

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from American Samoa (Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3320.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

□ 1330

CONDEMNING THE NOVEMBER 6, 2007, TERRORIST BOMBING IN AFGHANISTAN

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 811) condemning the November 6, 2007, terrorist bombing in Afghanistan and expressing condolences to the people of Afghanistan and the members of the Wolesi Jirga.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 811

Whereas on November 6, 2007, a terrorist carried out a suicide bombing in the Baghlan province of Afghanistan that deliberately targeted a delegation of 18 members of the Wolesi Jirga, the directly elected chamber of the National Assembly of Afghanistan;

Whereas this horrific bombing was the deadliest suicide attack since the liberation of Afghanistan from the brutal Taliban regime in 2001, reportedly killing at least 50 Afghan citizens, including several schoolchildren, and wounding dozens of others;

Whereas at least six members of the Wolesi Jirga were killed in the attack, including Sayed Mustafa Kazemi, Chair of the Economic Commission of the Wolesi Jirga and former Minister of Commerce; Engineer Abdul Matin, a member from the province of Helmand; Sibgatullah Zaki, a member from the province of Takhar; Haji Sahib Rahman Hemat, a member from the province of Kunar; Nazik Mir Sarferaz, a member from the Kunduz province; and Mohammad Arif Zarif, a member from Kabul;

Whereas the legislative delegation transcended political, ethnic, and regional divisions and was targeted by this heinous act while carrying out its official duties in service to the Afghan people;

Whereas nearly six years after the liberation of Afghanistan from the Taliban, who provided al-Qaeda with a safe haven for planning the attacks of September 11, 2001, Afghanistan remains under siege, and the democratically elected Government of Afghanistan remains subject to attacks from remnants of the Taliban who have regrouped along with other insurgent groups, including al-Qaeda;

Whereas poppy cultivation and opium production, which directly support, sustain, and finance insurgents, militias, and terrorist organizations operating in Afghanistan, continue to dramatically increase;

Whereas the security of Afghanistan is closely intertwined with the security of its regional neighbors, and therefore cooperation and support from its neighbors in defeating insurgents and establishing security is urgently required;

Whereas the international community, including the Government of the United States, has expressed its ongoing commitment to supporting the efforts of the Government and people of Afghanistan to build a stable, secure, and democratic nation with the achievement of the Afghanistan Compact in 2006;

Whereas Afghanistan remains a critical front in the global struggle against terrorism, and supporting the development of democratic institutions in Afghanistan is critical to defeating this threat; and

Whereas the House Democracy Assistance Commission of the United States House of Representatives has worked in partnership with the Wolesi Jirga to strengthen its institutional capacity, and remains committed to a strong and mutually-beneficial partnership: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) condemns in the strongest terms the November 6, 2007, attack in the Baghlan province of Afghanistan and all other attacks against the democratic freedom and sovereignty of the Afghan people;

(2) expresses its condolences to the people of Afghanistan and the members of the Wolesi Jirga;

(3) supports the efforts of the Government of Afghanistan to investigate the attack and bring the perpetrators to justice;

(4) reaffirms the long-term commitment of the United States to the establishment of security, the strengthening of democratic and civil institutions, and the promotion of economic opportunity as the basis for a stable, secure, and democratic Afghanistan; and

(5) calls upon the United States and other responsible nations to strengthen their efforts to further the goals and standards set forth in the Afghanistan Compact for improvements in security, governance, and economic development.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from American Samoa (Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from American Samoa.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on this proposed legislation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from American Samoa?

There was no objection.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, first of all, I want to recognize the chief sponsor and author of this important legislation, my good friend, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. PRICE) and I also want to thank the chairman of our Foreign Affairs Committee, Mr. LANTOS, and our ranking member, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN of Florida, for their support and leader-

ship in bringing this legislation to the floor.

Mr. Speaker, last week the United States was reminded once again that amongst the weekly sacrifices of Americans in Iraq, the continuing concern of Iran and the recent developments in Pakistan, there still exists in the geographic center of the Middle East and South Asia a country that faces a growing insurgency that directly threatens its stability and the national security and interests of the United States and its allies.

On November 6, a suicide bomber targeted a delegation of members of the Afghanistan National Assembly, or the Wolesi Jirga, killing at least 50 Afghans, including school children, ordinary citizens and half a dozen elected members. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to strongly condemn this attack and to echo again our unified commitment to the stabilization and development of Afghanistan.

This House shares a special bond with the Wolesi Jirga, which participates in a partnership in our House Democracy Assistance Commission, and it is indeed a tragedy to see our fellow legislators or parliamentarians be murdered in such a way.

A few months ago, this House passed on an overwhelming and bipartisan basis the Afghanistan Freedom Support and Security Act of 2007. This act reaffirmed our long-term commitment to the security and development of Afghanistan by reauthorizing a comprehensive package of assistance to a country in dire need of the international community's support.

Mr. Speaker, if there is any lesson to be taken from the tragic events like these, it is that now is the time to act. Poppy cultivation is up manifold, suicide attacks have increased dramatically in the past year, and Afghanistan still suffers as being one of the poorest countries in the world. In that regard, I urge my colleagues in the Senate, the other body, to take up an Afghanistan reauthorization bill as early as possible so that we may help that country drive out the forces of extremism and intolerance and bring the forces of moderation and progress in.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the bipartisan resolution before us condemning the cowardly suicide bombings in Baghlan, Afghanistan, recently which killed at least six members of the Afghan Parliament and dozens of innocent men and women and children. Countless others were wounded.

Those who oppose the emergence of a free, democratic and stable Afghanistan mistakenly believe that through such nefarious acts they can deter the Afghan people from realizing their goal of a viable and independent Afghanistan that is secure and free from terrorism. This cowardly act will not deter us, nor will it deter the people of

Afghanistan from achieving those vital goals. It only strengthens the will of the Afghan people to not revert back to the days of totalitarian rule by the Taliban and its radical allies.

Last month, the committee met with the Speaker of the Afghan Parliament here in Washington and we discussed the challenges and common goals we all face and share in Afghanistan. I am confident that he and his colleagues, both men and women democratically elected by the people, will carry on, despite the loss of their colleagues in this brutal attack.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that President Karzai of Afghanistan spoke for all of us when he condemned the attacks and noted it was against Islam and said, "It is the work of the enemies of peace and security in Afghanistan."

This brutal attack is a solemn reminder that Afghanistan continues to be subjected to a campaign of unrelenting violence by the Taliban, Hizb-I Islami, and other terrorist organizations. The security climate has the potential to further compromise reconstruction and relief efforts by the United States, our allies and the international community.

In particular, the poppy cultivation and opium production, which directly supports local warlords and sustains and finances insurgents, militias and terrorist organizations behind these attacks, continues to increase at a staggering rate. In response, this critical resolution demonstrates the continued commitment from the United States and the international community to support the people of Afghanistan in their time of need.

I want to thank Congressman PRICE and Congressman DREIER for their leadership in ensuring that this resolution was considered by the House in a unified, expeditious manner.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, it is with pleasure that I yield 6 minutes to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. PRICE), the author of this proposed bill.

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Res. 811, to offer a message of solidarity to the people of Afghanistan.

The House Democracy Assistance Commission, which I chair at present and which our colleague Mr. DREIER chaired in the previous Congress, has worked in partnership with the Wolesi Jirga, the Afghan Parliament's equivalent of the House of Representatives, for the last 2 years.

In the course of that partnership, we have had the opportunity to travel to Afghanistan and meet with a range of Afghan leaders, including numbers of members of the Wolesi Jirga. We have been profoundly impressed by the courage and commitment of the Afghan people, who are striving against long odds to radically transform their society. Their nation has been at war or under attack for nearly all of the last

30 years, and yet they have faced down those who deny them their personal and political freedoms and have continued on course, to build a democratic and secure nation.

None have demonstrated this dedication more than the members of the Wolesi Jirga. Afghan voters have selected individuals representing every aspect of the Afghan culture—Islamic scholars, western businessmen, former communists, progressive women, and everything in between, for this remarkable assembly. They have approached their differences in a truly democratic fashion, settling disputes through debate, rather than violence. As their Speaker, Yunus Qanooni, likes to say, they now settle their differences by holding up voting cards instead of guns. And now they stand together, conservatives and progressives, men and women, Tajiks and Pashtuns, all working for a better Afghanistan.

Mr. Speaker, one week ago today, the Afghan democracy suffered its deadliest terrorist attack since the fall of the brutal Taliban regime. Over 50 Afghan citizens, including school children, tribal elders and other bystanders, were killed, and over 100 more were injured.

The main target of the attack was a delegation of members of the Wolesi Jirga, a delegation that strongly represented the new democratic spirit I have just described. The 18 members of the delegation represented diverse ethnic groups and religious affiliations. They included men and women, and covered the full political spectrum. It was a delegation traveling to Baghlan province to reach out to the constituents that the members have sworn to serve.

After the bombing, six Wolesi Jirga members lay dead. Sayed Mustafa Kazemi, Chair of the Economic Commission of the Wolesi Jirga and former Minister of Commerce; Engineer Abdul Matin, a member from the province of Helmand; Sibgatullah Zaki, a member from the province of Takhar; Haji Sahib Rahman Hemat, a member from the province of Kunar; Nazik Mir Sarferaz, a member from the Kunduz province; and Mohammad Arif Zarif, a member from Kabul.

Many more were injured. Some of the members killed and injured were members that our House Democracy Assistance Commission met with only last fall. We offer our deepest sympathies to the families and friends of these members who died in service to their country.

But I rise to say to those behind these attacks that despite your cowardly actions, Afghanistan's democracy remains strong, and our support for Afghanistan remains unwavering.

The resolution before us condemns this horrific attack and expresses our deep condolences to the Afghan people, who have sacrificed so much for the cause of a free and democratic nation. It also calls upon our Nation and the international community to redouble

our efforts in support of Afghanistan, to turn back the forces within that country and beyond that are capable of the barbarism we witnessed last week.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from California (Mr. DREIER), the coauthor of this resolution.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend for yielding. It is with a great deal of sadness that I rise in support of this resolution.

Our colleagues, Messrs. FALEOMAVAEGA, BILIRAKIS and PRICE, have very adequately outlined the circumstances around which this attack took place on November 6. But if there is one message that has come forward from the tragedy of a week ago, it is that if there is any doubt whatsoever that our enemies in Afghanistan are seeking to undermine democracy, liberalization and the cause of peace for the Afghan people, one needs look no further than what took place on November 6. This was a very sophisticated attack that took place, and it is one by those who clearly do want to undermine everything that we as Americans take for granted and for which the Afghan people aspire.

My dear friend and colleague Mr. PRICE has correctly pointed to the fact that just last week we had the opportunity as members of the House Democracy Assistance Commission to meet with our counterparts, members of the Wolesi Jirga, who have in many ways modeled their Parliament, their House of Representatives, after ours.

I know that we are not always the best model for everything. We are in fact a model to which many around the world, including the Afghan people and members of the Afghan Parliament, aspire. And that is why, as Mr. PRICE has correctly said, if anyone believes that this attack that took place on November 6 would in any way, in any way, diminish the commitment of the United States Congress and our 20-member bipartisan House Democracy Assistance Commission to our assistance to the Afghan people and to the future of peace, stability, democracy and political and economic liberalization in Afghanistan, they are wrong. In fact, Mr. Speaker, the tragedy of one week ago, on November 6, in my mind, stands to reaffirm and strengthen the commitment of the House Democracy Assistance Commission.

Now, while Mr. PRICE went through and talked about naming the six parliamentarians who tragically were killed and, as was pointed out, 50 people killed and many, many people wounded, I think it is important to note that Sayed Mustafa Kazemi was in fact a very bright 45-year-old leader who has, through his career, been responsible for bringing together a wide range of very, very diverse interests within Afghanistan. As Mr. PRICE pointed to the diversity that exists

within the Wolesi Jirga, it is important to note that Mr. Kazemi was in fact, if not the paramount leader, one of the top leaders in bringing these very diverse groups together.

□ 1345

Now, this delegation was in the Baghlan province doing their work, as we as Members of the House of Representatives do our work when we have delegations going to visit and work on different projects. This was the Economics Commission. As Mr. PRICE said, we had seen Mr. Kazemi as the head of the Economics Commission in the past. These were members of the Wolesi Jirga, parliamentarians just as we are, working on the project of trying to bring about greater reform and success to the people of Afghanistan. And to have them attacked in such a way is something that will in fact go down in history.

My friend from North Carolina said this was the worst attack to take place since the Taliban has come to power. Mr. Speaker, just today the British Broadcasting Corporation reported that the attack on November 6 was the single worst attack and the largest loss of life in the history of Afghanistan. Never before has such a large number of people been killed in an attack such as this.

So that is why I am very pleased that Mr. PRICE asked me to join with him working on this resolution. That is why we stand together, Democrats and Republicans, reaffirming our commitment to the future of Afghanistan. We know it was September 11 of 2001 and the attacks that emerged from Osama bin Laden and the Taliban, support for that effort, and al Qaeda that led to the work that we have done in Afghanistan.

Mr. Speaker, we remain committed. Our resolve is in fact strengthened by this tragedy. I urge my colleagues to join in support of this resolution.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, I deeply appreciate the remarks of my good friend and colleague from California and also the author of this legislation. Truly, I echo his sentiments. This is bipartisan proposed legislation, and I urge my colleagues to support the bill.

Does my colleague from Florida have any further speakers?

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Res. 811, Condemning the November 6, 2007, terrorist bombing in Afghanistan and expressing condolences to the people of Afghanistan and the members of the Wolesi Jirga, introduced by my distinguished colleague from North Carolina, Representative DAVID PRICE. As we all know, the situation in Afghanistan is critical, and it is essential that we maintain and strengthen our support of Afghanistan for the sake of the Afghan people and our own national security.

Mr. Speaker, it was almost exactly 6 years ago that, in response to the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the United States launched a military operation against Afghanistan, with the intent

to capture Osama bin Laden, to destroy the al-Qaeda terrorist network, and to remove the Taliban regime that had provided support and safe harbor for al-Qaeda. Though the Taliban has been removed from power, they have since regrouped and are an increasingly resurgent force, while al-Qaeda remains a significant threat and Osama bin Laden continues to evade capture.

Meanwhile, Afghanistan continues to suffer from the chronic instability that has plagued the nation for much of its modern history. Its infrastructure and economy have been devastated by decades of conflict, the fledgling democratic government continues to face a very real threat from the resurgent Taliban, and the people of Afghanistan continue to live in a climate of ongoing turmoil, particularly in the southern regions of the country, where there are ongoing and dangerous clashes between coalition-led forces and insurgents.

This most recent attack that occurred on November 6, 2007 was the deadliest suicide attack since the liberation of Afghanistan from the Taliban in 2001. This attack deliberately targeted the members of the Wolesi Jirga, the directly elected chamber of the National Assembly of Afghanistan, which transcended political, regional, and ethnic divisions within this war-torn nation. The suicide attack killed at least 6 members of the Wolesi Jirga as well as at least 50 Afghan citizens, including women and children, and wounded dozens of others.

Mr. Speaker, it is essential that we provide considerable aid for Afghanistan, a region which we have consistently underfunded despite its critical needs. While we have thrown away billions of taxpayers' dollars in Iraq, the real security threat of Afghanistan, home to the al-Qaeda and the Taliban, has gone relatively unchecked. This is a problem not simply for the United States to handle, but for NATO. We must work with our NATO allies to put increased pressure on them to step up to the task of addressing the most serious security issues. Security is essential to not only economic growth but also makes it easier for humanitarian organizations to accomplish their tasks. Creating a stable security situation in Afghanistan is an international concern.

Furthermore, trends of opium production in Afghanistan have changed. According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), "opium cultivation in Afghanistan is no longer associated with poverty." This is largely due to the fact that the poorer northern provinces are seeing a downward trend in poppy cultivation, while production and trafficking are growing in the eastern and southern provinces. As these are the areas of the country currently experiencing the greatest amount of conflict, UNODC now associates the opiate trade with insurgency. According to UNODC, the Taliban have "started to extract from the drug economy resources for arms, logistics, and militia pay." This horrific attack may be directly linked to poppy cultivation and opium production, which has as of late been used to directly "support, sustain, and finance insurgents, militias, and terrorist organizations operating in Afghanistan."

In the 110th Congress, we have already passed important legislation that, I believe, will help promote peace and freedom in Afghanistan. However, it is necessary for us to continue to work together with the Afghan government and other members of the international

community to address the outstanding challenges that continue to threaten the nation. As stated in this legislation, the United States must reaffirm its long-term commitment to Afghanistan, "to the establishment of security, the strengthening of democratic and civil institutions, and the promotion of economic opportunity as the basis for a stable, secure, and democratic Afghanistan."

The security and stability of Afghanistan is crucial to the current war on terror. The United States must strengthen and sustain its support of Afghanistan, we must continue in our commitment to this nation at this critical turning point. I am proud cosponsor of this legislation and I strongly urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this important legislation.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. I have no further speakers, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from American Samoa (Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 811.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the yeas have it.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

ALLOWING EXCEPTION FROM \$1 COIN DISPENSING CAPABILITY REQUIREMENT

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3703) to amend section 5112(p)(1)(A) of title 31, United States Code, to allow an exception from the \$1 coin dispensing capability requirement for certain vending machines.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3703

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That section 5112(p)(1)(A) of title 31, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

"(A) any business operations conducted by any such agency, instrumentality, system, or entity that involve coins or currency will be fully capable of—

"(i) accepting \$1 coins in connection with such operations; and

"(ii) other than vending machines that do not receive currency denominations higher than \$1, dispensing \$1 coins in connection with such operations; and".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. SCOTT) and the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. PRICE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. SCOTT).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within