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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 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.

Eternal Lord God, source of goodness, forgive our departures from Your plans. We have desired to rule and not to serve. We have wanted to avenge ourselves and not forgive. We have focused on getting and not giving, on speaking and not listening. We have been too busy to spend time with You, and the voice of conscience has condemned us. We have learned too little from our mistakes. Forgive us not because of our goodness but because of Your mercy.

Today, bless our Senators with Your peace. Help them to honor You with their thoughts and actions. Prepare each of us for a future of hope and trust. We pray in Your righteous Name. 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.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, in a few moments, we will return to the consid-

eration of the Commerce-Justice-Science appropriations bill. We are very close to an agreement which will allow us to finish that bill at an early hour today. The two managers have worked diligently over the course of the last week and this week—it has been now 2 weeks on the bill—and we are now ready to proceed to final passage after we dispose of a few remaining issues. I expect that we will line up a series of stacked votes beginning sometime around 10:45 or 11 this morning, and we will alert Senators once we lock in that time.

Once we complete the Commerce-Justice-Science appropriations bill, we will start consideration of the Agriculture appropriations bill. Senators should begin preparing for that bill and I encourage Senators to notify their respective chairman and ranking member if they intend to offer amendments. It is helpful for the two leaders and the bill managers to know in advance what amendments will be offered so that we can proceed in an orderly way.

HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the monthlong celebration honoring the heritage of Hispanic Americans. That monthlong celebration begins today.

Nearly 40 years ago, Congress authorized President Lyndon Johnson to proclaim National Hispanic Heritage Week. Two decades later, George Herbert Walker Bush expanded the celebration to 4 weeks. National Hispanic Heritage Month was born. Every year we set aside a month to pay special regard to the contributions of Hispanic Americans.

Over the centuries, Hispanic Americans have profoundly affected the course of human history. Their influence predates the birth of our Nation, tracing back to the first footsteps of Spanish explorers now more than 400 years ago.

DeSoto and his men were the first to discover the mighty Mississippi. Coronado's expedition unearthed the Grand Canyon. DeAnza blazed a trail from Mexico to California's Pacific coast.

Since the dawn of early explorers, millions of men and women from Mexico, Puerto Rico, Cuba, Central America, South America, and Spain have continued the tradition of settling in America. They have come in search of freedom, peace, and prosperity, and they have gotten far more than they sought.

Through the ages, Hispanic Americans have left an indelible mark on the history, the culture, and the values of our Nation. It is those values and contributions that we celebrate.

Some names stand out. David Barkley was the first Hispanic American to receive the Congressional Medal of Honor. Barkley voluntarily swam the frosty Meuse River in France during World War I to gather information behind enemy lines. He gave his life to our country, drowning on his swim back to land.

Luis Alvarez, a Nobel Prize recipient, revolutionized the safety of air travel by inventing the ground control radar system for aircraft landings.

Ellen Ochoa was the world's first Hispanic-American astronaut.

Sara Martinez Tucker, who I had the opportunity to meet at a dinner I recently hosted, her story intrigued me so much. A native of Laredo, Sara worked her way up from humble beginnings to be the first Hispanic female to hold an executive position at AT&T. Time Magazine recently named her one of the top 25 most influential Hispanic Americans. But most important is what she has done to help other Hispanic Americans realize their own dreams. As CEO of the Hispanic Scholarship Fund, she has grown the scholarship fund from \$3 million tenfold to \$30 million in scholarship money distributed every year, and she is not stopping there. Sara wants to nearly

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



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double the percentage of Hispanics with college degrees by 2010, and I believe with her determination, she will accomplish just that.

David Barkley, Luis Alvarez, Ellen Ochoa, Sara Martinez Tucker, Alex Rodriguez, Nancy Lopez, Richard Serra, Rita Hayworth, Cesar Chavez, Alberto Gonzales, Jose Gonzalez—I mention Jose because he has a special place in my heart. Jose was the chief surgical resident at Massachusetts General Hospital when I was in my training in Boston. I was an intern at the time. Jose walked me through my very first hernia operation, an operation I have performed many times since that first occasion, an occasion which I remember vividly, an operation I continue to perform in Africa on medical mission work.

The list goes on. There are doctors, entrepreneurs, public servants, athletes, artists, philanthropists, scientists, scholars. In all of these professions, in all of these fields, the huge contributions that have been made in the past, all have contributed to that rich fabric of American life. We are a more vibrant nation and we are a more vibrant people because of it.

These names stand out, but there are many others, large and small, who move America forward every day. They are the countless heroes who have fought in our wars, who work in our hospitals, who teach in our schools, and who serve in our Government. Many have come to America with a simple hope of a better life and through hard work they have achieved that goal. We honor their character, their determination, and their enduring optimism.

It is the spirit of the American character which gives flight to the American dream and has fueled the progress of our great Nation.

Today as we begin a monthlong celebration of Hispanic heritage, I join with all Americans in recognizing the invaluable role of Hispanic Americans in shaping and enriching these United States.

MAKING APPROPRIATIONS FOR SCIENCE, THE DEPARTMENTS OF STATE, JUSTICE, AND COMMERCE, AND RELATED AGENCIES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2006

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 2862, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 2862) making appropriations for Science, the Departments of State, Justice, and Commerce, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2006, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Dorgan amendment No. 1665, to prohibit weakening any law that provides safeguards from unfair foreign trade practices.

Lieberman amendment No. 1678, to provide financial relief for individuals and entities affected by Hurricane Katrina.

Kerry/Landrieu amendment No. 1695, to strengthen the loan, procurement assistance, and management education programs of the Small Business Administration in order to help small businesses and homeowners hurt by Hurricane Katrina meet their existing obligations, finance their businesses, and maintain and create jobs, thereby providing stability to the national economy.

Mr. FRIST. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask to speak as in morning business.

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

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, as I mentioned a few moments ago, we will begin voting sometime around 10:45 or 11. The plans are being finalized, and we will be back with a more specific announcement as to when that time will be as we address the amendments.

MEETING PRESIDENT ALVARO URIBE OF COLOMBIA

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, on a separate issue, I want to take the opportunity to mention a meeting I am honored to be hosting later today with Colombian President Alvaro Uribe, who is visiting our country and who will be here with us in the U.S. Capitol. He has served as Colombia's President since his election in 2002 and has done a remarkable job. I have had the privilege of meeting with President Uribe during visits, both here in Washington as well as on a trip that I took to Colombia in January of 2004. Throughout his term, the President has enjoyed high levels of popular support. He has earned it. He deserves it. He ran on the platform of public security and he has delivered.

Since his election, Colombia has seen significant decreases in homicides, decreases in crime, decreases in acts of terrorism. Coca and poppy cultivation have decreased by over a third while he served in office. President Uribe has worked hard to promote greater respect for the rule of law, institute judicial reform, and improve Colombia's record on human rights.

Colombia is one of our Nation's strongest allies and our close partnership is key to advancing U.S. interests in the Western Hemisphere. Colombia is the third most populous country in Latin America after Brazil and Mexico. Because of its size and strategic location, Colombia is a key player in regional issues. In addition, it has played an active role in multilateral institutions such as the United Nations and the Organization of American States.

The close bilateral relationship that America enjoys with Colombia centers on our efforts to counter terrorism and stop illicit drug traffic. Together, our

two countries are working hard to promote stability and promote security, to promote prosperity in Colombia and the region. I look forward to discussing all of these issues with the President this afternoon.

At the top of the list, we will address the President's efforts to defeat Colombia's insurgent groups. Three main illegal armed groups operate in Colombia: The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, FARC; the National Liberation Army, or ELN; and the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia, known as AUC. All three thrive on the illegal narcotics trade. The U.S. Secretary of State has designated all three groups as foreign terrorist organizations. For years, FARC, ELN, and AUC have terrorized the Colombian people with bombings, murders, kidnappings, extortion, hijackings, and the list goes on. They have kidnapped dozens of American citizens, and they have murdered at least 10.

Their drug-sponsored terrorist activity has created destabilizing effects on Colombia and the region and threatens the United States. The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration estimates that more than 80 percent of the worldwide powder cocaine supply and approximately 90 percent of the powder cocaine smuggled into the United States is produced in Colombia. Colombian producers also account for 50 percent of the heroin entering the United States. The United States spends hundreds of millions of dollars each year in Colombia to train the counternarcotics forces, shore up their civilian counterdrug efforts, and help provide crop alternatives for farmers. We are getting results.

Aerial eradication alone has cut coca and poppy cultivation by a third since 2001.

Human rights is another topic that the President and I and leadership will be discussing. Members of Congress have repeatedly and rightly voiced concerns about continuing human rights violations in Colombia. FARC, ELN, and AUC are notorious culprits. I hope to learn more about how President Uribe plans to demobilize these troops and address allegations of human rights abuses within Colombia's Armed Forces.

The United States and Colombia have worked hard to build a solid foundation for a close, cooperative relationship. I look forward to hearing the President's ideas on how we can continue to work together on all of these issues of huge concern. I urge my colleagues in the Senate to continue to support President Uribe in his efforts, his convictions, his determination to fight the illicit drug trade, strengthen the rule of law, expand economic opportunity and foster peace and stability in his country and in the region. When we strengthen the security of our neighbors, we increase our security at home.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. MURKOWSKI). The clerk will call the roll.