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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. FLEISCHMANN).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
July 18, 2018.

I hereby appoint the Honorable CHARLES J. FLEISCHMANN 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.

UPDATE ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, when the Endangered Species Act was signed into law in 1973, its goal was simple: safeguard endangered species and assist in the recovery of their population.

Until last week, no recent attempts have been made to reform this essential piece of legislation. Over the past

several years, the Congressional Western Caucus has been working together to determine what parts of the Endangered Species Act are broken and to develop solutions to repair this law.

The Endangered Species Act is in dire need of modernization and reform, which is why, last week, the Western Caucus, which I am proud to belong to, rolled out some solutions; among them is to address the broken litigation process that incentivizes litigation for profit at the expense of the taxpayer, address the lack of clear listing and delisting criteria, address the lack of transparency in Endangered Species Act decisionmaking and data collection, consider the needs of States more seriously, and address the unnecessary impediments to economic development and land management that affect endangered species.

Mr. Speaker, as far as statutes that require costly litigation, the Endangered Species Act was the third most expensive for the Department of Agriculture and the most expensive for the Department of the Interior.

Endangered Species Act litigation cost the Department of Agriculture and the Federal taxpayers \$1.63 billion from 2000 to 2010. It cost the Department of the Interior \$22 billion from 2000 to 2010, all at the expense of the taxpayer. These frivolous lawsuits have severe consequences on local economies.

Additionally, the absence of State consultation weakens the overall data that can be used to justify the Endangered Species Act listings and recovery plans, a complete lack of transparency. State and local expertise is needed to strengthen and streamline the Endangered Species Act listing and delisting process.

I am happy to say that these issues are addressed in some of the bills that were introduced last week. I proudly cosponsored a number of the bills that will make progress on this front, in-

cluding the LOCAL Act, which was introduced by my colleague SCOTT TIPTON. This bill would set up new incentives and opportunities for voluntary conservation by establishing a private party conservation grants program and a habitat conservation planning loan program for State and local governments. These programs will save the taxpayers money while boosting conservation.

Mr. Speaker, we know that the majority of the recent species that have been delisted happened not as a result of the Endangered Species Act or the Fish and Wildlife Service, but through voluntary conservation with the leadership of the Department of Agriculture.

The LAMP Act, introduced by my colleague Congressman DON YOUNG, permits the Secretary of the Interior to enter into cooperative management agreements with States, local governments, Tribes, and other non-Federal persons in order to better manage species and improve habitat conservation. The bill also empowers States with robust species conservation programs already in place to take the lead in managing and preserving such species when meeting certain qualifying conditions.

Mr. Speaker, these are just two examples of great pieces of legislation that have been introduced in the House to upgrade, modernize, and bring into the 21st century the Endangered Species Act.

The Endangered Species Act is in dire need of modernization, and I am eager to work with my colleagues to address these needs and reform this outdated law. I urge my colleagues to examine these commonsense bills, look at the facts behind them, and cosponsor them today.

THE WHOLE WORLD IS WATCHING

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

☐ 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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Mr. GUTIÉRREZ. Mr. Speaker, on Monday, the world witnessed the single worst performance by an American President on the world stage in world history. It was a culmination of the worst week an American President has ever had. As a citizen, I am shocked and embarrassed for our Nation.

Given evidence, indictments, and facts, the President was given the choice of taking America's side or taking President Putin's side. The President chose Putin. I believe the American people, our Armed Forces, our allies, our lawmakers, and the President's own Cabinet deserve an immediate apology from the President for his actions.

Having insulted and demeaned our closest military allies and trading partners, the President doubled down by insulting world leaders individually and in public, especially those who are most friendly to the United States. It was disgraceful.

The President even went as far as to say that Germany is totally controlled by Russia, a comment that makes the President quite literally the laughing stock of the world. To then go on and take President Putin's side in defending the Kremlin's attack on the United States—an attack which this Congress, our intelligence and law enforcement agencies, our allies, and the American people know in fact took place—was nothing short of treasonous.

The President has proven himself unable to separate his own personal interests from his current job as leader of the free world and has consistently, repeatedly, and now, in full view of the world, definitively put his own interests above those of the United States and the free world by siding with the petty, antidemocratic dictator of our international rival.

The campaign of repression and the straight-up murder of political and business rivals by President Putin is well established. It is not something any American leader can or should debate. Using foreign agents to murder people overseas is the Kremlin's MO, and the President seems to feel that is okay.

Let us not forget that Russia, on more than one occasion, has allowed paranoia, fear, and impunity to escalate to such a level that they have literally shot passenger airliners out of the sky, killing all on board.

Invading other countries and using the pretext of national security to expand the Russian empire is not only condoned by this President, apparently, in some ways, he is seeking to emulate Putin's behavior by using national security as a pretext for trade wars with our closest allies and for policies to take babies, toddlers, and other children from people lawfully seeking asylum in the United States.

Russia is not a government to be condoned; it is a government to be contained. Yet our President was unable to be critical of the dictator of our greatest rival in public—and God knows what he did in private.

Mr. Speaker, it is well established that I believe our current President is a threat to American democracy, which is why I was one of the first Members of Congress to sign on to Articles of Impeachment last year. I have already begun consulting with my colleagues about whether those Articles of Impeachment can be expanded and updated to include the betrayal witnessed by the American people in the world this week.

While it is already a full-time job, I will redouble my efforts to prevent the House of Representatives from taking actions to actively obstruct justice and undermine law enforcement and the FBI, while seeking to give the President cover and relief from a genuine, thorough investigation into the attack on our country by the Russians in 2016 and the attacks that are continuing to this day.

This body, the House, the institution that I love so much and have served for more than 25 years, cannot be sullied or diminished by this President or his inability to see the facts about the attack on the United States.

As a body, we must take action to relieve the President of his duties. Most Americans probably doubt that the House of Representatives is even up to the task of being fair, being honest, being impartial enough to call a spade a spade when it comes to Russian aggression.

But I call on my fellow Democrats and my fellow Members on the other side of the aisle: If you still believe in truth, if you believe in democracy, if you believe in the rule of law and our Constitution, you will join me in holding this President accountable for his actions, in holding Russia accountable for the attacks on the United States and her people, and will stand up to defend your country and not just your party or your own income and career.

This is a moment of destiny when the House as an institution must rise to the occasion. Mr. Speaker, the whole world is watching.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President.

CONDEMNING EVO MORALES' DEPLORABLE HUMAN RIGHTS RECORD

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, following the Castro playbook, Evo Morales has taken systematic steps to curtail the basic rights of the people of Bolivia and solidify his legacy to maintain his evil grip on power.

Evo Morales has ruled Bolivia for over 12 years and expects to do so indefinitely. Two years ago, he imposed a constitutional referendum to eliminate presidential term limits so that he could run for yet another term, his fourth term, in 2019.

After a resounding "no" vote from the people of Bolivia, this thug turned to the courts, which he totally controls, to stomp on the will of the people. The courts sided with him—what a surprise—and went as far as declaring that Morales' indefinite reelection is a human right. What an insult that is to the Bolivian people and to all of us who cherish true democratic ideals.

Just like Castro, Evo Morales also continues to clamp down on the opposition, sending his national police to deploy repressive tactics and silence dissent brutally. Just last month, his henchmen killed a young student from the Public University in the city of El Alto, where students peacefully protested, calling for additional resources for their university.

The latest State Department human rights report states that Morales' power over the judicial system, the denial of a fair and timely public trial, and prosecutions of political opponents are at the top of his human rights abuses, his greatest hits.

It is no wonder that over 1,200 Bolivian political exiles are now living in Brazil, Peru, Paraguay, Spain, and here in our wonderful country, including my lovely south Florida community.

Mr. Speaker, Evo Morales' anti-imperialist rhetoric, expelling all of our agencies—DEA, USAID, and the U.S. Ambassador to Bolivia—and his coziness with rogue regimes are just further proof of the threat his regime poses for the stability and security of our allies in our hemisphere and beyond.

Using Bolivia's status as a nonpermanent member of the United Nations Security Council, Morales has sided with Syria and its abysmal human rights record; undermined our ally, the democratic Jewish State of Israel; and consistently attacked the United States and our efforts to uphold and promote the values of freedom and democracy in the region and around the world.

Simply put, Morales is no friend of democratic values, and just like the dictatorships in Cuba, Venezuela, and Nicaragua, his regime has solidified control at the expense of the people and our own national security interests.

The Bolivian people need our help, Mr. Speaker, and we must start paying attention to what is happening right here in our own hemisphere.

HONORING THE LIFE OF ROBERT TRAUIG

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I was saddened to hear of the passing of Robert Traurig, a revered leader who helped build south Florida and someone who Dexter and I proudly called a dear friend. Bob passed away recently, but he left an incredible legacy of legal brilliance and leadership in our community.

Founder of Greenberg Traurig in 1967, which is now one of the world's top and largest law firms, Bob was an expert zoning lawyer who helped develop Miami-Dade County into the metropolitan area that it is today.