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House of Representatives

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

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
November 20, 2013.

I hereby appoint the Honorable THOMAS MASSIE to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

JOHN A. BOEHNER,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 3, 2013, 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 1 hour and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

TALK TO IRAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. SCHIFF) for 5 minutes.

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, for much of the past decade, Iran's nuclear weapons development program has been a top national security concern for the United States. An Iran armed with nuclear weapons, capable of threatening Israel and other regional states, would touch off a nuclear arms race in the world's most volatile region.

For this reason, I have pressed for ever-increasing sanctions to isolate Iran from the global economy and have

supported a policy that leaves all options on the table, including military force. The stakes are too high to risk any miscalculation of our resolve by Iran's leaders.

In pushing for ever more punitive sanctions, I have held out the hope that increased economic pressure might force Iran to give up its nuclear weapons ambition and rejoin the community of nations. Now we are at a moment in the standoff with Tehran that will test that assumption.

In repeated statements since his election as Iran's new President in June, Hassan Rouhani expressed interest in exploring a negotiated end to the sanctions in exchange for walking back its nuclear program. While the first Geneva meeting did not lead to a breakthrough on an interim deal, the parties reportedly came close and will be reconvening today for a second round.

Some have called on the Senate to continue work on a new round of sanctions that was passed by the House with my support earlier this year. Advocates of this approach say that sanctions brought us to this point, and increased pressure during the negotiations will improve the likelihood of success at the bargaining table.

I disagree.

President Obama and Secretary of State Kerry have asked for more time to test Iran's willingness to enter into a tough and verifiable agreement, and I think we should give it to them.

I am pleased to see reports that there appears to be a bipartisan agreement in the Senate that we will hold off for now. We will know soon enough if the Iranian regime is serious about a new direction in its nuclear program and in its relationship with the West. If it is not, there will be ample opportunity to tighten the stranglehold on Iran's economy, and further sanctions will have my full support.

Some have warned that any relaxation of sanctions in an interim deal

risks unraveling the whole sanctions regime. This is not an illusory concern, and for this reason, any partial lifting of the freeze on Iranian assets must be quickly reversible if the Iranians balk on a final deal; but the absence of an interim deal is also problematic if it means another 6 months of Iranian enrichment. The Iranians must be made to understand that, if they walk away or cheat, the sanctions will be tightened to the point of strangulation—and the international community must be prepared to make good on that threat.

I have no illusions about the character of the Iranian regime; nor do I trust it. I do not believe that we can look into Rouhani's eyes and see the truth, let alone his soul. Even if Rouhani were serious about his intentions, there is no guarantee that Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khomeini, would bless any agreement that forces Iran to verifiably forswear the development of the bomb.

Ultimately, this is not about trust. It is not about making concessions to Iran or awarding the mullahs for thwarting the will of the international community for many years. It is about seizing the opportunity to see whether we can end Iran's nuclear weapons program without resorting to military action; and if we cannot, no doubt it will remain that the United States made every effort to resolve this grave threat diplomatically.

No negotiation is without risk, and the Iranians' track record is cause for great skepticism. The administration must not accept a bad deal, but neither should it be prevented from testing whether it can obtain a good deal that advances our security interests and those of our allies.

Yitzhak Rabin, the former Israeli Prime Minister who signed the Oslo Accords two decades ago, once noted:

You make peace with your enemies, not the Queen of Holland.

I agree and urge us to give diplomacy a chance.

□ 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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GENERAL JAMES D. THURMAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CARTER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CARTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate General James D. Thurman on his retirement from the United States Army after 38 years of dedicated, distinguished, and honorable service. He will retire on November 22, 2013, concluding his service over the past 2 years as commander of the U.S. forces in Korea. During both war and peace, General Thurman has served with courage and distinction in the face of tremendous adversity, demonstrating his commitment to America and to our people.

During his long and honorable career, General Thurman successfully commanded 10 different units at every echelon of command, including extensive operational combat deployments. Besides his command of the 4th Infantry Division and the Multinational Division in Baghdad, Iraq, he made significant contributions during the initial invasion of Iraq as the chief of operations for the Coalition Forces Land Component Command. Other notable assignments during his tenure include operations in Kosova as the chief of the Plans and Policy Division for Allied Forces Southern Europe and battalion executive officer in the 1st Cavalry Division during Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm.

In his final assignment, General Thurman served as the senior U.S. military officer in Korea where he was responsible for 28,500 U.S. forces stationed there. His top command priority was to deter and defend against North Korean provocations and aggression and, should deterrence fail, to be prepared to "fight tonight" and win. He ensured the readiness of his multinational, combined and joint forces through a broad range of actions.

As a result of changes he directed during the two annual multinational, combined and joint exercises in Korea, forces under his command became the most mission-focused training exercises in U.S.-ROK history. His initial assessment of existing capabilities on the peninsula resulted in the addition of an armed reconnaissance squadron and other changes to better prepare and position U.S. forces to respond. His steady hand and strong relationships with his ROK counterparts, as well as with senior civilian and military leaders in the U.S., were critical to safely navigating several operational crises.

A native of Marietta, Oklahoma, General Thurman graduated from East Central Oklahoma University, where he earned his commission through the Reserve Officers' Training Corps. His first assignment was with the 4th Infantry Division, which he later commanded and deployed with to Iraq. Since his first assignment, he and his wife, Delia, known as "Dee" Thurman, have moved over 25 times in 38 years, including four tours in Germany, two at the National Training Center, and

three in my district at Fort Hood, Texas. During that time, they raised two daughters, and they are now proud grandparents.

Retirement is to be celebrated and enjoyed. It is not the end of a career but, rather, the beginning of a new adventure. I commend General Thurman for his selfless service to the Nation and to the United States Army. I wish him and his wife the best in the years ahead, and I welcome them as new constituents to the 31st Congressional District.

CUTS TO SNAP HURT VETERANS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, next week is Thanksgiving. All of us in this Chamber will go back to our districts, and we will celebrate this holiday with our families, usually with a big turkey dinner with all of the fixings and with all of these wonderful desserts; but, Mr. Speaker, for millions and millions of Americans, they won't have anything to celebrate next week because they don't have enough to put food on their tables for their families. There are close to 50 million people in the United States of America—the richest country in the history of the world—who are hungry. Close to 17 million of them are kids.

Mr. Speaker, in the face of these terrible statistics, we have a Congress that is working overtime to make life for many of these people even more miserable. There has already been a cut in SNAP as a result of the ending of the Recovery Act moneys that provided an extra boost to the program. So everybody who is on this program, on November 1, received a cut in their benefit—a benefit that is, on average, about \$1.50 per meal per day. They received a cut. On top of that, the House of Representatives passed a farm bill that has an additional \$40 billion cut in this program.

That would result in millions of families who currently receive the benefit losing it altogether. It would result in hundreds of thousands of children who right now are able to take advantage of a free breakfast and lunch program at school to lose that benefit. It would also result in about 170,000 veterans losing the benefit.

So I want to talk a little bit today about our veterans and about how they are being adversely impacted by some of the policies that we are pursuing here in the House of Representatives.

On November 1, Jonathan Capehart of The Washington Post wrote a column entitled, "Oh, SNAP. Veterans Get Dissed by the GOP." I want to read the first few paragraphs of his piece:

Remember all the howling by Republicans about the closed monuments and war memorials during the Ted Cruz government shutdown? Remember how they helped World War II vets storm their memorial on the

very first day? Remember how one of the Members of Congress snarled at a Park Service ranger for trying to abide by the law and keep the memorial closed to the public? Remember how the likes of Cruz and Sarah Palin railed against President Obama for the cuts to veterans' benefits that resulted from the Cruz-caused shutdown?

"Our veterans should be above political games," Cruz said at the Million Vets March on October 13. "Veterans have proven they are not timid, and we will not be timid in calling out anybody that uses the military as pawns." Palin said at the same event, "We can only be America, home of the free, if we are America, home of the brave."

So, pardon the forthcoming blue language: Where the hell are they now that a multi-billion-dollar cut to the food stamp program has hit thousands of veterans squarely in their wallets?

He is referring to the cut that occurred on November 1.

According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, "In any given month, a total of 900,000 veterans nationwide lived in households that relied on SNAP, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, to provide food for their families."

In any given year or in any given month, millions and millions of dollars of SNAP funds are spent at military commissaries to help feed military members and their families who struggle against hunger.

Mr. Speaker, I raise this issue because there seems to be somewhat of a contradiction here in this people's House of Representatives. We are all very good at kind of talking the talk. People get up time and time again, and they talk about how important and how wonderful our veterans are. We all go back to our districts on Veterans Day and on Memorial Day, and we praise our veterans, and we thank them for their service to their country and for their sacrifice; but when it comes to making sure that our veterans have enough to eat, that they have enough food to put on their tables for their families, we are worse than indifferent in this House of Representatives. We are making things worse for them.

If this cut that the House of Representatives passed goes into effect—this \$40 billion cut in SNAP—as I said, 170,000 veterans and their families will lose their benefit altogether. This is on top of a cut in their benefit that they have already received.

□ 1015

I don't know what people think is meant by praising our veterans. But instead of talking the talk, we ought to walk the walk a little bit more. We ought to make sure that the men and women who served our country, who this Congress voted to send over to Iraq and send over to Afghanistan, we ought to ensure that when they come back that they at least have enough to eat. Many veterans that come back have a tough time getting back into the workforce, and yet some of the language that was put in the House farm bill would actually make it almost impossible for them to get this benefit.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues as we approach Thanksgiving to not forget our veterans.