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House of Representatives

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

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
March 26, 2007.

I hereby appoint the Honorable KATHY CASTOR to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING HOUR DEBATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2007, 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 Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) for 5 minutes.

THE VICE PRESIDENT AND THE IRAQ ACCOUNTABILITY ACT

Mr. DEFAZIO. I thank the Chair.

Well, Vice President CHENEY was in form last weekend in Florida addressing a small group behind closed doors. He attacked the House of Representatives for passing the Iraq Accountability Act. I am not certain whether it is because he objects to the fact that we are going to make this administration review the readiness of our troops, their equipment, before they're rushed to Iraq in an attempt to escalate the

war. They don't want that kind of accountability, because it failed our troops, from day one, on equipment and readiness.

And then maybe it's the other part, the part where we are going to demand accountability of the Iraqi Government. Time and time again President Bush sets benchmarks. "Those benchmarks will be met." They are never met. There has to be a diplomatic and political component. You cannot resolve a civil war with military force in Iraq. But time and time again the Bush administration has let the Iraqi Government skate. This bill says they will meet the President's own chosen, President Bush and al Maliki's, own chosen guidelines and benchmarks or we will begin to bring our troops home. Plain and simple, not a war without end, not a war that will be settled by future Presidents, as George Bush said a year ago, but if this administration and the Iraqi Government fail to do what's necessary for our troops, we are not going to strand them in the middle of a civil war.

But the Vice President objects to those things. He says if they really support the troops, then we should take them at their word and expect them to meet the needs of our military on time, in full, no strings attached.

Let's review the administration's record on those issues. Let's review how the Bush-Cheney administration met the needs of our troops. First of all, it was an unnecessary war. They were pursuing a necessary war against al Qaeda, the Taliban, Osama bin Laden. Remember them? Dead or alive? Dead or alive? They abandoned that war for an unnecessary war launched under false pretenses in Iraq.

Now, something called the Office of Special Plans phoned up the intelligence. DICK CHENEY put together the Office of Special Plans with some of his own hand-picked people, I think one of whom is now on the way to jail, in fact,

Scooter Libby. In fact, he personally, unprecedented for a Vice President, kept visiting the CIA and saying, no, they didn't have the intelligence right yet. I.e., they didn't say what he wanted. Niger yellow cake, Chalabi, all that stuff. He was so wrong. And then he said, "Simply stated, there's no doubt that Saddam Hussein now has weapons of mass destruction." Vice President CHENEY in August of 2002 as he was pushing us toward war.

But then on the eve of the war, even after their myths about weapons of mass destruction, the yellow cake, the aluminum tubes had started to fall apart, he said, "We believe that Saddam has in fact reconstituted nuclear weapons." Vice President CHENEY. A man who has been so wrong and put our troops in harm's way unnecessarily, jeopardized the security of the United States by distracting us from the real fight in Afghanistan, challenges this Congress on the Iraq Accountability Act? No, I think last November the American people started to ask about accountability for him and his supposed boss, George Bush.

And then let's look at their military planning. General Shinseki, a good man. They fired him. It was said we didn't need 350,000 people. Rummy said, "Oh, don't worry. We can do it with 100,000 or so." Shinseki said, that would lead to strife, civil war and chaos. He was right. They fired him. But presidential economic adviser Larry Lindsey said, "It's going to be very expensive. Very expensive." No, CHENEY and his cohorts said, "No, don't worry. Iraq can pay for it themselves." Well, we are now at \$2 billion a week, hundreds of billions of dollars on this war. So wrong.

And then our troops, how did they serve them? Vice President CHENEY again, "We believe we will, in fact, be greeted as liberators. I think it will go relatively quick. Weeks rather than months." So they didn't give our men

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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