

Now, this is important, Mr. Speaker, because you wouldn't go take out a loan and you wouldn't be approved for that loan if there was not the ability to put things in place and begin to see some success in that neighborhood.

□ 2015

Well, we also have another one, a juice merchant, that used a USAID microfinance grant and opened a juice factory in Baghdad. There's lots of pomegranate juice and orange juice and the different juices they are beginning to manufacture and bottle and sell. This juice factory in Baghdad, with a microfinance grant from our USAID, has created 24 full-time jobs in Baghdad. That one little grant. And that gentleman is now making that juice. Of course, I said, well, I hope that Ahmed is one of the customers of the juice factory and selling that juice in his store on the corner, his produce store on the corner.

Now, I know that there are some who want to say that the security improvements aren't meaningful because we are not seeing enough political progress in Iraq. I will tell you that, and I think we all agree, that that political progress has not moved forward as quickly as we would like to. But we were reminded last week as we visited with Ambassador Crocker and General Petraeus that the Washington clock and the Baghdad clock move at different speeds. You know, I guess that as impatient as many times as we are, we do have to realize this is a country that was under a dictator, a very brutal dictator for over three decades.

We are beginning to see some very encouraging signs of political progress, and I think this year is going to be a year when we see some more of that. Just over a week ago, the Iraqi Parliament did pass what was for them a very difficult law. They have taken a long time to look at de-Ba'athification reform, and that was passed. It has been difficult for them to address that central question of how the Iraqi people are going to deal with their past and with the legacy of Saddam Hussein.

The law has gone through their parliament, and it has passed. It was passed with Shiite sponsorship, which is significant. We have also seen some key Sunni political blocks return to parliament, to return to their work to be a part of the process.

Those are very encouraging steps. They are steps in the right direction. Certainly, the success of the surge has allowed the ability for this to take place. We have also seen the Iraqi Government has developed and is working on an ambitious budget. We are certainly hoping that they are going to do the same thing as they work through this current year. We have seen some encouraging signs of critical power sharing arrangements within the Iraqi Government. Their Prime Minister, Nouri Maliki, is apparently more willing to share power with the three-person presidency council, which represents each of the major sects in Iraq. So that is another sign that is very encouraging to us.

Anybody who is a serious and objective observer can say that the surge has worked. They admit that. We know that we are going to face more debate in the coming year over the length and nature and the size of our mission in Iraq. I would encourage all of my colleagues to take the success of the surge to heart and to be certain that they are not trying to snatch a defeat from the jaws of victory, but that they are being fair to our troops, that they are recognizing the success that these troops have given us in the surge, and that they are taking time to commend and thank the troops and the commanders that are on the ground.

I think it's fair to say, Mr. Speaker, that we all, I know I certainly appreciate those troops and their families, and I appreciate having the opportunity to support them and to let them know how much I appreciate having that opportunity to support them and also to honor them and to honor their families. My hope is that as we go through 2008 and as we look at our legislative agenda, Mr. Speaker, I hope that the work of this body will honor those men and women who honor us

every single day, who honor the legacy of freedom every single day by the way that they choose to carry out their job and by the way they choose to represent this great Nation.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. WYNN (at the request of Mr. HOYER) for today after 6 p.m.

Mr. BARTON of Texas (at the request of Mr. BOEHNER) for today after 7 p.m. on account of attending a funeral.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Ms. WOOLSEY) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. MCGOVERN, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. CUMMINGS, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. WOOLSEY, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. DEFAZIO, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. KAPTUR, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. SPRATT, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. PALLONE, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. GINGREY) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. ROHRBACHER, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. CONAWAY, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. GINGREY, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. BROUN of Georgia, for 5 minutes, today.

ADJOURNMENT

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Concurrent Resolution 279, 110th Congress, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 8 o'clock and 20 minutes p.m.), the House adjourned until Wednesday, February 6, 2008, at 2 p.m.

EXPENDITURE REPORTS CONCERNING OFFICIAL FOREIGN TRAVEL

Reports concerning the foreign currencies and U.S. dollars utilized for Speaker-Authorized Official Travel during the fourth quarters of 2007 and the first quarter of 2008, pursuant to Public Law 95-384 are as follows:

REPORT OF EXPENDITURES FOR OFFICIAL FOREIGN TRAVEL, HON. FRANK R. WOLF, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, EXPENDED BETWEEN JAN. 1 AND JAN. 9, 2008

| Name of Member or employee | Date | | Country | Per diem ¹ | | Transportation | | Other purposes | | Total | |
|----------------------------|---------|-----------|---------------|-----------------------|--|------------------|--|------------------|--|------------------|--|
| | Arrival | Departure | | Foreign currency | U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency ² | Foreign currency | U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency ² | Foreign currency | U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency ² | Foreign currency | U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency ² |
| Hon. Frank R. Wolf | | 1/1 | United States | | | | 3 | 9,544.00 | | | 9,544.00 |
| | | 1/2 | Kuwait | | | | | | | | |
| | | 1/2 | Iraq | | | | | | | | |
| | | 1/3 | Kuwait | | 4 | 164.00 | | | | | 164.00 |
| | | 1/5 | Jordan | | | 291.00 | | | | | 291.00 |
| | | 1/6 | Israel | | | 2,095.00 | | | | | 2,095.00 |
| | | 1/9 | United States | | | | | | | | |
| Committee total | | | | | 5 | 2,550.00 | | 9,544.00 | | | 12,094.00 |

¹ Per diem constitutes lodging and meals.
² If foreign currency is used, enter U.S. dollar equivalent; if U.S. currency is used, enter amount expended.
³ Total cost of all commercial flights.
⁴ Hotel bill paid directly from fund site.
⁵ Returned \$500.00 to U.S. Treasury via cashiers check.