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No. 112

House of Representatives

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

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
September 12, 2006.

I hereby appoint the Honorable JUDY BIGGERT 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 Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN) for 5 minutes.

BUSH HAS NOT LEARNED LESSONS OF 9/11

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, yesterday we commemorated the fifth anniversary of that terrible morning of September 11, 2001. In communities across our Nation, people gathered to remember those whose lives were lost and, once again, our thoughts and our prayers were with the families, friends, neighbors and colleagues who lost someone on that tragic day.

There is no doubt that September 11 changed America.

There is no doubt that every American understands that there are individuals and networks of extremists who want to attack America and that terror is their weapon of choice.

And there is also no doubt that no attack of any kind can harm the pride each of us has in being an American and the privilege of living in the United States of America.

But I have to admit, Madam Speaker, that I am deeply disturbed by many of the statements and speeches that have been coming out of the White House over the past days and weeks leading up to this year's remembrance of September 11.

Five years ago, the world stood in sympathy and solidarity with America. Today, America's standing in the world is at its lowest point in history. More disturbing, the level of hatred against the United States is at its highest, and is spreading. This does not make us safer, Madam Speaker. It makes us more isolated and more vulnerable in an increasingly dangerous world.

Over the past few days and again last night, President Bush has finally admitted that he went into Iraq knowing there were no ties to al Qaeda, no ties to those who did us such grave harm on September 11.

We know now that there was no threat from weapons of mass destruction. Intelligence was manipulated. The mission of the U.N. weapons inspectors inside Iraq was deliberately cut short by our invasion. And no weapons of mass destruction were ever found.

We know now that Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld threatened to fire any military officer, no matter what his degree of seniority, expertise and experience, if he dared put forward a plan for stabilizing and consolidating Iraq following the invasion.

We know now that resources were diverted from Afghanistan, where the 9/11 deadly plot was born, in order to in-

vade and occupy Iraq. And we know now that the trail of Osama bin Laden, the mastermind of 9/11, has grown stone cold.

We know now that the President's policies in Iraq have put an enormous strain on our military, with U.S. military readiness levels now at historic lows.

We know now that the independent 9/11 Commission has just issued a 5-year report card on President Bush and the Republican Congress filled about D's and F's on homeland security.

We know now that the invasion and occupation of Iraq has increased the budget deficit to record proportions because this administration and this Republican Congress have done what no other President or Congress has ever done in the history of the United States. They have continued to fund this war completely outside the normal budget and to grant a series of tax cuts to the wealthiest of the wealthy during a time of war.

And we now know that Iraq is rapidly descending into an ethnic and religious civil war, with a daily civilian death toll that tells every single Iraqi that nowhere is safe from violence, not their homes, not their jobs, not their schools, not even their hospitals.

And still President Bush told us last night to stay the course. Told us that those who call for change or criticize his policy are giving comfort to the terrorists. Even worse, Vice President CHENEY said on Sunday's Meet the Press that not only was the invasion and occupation of Iraq the right thing to do but, quote, if we had to do it over again, we'd do exactly the same thing.

Exactly the same thing, Madam Speaker? Has this administration not learned a single lesson over the past 5 years? Did they intend to squander the good will of the international community? Did they intend for Iraq to fall into violent, sectarian civil war? Did they intend for our military to be

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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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stretched so thin it will take years and tens of billions of dollars to repair and rebuild? Did they intend for the Taliban to reassert control over parts of Afghanistan? Did they intend the historic, record-breaking deficits that will burden our children and our grandchildren?

Is there not one single decision or policy they might consider changing?

This is why we need new leadership and new direction, Madam Speaker. We need to change course and we need to do it now before our resources and the precious lives of our troops and our citizens are further sacrificed on the altar of these failed policies.

WAR IN IRAQ AND HOMELAND SECURITY TOP ISSUES FACING OUR COUNTRY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 31, 2006, the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Madam Speaker, the two most important issues facing our country right now are the seemingly endless and tragic war in Iraq and the need to ensure America's safety here at home.

President Bush's speech to the Nation last night regrettably demonstrates that either he doesn't understand the security challenges we face, or that he is intentionally misleading the American people for partisan political purposes.

This is a tough election year, and I can understand why the President and the Republican Party are desperately clinging to a campaign of misinformation, mudslinging and fear, given their failures on the economy, the war and homeland security. But their campaign is not responsible, and it ill serves our troops, our people and our future.

The President continues to try to convince Americans that the war in Iraq is part of the war on terror. Last week, the President said, and I quote, one of the hardest parts of my job is to try and connect the war in Iraq to the war on terror.

I can understand why it is so difficult for the President, considering that Saddam Hussein's regime and Iraq were not responsible for the attacks of 9/11 or the war on terror. The only prewar connection between Iraq and Saddam Hussein and al Qaeda was that they were enemies. The bipartisan Senate intelligence committee report just released last week states that Saddam Hussein distrusted Osama bin Laden so much that he, quote, issued a general order that Iraq should not deal with al Qaeda.

And, more importantly, while there was not an Iraq/al Qaeda connection before the invasion, certainly there appears to be one now. And that is what the President would say makes Iraq the central front in the war on terror.

But, once again, the President is wrong.

First, the only role the U.S. occupation in Iraq currently plays in the war on terror is making it worse. Our presence in Iraq has created more terrorists than we have captured or killed. In fact, the U.S. occupation of Iraq is one of al Qaeda's chief recruitment tools, and the American people have caught on to this.

According to a recently released poll, by a 45 to 32 percent margin, people believe that reducing America's overseas military presence, rather than expanding it, will have a greater effect on reducing the threat of terrorism.

The most effective weapon against terrorists is cooperation among nations in sharing critical intelligence to round up and disrupt terrorist organizations and activities. That effort is hampered by the recruitment and growth of terrorists because of the Iraq war.

It is time for the President to be honest with the American people and to admit that the biggest threat to Iraq's future is the presence of U.S. troops fanning the flames of Sunni-Shiite civil war. And one of the biggest threats to the United States' security is the powerful motivation our presence in Iraq gives terrorists who seek to do us harm.

The President and this Congress have wasted resources, time and precious lives in a diversion from making Americans safer, and it has been an enormous and costly diversion by this administration. But the facts are clear that we have not done enough to make America safer. In fact, we have done just the opposite by getting bogged down in the war in Iraq and fanning the flames of hatred and violence.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President.

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 41 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. MURPHY) at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer:

Lord God, Creator of all and Savior of those who put their trust in You, in this era of post-9/11, we pray that the

children of this generation and their children's children may never have to experience another day like the one that flooded our TV screens yesterday.

Protect and guide this Nation to a new security built upon human integrity and communal solidarity with all who love freedom and human dignity while respecting the life and beliefs of others.

Empower the Members of Congress and governments around the world to establish just laws and seek the common good that will lead to ways of equity and peace.

Let our children dream dreams, equip themselves with the best education possible and become creative leaders of tomorrow because they are aligned with Your will, Your power and give You the glory 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 Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois 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.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed without amendment a concurrent resolution of the House of the following title:

H. Con. Res. 449. Concurrent resolution commemorating the 60th anniversary of the historic 1946 season of Major League Baseball Hall of Fame member Bob Feller and his return from military service to the United States.

COMMEMORATING SEPTEMBER 11

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

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, yesterday we came together to remember the day that will define our generation. September 11 was a day that forever changed the way we look at the world.

We learned about the amazing strength and character of the American people. During the events of that day, we saw astonishing courage and the very measure of the American spirit that our enemy had sought to destroy. We also learned that day there was a great evil out in the world that