



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 109th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 152

WASHINGTON, MONDAY, JULY 24, 2006

No. 98

House of Representatives

The House met at 12:30 p.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. CONAWAY).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
July 24, 2006.

I hereby appoint the Honorable K. MICHAEL CONAWAY to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING HOUR DEBATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 31, 2006, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to not to exceed 30 minutes, and each Member, except the majority leader, the minority leader, or the minority whip, limited to not to exceed 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. STEARNS) for 5 minutes.

PROGRESS IN AFGHANISTAN

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor to talk about progress in Afghanistan. There has been a lot of publicity lately about questioning that progress.

My colleagues, since the onset of Operation Enduring Freedom, Afghanistan has made real and substantive progress. To understand the degree to which this progress can be measured, it is important, of course, to remember the many obstacles that we faced in Afghanistan.

Consider, for example, that life expectancy is only 45 years; 71 percent of Afghans over 15 cannot read or write; 91 percent of all rural women are illiterate. Three out of five girls do not go to school, and most of the existing infrastructure has been destroyed. Under those conditions, we realize that progress still is able to proceed.

Now, in testimony before the House Armed Services Committee, James Kunder, the Assistant Administrator for Asia and the Near East for USAID said, "Historically, the vast majority of Afghans have not had access to electricity or safe water. In some remote, mountainous villages, the nearest paved road is a 2-week walk away. And when USAID first arrived in Kabul, much of the population had been severely traumatized after years and years of war. Most Afghans did not remember a time when conflict was not a major part of their lives."

So, my colleagues, against this background, the overthrow of the Taliban by the United States and coalition forces, the rebuilding of roads and infrastructure, and the widespread participation by the Afghan people in presidential and parliamentary elections is a monumental and historic achievement. Afghanistan continues to confront obstacles, but the colossal steps forward that have already been taken should not be underestimated.

In order to increase business opportunities and develop a private sector in Afghanistan, the USAID's Alternative Livelihoods' Private Sector Development Unit opened their first Eastern Regional Business Development Center in Jalalabad. Now, my colleagues, this office works closely with local government, national and international communities, to promote business enterprises, effective services and full employment.

Approximately 6,000 businesses have already registered in one of the provinces. There have been successes in the

agriculture sector as well, including 600 farmers in the Jalalabad region who have received training in harvest handling, packaging and marketing to improve their business opportunities. This program is developing a regional market information system to develop quality standards and retail marketing measures for farmers and business people.

Over 4,000 women in 13 districts have benefitted from the micro-enterprise development projects that train them and increase their income potential. Said one of these recipients, a mother of five in one province, quote, I learned how to sell and to market my products during the USAID training, so I now sell cheese in the neighborhood and in the nearest markets. The skill of cheesemaking has helped me and my family to stand on our own two feet and depend on this, instead of poppy cultivation.

Furthermore, Afghanistan's reconstruction has made considerable progress during the past 4 years. Recently, the World Bank reported that "led by the government with international support, but relying most on the energy and initiative of the Afghan people themselves, reconstruction has resulted in solid achievements. Economic growth, unprecedented primary school enrollments, including for girls, great expansion of immunization, rehabilitation of major highways, a new and stable currency, promulgation of a new constitution, presidential and parliamentary elections, return of refugees and the demobilization of militias . . . Yet the challenges still remain enormous."

Since 2001, the United States has dedicated \$60.5 million for primary education to construct schools, train teachers, provide books and supplies. Currently, approximately 5.3 million Afghan children are enrolled in schools, and 40 percent of them are females.

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.



Printed on recycled paper.

H5569

In contrast, on June 11, 2006, the Taliban extremists burned a school and have been implicated or have claimed responsibility for damaging more than 45 schools, assassinating teachers and intimidating school-age children in the past year. Notwithstanding the Taliban threat, three volunteer teachers and 60 students traveled as far as 9 miles to attend the first day of school outside of their city in Afghanistan. That is progress.

The United States has provided more than \$87 million to health care programs throughout Afghanistan. This funding includes programs to train women as health care workers, community midwives, and improving health care, including the construction of women's wings at hospitals and dormitories. As of March, 2006, USAID has completed 454 clinics that serve 340,000 patients per month. Overall, the U.S. has provided basic health services to more than 5 million people in 14 provinces. USAID has trained over 6,000 Afghan community health care professionals.

As we can see, Mr. Speaker, much progress has been made in Afghanistan, but much work still remains. We must continue this process towards a free and prosperous Afghanistan.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 37 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until 2 p.m.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. CONAWAY) at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer: Lord God, as the voice of truth, You tell us: "Whoever perseveres to the end will be saved."

On this Monday, as we embrace this week and the work You require of us, both as this institution of leadership and as Americans, Your children born of freedom, give us the grace of perseverance.

May daily work and prayerful hopes guide us a step at a time to reach the goals that will bring fulfillment to the promises of our constitutional lives as a people and lead us to find eternal reward for just deeds, both now and forever. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. POE 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.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, July 21, 2006.

Hon. J. DENNIS HASTERT,
The Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Class 2(b) of rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on July 21, 2006, at 12:40 pm:

That the Senate Agreed to without amendment H. Con. Res. 448.

With best wishes, I am,
Sincerely,

KAREN L. HAAS,
Clerk of the House.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, July 21, 2006.

Hon. J. DENNIS HASTERT,
The Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on July 21, 2006, at 10:00 a.m.:

That the Senate agreed to S. Con. Res. 112.
That the Senate passed with amendments H.R. 4472.

That the Senate passed S. 2690.

That the Senate passed S. 3187.

That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 2977.

That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 3440.

That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 3549.

That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 3934.

That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 4108.

That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 4456.

That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 4561.

That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 4688.

That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 4786.

That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 4995.

That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 5245.

That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 4101.

With best wishes, I am,
Sincerely,

KAREN L. HAAS,
Clerk of the House.

PEACE, PEACE, AT ANY PRICE PEACE?

(Mr. POE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, people cry peace, peace. But there can be no peace as long as there is one side that enjoys the shooting and refuses to stop.

Hezbollah, a gang of psychothugs and criminals, kidnapped Israelis and are firing rockets from their hole in the wall in southern Lebanon into Israel. Israel has responded and their commanders say they are going to take out these terrorists.

Now appeasement peaceniks who believe in peace at any price, like France's Chirac, want Israel to stop and talk things over, probably over a bottle of French wine.

But Hezbollah won't stop shooting. These are the same pseudopeace experts that told Israel to withdraw from occupying Lebanon. Israel did just that back in 2000, then gave up Gaza to the Palestinians so there would be so-called land for peace.

But the terrorists in Gaza, Hamas, are shooting rockets into southern Israel, while Hezbollah terrorists, still in Lebanon, are shooting rockets into northern Israel. And the world's peace police still whine for harmony.

Mr. Speaker, you make peace by making the terrorist criminals stop shooting. Here guns talk louder than appeasement words. And that's just the way it is.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. On July 24, 1998, at 3:40 p.m., Officer Jacob J. Chestnut and Detective John M. Gibson of the United States Capitol Police were killed in the line of duty defending the Capitol against an intruder armed with a gun.

At 3:40 p.m. and in between votes that are to commence at 6:30 p.m., the Chair will recognize the anniversary of this tragedy by observing a moment of silence in their memory.

ALLEVIATING THE PROBLEM OF HIGH GAS PRICES

(Ms. FOXX asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address a problem that faces all