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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. MRVAN).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
November 4, 2021.

I hereby appoint the Honorable FRANK J. MRVAN 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, 2021, 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 time equally allocated between the parties 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.

AFGHANISTAN AFTERMATH

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

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Mr. Speaker, the President hasn't mentioned Afghanistan since he turned the phased, conditional withdrawal under Trump into an unconditional surrender to the Taliban. Nor has he yet found the time to see, much less admit, the chaos that his policies have produced by collapsing our southern border.

Yet, putting these things out of sight and mind doesn't change the dangers

they have unleashed. I am afraid that together, they pose a terrifying prospect for our country that Americans should prepare themselves to face in coming days.

Trump's phased withdrawal included keeping Bagram Air Base. This strategic American asset ensured that U.S. airpower could be projected throughout the region as both a bulwark to support the Afghan defense forces and a deterrent to the extremist regimes throughout the Middle East. In addition, Bagram included the Parwan Detention Facility that held, under Afghan control, between 5,000 and 7,000 hardened terrorists.

Instead, Mr. Biden ordered—and his woke generals executed—a surprise abandonment of Bagram in the dead of night without even notifying our allies. It took the Afghan Government by complete surprise and set off a shockwave that resulted in the rapid collapse of Afghan forces. In turn, this meant not only the loss of billions of dollars of U.S. military equipment to the very forces that attacked us on 9/11, but also the release of the most dangerous terrorists in the world.

Now, we know where one of those terrorists went. Ten days later, Abdul Rehman detonated a bomb at the airport in Kabul, killing 13 of our servicemen and -women, including a constituent of mine, Sergeant Nicole Gee of Roseville, California.

That is what one of them did. We still don't know where the thousands of other terrorists released from Bagram are or the plans they are pursuing.

I think it is a very good bet that more than a few of them are making their way right now to our open southern border. We know the Border Patrol has intercepted a number of known terrorists already. The Government of Panama told Congressman GONZALES from Texas that it intercepted 52 known terrorists with intent to make their way into the United States and

tried in vain to warn the Biden administration.

What we don't know is how many have already infiltrated our country among the tens of thousands admitted by the Biden administration since the surrender of Bagram. We don't know how many more are among the gotaways who escaped the Border Patrol while it has been overwhelmed processing the masses who responded to Biden's open border invitation. Nor do we know how many radicalized Taliban or ISIS-K are among the nearly 100,000 evacuees being admitted into the United States from Afghanistan.

The Homeland Security Secretary, Mr. Mayorkas, informed us that it is not necessary for them to show that they assisted U.S. forces, but only that we don't know of any hostile actions that they have committed. In other words, if we don't know who they are or what they plan, that is sufficient for permanent residence in the United States.

Americans should brace themselves for what is surely coming. If these terrorists, unleashed because of the President's policy in Afghanistan, are able to make their way into our country because of the President's immigration policy, I am afraid that the price paid by innocent Americans will be horrendous. The mass bombings we read about in other countries may soon arrive on our shores, and if they do, the responsibility will rest squarely with the President, his administration, and his apologists in both public office and the press.

On October 14, I requested Mr. Mayorkas to provide the number of foreign nationals encountered on our southern border by nationality, the number that were in the Terrorist Screening Database, and whether any were imprisoned at Bagram Air Base. As of this date, we have received no response.

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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Mr. President, wake up. This terror is coming. For all we know, it is already on its way. For all we know, it is already here. For God's sake, secure our border, start enforcing our immigration laws, fully vet any asylum claims or refugees before they are admitted into our country. Or else, be prepared to bear the full condemnation of history for the terrors you will have set in motion against your country and your countrymen, betraying the highest trust in the land.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to address their remarks to the Chair and not to a perceived viewing audience.

TRENDING TOWARD AUTHORITARIANISM

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

Mr. QUIGLEY. Mr. Speaker, author and historian Timothy Snyder said in his book, "On Tyranny: Twenty Lessons from the Twentieth Century," that "history does not repeat, but it does instruct."

Indeed, we must constantly work to preserve our democratic institutions from those who wish to threaten them because one of the most powerful instructions or lessons from the last century is that democracy is deeply fragile, and more importantly, it can trend and fall into authoritarianism.

There are those in this country who are ignoring the lessons of the past, or worse. Some of the most popular news programs, Facebook groups, and social media networks are those that spread deliberate or negligent misinformation for partisan gain, sure, but for financial gain especially.

In 2018, the American Institutional Confidence Poll found that only 69 percent of Americans believed democracy is always preferable to any other kind of government. The remaining 31 percent either reported that they were open to authoritarianism under some circumstances or they were so disillusioned with politics that the type of government didn't matter.

While 69 percent may not seem alarming, it is nearly the same number of Hungarians who reported that democratic values, such as multiparty elections, were "very important" the same year that autocratic Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban began his ascent to power.

Alarming, American conservative pundits have been praising Orban for his brand of strongman authoritarianism for months, while Orban's rule has been marked by state control of the media; restrictions on LGBTQ and immigrant communities; and suppression of free speech, a free media, and political opposition.

Despite Orban's assault on global democratic values, conservative commentators here at home have endorsed his policies and have held him up as an example of what Americans should

look for in a leader. These pundits have praised him for rejecting immigrants and refugees and have embraced his brand of ethnoreligious nationalism.

This praise for autocratic leaders and authoritarianism is dangerous.

Perhaps many believe that what happened in Hungary, the swift consolidation of political power and manipulation of political institutions, could not happen here. But one of the important lessons of the Trump Presidency is that we cannot afford to be complacent.

Over the past 4 years, we watched media and leaders on the right excuse or even support former President Trump as he leaned into authoritarianism and incited violence. During his time in office, the former President's actions often echoed those of strongmen like Orban.

The former President used his office to target political rivals, including the efforts in Ukraine that ultimately led to his impeachment, treated the Department of Justice as his own personal police force, violently put down protests against him, used the Presidency to enrich himself, embraced political strongmen across the globe, and intentionally inflamed political tensions to his own benefit.

I believe history can and should continue to inform us, but we don't have to look back very far. The trends developing around the world and in our own country are warning about the threat of authoritarianism.

At a time when political polarization has led to violent attacks on democratic institutions across the country and in this very room, it is reckless to be feeding into these divisions.

They are preying on deep ideological divides in this country and on their followers' fears. They exploit economic anxieties and concerns over immigration and globalization. They advocate for a society where the voices of those who offer different opinions are threatened or silenced.

A poll just released by the Public Religion Research Institute found that 40 percent of those who subscribe to the farthest right media agree with the statement that "true American patriots may have to resort to violence in order to save this country."

These statistics should be alarming to all of us. But those who peddle incendiary and harmful rhetoric are using the trends toward authoritarianism to their cynical advantage.

Authoritarianism thrives on polarization and uncertainty. Those who exploit, not repair, these cracks in our democracy do so for the explicit purpose of increasing their own power.

We must recognize their true intentions and work to preserve the democracy they seek to threaten.

All media outlets have an obligation to present Orban and others like him as they are, repressive demagogues who threaten liberty and the rule of law.

We must continue to recognize our common interests and those that have

made our country the envy of the world: our freedoms of expression, economic mobility, and our deep cultural richness.

Orban's rule is a warning to all of us.

RECOGNIZING STAFF OF LEVINE CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. NORMAN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. NORMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to enter into the 117th CONGRESSIONAL RECORD an example of service beyond the call of duty of two surgeons and an amazing team of nurses and staff working at the Levine Children's Hospital located in Charlotte, North Carolina.

On Sunday, August 22, 2021, while enjoying a relaxing day at our family farm, our 5-year-old grandson, Blair Beckham, got his hand entangled in the steel winch located at the front of a four-wheeler while attempting to pull a canoe out of a pond.

I was able to pull his hand out of the winch just before his entire arm would have been severed by the steel pulley, but not before his index finger was severed and attached only by a single artery and his middle finger remained attached, but all veins, bones, and joints were totally shattered.

I immediately wrapped his hand in a towel and drove to the emergency room at our local hospital, where he spent 3 hours before the ambulance transported him to Levine Children's Hospital located in Charlotte, North Carolina.

The ambulance arrived at the Levine Children's Hospital at 9 p.m., and it was there that Dr. Dan Lewis, a faculty member of OrthoCarolina and a member of the American Association of Hand Surgeons, and Dr. Keith Nord, who had instructed the staff at the emergency room at Piedmont Medical Center on the medical procedures to take while Blair was being transported to the Levine Children's Hospital and who was a specialist in hand surgery and serving a fellowship at the hospital, examined Blair and scheduled him immediately for emergency surgery that night.

The expedient and easy determination for these doctors to make would have been to amputate both fingers, as the loss of two fingers was not life-threatening and the surgery involved attaching the index finger, which was dangling by a lone vein, which was the size of one-fourth of the width of a human hair, and totally reconstructing the middle finger, which was completely shattered. The decision, however, was made to attempt to save the two fingers and to perform a surgery that lasted over 5 hours, beginning on a Sunday night at 11:30 p.m. and ending at 4:30 a.m.

Blair stayed in Levine Children's Hospital for 8 days, August 22 through August 29, where he had medical leech