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House of Representatives

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

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
September 28, 2010.

I hereby appoint the Honorable JOHN A. YARMUTH 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 6, 2009, 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 30 minutes and each Member, other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip, limited to 5 minutes.

MANY CHALLENGES FACING EL SALVADOR: PRESIDENT FUNES DESERVES U.S. SUPPORT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, in 1992, when the historic Peace Accords were signed ending El Salvador's 12 years of civil war, many of us anticipated a new and prosperous era for that country. In the following years, political competition flourished and electoral processes matured. The ruling ARENA party maintained its power, base, and organization, winning con-

secutive elections for the next 17 years. But in 2009, the FMLN opposition party won the presidency. It was a watershed moment for El Salvador.

Sadly, many things did not change over these years. The ability of the courts and justice system to hold elites, government officials, and members of the security forces accountable for crimes, including human rights crimes, continued to fail, reinforcing a culture of impunity. The newly created police, although light years ahead of the old security forces, was infiltrated by criminal elements and human rights abusers who blocked investigations and collaborated with criminal groups. The poor did not benefit from trade and investment, and international aid diminished, including U.S. aid. And the migration of Salvadorans to the U.S. is as great or greater as it was during the civil war. And some things got worse. Little could I have imagined the violence in El Salvador becoming worse after the war, but it has. Criminal networks invaded the country and use it to traffic drugs, guns, human beings, and other contraband throughout the hemisphere. Youth gangs are exploited; poor neighborhoods are terrorized; security and judicial authorities are corrupted; and crime, violence, and murder have exploded.

This is the reality inherited by Mauricio Funes when he became president 18 months ago. I have had the privilege of meeting President Funes. I find his administration to be pragmatic, committed to improving the lives of the majority poor, and addressing the crime and corruption that are robbing the country of its much-longed-for peace. However, there are longstanding institutional problems that remain obstacles to reform, the pursuit of justice, and even the consolidation of democracy. Among them, in my opinion, is the Attorney General's Office—the Fiscalía—where countless cases of murder, corruption, drug traf-

ficking, money laundering, and other crimes are stymied. But the Funes administration is taking courageous and positive steps to confront these challenges. These include naming an Inspector General for the National Civilian Police, Zaira Navas, who is serious about ensuring that an honest, hard-working police force is not sullied by corrupt cops.

This month, Inspector General Navas suspended from duty over 150 police officers. These "bad apples" are under investigation for corruption and links to criminal and drug organizations. Rather than embracing this effort to clean up the police, intransigent forces chose instead to create a new commission inside the National Assembly to investigate the Inspector General. This action has been accompanied by renewed death threats against her life.

Last December, Senator LEAHY praised the hard work of PCN Inspector General Navas and the importance of strengthening the rule of law in El Salvador. I agree. I believe Inspector General Navas is taking courageous action, and I encourage the State Department and the U.S. Embassy to support her in these efforts. President Funes is exploring the possibility of establishing an independent commission, similar to the one created in Guatemala, under the auspices of the United Nations, to investigate drug and criminal networks and key human rights crimes. This would ensure an independent investigation into many of the criminal cases and charges of official corruption that have languished in the Fiscalía for years. It could open new paths to ending impunity.

President Funes is also working with Mexican President Calderon, the Obama administration, and his Central American neighbors to confront the escalating penetration of the region by

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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major drug cartels and criminal networks. He is seeking coordinated strategies and action, increased aid and assistance, stronger laws and policies, and more effective social investment.

El Salvador has experienced several tragic episodes of violence carried out by drug members, and public revulsion at gang crimes is at an all-time high. President Funes is seeking to respond decisively to this terrible situation, while not repeating the mistaken policies that sounded tough but failed to reduce crime or keep young people out of gangs. He has also established an advisory commission on gangs and gang-related violence. One program that might be a model is the Center for Formation and Orientation at St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Mejicanos. It has had success working with young people on rejecting gang life and providing those who want to leave the gangs with advice, education, and training. Its pastor, Father Antonio Rodriguez, has made important contributions to the discussions about how to address the youth violence.

Mr. Speaker, it is in the best interest of the U.S. to support the Funes administration as it seeks to strengthen the rule of law, clean up institutional corruption and crime, and help lead the region in breaking impunity and confronting criminal threats.

[From the Los Angeles Times, Sept. 11, 2010]

SALVADORAN LEADER SPEAKS OF CRIMINAL GANGS' LINKS TO DRUG CARTELS

El Salvador's president, Mauricio Funes, the country's first leftist leader since the end of its civil war in 1992, finds himself preoccupied with a deepening struggle against criminal gangs and international drug cartels.

Since winning office in 2009, Funes has deployed the army to back up police, who are trying to curb a drug-fueled homicide rate that claims about 12 victims a day.

On Thursday, he signed a controversial law criminalizing gang membership. The gangs responded by shutting down nationwide public transportation with the threat of violence.

During a visit to Los Angeles this week to meet with community leaders on immigration issues, Funes spoke with Times editors about the growing links between Salvadoran gangs and international drug cartels, and he argued that boosting U.S.-led economic investment holds the most hope for defeating drug violence and illegal immigration.

WHO CONTROLS THE NARCOTICS TRAFFIC IN EL SALVADOR?

Everybody. There are Salvadoran cartels in connection with Colombian cartels. Guatemalan cartels are there. And recently we have found evidence of the presence of [the Mexican-based drug cartel] Los Zetas.

Just a few days after I came to office, I received an intelligence report saying that Los Zetas were exploring the territory and that they had started to make contacts with Salvadoran narcotraffickers and Salvadoran gangs, particularly the MS [Mara Salvatrucha, a transnational gang born in L.A.'s Salvadoran immigrant community]. It is the one that has shown, up to now, to have the most firepower.

The change that has occurred lately is that the [criminal] gangs have become involved in the business. At the beginning, the gangs were just a group of rebel youngsters. As

time moved on, the gangs became killers for hire. Now the situation is that the gangs have become part of the whole thing. They control territory and they are disputing territory with the drug traffickers. Why? Because they need to finance their way of life: basically, getting arms.

HAVE STATE INSTITUTIONS BEEN INFILTRATED?

I am convinced that the army is not infiltrated by the cartels. The grenades and the arms that these people have, they have not gotten them through the army. That does not mean that there are not other institutions that are infiltrated. Since my government started, we have dismissed more than 150 police officers, out of a total of slightly more than 20,000, because of suspicions they were involved with organized crime. I have my suspicions that the judicial system is also infiltrated by organized crime.

Yes, organized crime has penetrated certain institutions, but these institutions have not collapsed. We are talking about rotten apples, and we still have the opportunity and the time to get rid of them.

HOW DO YOU EXPLAIN THAT CIVILIAN INSTITUTIONS REMAIN STRONGER IN EL SALVADOR THAN IN GUATEMALA OR MEXICO?

The 1992 peace accords [which ended the civil war] allowed for a sort of re-foundation of the Salvadoran state. Through that process, it was possible to cleanse the army and security forces that were linked to gross violations of human rights. And now we have a professional armed force. If that cleansing of the armed forces had not taken place, we would probably be in the same situation as Guatemala.

ARE CURRENT U.S. POLICIES ON DRUGS AND IMMIGRATION ON THE RIGHT TRACK?

There will be [cartels] as long as there are consumers of drugs.

Furthermore, the only way we can prevent more migrants from coming to the U.S. is by providing jobs, opportunities and development. The same thing applies to narcotics. If the United States is concerned about [illegal] immigration and drug traffic, the best solution is a strategic alliance that together will bring development and job opportunities and social benefits to El Salvador.

AFGHANISTAN-PAKISTAN STUDY GROUP

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WOLF) for 5 minutes.

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share with my colleagues the text of a letter I sent today to President Obama, Secretary Gates, Admiral Mullen, and all other parties in the administration charged with executing the war effort. I will enclose in my correspondence to the administration a copy of a letter from a constituent who is a mother of six children, all of whom are currently serving or have served in the U.S. military.

I submit for the RECORD a copy of my original letter to the President as well as a copy of the letter from my constituent.

My letter today to the administration will read, in part, "I implore you to consider my constituent's views—the views of an 'American mother with children glad to serve our country,' and to move swiftly to establish an Afghanistan-Pakistan Study Group, modeled after the Iraq Study Group, to bring

'fresh eyes' to the war effort in Afghanistan.

"The group would be comprised of nationally known and respected individuals who love their country more than their political party and would serve to provide much-needed clarity to a policy that increasingly appears adrift.

"Candidly, after reading yesterday's Washington Post piece adapted from Bob Woodward's Obama's Wars, I have serious concerns that the needed clarity about our aim in Afghanistan ever existed within the administration. Woodward writes, 'Even at the end of the process, the President's team wrestled with the most basic questions about the war, then entering its ninth year: What is the mission? What are we trying to do? What will work?'

"These are sobering questions—but they are questions that must be answered, and the Afghanistan-Pakistan Study Group is just the means to arrive at these answers in a way that honors our men and women in uniform.

"In the halls of Congress or the White House, at Foggy Bottom or the Pentagon, public discussions can at times be detached from the actual lives that are most directly impacted by the decisions being made. This couldn't be further from the case for this mother. She doesn't have that luxury when it comes to the war in Afghanistan. And we mustn't either.

"This is not a matter of politics—or at least it ought not be—for it is always in our national interest to openly assess the challenges before us and to chart a clear course to victory. Frankly, I've been deeply troubled by Woodward's reporting which indicates that discussions of the war strategy were infused with political calculations. An Afghanistan-Pakistan Study Group could help redeem what was clearly a deeply flawed process."

I close with a line from my constituent. She said, "The casualties suffered aren't just numbers to me. Each name, each face, represents a family who is paying the ultimate price—the loss of a son or a daughter, brother or sister, father or mother; a family that will never be the same. Therefore, I wholeheartedly support the formation of an Afghanistan-Pakistan Study Group in the hope that it will help to turn the tide of this war and lessen the number of casualties as well."

I hope the President and his advisers will heed the eloquent words of this military mother who has six children serving and another child is married to a marine. And many have served in both Afghanistan and Iraq.

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

August 4, 2010.

Hon. BARACK H. OBAMA,
The President,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: On September 14, 2001, following the catastrophic and deliberate terrorist attack on our country, I voted to go to war in Afghanistan. I stand by