

to go ahead without the approval of the Congress violates the Constitution and, almost as important, undercuts the sense of resolve for the important work that we may be able to accomplish in Kosovo.

I ask my colleagues to please sign the Skaggs-Campbell letter and ask the President to abide by the Constitution. Do not go to war without the approval of the American people.

REREFERRAL OF H.R. 2349, AUGUSTUS F. HAWKINS POST OFFICE BUILDING, TO COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM AND OVERSIGHT

Mr. KIM. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure be discharged from further consideration of the bill (H.R. 2349) to redesignate the Federal building located at 10301 South Compton Avenue, in Los Angeles, California, and known as the Watts Finance Office, as the "Augustus F. Hawkins Post Office Building," and that the bill be referred to the Committee on Government Reform and Oversight.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. EWING). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

WAIVING REQUIREMENT OF CLAUSE 4(b) OF RULE XI WITH RESPECT TO CONSIDERATION OF CERTAIN RESOLUTIONS FROM COMMITTEE ON RULES

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 558 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 558

Resolved, That the requirement of clause 4(b) of rule XI for a two-thirds vote to consider a report from the Committee on Rules on the same day it is presented to the House is waived with respect to any resolution reported from that committee on the legislative day of October 1 or October 2, 1998, providing for consideration or disposition of a conference report to accompany a bill or joint resolution making general appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1999, or any amendment reported in disagreement from a conference thereon.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Washington (Mr. HASTINGS) is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, for purposes of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the distinguished ranking member of the Committee on Rules, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MOAKLEY), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

(Mr. HASTINGS of Washington asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 558 would waive clause 4(b) of Rule XI against certain resolutions reported from the Committee on Rules. Clause 4(b) requires a two-thirds vote of the House to consider a rule on the same day it is reported from the Committee on Rules.

This resolution would apply the waiver to a special rule reported on October 1st or October 2nd, 1998, providing for consideration or disposition of a conference report to accompany a bill or a joint resolution making general appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30th, 1999, or any amendment reported in disagreement from a conference thereon.

Mr. Speaker, this proposed waiver is essential in order for the House to consider, in a timely fashion, one or more appropriations conference reports that may be available later today or tomorrow.

I know all of my colleagues share a desire to move as expeditiously as possible through the remaining legislative matters that must be completed prior to our adjournment. Therefore, I encourage Members on both sides of the aisle to support this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MOAKLEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume, and I thank my dear friend, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. HASTINGS), for yielding me the customary half-hour.

Mr. Speaker, today is the beginning of the fiscal year and, once again, my Republican colleagues have not finished their appropriations bills. As many people know, in order to keep the government open for business, President Clinton had to sign a continuing resolution last week, but we still have to pass eight appropriations bills and send them to the White House for signature. Mr. Speaker, that is a tall order. By the end of next week we have to do this.

Normally, conference reports have to be available at least 3 days before they are considered on the House floor. The idea behind that rule is very simple. It is that appropriations bills are very important spending bills and Members have to have enough time to look at them and consider them very carefully.

So although we must hurry and finish these bills before they are any more overdue, I hesitate to support such rules except in the case of extreme circumstances. Martial law rules nearly always diminish the rights of the minority, and I think my Republican colleagues have really had plenty of time to finish the appropriations process. But, Mr. Speaker, in this case the rule is narrowly focused to apply only to appropriations conference reports, and it is only in effect until the end of this week.

In all likelihood, Mr. Speaker, the Agriculture and Treasury Postal appropriations conference reports, which came before the Committee on Rules

the other day, will be brought to the floor under this scenario. That means that they could be on the floor later today. These bills contain very important spending on programs from Federal drug control programs to badly needed disaster assistance for American farmers who have been very hard hit by severe weather conditions this summer. So we need to pass these bills and get them signed into law as quickly as possible.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The previous question was ordered.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain special orders without prejudice to the resumption of legislative business until 4:30 p.m.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

BAD CONDUCT IS NOT GROUNDS FOR IMPEACHMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. KENNEDY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. KENNEDY of Rhode Island. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in defense not of the President but rather of the Presidency.

TRENT LOTT, the majority leader of the Senate, has just spun to the press that, quote-unquote, bad conduct is grounds for impeachment. To me, this is shocking. I actually could not believe that he was serious. But, sadly, he was.

Today, we are at a turning point in this debate and we have to put this thing in park and take a break.

□ 1430

The removal of the President of the United States is different from the removal of a judge, is different from the removal of a Member of Congress or a college president. The situation cannot be equated, as it often is, with the CEO or a college president who would be removed for similar types of acts that the President is accused of.

To remove the President of the United States would be to paralyze the entire government. Because, whereas a judge, a legislator, and certainly not a private citizen represents an entire branch of government, the President is

the executive branch of government, and to suggest his removal entails a constitutional crisis and a disruption of our whole political system.

We have all been slapped in the face by not only the President's action, but also the Starr inquisition, and we have been so busy holding our cheeks that we have not even examined the evidence and made a deliberative assessment of it. I myself have educated myself about the severity of the Articles of Impeachment, and I want to share with my colleagues and the American people some of the thoughts that I have learned.

As we all know, the Congress has been down this road only twice before in American history, and we need to wake up right now as to the severity of today's issue and what it means to the Republic and this Congress's place in U.S. history.

I asked Larry Tribe, perhaps our Nation's most renowned constitutional scholar, to describe the upcoming vote to begin, just to begin, an impeachment inquiry; and his answer, my colleagues, captures everything that I want to say today.

Professor Tribe likened a vote simply to begin the impeachment proceeding to that of breaking the glass of a fire alarm, that would trigger a mad rush and a state of emergency. He said once the glass is broken and the alarm goes off, we cannot put the pieces back together. Such an action will make it almost impossible to restore a sense of stability and order in this country. Impeachment proceedings are just like pulling a fire alarm in a crowded room; you better think before you pull, lest many people or this Nation get hurt in the process.

To be sure, if we are going to go down the road to impeachment, it must be taken with a keen sense of understanding and purpose. Otherwise, we will be blind to the consequences of our actions. And we must begin with what constitutes the ground for an impeachable offense.

Is this what Ken Starr says it is? Is this what TRENT LOTT says it is? Is this what the gentleman from Illinois (HENRY HYDE) or I should say the gentleman from Georgia (NEWT GINGRICH) says it is? Or should it be the definition of the entire Congress before we begin an inquiry into impeachment?

I like the fact that, in fact, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HYDE) has said that we should have hearings on what constitutes grounds for impeachment. That seems to be the right course to take. Yet it seems the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HYDE) and the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. GINGRICH) intend to proceed with an impeachment inquiry before such hearings on the working definition of what impeachment really is could even take place.

Do they want to make it up as they go along? It sure sounds as though they do. In my opinion, to make up a definition or to proceed with an inquisition

before we have had the time to understand what truly constitutes impeachment and we have a frame of reference to judge our actions against when we continue with an inquiry, constitutes sounding the fire alarm before we know there is even a fire, and it flies in the face of the due process set forth by our Constitution, which says that we need to know what to prosecute before we know whether a crime has been committed.

The reason the majority wants to vote on an impeachment inquiry next Monday, before they know what impeachment really is, is because they would never vote to initiate an inquiry once they really know what they are talking about. And once we know what is truly impeachable, then we need to ask one more question.

REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL TIME

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. EWING). The time of the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. KENNEDY) has expired.

Mr. KENNEDY of Rhode Island. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to proceed for an additional 3 minutes.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time is limited to 5 minutes. The Member will close.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Member should avoid reference to personal conduct of the President and reference to statements of members of the other body.

Mr. KENNEDY of Rhode Island. In conclusion, once we know what impeachable offense is, then we need to ask another question. Is it the kind of offense in which the President's remaining in office is far worse for this country than what will happen to this country if we remove a President from office? We need wisdom to prevail over politics.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. KENNEDY) has expired.

Mr. KENNEDY of Rhode Island. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to proceed for an additional 2 minutes.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair cannot entertain the request for any additional time. The gentleman's time has expired.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mr. FOSSELLA) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. FOSSELLA addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. CONYERS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gen-

tleman from Georgia (Mr. KINGSTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. KINGSTON addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mrs. CAPPS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. CAPPS addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SCARBOROUGH) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. SCARBOROUGH addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BLUMENAUER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. WELDON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. TALENT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. TALENT addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

MILITARY ACTION AGAINST YUGOSLAVIA REQUIRES AUTHORITY FROM CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. SKAGGS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SKAGGS. Mr. Speaker, yesterday we heard news of horrible massacres of ethnic Albanians by Serbian forces in Kosovo: women, children, the elderly all shot in cold blood. The same reports say that these massacres may now spur NATO to take military action.

As terrible as these events are, I want to remind my colleagues that under our Constitution, Congress has the responsibility to decide whether