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House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Tuesday, December 4, 2007, at 2 p.m.

Senate

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 2007

The Senate met at 8:30 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 giver of every good and perfect gift, as we enter the Thanksgiving season, heighten our gratitude for the blessings You so lavishly bestow upon us. Deepen our appreciation for the resources so uncommonly plentiful in our land. Lord, so many in our world live in fear. You have enabled us to live in freedom. So many in our world are hungry, but we have plenty to eat. So many in our world can't read or write, but You have placed in our Nation great institutions of higher learning. So many in our world don't know You as Savior, but we are grateful for Your saving love.

Use our Senators today to touch hurting lives. Make them sensitive to the pain in our world. May they become such good stewards of their influence and power that they will be advocates for the voiceless, the weak, the poor, the elderly, and the neglected. Let compassion be the hallmark of their deliberations. We pray in the name of Him who gave His life for all. 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 Repub-

lic 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, November 16, 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.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 2363

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask the Chair to direct the clerk to report S. 2363, which is at the desk and due for a second reading.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2363) making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2008, and for other purposes.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I would object to any further proceedings with respect to this measure.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection is heard. The bill will be placed on the calendar.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, this morning, there will be debate prior to the first of three cloture votes. The first cloture vote is on the Motion to Proceed to S. 2340, the second cloture vote is on the Motion to Proceed to H.R. 4156, the House-passed Orderly and Responsible Iraq Redeployment bill, and the third vote is a vote on invoking cloture on the Harkin substitute amendment to the farm bill.

All debate time is equally divided between the two leaders, with each leader speaking for 5 minutes immediately prior to the first vote, which will occur at 9:30.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. President, I now ask unanimous consent that the vote time after the first vote be limited to 10 minutes.

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

Mr. REID. Mr. President, yesterday was a day of real negativity by our colleagues on the other side of the aisle. The country could have benefitted

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



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from passage of TRIA, the Terrorism Risk Insurance Act, which is so important. We must do that before the end of the year or it will bring business to a real slowdown here in America.

We also were unable to get the modernization of FHA done, even though it passed the House overwhelmingly and came out of committee here by a vote of 20 to 1. It is a shame there was an objection to that.

And also AMT, Mr. President. We tried a number of different ways to get that done. It was objected to every time we tried to do something. That is unfortunate. We will continue to work on these things and maybe before the day is out, we will get that done.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

MAKING EMERGENCY SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS—MOTION TO PROCEED

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will be 1 hour of debate prior to the cloture vote on the motion to proceed to S. 2340.

The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, today we have an opportunity before us. With the bill we will consider, we can do what the American people have asked us to do. We can begin to bring the war in Iraq to a close.

More than 3,800 of our servicemembers have died. In fact, as we know, 2007 has been the deadliest year so far in Iraq. And while we spend billions of dollars in Iraq, the list of safety, health, and infrastructure needs at home is stacking up.

Today it is time to begin redeploying our troops, rebuilding our military, and getting back to fighting the war on terror.

I was one of the 23 Senators who voted against the war in Iraq, and since then I have voted time and time again to get us out of this war. That is why I support the bridge funding that is being offered by Senator REID this morning that we will consider.

This bill provides \$50 billion to make sure our troops have what they need to do their job and it requires the President to begin redeploying troops out of Iraq within 30 days after he signs this into law. Our goal with this legislation is to be out of Iraq by the end of next year. And importantly, unlike the bill being offered by the other side, it is not a blank check. It requires American personnel, including the CIA, to follow Army Field Manual rules on torture, it requires the military to give our troops at least a year to rest in between tours of duty, and to ensure that they are battle ready before going into war. So this morning I urge our colleagues to seize this opportunity and put American lives, American security, and

America's future first and begin to change direction in Iraq.

Earlier this year, President Bush promised us his troop surge was going to improve security and allow Iraqis to stabilize their own country, but that is not working. The Washington Post reported Thursday that senior military commanders in Iraq are now saying that the inflexibility of the Shiite government is the key threat facing the U.S. effort there.

We have given the Iraqi Government every chance to step up and take control. We have done our part. The Iraqi Government has not done its part. And in the meantime—while more than 150,000 of our troops are policing a civil war in Iraq—we have become more vulnerable overseas. Terrorist attacks have risen almost fivefold since 9/11.

The President has hidden in his bunker and stubbornly refused to pursue the strategy needed to bring stability in Iraq. It is time for him to face facts. It is time for the Iraqis to take control of their own country and for us to redeploy our troops where they are most needed.

Our bill will allow us to rebuild our military, which is stretched too thin. Generals have testified to Congress that the war in Iraq has weakened our military readiness, destroyed our equipment, hurt our ability to respond to disasters here at home, and left our troops stressed and without fully rounded training. We need to make sure our troops are trained for whatever conflict they face, and changing the direction in Iraq allows us to do that.

We need to fight and win the war on terror and rebuild our military. We also need to be there to support our servicemembers, our veterans, and their families. Our veterans have had to struggle to get basic care because this administration has put them on the back burner. We learned this week that, tragically, thousands of our veterans didn't get the help they needed and they took their own lives. CBS reported that in 2005 alone, 6,256 veterans committed suicide—a rate twice that of other Americans. That is shocking.

The bill we are working on today, and that we hope we can get enough votes for, will ensure we are meeting our veterans' needs every step of the way, from the day they are recruited, while they are trained, while they are deployed, and as they transition back home.

Finally, while President Bush has waged war overseas, he has insisted on paying for it in ways that have left us tragically underfunded here at home. Democrats have taken the right steps to reinvest in the many parts of our budget that have been neglected. We have got to move forward. I hope we can move this legislation that has been offered on our side, because the war in Iraq is not making us more secure, it is making us less secure. It is hurting how our Nation is perceived around the world, it is hurting our military, it is

hurting our veterans, and it is hurting our security at home.

Today we have an opportunity to make progress, and I urge my colleagues to support the bridge funding and send a message to the President that it is time to change course in Iraq.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, how much time remains on the Democratic side?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator may speak for up to 7 minutes. The balance of the time on the Democratic side has already been allocated.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I request 5 minutes.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, today we face an opportunity to change the course and the direction of our policy in Iraq. The other body, the House of Representatives, has sent a provision—a bridge appropriations supplemental—to us, which includes language that would change this policy. It would change our missions, it would establish a goal to complete the transition to this new mission by the end of next year, and it would invest resources, energy, and effort in diplomacy as well as military activity. I think it is critical to do that.

We have, for the last several months, seen an increase in American forces on the ground, and the sheer presence and effectiveness of American forces has created some tactical momentum in terms of the security situation. But the fundamental challenge remains to get the policy right in Iraq, and that is the responsibility of the Government of Iraq. In January of this year, 2007, the President announced his surge and he said:

I have made it clear to the prime minister and Iraq's other leaders that America's commitment is not open-ended. If the Iraqi government does not follow through on its promises, it will lose the support of the American people and it will lose the support of the Iraqi people.

Well, those individuals in this body who oppose the House provision, the changed missions, are essentially declaring that there is an open-ended commitment; that we will not condition our resources and our effort in Iraq. I think that is wrong. And, in fact, it is wrong because what has been acknowledged over the last several days is the fact that the Iraqi political leaders have not seized on the situation in Iraq. They have not followed through.

The President proposed his surge because he thought the Government of Iraq would have the breathing space it needed to make progress in other critical areas. No such significant progress has been made. Yesterday, on the front page of *The Washington Post*, Tom Ricks wrote:

Senior military commanders here now portray the intransigence of Iraq's Shiite-dominated government as the key threat facing