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No. 79

House of Representatives

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

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,

May 14, 2007.

I hereby appoint the Honorable JIM COSTA to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,

Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

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 debate. 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 Washington (Mr. McDERMOTT) for 5 minutes.

WHAT HAPPENED ON OCTOBER 10, 2006, IN IRAQ?

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, I rise to call for an explanation and a full accounting from the Department of Defense concerning an attack on Camp Falcon last year. This much is not in dispute: Under cover of darkness on October 10, 2006, Camp Falcon, America's largest military base in Iraq, which is 10 miles south of Baghdad, was attacked by insurgents, and the base was shelled with mortars and rockets. An enemy round struck an ammunition store which triggered massive explo-

sions and huge fireballs that lit up the night sky in Baghdad.

News footage and amateur video were shown on television in the Middle East, and a BBC reporter described the explosions as immense. In the days following the attack, U.S. military officers in Iraq repeatedly said that the damage would not degrade U.S. military capacity and that the attack did not injure or kill anyone at the base.

In a briefing on October 12, 2006, Major General William Caldwell told reporters, "Very fortunately, no coalition forces or Iraqi security forces were injured, nor civilian casualties that anyone is aware of at this point. We lost some munitions, but took no personnel casualties." That is the official line for the military.

But the questions are beginning to surface as to whether the official line is the truth. It was brought to my attention yesterday during a meeting in my congressional office with Mohammed al Deeni, an independent member of the Iraqi Parliament. He came to the U.S. to talk with Members of Congress about the realities of life in Iraq. At my invitation, other Members of Congress joined me in this face-to-face legislative exchange of information. They heard what I am about to share.

During our meeting, I asked Mr. al Deeni if Iraq was so unstable that a terrorist attack could claim a large number of Americans in one attack. As many of us remember, that is what happened in 1983 when a massive terrorist truck bomb struck and killed 241 U.S. Marines in Beirut. I wanted to know if such an attack was possible in Iraq. Without hesitation, Mr. al Deeni said such an attack had already occurred. He said—and others are saying online—that the attack on Camp Falcon killed 300 Americans, wounded another 200 Americans and killed or injured another 200 Iraqis.

The Pentagon says there were no casualties. But a member of the Iraqi Par-

liament and others claim there were significant casualties. Which story is true? Satellite images, aerial photographs, videos and written accounts that purport to be firsthand can be found online. I will enter into the RECORD a list of some of these sites so that people can see for themselves.

Internet sites which contains video, photographs, or written accounts of the attack on Camp Falcon on October 10, 2006:

<http://www.cawa.fr/destruction-du-camp-american-falcon-explosions-d-armes-a-l-ua-et-ou-d-armes-nucleaires-tactiques-article00913.html>.

http://www.dailymotion.com/related/966319/video/xkpjv_base-falcon-irakexplosion-nucleaire/1.

<http://abutamam.blogspot.com/2006/10/no-reported-casualties-at-camp-falcon.html>.

<http://zennobia.blogspot.com/2006/10/al-rashid-falcon-military-bases.html>.

Here is one excerpt from a site written after the attack by French journalists: "Nine big carriers marked by the Red Cross sign transporting the dead and injured were seen by journalists . . . Silence still wraps the whole event from the side of the American military as well as the Bush administration, since there remains only a few weeks before the legislative elections, with a public opinion more and more against the war."

This happened just before the last elections, and it is unclear as to what happened. I don't know if these stories are credible. But these reports cannot be ignored. If we lost hundreds of U.S. soldiers and other Americans in one attack, Congress and the American people have a right to know about it.

I looked at the videos and the aerial photographs, and the damage appears quite extensive to buildings and military vehicles like tanks. Perhaps American soldiers and others miraculously escaped injury. That would be very good news. Or perhaps we don't know what really happened on the night of October 10, 2006 in an insurgent attack on Camp Falcon.

□ 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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The Pentagon should open all of its files to independent journalists. I call for a full accounting as soon as possible. Some are saying there's a cover-up in the military. I say it's time to put all the evidence out in the open.

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 38 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess until noon.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. CARNAHAN) at noon.

PRAYER

The Reverend Dr. Alan Keiran, Senate Chaplain's Office, Washington, D.C., offered the following prayer:

Lord Almighty, the heavens declare Your handiwork, and the majestic beauty of our world shows forth the splendor of Your creation.

We thank You for the unmerited favor You shower upon us each day. We thank You for family, friends, faith, and freedom. Most of all, we thank You for the sacrifice You made to bring us into Your family and give us eternal life.

O God, I pray today for our Nation's representatives, their families, and staffs. Grant them Your favor and wisdom as they pursue righteous ends and seek our Nation's highest good. Continue to equip them for these challenging times. Give them courageous spirits and eternal insights needed in their service to a grateful Nation.

We lift to You our Nation's law enforcement officers and their families, and we thank You for their tireless service. Bless as well our own Capitol Hill Police Department with Your divine blessing and protection.

You alone, O God, are our rock and our redeemer. May You in Your loving providence move in our midst to make Yourself known. I ask all this in the name that is above every name. 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 Arizona (Mr. SHADEGG) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. SHADEGG 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.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, May 11, 2007.

Hon. NANCY PELOSI,
The Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MADAM SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on May 11, 2007, at 10:01 a.m.:

That the Senate agreed to S. Con. Res. 29.
That the Senate agreed to H. Con. Res. 68.
With best wishes, I am,

Sincerely,

LORRAINE C. MILLER,
Clerk of the House.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote is objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken after 6:30 p.m. today.

EXTENDING DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA COLLEGE ACCESS ACT OF 1999

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1124) to extend the District of Columbia College Access Act of 1999.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1124

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. 5-YEAR REAUTHORIZATION OF TUITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS.

(a) PUBLIC SCHOOL PROGRAM.—Section 3(i) of the District of Columbia College Access Act of 1999 (sec. 38-2702(i), DC Official Code) is amended by striking “each of the 7 succeeding fiscal years” and inserting “each of the 12 succeeding fiscal years”.

(b) PRIVATE SCHOOL PROGRAM.—Section 5(f) of such Act (sec. 38-2704(f), DC Official Code) is amended by striking “each of the 7 succeeding fiscal years” and inserting “each of the 12 succeeding fiscal years”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) and the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. WESTMORELAND) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 1124, the District of Columbia College Access Act of 1999, will reauthorize funding for the District of Columbia Tuition Assistance Grant, the DCTAG program, which will help promote higher education for high school graduates in the District of Columbia.

DCTAG provides grants for District high school students to attend public colleges and universities nationwide at in-state tuition rates. Additionally, the bill provides smaller grants for District students to attend private institutions in the D.C. metropolitan area and to attend Historically Black Colleges and Universities nationwide.

The impact of this legislation on the community and in the lives of the students who receive the grants cannot be minimized. DCTAG reaches students and communities where there is no hope of being able to obtain a college education. This is particularly true for many of the students that participate in DCTAG. Fifty-eight percent of the students who participate in the program come from low-income households.

Furthermore, students that participate are attending educational institutions that are known to nurture students of color. Five of the top 10 schools these students attend are HBCUs: Hampton University, Morehouse College, Virginia Union University, St. Augustine's College, and Bennett College.

While students from all races participate in the program and attend over 270 institutions in 47 States, including nationally recognized public institutions like the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor, the University of Illinois, the University of California-Berkeley, and Ohio State University, this program serves a community that is lacking resources for students of color from low-income households.

Mr. Speaker, I want to commend the ranking minority member, Representative TOM DAVIS, and, of course, the distinguished gentlewoman from the District of Columbia for introducing and championing this legislation.

I urge all of my colleagues to support it.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

This bill would simply reauthorize the DCTAG program for an additional 5 years and enable District residents to