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House of Representatives

The House met at 12:30 p.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Ms. CASTOR).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,

March 26, 2007.

I hereby appoint the Honorable KATHY CASTOR 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 Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) for 5 minutes.

THE VICE PRESIDENT AND THE IRAQ ACCOUNTABILITY ACT

Mr. DEFAZIO. I thank the Chair.

Well, Vice President CHENEY was in form last weekend in Florida addressing a small group behind closed doors. He attacked the House of Representatives for passing the Iraq Accountability Act. I am not certain whether it is because he objects to the fact that we are going to make this administration review the readiness of our troops, their equipment, before they're rushed to Iraq in an attempt to escalate the

war. They don't want that kind of accountability, because it failed our troops, from day one, on equipment and readiness.

And then maybe it's the other part, the part where we are going to demand accountability of the Iraqi Government. Time and time again President Bush sets benchmarks. "Those benchmarks will be met." They are never met. There has to be a diplomatic and political component. You cannot resolve a civil war with military force in Iraq. But time and time again the Bush administration has let the Iraqi Government skate. This bill says they will meet the President's own chosen, President Bush and al Maliki's, own chosen guidelines and benchmarks or we will begin to bring our troops home. Plain and simple, not a war without end, not a war that will be settled by future Presidents, as George Bush said a year ago, but if this administration and the Iraqi Government fail to do what's necessary for our troops, we are not going to strand them in the middle of a civil war.

But the Vice President objects to those things. He says if they really support the troops, then we should take them at their word and expect them to meet the needs of our military on time, in full, no strings attached.

Let's review the administration's record on those issues. Let's review how the Bush-Cheney administration met the needs of our troops. First of all, it was an unnecessary war. They were pursuing a necessary war against al Qaeda, the Taliban, Osama bin Laden. Remember them? Dead or alive? Dead or alive? They abandoned that war for an unnecessary war launched under false pretenses in Iraq.

Now, something called the Office of Special Plans phoned up the intelligence. DICK CHENEY put together the Office of Special Plans with some of his own hand-picked people, I think one of whom is now on the way to jail, in fact,

Scooter Libby. In fact, he personally, unprecedented for a Vice President, kept visiting the CIA and saying, no, they didn't have the intelligence right yet. I.e., they didn't say what he wanted. Niger yellow cake, Chalabi, all that stuff. He was so wrong. And then he said, "Simply stated, there's no doubt that Saddam Hussein now has weapons of mass destruction." Vice President CHENEY in August of 2002 as he was pushing us toward war.

But then on the eve of the war, even after their myths about weapons of mass destruction, the yellow cake, the aluminum tubes had started to fall apart, he said, "We believe that Saddam has in fact reconstituted nuclear weapons." Vice President CHENEY. A man who has been so wrong and put our troops in harm's way unnecessarily, jeopardized the security of the United States by distracting us from the real fight in Afghanistan, challenges this Congress on the Iraq Accountability Act? No, I think last November the American people started to ask about accountability for him and his supposed boss, George Bush.

And then let's look at their military planning. General Shinseki, a good man. They fired him. It was said we didn't need 350,000 people. Rummy said, "Oh, don't worry. We can do it with 100,000 or so." Shinseki said, that would lead to strife, civil war and chaos. He was right. They fired him. But presidential economic adviser Larry Lindsey said, "It's going to be very expensive. Very expensive." No, CHENEY and his cohorts said, "No, don't worry. Iraq can pay for it themselves." Well, we are now at \$2 billion a week, hundreds of billions of dollars on this war. So wrong.

And then our troops, how did they serve them? Vice President CHENEY again, "We believe we will, in fact, be greeted as liberators. I think it will go relatively quick. Weeks rather than months." So they didn't give our men

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

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and women body armor, didn't have armored Humvees, they didn't have the equipment they needed. Congress had to uncover those scandals after we heard from the troops in the field. We had to provide it over the objections of this administration, and this guy has the gall to say we aren't serving the troops as they want to keep our troops mired down forever in the middle of a civil war?

This is extraordinary. And, most recently, Vice President CHENEY last year, no, 2 years ago, "I think they're in the last throes, if you will, of the insurgency." I guess he still believes that.

These people have done an extraordinary disservice to our troops, our country, our national security and the fight against true terrorism that attacked us on 9/11. We will not be distracted or bullied anymore. The Iraq Accountability Act is a strong response to their mismanagement and it offers the United States a way to bring this war to a successful conclusion and soon.

Bring the troops home.

CONGRATULATING BARTON COLLEGE'S BASKETBALL TEAM

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

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, there was great cause for celebration in eastern North Carolina over this past weekend, as Wilson, North Carolina's Barton College captured the NCAA Division II men's college basketball championship. What a game.

Barton College, Madam Speaker, is a small but proud college with a rich academic history. With a student body of about 1,000 students, it is located not only in my congressional district but located in my community. I am so proud of them.

Barton College captured the national championship Saturday afternoon, scoring an amazing come-from-behind 77-75 victory over previously undefeated and defending national champion Winona State University. Barton won the title game at the buzzer, with one-tenth of a second remaining. They won their semifinal game by one point on a last-second free throw. And it won its quarterfinal game on a three-pointer at the buzzer in overtime. This will be a game that will long be remembered.

Madam Speaker, it is a great honor for me to recognize the success, efforts and achievements of these outstanding young student athletes. It is my pleasure to recognize their head coach, Ron Lievense, and his staff. Their hard work and dedication to teamwork is something that we are all proud of in Wilson, North Carolina and throughout the First Congressional District.

I ask my colleagues today to rise and join me in paying tribute to Barton College's basketball team of 2007 and to recognize their extraordinary championship.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 39 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until 2 p.m.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. SALAZAR) at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

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

"Go down, Moses,
Way down in Egypt land.
Tell ole Pharaoh,
Let my people go."

These lines from the old spiritual, Lord, gave human slavery voice and hope. Its rundown rhythm muffled the sound of the Underground Railroad traveling through darkness to bring people freedom's light.

Lord, we pray that You help now all those held captive in human bondage. May the thousands caught in the clutches of slave labor and worse, in our own country, find a new exodus. Bring their hidden stories to the brightness of news in our day, so they may live with the glimmer of hope. Lead them through the complexity of economic and legal systems to breathe in the common air of freedom.

May our preparations for Passover and Easter shake off our indifference, change obstinate hearts of unscrupulous employers and profiteers in human trafficking that the redeemed may rejoice in You, our God and Savior, both now and forever. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

Mr. ROSS 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.

DEMOCRATS CONTINUE TO TAX AND SPEND

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, Democrats are as predictable as the sun: it continues to rise in the east, and they continue to tax and spend.

The Democratic budget released last week proposes the largest tax increase in American history: \$392.5 billion. Not only does it allow for the expiration of the 2001 and 2003 tax cuts, but it does nothing to control unsustainable entitlement spending.

Republicans believe fiscal restraint and pro-growth economic policies will lead to budget surpluses and new jobs. Democrats believe out-of-control government spending should be subsidized with the hard-earned money of American taxpayers.

Unfortunately, the Democratic budget continues to squeeze taxpayers' pocketbooks without tightening the belt of Big Government. Such reckless policies will chill our growing economy by reducing job creation.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September 11.

PHOTO IDENTIFICATION SECURITY ACT

(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, you know, one of the things that we heard about so often during the campaign last year was illegal immigration. And coming back to Congress, one of the things we are hearing about as we hold our town hall meetings is the impact of illegal immigrants having access to credit cards and to financial services in this country. Banking institutions, the Federal Reserve, the U.S. Treasury, and the IRS are allowing illegal immigrants the ability to sign up for credit cards, mortgages, taxpayer identification numbers, and to transfer money back to their country.

It is a problem, and there is a solution. H.R. 1314 is a piece of legislation I have filed. It is bipartisan legislation with over 50 cosponsors. The Photo ID Security Act will close the loophole that illegal immigrants are using to obtain valid financial service information and access to these services. What it will do is change the identification that is required, requiring them to present a photo ID issued from their home country or the U.S. Everyone in the U.S. can legally obtain these documents.

I encourage all Members to cosponsor H.R. 1314.