United States of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 110th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 153 WASHINGTON, MONDAY, MAY 14, 2007 No. 79

House of Representatives

The House met at 10:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. COSTA).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
May 14, 2007.

I hereby appoint the Honorable JIM COSTA to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2007, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate. 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 Washington (Mr. MCDERMOTT) for 5 minutes.

WHAT HAPPENED ON OCTOBER 10, 2006, IN IRAQ?

Mr. MCDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, I rise to call for an explanation and a full accounting from the Department of Defense concerning an attack on Camp Falcon last year. This much is not in dispute: Under cover of darkness on October 10, 2006, Camp Falcon, America's largest military base in Iraq, which is 10 miles south of Baghdad, was attacked by insurgents, and the base was shelled with mortars and rockets. An enemy round struck an ammunition store which triggered massive explosions and huge fireballs that lit up the night sky in Baghdad.

News footage and amateur video were shown on television in the Middle East, and a BBC reporter described the explosions as immense. In the days following the attack, U.S. military officers in Iraq repeatedly said that the damage would not degrade U.S. military capacity and that the attack did not injure or kill anyone at the base.

In a briefing on October 12, 2006, Major General William Caldwell told reporters, ''Very fortunately, no coalition forces or Iraqi security forces were injured, nor civilian casualties that anyone is aware of at this point. We lost some munitions, but took no personnel casualties.'' That is the official line for the military.

But the questions are beginning to surface as to whether the official line is the truth. It was brought to my attention yesterday during a meeting in my congressional office with Mohammed al Deeni, an independent member of the Iraqi Parliament. He came to the U.S. to talk with Members of Congress about the realities of life in Iraq. At my invitation, other Members of Congress joined me in this face-to-face legislative exchange of information. They heard what I am about to share.

During our meeting, I asked Mr. al Deeni if Iraq was so unstable that a terrorist attack could claim a large number of Americans in one attack. As many of us remember, that is what happened in 1983 when a massive terrorist truck bomb struck and killed 241 U.S. Marines in Beirut. I wanted to know if such an attack was possible in Iraq. Without hesitation, Mr. al Deeni said such an attack had already occurred. He said—and others are saying online—that the attack on Camp Falcon killed 300 Americans, wounded another 200 Americans and killed or injured another 200 Iraqis.

The Pentagon says there were no casualties. But a member of the Iraqi Parliament and others claim there were significant casualties. Which story is true? Satellite images, aerial photographs, videos and written accounts that purport to be firsthand can be found online. I will enter into the RECORD a list of some of these sites so that people can see for themselves.

Internet sites which contains video, photographs, or written accounts of the attack on Camp Falcon on October 10, 2006:

http://www.cawa.fr/destruction-du-camp-americain-falcon-explosions-d-armes-a-l-ua-et-ou-d-armes-nucleaires-tactiques-article00913.html.

http://www.dailymotion.com/related/966319/video/xkpjv_base-falcon-irakexplosion-nucleaire/1.

http://abutamam.blogspot.com/2006/10/no-reported-casualties-at-camp-falcon.html.

http://zennobia.blogspot.com/2006/10/al-rashid-falcon-military-bases.html.

Here is one excerpt from a site written after the attack by French journalists: ''Nine big carriers marked by the Red Cross sign transporting the dead and injured were seen by journalists . . . Silence still wraps the whole event from the side of the American military as well as the Bush administration, since there remains only a few weeks before the legislative elections, with a public opinion more and more against the war.''

This happened just before the last elections, and it is unclear as to what happened. I don't know if these stories are credible. But these reports cannot be ignored. If we lost hundreds of U.S. soldiers and other Americans in one attack, Congress and the American people have a right to know about it.

I looked at the videos and the aerial photographs, and the damage appears quite extensive to buildings and military vehicles like tanks. Perhaps American soldiers and others miraculously escaped injury. That would be very good news. Or perhaps we don't know what really happened on the night of October 10, 2006 in an insurgent attack on Camp Falcon.

Printed on recycled paper.