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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable BENJAMIN L. CARDIN, a Senator from the State of Maryland.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

O God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come, thank You for the gift of another day. Because of You, we live and breathe and have our being, and we would not take the gift of our heartbeats for granted.

Guide our Senators in their labors. Give them the grace to work together in the strategic mix that is our legislative process. Make them such models of integrity that their actions will match their words. Help them to resist the tendency to rely too much on their own wisdom, as they permit You to lead them to truth. Grant that their lives this day will be infused with Your presence, love, wisdom, and power.

We pray in the Redeemer's Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable BENJAMIN L. CARDIN led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. BYRD).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,

Washington, DC, February 27, 2008.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby

appoint the Honorable BENJAMIN L. CARDIN, a Senator from the State of Maryland, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

Mr. CARDIN thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, following my remarks and those of the Republican leader, there will be a period of morning business for an hour, with the Republicans controlling the first half, the majority controlling the final half. Following morning business, we will resume the motion to proceed to S. 2633, a bill that calls for the safe redeployment of the troops in Iraq. Today, the Senate will stand in recess from 12:30 until 2:15 p.m.

IRAQ

Mr. President, another day in Iraq. As we see from the morning papers—the Washington Post is a good example—headline: “Suicide Bomber Hits Bus in Iraq’s North.” Among other things, the article goes on to state:

A suicide bomber detonated his explosives belt outside a bus in northern Iraq on Tuesday, killing at least eight people and injuring many more.

In a different paragraph:

The Tall Afar bombing followed a bloody weekend of attacks against Shiite pilgrims, the deadliest incident taking place on Sunday when a suicide bomber killed at least 63 pilgrims near the southern town of Iskandariyah. Even as overall violence has fallen, the recent attacks underscore the tenuous security environment and the resiliency of the insurgency.

In volatile Diyala province, armed men set up a fake checkpoint and kidnapped 21 people.

Near the oil-rich city of Kirkuk, gunmen attacked a checkpoint manned by Sunni volunteers, killing the Sunni volunteers.

Mr. President, this is 1 day and a half billion dollars. That is what is going on in Iraq.

What impact does that have? General Casey testified here yesterday. General Casey said:

The cumulative effects of the last 6-plus years of war have left the Army out of balance, consumed by the current fight, unable to do the things we know we need to do.

And I failed to mention in my earlier comments that below the article about the suicide bomber is the report of three more dead American soldiers: CPT Nathan R. Raudenbush, LCpl Drew W. Weaver, and SPC Keisha M. Morgan.

So that is where we are on the Iraq debate today. I will sum up in a short time, after I make a few other remarks, and I will ask consent so that we have some idea today as to how we will proceed.

I would tell all Senators that we will have, sometime today, either after the 30 hours or before a vote on the motion to proceed to the matter that is now before the Senate—immediately after that, no matter what happens on that—we will have a cloture vote on the second matter, which is, as we all know, a piece of legislation that calls for periodic reports by the President on the war on terror. Following that, when that is disposed of, we will go to the housing stimulus package. That is what I would like to spend a few minutes on because we will get to that sometime this week. It is only a question of when we get to it.

HOUSING

Mr. President, the sights and signs of America’s housing crisis are all around us. There is not a State in the Union that doesn’t feel the housing crisis. Neighborhood streets are dotted with one “For Sale” sign after another. And once we have one “For Sale” sign or, even worse, the bank has a foreclosure sign on it, it affects the whole neighborhood.

• This “bullet” symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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