

Mr. HOYER. Those are my thoughts; my thoughts and my hope. I think that lame duck sessions, in my experience, have not been particularly productive, particularly when you are going to have a change of administration. Whether it is Senator MCCAIN, Senator CLINTON or Senator OBAMA, we are going to have a change of administration. I expressed it as a hope, and we are going to work toward not having a lame duck session.

Let me go back and answer your question. I think we had a week delay on the supplemental, and I think the week of May 5 is the week we are looking at for the supplemental. As you know, I said the last week in April, the first week in May. That is the first full week in May, so I guess I am still accurate. We are on for that week hopefully on the supplemental, which will be timely in accomplishing the objective of getting dollars in time before the depletion of the funds that have already been appropriated.

With respect to the appropriations process, obviously I will be discussing with Mr. OBEY and with Mr. SPRATT, if we fail to pass a budget, we have to give the Appropriations Committee a figure to mark to. My thought would be that we will do as we have done in years past, deem that the House budget will be the numbers to which they will mark. But we have not made that decision at this point in time.

Mr. BLUNT. I thank the gentleman for that.

On the idea on a congressional year that will end before the election, I know last week we voted in an unusual way to put off the vote on the Columbia trade agreement, and I suppose that could mean to put it off indefinitely. Without a lame duck session, and that is one of the times when it was thought that we might get back to those trade bills. I'm not aware of any real discussion that has gone on this week on this Columbia agreement. I hope we are continuing to look for a way to get that important bill done.

I yield to my friend.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

The Speaker has focused on, as I think she has been quoted in the press as saying, we are still looking at TAA and discussing that with the administration. TAA, trade adjustment assistance, we think that is very important. There have been some positive discussions and indications from the administration. In addition, I know the Speaker has been discussing additional items with the leadership in the House and with Mr. REID, and I think as well with the White House. So I think discussions are ongoing. The Speaker has made it very clear that the action taken from her perception, certainly from my perception, was not the death knell of Columbia. I know that some have interpreted it that way, but I don't think that the Speaker or I interpreted it that way.

Mr. BLUNT. I hope we are continuing that.

Also, we are now entering the third month since the expiration of the Protect America Act. I know you and I were in a meeting a week or 10 days ago on this, and I still don't see any scheduled discussion of legislation on the floor that brings us back to that whole issue of foreign intelligence surveillance, and I hope we are moving toward a conclusion of that important issue.

I would yield.

Mr. HOYER. As you know because we have had an opportunity to discuss it, I have essentially been coordinating this issue on our side with Mr. REYES and Mr. CONYERS, and also working with Mr. ROCKEFELLER. And you and I had a meeting with Senator BOND, the ranking member on the Republican side.

I am hopeful that we can have a proposition passed through the House and hopefully by the Senate by the Memorial Day break. That is my time frame. I am working toward that. I have meetings tomorrow with respect to the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act. I am going to have meetings this afternoon, and I had meetings yesterday. I am giving it a lot of attention, with others as well. As you know, we met briefly. I would reiterate to you that when I have some better fix on where I think the Senate is willing to go or where we are willing to go and where we can reach agreement, I want to discuss it with you because I am hopeful that we can work together to try to make that happen.

Mr. BLUNT. I thank the gentleman. I think every day matters in this regard, and certainly going home for another work period at home without a conclusion here would be the wrong thing for us to do. I hope we can meet your goal and hopefully meet it earlier than the last day or two that we are here before the Memorial Day break.

Mr. HOYER. If the gentleman would yield, I share that hope. Again, I share the conviction, which I have expressed on numerous occasions, that the law that currently exists to my understanding, and when I say currently exists, and the authorizations that were given under the Protect America Act, are in place and in fact are continuing to provide opportunities to intercept those communications that the administration and the intelligence community feel are necessary to focus on. Having said that, we are trying, I'm trying to move ahead as quickly as we can come to agreement.

Mr. BLUNT. I want to say in response that I am not quite as confident, and maybe you're not confident either, that law doesn't meet all of the circumstances that occur. And even if it does, that law reaches an anniversary of those particular orders August 1. Again, coming back after Memorial Day, we are suddenly under a situation where even those things that we currently believe are covered, we will begin to have a problem in them expiring. And certainly the things that are

not covered, there is no easy way in my view, which may be different than yours, there is no easy way to begin to listen to a new set of conversations that we just determined need to be listened to. That is what that whole debate is about. We don't need to have that debate here. But I have pledged to do everything that I can to bring this to a conclusion.

Mr. HOYER. If the gentleman would yield, I want to thank the gentleman because I believe he is absolutely sincere in that effort. He and I have had an opportunity to have discussions. We are going to continue those over the coming days, and hopefully we can get this done sooner rather than later. The chairman of the Judiciary Committee and the chairman of the Intelligence Committee have both expressed that objective.

Mr. BLUNT. I thank the gentleman.

HOUSING CRISIS

Mr. HOYER. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 9 a.m. tomorrow.

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

There was no objection.

HOUSING CRISIS

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

Mr. HALL of New York. Madam Speaker, we are in a housing crisis in the United States, yet the Bush administration seems determined to ignore it.

Losing your home has a deep economic and emotional impact that can last for years. When the mortgage crisis broadens as wide as it has, entire communities, not just individuals, face dire consequences for the future.

In the Hudson Valley of New York, we have been especially hard hit. Over the last 3 months, foreclosures in Westchester County were up almost 40 percent from last year, and they've more than tripled since 2005. Putnam County, also in my district, has the single highest foreclosure rate of any county in New York State.

This crisis demands bold action. This Congress has already expanded the Federal loan limits to make Federal protections available to more home buyers, now we need to extend these Federal guarantees to more homeowners in need. This Congress will not only protect institutions like Bear Stearns, but will also protect American families who remain at great risk.

□ 1430

WELCOMING POPE BENEDICT XVI

(Mr. GINGREY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1