

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain up to 10 requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

RESPONSIBLE DEPLOYMENT FROM IRAQ ACT

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, today we take another step in ending the war in Iraq as we consider the measure to withdraw our troops by next April.

Each day, support for President Bush's war crumbles as evidence mounts of the cost of this debacle: \$10 billion a month, more lives lost, and thousands of hopes and dreams shattered.

We who opposed this war from the start for the reasons played out every day on the front pages of our newspapers understand that the redeployment of 200,000 American soldiers and contractors in Iraq will take some time to implement, but that is no excuse not to start now as rapidly and responsibly as possible to get our people out of the crossfire of this religious civil war. They have done all that they can, all that we should expect of them.

I call on the doubters in Congress to stop enabling the President; instead, to join us in supporting the strongest, most direct measure possible, not just to send the President a message, but to rein him in and bring our soldiers home from this nightmare.

THE GLOBAL WAR ON TERRORISM

(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, in the past weeks terrorists with possible al Qaeda ties have attempted car bombings in London. Following these failed attempts, terrorists struck the Glasgow, Scotland airport. This attack by two doctors in a flaming Jeep Cherokee, doctors who have been sworn to protect life, were arrested for attempting mass murder by incineration of innocent civilians.

In addition, terrorists held children captive in a mosque in Islamabad, Pakistan; and an al Qaeda homicide bomber in Yemen murdered seven Spanish tourists and two Yemeni guides while they were visiting a temple of the ancient Queen of Sheba.

Recent events such as this should alert Americans that the global war on terrorism is a worldwide threat and that Iraq and Afghanistan remain the central front of the battle as claimed by bin Laden's spokesman Zawahiri.

Instead of practicing party politics, Congress should rely on the leadership of our military leaders such as General

David Petraeus. By stopping terrorists overseas, our troops are protecting America's families at home.

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

REBUILDING A NEW VA HOSPITAL IN NEW ORLEANS

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

Mr. JEFFERSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise to thank Chairman BOB FILNER and members on his House Committee on Veterans' Affairs for holding a field hearing in New Orleans on this past Monday on the subject of rebuilding a new VA hospital in the greater New Orleans area.

The VA has narrowed its search for the location of a new VA hospital to a downtown New Orleans site and to a site in the adjoining Jefferson Parish. For reasons of taking advantage of the synergies of the relationship of Tulane and LSU medical schools to the new VA hospital and because of the savings and long-term operational costs that can be realized, I and several of the panelists recommended the New Orleans site as most beneficial to the care of our veterans.

Mr. Speaker, in the end it is important that we put our veterans first. When we have called on them to serve our country, they have not asked us to wait. They have responded to our Nation's call to duty at great risk to themselves and to their families. Nearly 2 years after Hurricane Katrina struck, we have already asked them to wait far too long. It is now time to build a world-class, state-of-the-art VA hospital in downtown New Orleans and to do so in the shortest possible time. We call on the Veterans Administration to do just that.

GLOBAL WAR ON TERROR

(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, today we will see another attempt by the liberal majority leadership to drive a stake between the American people and the brave men and women fighting in the global war on terror. Today's latest attempt is called a precipitous withdrawal. The American people would label it a cut and run. Our soldiers deserve the confidence of their leaders, not second-guessing arrogance by politicians half a world away.

The leadership thinks Iraq is lost, despite the fact that the new mission has shown signs of progress, including the fact that half of Baghdad has been secured, the Baghdad Security Plan. General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker are going to provide us a progress report in September, but that is not fast enough for the liberal leadership. They expected the new strategy to win over-

night. Don't they know that you don't find instant gratification in war?

One thing is certain: surrender and failure in securing Iraq hold catastrophic consequences for freedom, the U.S., and the Iraqi people. Surrender would send the wrong message. It will say the U.S. is weak, that roving death squads in the streets of Baghdad and ethnic cleansing are acceptable to us. It may be fashionable to want to pull out of Iraq, but it sends the wrong message.

WE OWE AN EXPLANATION TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

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

Mr. SESTAK. I can be and am disappointed in this bill we will vote on today, intended to reduce U.S. troops in Iraq. It aims to begin the reduction, but leaves an unspecified limited presence of troops in Iraq by a deadline of April 1, 2008, a level of troops and their missions to be determined by President Bush.

It does no harm, but how much good? One might say it is a step in the right direction even with such significant limitations, but I have concern. Congress is, as it should be, close to ending this tragic misadventure; however, ending this war is necessary but insufficient. How we end it and by what means is of even greater importance for our troops' safety and our own security. A Congress intent upon mandating such a new security policy through force of law owes a careful explanation to the country why and how it is to be done, including dealing with what would occur in the aftermath. We don't do that here.

I will vote for this bill for it does no harm, perhaps some good. But I will do so reluctantly, for it does little to define the how and why within a strategic approach of a date within a year that we can redeploy from Iraq and leave behind the possibility of an unfailed Iraqi state. We owe such an explanation since it is us by force of law that will end this tragic misadventure.

DEMOCRATS SETTING RECORDS

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

Mr. AKIN. Americans love to compete and to set records. In fact, people all over the world record their records in the Guinness Book of World Records. But there are some kinds of records called Darwin Awards for foolish behavior where people eliminate themselves by doing something unusual. One man took a pistol and decided to rob a gun store and got shot.

The Democrats are not using a pistol, but they have been setting some records. They have just set one this year, that is, the largest tax increase

in the history of this country. It comes out to about \$290-some-billion. But that means to the average household a \$3,000 tax increase. What household can absorb a \$3,000 tax increase in just 1 year alone?

Unfortunately, that is not the only record being set by the Democrats. They have doubled that record in terms of how much money they have spent, over \$800 billion, which would come to \$6,000 per family. American people would be better if we didn't set records like that.

NASA ASTRONAUT SUNITA WILLIAMS

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

Mr. LAMPSON. Mr. Speaker, it is truly a pleasure to rise today to acknowledge the achievements of NASA astronaut Sunita Williams.

On Friday, June 22, Sunita returned to Earth after spending 195 days in space. She now holds the record for the longest duration space flight by a woman. Also, after completing four space walks lasting a total of 29 hours, 17 minutes, she is a record holder for the most hours outside a spacecraft by a woman.

I was at the emotional STS-117 crew return welcome a few weeks ago at Johnson Space Center and saw firsthand how Sunita's achievements serve as an inspiration to so many young people, particularly young ladies, interested in pursuing their dreams of space exploration. She has shown them that if they work hard and are dedicated, they too can one day reach the stars.

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THE CAUSE OF CLEANING UP CONGRESS HAS GROUND TO A HALT

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

Mr. KIRK. Mr. Speaker, despite promises that are only 6 months old, the cause of cleaning up the Congress has ground to a halt.

We should kill pensions for Members of Congress convicted of a felony. And after passing a shadow bill in January, this action has completely stalled. No action in February, March, April, May or June.

Now the real surprise. Despite promises of spending reform, Congressional leaders blocked efforts to stop funding the construction of the bridges to nowhere. That's right. Democratic leaders in Congress now support building the bridges to nowhere, one structure, connecting to an island with just 50 people, the other to an island with only 22, at a cost to the U.S. taxpayer of over \$1 billion. Only 6 months into a new Congress, and now Congressional leaders do not want to kill pensions for Congressional felons, but do want to build the bridges to nowhere.

SCHIP

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

Ms. SCHWARTZ. Mr. Speaker, in 1992, I was proud to spearhead one of the first State initiatives to enable working families to purchase private health insurance for their children; 5 years later Congress passed the State Children's Health Insurance Program, SCHIP, enabling every State to implement its own plan.

Today 6 million American children have health coverage thanks to SCHIP. We in Congress are building upon the extraordinary success of SCHIP to extend it to almost 9 million American children who are now uninsured. The goal of insuring all American children is within our reach.

Yet, instead of working with Congress to reach this goal, the President this week made it clear that health insurance for children is not important to him.

Does the President really believe that America's children do not deserve quality ongoing health care? Does the President really believe that emergency rooms are the best place for primary care for children?

It is clear to just about every American that health insurance is expensive, and for too many American families, it is simply too expensive.

Congress recognizes the urgency of the situation, and we move ahead, unlike the President, to take this opportunity to cover every American child.

DALITS

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

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, earlier this week I hosted a screening of a documentary entitled, "India's Hidden Slavery," a film about contemporary slavery in India among the 250 million Dalits or untouchables.

The caste system has at the top the Brahmin or priestly class, the ruling class. That includes politicians. At the very bottom, not even considered a caste because they're too low, the Dalits. Today, in the world's largest democracy, an unknown hidden system exists with people without basic human rights.

In contrast to the economic progress in some sectors in Indian society, below the surface is a society still racked by caste, with millions suffering and held hostage to a social structure that reinforces segregation, poverty, injustice and slavery. Recently, village leaders just condemned to death a couple that married outside their caste.

While the government of India has taken some small steps to outlaw the caste system, in reality, it permeates every aspect of life there.

I commend India for its economic progress, but I urge government leaders to ensure that all people in India have basic human rights, and especially the 250 million Dalits.

THE IRAQ WAR

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

Mr. HODES. Mr. Speaker, the war in Iraq is in its fifth year, but the Bush administration still refuses to develop a realistic, strategic plan for the Middle East and Iraq.

The Iraq War has destabilized the region, and the United States must reassert and protect its fundamental national security interests by actively taking the necessary steps to stabilize the Middle East.

Today Congress will debate a plan which stands in stark contrast to the delusional policies of the Bush administration which have sapped our military readiness, strengthened al Qaeda, wasted our resources and betrayed the trust of the American people.

There is a way forward, and we must be bold, courageous and strategic. Without leadership in the White House, we must continue to exercise leadership in the people's House. And I assure the American people that we will.

MISSING OR CAPTURED AMERICAN SOLDIERS

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

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. You know, we shouldn't even be discussing surrender in Iraq today because 2 months ago today, three American soldiers were captured in Iraq. Tragically, the body of Private First Class Anzack was found a few days later in the river. DOD has changed the status of Specialist Jimenez and Private Fouty from unknown to missing/captured. Considering that the military found their IDs in an al Qaeda safe house, I'm sure they're being mistreated. And I hope and pray that they can stay alive until we can rescue them.

As a former prisoner of war for nearly 7 years in Vietnam, I know what these guys are going through. We must find them, and we must bring them home. Naysayers in Washington should not be talking about pulling the plug on our troops in Iraq when we have our own men missing in action who need to be rescued.

SCHIP

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

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, in our Energy and Commerce Committee, we're