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House of Representatives

The House met at 9 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. COHEN).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
October 2, 2007.

I hereby appoint the Honorable STEVE COHEN 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 4, 2007, 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 25 minutes and each Member, other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip, limited to 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 9:50 a.m.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. ISSA) for 5 minutes.

WAR IN IRAQ

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, today in the Committee on Oversight and Reform, we are going to continue without a doubt the attack on our men and women in uniform. It is clear after last week's debate in which 79 Members of the House refused to denounce MoveOn.org for their attacks on the patriotism of General David Petraeus, there are those who intend to continue to attack the war on any front.

Mr. Speaker, I rise not because I support the war, not because I love war,

not because in fact I have any desire to have this war or any war last one day longer than absolutely necessary.

Mr. Speaker, unable to effectively portray our men and women in uniform as guilty of wrongdoing, in spite of the fact that one of our Members called in fact our marines, marines based at Camp Pendleton, killers of women and children in cold blood. Those charges for the most part have already been dismissed.

Our men and women in uniform make mistakes. In the Committee on Oversight and Reform today, we are going to be talking about not our men and women in uniform, but men and women who served an average of 10 years in uniform who have joined private contractors in support of our State Department. Specifically, Mr. Speaker, I am talking about Blackwater. I am not defending Blackwater. The truth is neither Speaker PELOSI nor Chairman WAXMAN know what happened in Iraq in September. What we do know is that there are investigations going on into the specific incidents, like so many incidents in a country in which every day soldiers, sailors and marines die by IEDs and roadside bombs and other ways of killing our men and women without taking risk to their own lives.

An incident like that apparently occurred in September, but instead of waiting until the IG, the FBI, the State Department concluded their investigations, today, Mr. Speaker, the Government Oversight and Reform will decide that they are going to go after the facts directly. They have subpoenaed directly the CEO of that company, not because he was there, not because he has some special knowledge, but because, Mr. Speaker, it is all about the headlines. The bodies were not even cold on that incident before the Committee on Oversight and Reform began to prepare for today's hearings.

In order to believe that Blackwater is guilty before the evidence is in, you

have to believe the Minister of Interior. Mr. Speaker, you have to believe the very organization that former Washington, DC, Chief Ramsey and retired four star General Jim Jones called that organization that he leads, some 300,000 police, 85 percent of whom are Shia, so corrupted and so compromised as to be disbanded. In fact, that is exactly the organization that apparently arrived and apparently is to be believed that some wrongdoing occurred.

Mr. Speaker, when I went to Iraq the last time or one time, I went with Chairman WAXMAN and now Speaker PELOSI, our unit was guarded by Blackwater. At that time, I didn't hear any objections to the overhead cover provided by Blackwater. I didn't hear any objections to the EOD unit that was protecting us against bombs. In fact, Mr. Speaker, the only time there seems to be a desire to have this type of oversight is when the headlines would help demean the very effort we are involved in in Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, I trust that the American people are in fact more knowledgeable of what this war is all about. Not that they want this war, but that they do not want to have the men and women in uniform or those Americans who under contract go to this combat zone willingly, most of them after service in that combat zone while in uniform, demeaned without a fair opportunity for investigation.

Mr. Speaker, I was one of many Members of Congress who asked that today's hearing be postponed until at least the State Department, the FBI, and other organizations had an opportunity to do a proper investigation. I am proud to be a ranking member on the Subcommittee on Oversight and Reform, but I am ashamed that we in fact are doing trials rather than oversight. We have never done anything more shameless than what we are doing today, going after an organization without waiting for the facts. We

□ 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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