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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. WEBER of Texas).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
March 20, 2018.

I hereby appoint the Honorable RANDY K. WEBER, Sr. to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

PAUL D. RYAN,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 8, 2018, 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. All time shall be equally allocated between the parties, and in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m. Each Member, other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip, shall be limited to 5 minutes.

RUSSIAN INTERFERENCE IN ELECTIONS

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

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak about Russian interference in our elections.

In the last 18 months, the United States intelligence agencies and our allies abroad have decisively concluded that Russia interfered with our elections. We have sworn testimony from men and women with impeccable records, Democrats and Republicans

alike. Their testimony overwhelmingly states that Russia interfered in our elections and that Russia has done so as well in other Western democracies for years.

Russia's goal with election interference is to destabilize Western democracies. Destabilizing our democracy will weaken our ability to defend ourselves against foreign adversaries like Russia, China, and Iran.

Democratic institutions and systems are the foundation of how we govern ourselves and defend our borders. When the integrity of democratic institutions is doubted, the power of our democracy is weakened.

Make no mistake: attacking the integrity of our democratic institutions is an attempt to weaken our Nation and our way of life. We must ensure that neither Russia nor any other foreign power interferes in our election process in the future.

The House of Representatives seems to have abdicated its official role in investigating Russian interference. It is my hope that the Senate will continue its investigation in a bipartisan manner. Thus, Special Counsel Robert Mueller must be allowed to continue his investigation, following the evidence wherever it leads, and write a comprehensive and complete report without intrusion or obstruction by political power plays.

This is not a Democratic or Republican issue. This is an American issue.

Mr. Speaker, as Members of Congress, our first responsibility is to protect our Nation. We take an oath of office every 2 years to defend and protect our Nation from all enemies, foreign and domestic.

I call upon my colleagues, my fellow Americans, to join me in putting partisanship aside, putting our country first, and doing everything we can to prevent foreign interference in our elections in the future.

TARIFFS AND TRADE

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I also rise today to speak about U.S. trade and the recently raised tariffs on steel and aluminum.

We all want to secure American jobs and increase the opportunity in the U.S. economy, but raising far-reaching tariffs will do just the opposite. The most likely effect of raising tariffs will be other countries adjusting their trade measures to protect their economies and their workers. This is known as a trade war, and no one wins in a trade war.

What's more, American agriculture is always the target of international reactionary and retaliatory trade behavior. California agriculture, which I am a strong advocate of and represent, feels the most intense direct pain from these tariffs. California farmers and ranchers earned roughly 44 percent of their total revenue from international trade in 2016.

But this pain will radiate across the country. Manufacturers, processors, merchants, and farmers will face negative impacts to their businesses as foreign markets close, which will cost both American jobs and profits.

Yes, we have an international trade imbalance that must be addressed, but raising these tariffs, I think, is the wrong strategy, plain and simple. This is why both Republicans and Democrats have publicly expressed grave concern with these recent actions.

The way to address these trade imbalances is to successfully renegotiate and modernize NAFTA and other trade agreements with our European allies. The President and Congress must work together on trade agreements; it is that simple.

Our best approach for successfully renegotiating trade agreements is a way that serves the entire Nation is by Republicans and Democrats coming together and putting in the hard work required for bipartisan negotiations, serious policymaking, and getting the job

☐ 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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