to pursue the ideological fantasy of conquering Iraq.

□ 1615

The new director of national intelligence, Mike McConnell, told the Senate Armed Services Committee this week: "Long-term prospects for eliminating the Taliban threat appear dim, so long as the sanctuary remains in Pakistan, and there are no encouraging signs that Pakistan is eliminating it."

And whose fault is that, Mr. Speaker? Not the Speaker of the House.

Unbelievably, when the White House spokesman was asked about the Pakistani Government's failure to cooperate, he answered: "We're often asked to give our report cards on other heads of state. I'm not going to play."

We have come a long way from the tough talk of 2001. Remember how we were told that those who harbored terrorists would be treated just as harshly as the terrorists themselves?

Journalist Spencer Ackerman assesses the Afghanistan situation this way: "After two wars, we're in some sense right back where we were before 9/11 itself: unable to invade the territory where al Qaeda possesses a stronghold and groping for alternatives, while the intelligence community puts out warnings about the urgency of the threat. Except this time," he continues, "our entire national security apparatus is overtaxed from the strains of two wars, wars that were supposed