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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. FITZPATRICK).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
June 23, 2011.

I hereby appoint the Honorable MIKE FITZPATRICK to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

JOHN A. BOEHNER,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 5, 2011, 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 1 hour and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes each, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

TROOP WITHDRAWAL FROM AFGHANISTAN

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, it's time, after a decade, to wind down this American-Afghanistan adventure. With his speech last night, President Obama started a process America needs to accelerate, removing 100,000 combat troops from Afghanistan.

I supported the initial move 10 years ago against the Taliban in Afghanistan. It began on a very hopeful note,

even with nations like Iran working with the United States in that critical 2001–2002 post-9/11 era.

It was a tragic mistake not to finish the job and withdraw with global support. Instead, the Bush administration, sadly, with support from too many in Congress, started a reckless, flawed and ultimately tragic war in Iraq.

President Obama reasonably says that we won't try to make Afghanistan a perfect place. We won't because we can't. America has already invested enough, direct costs of over 1,500 American lives, approaching one-half trillion dollars. Indirect and long-term will be much greater. Bear in mind, we have invested \$2 trillion in the war against terror, and the long-term costs are going to be between \$4 trillion and \$6 trillion.

In Afghanistan, ultimately there will be a negotiated settlement with the least, worst guys, the Taliban and warlords, assorted tribal strongmen. It's already started.

We cannot afford to continue this effort, not when crying needs are here in America to rebuild and renew our country.

Last week, the American mayors got it right when they called this question and called for renewed investment here at home. The tragedy is that it's not ultimately going to make that much difference the longer we're there and the more we fight. Whether it's going to be 1 year, 2 years, 10 years, far in the future, it's not going to look that much different in terms of the ultimate outcome in Afghanistan.

America needs to be engaged in this dangerous region. It needs to help Afghanistan. It needs to help the Pakistani people. It needs to be involved, both diplomatically and with development assistance. No longer do we need to have combat troops being a part of that mission.

REPUBLICAN WOMEN IN CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, earlier this week my Republican female colleagues spent an hour on the floor of this great Chamber talking about why they have chosen to come to Congress, talking about why they have chosen to leave the private sector and come to the public sector, and talked about why it is so important, so vitally important that they chose to come as Republican women.

I think that as you listened to that debate, their stories were inspiring. You realized the diversity of the background of the Republican women that have come to this Chamber, the richness of the experiences, the life experiences that they have brought with them. You also realized how solidly and firmly committed they are to strengthening and preserving this great Nation.

I think it's fair to say that our Republican philosophy of government centers on faith, family, freedom, hope, opportunity, and preserving those tenets that really underpin this Nation.

I can say that, as a wife, a mother, a grandmother, a small business owner, I've had the blessing of learning firsthand how very important it is that we take our conservative philosophy of life and government into the public sector of our Nation. Daily we work to preserve opportunities for all of our children and our grandchildren.

We work to make certain that each and every child in our presence knows the value of, and realizes there is an opportunity for them to achieve the American Dream; that it is a good thing, a healthy thing for them to dream big dreams and to work very hard to make those dreams come true.

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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