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House of Representatives

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

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
July 23, 2007.

I hereby appoint the Honorable JERRY McNERNEY 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 Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for 5 minutes.

PLIGHT OF IRAQI REFUGEES

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, the front page of the Washington Post yesterday had the harsh and ugly reality. We cannot afford not to help the Iraqis who trusted and worked with the United States with the opportunity for refugee status.

I quote:

"The American Ambassador in Baghdad, Ryan Crocker, has asked the Bush administration to take the unusual step of granting immigrant visas to all Iraqis employed by the United States

Government in Iraq because of growing concern that they will quit and flee the country if they cannot be assured of eventual safe passage to the United States."

For the last 7 months, I have been working with a broad bipartisan group of people on legislation that would deal with the largest ongoing humanitarian crisis in the world other than Darfur. And unlike the tragedy in the Darfur region of the Sudan, the United States is front and center in Iraq. We have over 300,000 American soldiers, contractors, and civilian U.S. Government employees. We see firsthand every day the train wreck, while officials at the top of the food chain appear, sadly, oblivious and powerless to do anything about it.

I am proud to say that there are young American soldiers who will try to do something about it, even after they rotate out of the country. That is how I first became involved in this issue, as young Oregonian Guard members fought valiantly to try to save the life of their interpreter when they returned to Oregon, knowing that her life was at risk. Working with those young guardsmen and with high school students from Lincoln High School in Portland, Oregon, we were able to have a happy resolution in this one case. But, sadly, it is only one case.

I have become acquainted with another true American hero. Kirk Johnson was a young USAID worker who, as he rotated out, embarked upon a crusade to save the lives of Iraqis who were at risk because they were known to have helped the United States. He has compiled a list of over 500 Iraqis who were interpreters, who were guides, who were civilian employees. Not one, the last time I talked to Mr. Johnson, had been able to make it to the United States.

The sad fact is that we are failing miserably in terms of responding to the refugee requirements. Since I became

involved last fall, the United States has admitted the grand total of 133 Iraqi refugees, a shocking number when we consider that over 2 million Iraqis have fled the country and another 2 million within Iraq have been displaced from their homes. It's not that we can't figure out how to do it if we care, if we establish a priority, if we work on it. In that same period of time that we could only admit 133 Iraqis, we have allowed 3,500 refugees from Iran, a country with whom we have rocky relations, to say the least, where we have deep concerns about terrorism.

It makes a mockery of our commitment to accept 7,000 during this fiscal year which ends September 30. There must be a sense of urgency and a profound sense of obligation. In order to make even that modest goal of 7,000, we are going to have to admit more Iraqi refugees every working day than we have for the entire last 9 months.

It is not just the right thing to do for these poor souls and their families. There is a harsh geopolitical reality. With 4 million Iraqis displaced, more than half fleeing the country, there's 1.2 million in Syria, and the accounts of what these people are forced to do to keep body and soul together are truly disturbing. Or three-quarters of a million Iraqi refugees across the border in Jordan, threatening to overwhelm that small country, adding another element of instability to this already unsettled part of the world.

I urge my colleagues in the House of Representatives to look at a letter that we are circulating to them today that includes this article from the Post. I urge them to cosponsor our bipartisan legislation, H.R. 2265, have them urge a markup and action before we recess for August. Our failure to keep our commitment will be exceedingly serious. We undermine our ability to carry out

□ 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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our current mission in Iraq if people we depend upon know that they can't depend upon us.

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. MAHONEY of Florida) at noon.

PRAYER

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

Lord God, America returns to another workweek while some coworkers and family members are away on summer vacation.

May this be a lesson to us all; that life must be lived with balance and none of us is irreplaceable in Your divine plan.

Inspire Members of the House of Representatives, Lord, to make the best use of the time given them. In the midst of many duties, let family needs be attended to. May the productive work of Congress stabilize this Nation and create a better social order, so that all Your people may enjoy responsible freedom and equal justice under the law.

To You be praise and glory 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 Maryland (Mr. SARBANES) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. SARBANES 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.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communications from the President of the United States:

THE WHITE HOUSE,
Washington, July 21, 2007.

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

DEAR MADAME SPEAKER: This morning I will undergo a routine medical procedure requiring sedation. In view of present circumstances, I have determined to transfer temporarily my Constitutional powers and duties to the Vice President during the brief period of the procedure and recovery.

In accordance with the provisions of Section 3 of the Twenty-Fifth Amendment to the United States Constitution, this letter shall constitute my written declaration that I am unable to discharge the constitutional powers and duties of the office of the President of the United States. Pursuant to Section 3, the Vice President shall discharge those powers and duties as Acting President until I transmit to you a written declaration that I am able to resume the discharge of those powers and duties.

Sincerely,

GEORGE BUSH.

THE WHITE HOUSE,
Washington, July 21, 2007.

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

DEAR MADAME SPEAKER: In accordance with the provisions of Section 3 of the Twenty-Fifth Amendment to the United States Constitution, this letter shall constitute my written declaration that I am presently able to resume the discharge of the Constitutional powers and duties of the office of the President of the United States. With the transmittal of this letter, I am resuming those powers and duties effective immediately.

Sincerely,

GEORGE BUSH.

THE STOCK MARKET SOARS, AMERICA'S ECONOMY IS BOOMING

(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, all Americans should be grateful that the New York Stock Exchange closed at a record high of 14,000 last Thursday. Students benefit as college endowments grew, reducing tuition costs. Retirees benefit as retirement accounts appreciated. And with increased liquidity, jobs are created for small businesses. The stock market in 5 years has soared 91 percent from the decline caused by the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

More than 2 million jobs have been created in the last year, and 8.2 million jobs have been created since the tax relief was initiated in June 2003. This has led to an unemployment rate lower than the average of the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s. There is record high homeowner-ship.

The Republican tax reductions are helping workers. I urge my colleagues to act immediately to make the tax cuts permanent so American workers, not the Federal Government, can continue to decide how to spend their hard-earned money. This proves the point of Jerry Bellune, editor of the Lexington County Chronicle, that the

earnings of America's workers belong to the people and are not a handout from the government.

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

BRITISH PETROLEUM POLLUTING LAKE MICHIGAN

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

Mr. KIRK. Mr. Speaker, the Great Lakes are the source of our drinking water for 30 million Americans, and the Congress has enacted new laws to protect the Great Lakes ecosystem, including the Great Lakes Legacy Act and the Regional Collaboration.

This is why we were surprised, no, stunned, when British Petroleum applied for the rights to increase its pollution of Lake Michigan. A 35-percent increase in ammonia dumping, a 54-percent increase in the dumping of suspended solids.

BP is one of the most profitable companies on Earth. Their plans include a \$3 billion upgrade to the facility, but they presented excuses from their own paid consultant that they had to increase their pollution of the lake.

Now, tomorrow the Congress will take up a resolution condemning BP and the actions of the State of Indiana that approved this pollution.

BP is a company spending millions to brand itself as a friend of the environment, but we know what BP stands for, "Bad Polluter."

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, July 20, 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 July 20, 2007, at 12:00 p.m.:

That the Senate passed with an amendment and requests a conference with the House, appoints conferees, H.R. 2272.

That the Senate passed with an amendment and requests a conference with the House, appoints conferees, H.R. 2669.

Appointments:
United States Holocaust Memorial Council.

With best wishes, I am,
Sincerely,

LORRAINE C. MILLER,
Clerk of the House.