

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES—Tuesday, December 11, 2001

The House met at 12:30 p.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. OTTER).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

Washington, DC, December 11, 2001.

I hereby appoint the Honorable C.L. "BUTCH" OTTER to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

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

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Mr. Monahan, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed without amendment Concurrent Resolutions of the House of the following titles:

H. Con. Res. 88. Concurrent Resolution expressing the sense of the Congress that the President should issue a proclamation to recognize the contribution of the Lao-Hmong in defending freedom and democracy and supporting the goals of Lao-Hmong Recognition Day.

H. Con. Res. 272. Concurrent Resolution expressing the sense of Congress regarding the crash of American Airlines Flight 587.

The message also announced that the Senate has passed with an amendment in which the concurrence of the House is requested, a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 3338. An act making appropriations for the Department of Defense for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2002, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the Senate insists upon its amendment to the bill (H.R. 3338) "An Act making appropriations for the Department of Defense for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2002, and for other purposes," requests a conference with the House on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses thereupon, and appoints Mr. INOUE, Mr. HOLLINGS, Mr. BYRD, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. HARKIN, Mr. DORGAN, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. REID, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. KOHL, Mr. STEVENS, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. SPECTER, Mr. DOMENICI, Mr. BOND, Mr. MCCONNELL, Mr. SHELBY, Mr. GREGG, and Mrs. HUTCHISON, to be the conferees on the part of the Senate.

The message also announced that the Senate has passed concurrent resolutions of the following titles in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. Con. Res. 73. Concurrent resolution expressing the profound sorrow of Congress for

the deaths and injuries suffered by first responders as they endeavored to save innocent people in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001.

S. Con. Res. 87. Concurrent resolution expressing the sense of Congress regarding the crash of American Airlines Flight 587.

S. Con. Res. 91. Concurrent resolution expressing deep gratitude to the government and the people of the Philippines for their sympathy and support since September 11, 2001, and for other purposes.

MORNING HOUR DEBATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 3, 2001, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates. 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 Florida (Mr. STEARNS) for 5 minutes.

SALUTING OUR MILITARY ON THE 3-MONTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SEPTEMBER 11 ATTACKS

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, today we come upon the 3-month anniversary of the tragic terrorist attacks of September 11. Numerous ceremonies will be conducted in remembrance of this day, reflecting upon the loss of life and the senseless attack against our freedom. What also deserves reflection, recognition, and honor is the response of those tasked to defend our country and right the terrible wrong that occurred 3 months ago.

On September 14 the Congress authorized the President to use all necessary and appropriate force in retaliation for the attacks of September 11. That same day the President began a partial mobilization of our forces for homeland defense, later dubbed "Operation Noble Eagle," with additional Guard and Reservists being called up over the next 2 months. Our response abroad became Operation Enduring Freedom. Upon the ruling Taliban's refusal to cooperate and hand over Osama bin Laden, our military sent a message, one that is being trumpeted by the administration today: if you provide aid and support to terrorists, you will find yourself on the wrong side of a very irate, heroic giant.

On October 7, our aircraft and warships, along with assistance from our allies, began systematically to eliminate suspected terrorist camps, air defense assets, and command and control installations. These attacks continued almost daily, which included the use of Special Forces aircraft such as the AC-130 gunship, providing devastating air-to-ground fire against Taliban military units.

Our Special Forces groups were on the ground early in October, assisting anti-Taliban fighters and calling in air strikes on frontline Taliban units. The dedication of our forces, the overwhelming firepower used, and the assistance of our allies has resulted in every major Taliban stronghold falling into the hands of the anti-Taliban forces.

The Taliban lost the pivotal town of Mazar-I-Sharif, and the capital city of Kabul fell to Northern Alliance forces by mid-November. The last Taliban stronghold in the north, Kunduz, fell by the end of November.

By December 7, despite Taliban promises to "fight to the death," the last major Taliban stronghold fell and remaining Taliban forces fled the city.

Our forces are now working with local fighters to root out the remaining Taliban and al Qaeda forces in the cave complexes in Tora Bora. This is an extraordinary achievement.

The success of Operation Enduring Freedom has enabled the United States to begin reestablishing a diplomatic presence, 12 years absent in Afghanistan, with Marine forces securing the former American embassy in Kabul. During the Taliban's rule, only three countries legitimately recognized the government and have eventually severed their ties.

Now, with Afghanistan under new leadership, several countries, including Britain, Russia, France, and India, are beginning the process of reestablishing diplomatic relations.

As the President has stated, this campaign against terrorism will not be a war of "instant gratification." Though our forces have succeeded in toppling the Taliban and ending its capability both as a military force and ruling authority, we are still engaged in action against remaining forces in the Afghan mountains. Further actions abroad to root out terrorism may well be necessary.

Our military has performed admirably. Our professional forces continue to demonstrate that they are the best in the world. Sadly, as with any military action, we have suffered casualties.

☐ 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.

The success of our forces serves as a warning for those groups and governments that continue to harbor and support terrorism. The demise of the Taliban is an example of the resolve of the United States and the might of its cause. Terrorism and those that support it will no longer be allowed to flourish in this world.

So, today at 8:46 a.m., the President led a memorial to grieve the deaths of more than 3,000 people in suicide hijackings. He vowed to "right this huge wrong." Secretary Rumsfeld, speaking at the Pentagon ceremony said, "We will remember until freedom triumphs over fear, over repression, and long beyond."

Eighty countries around the world are also recognizing this tragedy and renewing commitments.

Mr. Speaker, I too stand here to recognize these events and to also stand here to salute the men and women of our Armed Forces, both at home and abroad, in their extraordinary service and success to this country, to their families, and to our fellow citizens.

PARTISAN VOTING MEANS LOSS OF OPPORTUNITY FOR NEW TRADE ERA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, the December 6 House vote on Presidential Trade Promotion Authority continued a sad string of hard-edge partisan votes since September 11 and the loss of an historic opportunity to move to a new era of trade.

The pattern was established when the leadership took the legitimate need for stabilizing the airline industry and rushed through a program to lavishly reward airlines, but with no consideration of the needs of American workers.

The antiterrorism legislation, produced unanimously by the Committee on the Judiciary in the House, was rejected in favor of a narrow, more partisan alternative that did not even have a hearing. The economic stimulus bill was shoe-horned through by a single vote. Its package of corporate tax breaks, with no connection to investment or economic growth, has been roundly criticized by liberals and conservatives alike. Even legislation to stabilize the insurance industry was hijacked by other ideological and political agendas.

The trade promotion legislation fell victim to this same treatment when the House Republican leadership prevented any effort to resolve other legitimate concerns, with the active support, sadly, of the Bush administration, instead focusing on advancing partisan political objectives.

The President could have openly repudiated the partisan ideological posturing here in Congress. He could have demanded and would have been given a bipartisan bill with broad support that would have helped place trade promotion above the political fray. That would have placed, in a stressful time for the country and our economy, a majority of the House of Representatives, like the majority of Americans, in a position to give benefit of the doubt to the President, as they have done repeatedly since September 11. The President could have achieved this objective by making modest adjustments to the trade legislation.

The concern about disadvantage to American workers, with the extension of NAFTA to the entire western hemisphere, could have been answered by making a principal trade objective adherence to, and enforcement of, the International Labor Organization's core labor standards, which all of these countries say they support. To the fear that chapter XI investor protections under NAFTA put foreign investors in a superior position to undermine American environmental protections, a simple answer would have been to mandate that no foreign investor be given a superior position to American companies, and the House would have gone along.

Finally, we could have made provisions for the continued enforceability of environmental treaties. When both parties to trade disputes are signatories, we can insist that these agreements' provisions being enforced is not an unfair trade barrier.

These three simple changes, together with meaningful assistance to the financially distressed and unemployment, that were promised months ago and have yet to be meaningfully delivered, would have produced a comfortable margin of votes from Democrats and Republicans alike. Instead, the administration chose to wheel and deal in ways that will only become clear from careful observation and good journalism. It is bad enough that the price of passing poor trade legislation might be funding for unnecessary public works projects.

What is worse is that the administration and the Republican leadership abandoned their commitment to free trade in the poorest of countries by gutting the Caribbean Basin Initiative. This hard-fought trademark legislation was a proud bipartisan achievement that would have helped some of the poorest and most distressed countries. We are now jettisoning our principles, denying hundreds of millions of the world's poorest citizens the power of trade benefits.

□ 1245

Of course, we await to learn the concessions, not just to citrus growers but to the whole tired American agricultural regime. Our current policy works

to the detriment of most American farmers and the taxpayers and undercuts our ability at the bargaining table to open up foreign markets to American agriculture.

It is not too late for the President to restore integrity to our trade negotiations by abandoning these narrow, ideological partisan approaches. The Senate can easily make this a better bill by jettisoning the trade-corrupting provisions, letting the legislative process work, and listening to the critics who have legitimate concerns.

We are not going to end the debates on the role of globalization and trade policy; but by addressing these legitimate concerns, we can narrow the debate and enable the administration to pursue the policies that United States Trade Representative Zoellick sincerely wants to achieve, I believe.

Given the right bill, we will not be held hostage to narrow special interests at home while we make the poorest of countries pay the price for our lack of political leadership and policy clarity.

SOCIAL SECURITY SOLVENCY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. OTTER). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. SMITH) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I just returned from the Presidential Commission on Social Security meeting. This morning they released their plan that they will be reviewing and presenting to the President on the 21st of this month.

They presented three proposals. Earlier this year, I encouraged the commission to come to agreement on one proposal. I am somewhat concerned, with three proposals, that we end up bickering in this Chamber about the advantages and disadvantages of each proposal and use it as an excuse to do nothing. It would have been much better if the commission had developed one proposal.

Briefly, the three proposals allow optional, worker owned investments.

The first proposal allows an investment of 2 percent of our taxable income and then offsets future Social Security benefits to the extent and with the assumption that that investment in private accounts will accumulate 3.5 percent return on investment. So they assume that that is 3.5 percent, and deduct that compounded earnings value from future benefits.

The second proposal allows 4 percent of taxable income, not to exceed \$1,000 a year, but provides that they are only assuming 2 percent return on that proposal to determine reductions in future benefits. Investments would be limited to safe investments, and all plans are optional. Everything that our personal