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House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 4, 2003, at 12:30 p.m.

Senate

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 31, 2003

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore [Mr. STEVENS].

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

O God, our strength and refuge, who shows us unfailing love, we see Your majesty in the beauty of the Earth and the glory of the skies. Your voice speaks in the thunder and You form the mighty oak. You reign as King forever, blessing Your people with peace.

Lord, protect us from destructive forces and rescue us from setbacks that ambush our dreams. Rise and help us, and we will sing about Your power. Let the world come to know Your faithfulness, which is as enduring as the heavens.

Teach our Senators to walk in Your ways and to trust Your promises, which cannot fail. Bless the members of their families, who share the challenges of their work. We wait upon You to supply our needs and to quench our thirst for purpose. Blessed be Your name forever and ever. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The PRESIDENT pro tempore 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.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, this morning we will be in a period of morning business to allow Senators to speak for up to 10 minutes each. As I announced last night, there will be no rollcall votes during today's session.

Last evening, after a lengthy session with 14 rollcall votes, we were able to finish work on a number of items. We were able to pass the Healthy Forests bill as well as complete action last night on the Foreign Operations appropriations bill. We were also able to reach agreements on a number of other important matters, including the Iraq-Afghanistan supplemental, the Interior appropriations conference report, the continuing resolution, as well as the Internet tax moratorium legislation.

Earlier in the day, the Senate considered the climate change bill and failed to invoke cloture on the nomination of Charles Pickering.

As a reminder, the next vote will occur on Monday at some point, most likely between 5:30 and 6 o'clock. That vote will be on the adoption of the conference report to accompany the Interior appropriations. Also on Monday, the Senate will consider the Iraq supplemental conference report; however, that conference report will be completed without a rollcall vote.

I also remind my colleagues that earlier in the week we reached a consent

on a fair credit reporting bill. I expect the Senate would turn to that measure on Tuesday.

I mentioned a few moments ago the Internet tax moratorium bill. What we agreed to last night was that we would address that bill next week, and as part of that agreement, that we would not address it prior to Thursday. With the current extension expiring, it was my hope that the Senate could have finished that bill last night or today, prior to that deadline, but a few Members have raised concerns and desire amendments. Thus, it will be our intent to finish that bill at the end of next week, rather than this week. The agreement, again, will lead us to turn to that on Thursday, and I expect, after giving Senators the opportunity to offer, hopefully, relevant amendments, that we would move that bill toward passage on either Thursday or Friday.

Another item that will demand the Senate's attention next week is the Syria accountability bill. Senator SANTORUM has been working on getting that measure cleared, and we hope to schedule that vote very early next week.

Finally, I add we will continue to consider the available appropriations conference reports as they become available.

Having said all that, you can see that next week is shaping up to be another very active week of floor action. With Members' continued cooperation, we can finish our business and still adjourn at the earliest opportunity this year. I do thank Members for their cooperation and participation in allowing

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



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us to proceed with the business of the Senate.

RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The deputy Democratic leader.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, one question I have gotten over here several times, and I have raised this issue on the floor, Senator MCCONNELL has said on two separate occasions that a week from this Monday, we will be working. People are changing schedules and all.

My personal feeling is we should be working. I hope the leader, whatever the final decision—I understand the preliminary decision is we would be working a week from Monday, more so than just 5 o'clock at night.

If we are to have any hope of getting out of here in time for important events such as people's birthdays and events of that nature, we have to really move forward. I say that actually recognizing the Presiding Officer has a very important date coming up—it is the 18th or 20th, or something like that.

Seriously, if we can have a signoff on what you are going to do that day, it would be important to everybody.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, in response, through the Chair, the intention right now is to work Monday, make that a full working day. As we finished last night at about midnight, a lot of people were saying we can't work any harder than what we are doing right now in terms of taking these bills one by one, and that is the way we are going to have to work, unfortunately—or fortunately—in order to complete what we have before us; thus the intentions for the day before Veterans Day.

The real issue, obviously, for our colleagues, because they understand, but for others who are listening to understand, Veterans Day is a day we want to be able to honor, and a lot of people will have to change their plans because they have to be flying to the west coast. But I want to make it clear our intention is to stay here and work. In truth, that is what the people around the country expect us to do. We have work right now. We have the Nation's business before us, in terms of the appropriations bills, the many conference reports that we are waiting for, the very important conference in terms of energy and Medicare, which is underway. So it is critical that we continue work on that Monday.

It is my intention, of course, on Veterans Day, to be able to respect that day accordingly, as we go forward. I think we will be able to announce more about that in the early part of next week. The schedule constantly changes. I was very hopeful we could complete this Internet tax issue. That was really our goal. We worked very hard, but, again, out of consideration for our Members, we have had to move that forward a week. We intend to finish that the end of next week, and it is critical we do so.

It is important for our colleagues to understand because about this time of the year everybody is sort of sitting and waiting to see who is going to make the next move. At this point, we are trying to wrap everything up for the session. It means everybody needs to recognize decisions have to be made, very tough decisions. I am speaking in part to the conferees who are addressing issues right now. There are one or two outstanding issues in these conferences. Now is the time to make those decisions. If not, we will be here all the way up to Thanksgiving, and after Thanksgiving, and up to the December holidays. That is really unacceptable to me. But now is the time to wrap things up, over these next several weeks.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I have said on the floor previously that the veterans of America recognize how important our work is here. So much that we do reflects on these different programs. I also think if things are as difficult as they appear, we may have to do something on that Tuesday. That will certainly be up to the leader. But I also recognize that other than Senator FRIST and Senator DASCHLE, no one has had a more difficult job these last few weeks than the Presiding Officer and Senator BYRD. Trying to marshal through these appropriations bills is extremely difficult.

But we have made really good progress. To think we have been able in just the last few weeks to do as much as we have here on the Senate floor with the appropriations bills is significant. Debating the Interior appropriations conference report this coming Monday is also important. I think there is light at end of the tunnel. With the chairman cajoling, along with the Presiding Officer, we can continue to make progress.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will now be a period of morning business with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

RECALL THE IRAQI ARMY

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, last week a memorandum on the war on ter-

rorism from Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld to his top subordinates was leaked to the press. In that memo, Secretary Rumsfeld asked a number of questions, including the following: Is our current situation such that "the harder we work, the behinder we get?" Then he asked: "What else should we be considering?"

Well, I am dismayed that Secretary Rumsfeld says publicly something so differently than what he has said privately. I am glad he is looking for new direction since our post-Saddam policy is not working well, given the sustained and increasing attacks on our forces.

Secretary Rumsfeld asked—again—"What else should we be considering?" Well, the President of the Iraqi Governing Council has made a specific recommendation for us to consider: that the regular Iraqi Army units be called up to assist our troops in providing security for the reconstruction of their country.

Surely it is worthy of our consideration, when Iyad Alawi, this month's serving President of the Iraqi Governing Council—the 25-member body selected by the United States to represent the Iraqi people—is making a suggestion to change course.

He wrote an important opinion piece entitled "America Must Let Iraq Rebuild Itself," which was published by the New York Times on October 19. The main premise of the article is that "ultimately, only Iraqis themselves can restore security, rebuild national institutions, enact a constitution and elect a democratic government."

I believe all of us would agree with that premise. For Mr. Alawi, the vital step is to "call up the Iraqi Army and the national police force [for] at least up to the mid-officer level" to deal with the insecurity and chaos in the country.

Mr. Alawi believes the Iraqi officer corps will have to be vetted to remove those who have committed crimes under the old regime. He points out that most of the Iraqi Army's soldiers are "Iraqi patriots who chose not fight for Saddam Hussein" and "would probably return to their units and contribute to their country's future." He argues that it would be "much easier and quicker to retrain and reequip them within their existing organizational structure than to start from scratch."

Mr. Alawi argues that these steps would not only relieve the burden on American troops but also would gain substantial good will among Iraqis.

Tom Friedman, writing in the New York Times, on October 23, is of a similar mind. He urges the administration to declare the following: "We thank all the nations who offered troops, but we think the Iraqi people can and must secure their own country. So we're inviting all former Iraqi Army soldiers (not Republican Guards) to report back to duty. For every two Iraqi battalions that return to duty (they can weed out