

APPOINTMENT OF HON. FRANK R. WOLF OR HON. TOM DAVIS OF VIRGINIA TO ACT AS SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE TO SIGN ENROLLED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS THROUGH DECEMBER 6, 2004

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. OSE) laid before the House the following Communication from the Speaker:

THE SPEAKER'S ROOMS,
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, November 20, 2004.

I hereby appoint the Honorable FRANK R. WOLF or, if he is not available to perform this duty, the Honorable TOM DAVIS to act as Speaker pro tempore to sign enrolled bills and joint resolutions through December 6, 2004.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the appointment is approved.

There was no objection.

COMMUNICATION FROM HON. NANCY PELOSI, DEMOCRATIC LEADER

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from NANCY PELOSI, Democratic Leader:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
OFFICE OF THE DEMOCRATIC LEADER,
November 20, 2004.

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

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to section 1012(c)(1) of the Medicare Prescription Drug Improvement, and Modernization Act of 2003 42 U.S.C. 242b note, I hereby appoint Dr. Simon P. Cohn, of Oakland, California to the Commission On Systemic Interoperability.

Best regards,

NANCY PELOSI.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. KIRK. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to speak out of turn at this time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Illinois?

There was no objection.

THE HUNT FOR BIN LADEN

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

Mr. KIRK. Mr. Speaker, 3 years ago Osama bin Laden was able to run his al Qaeda network freely, thanks to the protection of the Taliban regime. Today, he is on the run, frequently crossing the border between Afghani-

stan and Pakistan to elude coalition forces.

Last January, I traveled to Pakistan and Afghanistan to determine how Osama bin Laden continues to avoid capture. When I traveled to the Kyber Agency, I was reminded that the State Department had run a very successful rewards program that had previously led to the arrest and capture of Mir Amal Kanshi, a terrorist who had murdered two CIA employees and injured three others in a 1993 shooting outside CIA headquarters in Virginia. The promise of a significant monetary reward was enough for some Pakistanis to turn Kanshi in to the proper authorities. The program worked before, and it could easily work again.

When I returned, I talked to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HYDE), the chairman of the Committee on International Relations, and had help from the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS), the ranking Democratic member, and we introduced legislation to increase the maximum reward this program could offer from 25 to \$50 million for some of the world's most dangerous terrorists. It made sense that we increase the reward for information leading to the capture of Osama bin Laden. Additionally, our bill allowed the State Department to use non-cash awards, and in a rural community, the provision of a truck or feed or farm animals can mean a lot in a rural community which could provide information leading to the arrest of Osama bin Laden.

I am pleased to report this legislation was included in the omnibus appropriations bill that was just passed by the House of Representatives. When the President signs this bill into law, he will give the State Department a new and powerful tool that can be used in the hunt for Osama bin Laden and his senior associates.

Bottom line, with passage of this bill the reward for the arrest of Osama bin Laden can rise to \$50 million. The passage of this bill could not come at a more critical moment, as earlier this week both the United Nations and the White House issued their latest estimate for the Afghan poppy harvest for the year. The estimate did not contain good news.

This year, the crop yielded enough poppy to produce 4,950 metric tons of opium. This represented a 239 percent increase in the crop last year. Evidence suggests that Afghanistan is in danger of becoming a narcostate; and worse, we know that al Qaeda and the remnants of the Taliban are now primarily funded by the sale of heroin.

Following the September 11 attack, the U.S. targeted bin Laden's Afghan sanctuary. We destroyed the Taliban's bases and bin Laden abandoned his terrorist training camps and also abandoned his foreign fund-raising efforts; but in their place, he and the Taliban have turned to the sale of heroin to finance terrorism. It appears that bin Laden and his patron, Mullah Omar,

plan to rely more heavily on heroin profits than ever before.

The international community wrongly praised the Taliban when Mullah Omar eradicated Afghanistan's poppy crop in 2001. They failed to see that the Taliban only destroyed poppies after it had stored tons of opium paste in its own warehouses. The purpose of Mullah Omar's touted eradication was an effort simply to corner the market on heroin for greater profits.

During my mission to Afghanistan earlier this year, the brave new antinarcotics minister for Afghanistan, Mirwais Yassini, noted that one Afghan drug kingpin, Haji Bashir Noorzai, delivered 2,000 kilograms of heroin every 8 weeks to al Qaeda operatives. At the market price in Pakistan, this one supply chain alone would yield Osama bin Laden \$28 million a year. The 9/11 Commission estimated that the September 11 attack cost only \$500,000.

Passage of this law shows that we are recognizing the growing connection between bin Laden's finances and the sale of heroin. During consideration of intelligence legislation, I offered an amendment calling for the administration to study the feasibility of bringing the Drug Enforcement Agency back in to the formal intelligence community. My amendment passed unanimously, underscoring how critical it is to recognize the connection between drug cartels and terrorism.

Mr. Speaker, Congress has turned up the heat on bin Laden today. Our new law raises the top award to \$50 million. We also allow for rewards to help in the arrest of drug kingpins who finance terror. We also give greater flexibility to paying awards in commodities, such as a truck or grain, that can mean a great deal to a rural family.

I applaud the action of the Congress and urge the President to make full use of his new authority to offer a \$50 million award for the arrest of Osama bin Laden.

CONCLUSION OF THE 108TH CONGRESS

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

Mr. HASTERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to offer my thoughts on the 108th Congress and the challenges that we face in the upcoming 109th Congress.

The 108th Congress has been dominated by concerns about security. Our constituents are worried about their personal security, and that is not surprising given the war on terror, but they are also concerned about economic security. They are worried about jobs. They are worried about health care, and they are worried about their families, about making this world a better place to live for their children and their grandchildren. They are also worried about the high costs of energy and especially gas and natural gas.