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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable BENJAMIN L. CARDIN, a Senator from the State of Maryland.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal spirit, the fountain of all goodness, thank You that You have us in the place You want us to be right now. Teach our lawmakers to take seriously their role in solving the problems of our times, that they may fulfill Your plans for their lives. Continue to mold and inspire our Senators, and bless others through their labors. Use Your sovereign wisdom to bring about good results from their decisions and from consequences beyond their control.

Lord, give our leaders the courage to tell us what we need to hear, not what we want to hear. Make them willing to take political risks, to do the unpopular thing when it leads to justice and truth. Draw us together as one people who do Your will so that America may be a light to nations.

We pray in Your great Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable BENJAMIN L. CARDIN 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.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. BYRD).

The assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, September 5, 2007.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable BENJAMIN L. CARDIN, a Senator from the State of Maryland, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

Mr. CARDIN thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, this morning, the Senate will be in a period for morning business until 11:30 a.m., with Republicans controlling the first half of the time, the majority controlling the final portion. I ask that be a full 90 minutes because both Republicans and Democrats have indicated a desire to speak. So whatever time Senator MCCONNELL and I take we will not count against that time.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, at approximately 11:30 a.m., the Senate will resume consideration of the Military Construction and Veterans appropriations measure. This, of course, is an extremely critical proposal for current members of the Armed Forces and those who have previously served, our veterans.

We got word yesterday from the co-manager of this bill, Senator KAY BALEY HUTCHISON, that the President said he would sign the bill in its present state, which is a good message. Therefore, I think we should proceed post-haste to complete this legislation as

quickly as we can today. We have business, as I already indicated, we have to finish this week. We will do our best to complete this legislation. I hope we don't have to file cloture on it. I hope we can complete the bill. There was no indication yesterday there would be a lot of amendments. I don't know if there will be any.

When we finish the bill, then we go to the Foreign Operations appropriations bill. That bill is \$700 million less than what the President requested. There certainly should be something we can work out in that regard.

Then we have to complete education reconciliation. There is a statutory 10 hours on that legislation.

We can complete all that business very quickly this week or, if necessary, we will work on Friday and Saturday, hopefully not on Sunday.

Monday morning, there will be votes. As I have indicated to the Republican leader, we will have no votes after about 5:30 or 6 p.m. on Monday. On Tuesday, we will have a full day. We might have to work into the night because we hope to be on Transportation appropriations. We will have our last vote about 12:30 or 1 p.m. on Wednesday in relation to the Jewish holiday. We may work past that time, but there will be no votes after midday.

I hope Members will cooperate. Today, we have our weekly recess for party conferences. We are going to come back at 2:15. In the history of the Senate, this is an important day. Someone who has stood for bipartisanship his entire career as a Member of the House of Representatives and as a Senator is coming back. TIM JOHNSON has been extremely ill. He was about as sick as a person can get. He is back. His brain is 100 percent. The right side of his body is not back. His speaking, as he said last week when he announced his coming back in South Dakota—he hoped all Senators would follow his example because his mind works faster than his mouth. The doctor said his speech will return totally.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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Right now, it is not, but it is still very good. So I hope Senators will come to the floor at 2:15 p.m. to hear his speech upon his return. Senator McCONNELL and I are going to submit a resolution welcoming him back. So I encourage Members to be here at that time.

We will have some rollcall votes later today, maybe even into this evening. Senator REED and Senator HUTCHISON are the ones managing the Military Construction and Veterans bill.

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—H.R. 2419 AND H.R. 3221

Mr. REID. I have a matter of business, Mr. President.

There are two bills at the desk due for a second reading.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the bills by title for a second time.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 2419) to provide for the continuation of agricultural programs through fiscal year 2012, and for other purposes.

A bill (H.R. 3221) moving the United States toward greater energy independence and security, developing innovative new technologies, reducing carbon emissions, creating green jobs, protecting consumers, increasing clean renewable energy production, and modernizing our energy infrastructure, and to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide tax incentives for the production of renewable energy and energy conservation.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I object to any further proceedings with respect to these two bills en bloc.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection having been heard, the bills will be placed on the calendar.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

RETURN OF SENATOR TIM JOHNSON

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, let me briefly second the observations of the majority leader about the return of our friend, TIM JOHNSON, from South Dakota. We look forward to welcoming him back after the policy luncheons today. It is a remarkable example of grit and determination to fight his way back. All of us on this side of the aisle are certainly happy he is back and look forward to welcoming him back to the Senate family officially, after the policy lunches.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, if I may say also—I said this personally to the distinguished Republican leader—Senator McCONNELL and the entire Republican caucus have been so thoughtful regarding Senator JOHNSON'S illness. There were things the Republican minority

could have done to have taken advantage of the situation of his being ill. That was never done, not on one occasion. I appreciate that very much. I know Senator JOHNSON does. It speaks well for the Senate.

I don't think I need to say more on that issue other than it is the right thing to do, but sometimes we try to take advantage of a situation politically. The Republican Senators did not do that, even though there would have been times it would have been to their advantage.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I thank the majority leader very much.

I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will now be in a period for the transaction of morning business until approximately 11:30 a.m., with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each, and the time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with the Republicans controlling the first half of the time and the majority controlling the second half of the time, with the Senator from North Dakota, Mr. DORGAN, controlling up to 20 minutes of the majority time.

The Senator from Georgia.

SENATOR TIM JOHNSON

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I appreciate this opportunity. Before I make my speech, I join the two leaders in expressing my joy at the return of Senator JOHNSON. He has suffered a tragic event, but his grit, his determination, and I think the prayers of the entire Senate have paid off. I am delighted he is returning to this body, with us, at 2:15 p.m. today.

IRAQ

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I spent the month of August on our break traveling the State of Georgia and did it for a specific reason. I knew that September 15 would be the report period for Ambassador Crocker and for General Petraeus. I knew it was very important for me as a Senator to go to the people of Georgia and find out what was on their minds.

As I introduced myself in every speech I made, I said: As a Member of the Senate, and with our men and women deployed in harm's way, it is absolutely incumbent upon me, first and foremost, to address the Iraq war, to address my votes, and to hear from the people of Georgia on what they feel.

When I returned to the Senate last night and I was on the floor, I had the occasion to listen to a speech by the Senator from New York, questioning, again, our involvement in Iraq and, even in advance of the Petraeus report, taking a position that whatever it was, it would not be good enough and the United States of America should withdraw. So I thought today I would come to the floor and speak not only my mind but I think the consensus of the people of Georgia regarding where we are now and where we may be in the months ahead.

I visited civic clubs, chambers of commerce, garden clubs, the State chamber of commerce and sat for a meaningful hour with Lucy and Rick Harris, the parents of LT Noah Harris, who died 2 years ago fighting for the United States of America in Iraq. I tried to get every perspective. I even spent half a day with new recruits at Fort Benning at the Third ID on their fourth day of basic training.

Next week is an important week for the United States of America, and the report by General Petraeus is an important report. There are some Members of the Senate who are invested in, whatever it says, staying the course, there are some who are invested in coming home no matter what it says, when, in fact our actions should lie between. We should wait and hear what the general says. We should wait and hear what Ambassador Crocker says. But also it is time for us to start thinking about defining what victory is rather than declaring, as some have done, that we have lost.

We all know there are positive words coming back from Iraq. We know some positive things have happened. But we know it is not done, and we know it is not over. But I think, in defining what victory is, it is important to remember the speech the President of the United States made the day before we all voted to authorize the engagement in Iraq and enforcement of U.N. Resolution 1441.

The President established three precise goals for our involvement in Iraq. No. 1 was to depose Saddam Hussein and find, if they existed, the weapons of mass destruction that every nation in the world thought Saddam Hussein had and U.N. Resolution 1441 delineated; second, to allow the Iraqi people to hold free elections and establish a government of their choosing; and the third goal was to adequately train the Iraqi military so it could successfully defend and protect that fledgling new Government.

On goal No. 1, Saddam Hussein was captured, he was deposed, he was tried by the people of Iraq, and he was executed.

On the weapons of mass destruction, there are those who say we didn't find them. We found all the components. The problem when you find a weapon of mass destruction, when you have a smoking gun, it has already gone off. So sometimes finding the components