IRAN'S NUCLEAR AMBITIONS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KELLY). Under the Speaker's announced policy of allowing Members to speak for 3 minutes, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. FRANKS) is recognized for 32 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. FRANKS of Arizona. Mr. Speaker, I thank the previous gentleman here. His comments were very compelling to me.

Mr. Speaker, before I begin my comments tonight, let me just sincerely say that I hold in my heart this privilege of being a Member of the American family and this United States Congress to be a priceless gift of God. And I would ask that my comments tonight would be heard in that context, and I would even dare to hope, Mr. Speaker, that you and the Members of this body might grant me a modicum of understanding befitting the conviction and the gravity that give impulse to the statements that I make tonight.

Mr. Speaker, the very first responsibility of human government is to protect its people. Many times during the nearly 4 years of the Obama administration, I have stood on this floor and have called upon this administration to address the grave threat posed by Iran's nuclear program.

When I first began calling for Iran to be referred to the Security Council, they possessed only 157 centrifuges, Mr. Speaker. But tonight, Iran possesses more than 9,000. And tonight I stand before you in such a gravity that I find it difficult to articulate, Mr. Speaker. I believe we may be facing the very last window this world will ever have before it becomes too late to prevent jihad from becoming armed with nuclear weapons and shattering the peace and security of human freedom as we have known it.

Because this administration has delayed and sent ambiguous messages to Iran and the world, as of approximately 3 months ago, Iran reached the point where it now possesses all the components necessary to become a nuclear-armed nation.

Mr. Speaker, Iran has the knowledge, the technical expertise, the equipment, everything necessary to build a nuclear warhead. They need no new technology, no new parts, no resources of any kind from anyone. All they need now is time and lack of intervention.

Mr. Speaker, if Iran is allowed to gain nuclear weapons, it will unequivocally transform the landscape of human freedom as we have known it throughout the world. The world's primary financier of terrorism will be armed with nuclear warheads. A desperate arms race will rage across the entire Middle East. Israel will be in range of nuclear missiles in the hands of a Jewish extremist who desires to obliterate their entire nation in 15 minutes.
Mr. Speaker, the Pentagon estimates that hundreds of U.S. soldiers have died, as many as three and four of our casualties, as a result of Iran supplying terrorists in Iraq with weapons such as highly sophisticated explosive form penetrators designed to destroy American armor and vehicles. What possesses us to believe that they would not do the same with nuclear weapons? Former Joint Chief of Staff Admiral Mike Mullen said:

My worst nightmare is terrorists with nuclear weapons. Not only do I know that they are trying to get them, but I know they will use them.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called Iran the major terrorist-sponsoring state of our time. Tehran could give those nuclear weapons to terrorists, or give them a nuclear umbrella that would bring terrorism beyond our wildest dreams.

Mr. Speaker, can we allow a man like Ahmadinejad, leading the world’s most dangerous regime, to be able to disseminate nuclear weapons to terrorists and have his finger on the button that could eliminate families targeting our families and our children?

And how do we negotiate with a nuclear Iran, as Senator Obama suggested, when their jihadist ideology considers Armageddon a good thing? Mr. Speaker, even without nuclear weapons, the Iranian regime has remained relentless and undeterred in its efforts to harm America, Israel, and our Western interests. In October of last year, our intelligence intercepted an Iranian plot to assassinate the Saudi Arabian Ambassador and to detonate bombs at both the Saudi Arabian and the Israeli Embassies right here in Washington, D.C. Tapes in American possession show that the Iranians were unconcerned with “collateral damage.” Now, Mr. Speaker, translated, that means dead Americans. It also means that Iran has no fear whatsoever of the Obama administration.

And more recent days, we have learned that Iran was behind another barbaric attack, a terrorist attack on innocent civilians, when its terrorist proxy, Hezbollah, bombed a Bulgarian bus, killing five innocent Israeli citizens and killing a pregnant woman and including dozens more. Imagine how emboldened Iran will become if they are allowed to come into possession of nuclear weapons.

Specifically Mr. Speaker, imagine for a moment the scenario of Hezbollah, one of Iran’s terrorist proxies, gaining possession of just two nuclear warheads and bringing them across the border into the United States concealed, say, in bales of marijuana—this shows you that they can get them in—when transporting them into the heart of two different crowded unnamed cities and then calling and telling the White House exactly when to detonate, and then following through 60 seconds later.

Then imagine them, Mr. Speaker, calling the White House back and making demands, which, if they’re not met, would mean that the second warhead would also be detonated in a different unnamed American city. The entire United States would be held hostage by terrorist monsters, Mr. Speaker.

One imagines if the Iranian terrorists acquired two small cargo ships carrying mobile launchers with SCUD missiles from Iran’s existing arsenal and used them to launch those two warheads in a coordinated and devastating high-altitude electromagnetic pulse potentially capable of devas- 

tating our electric grid and the civilian electrical grid as it exists today. That is a nuclear jihad to fall across their future.

For almost 4 years, Mr. Speaker, we have witnessed the same weakness, naiveté, vacillation, ambiguity, and delusion in the future, recognizing the Iranian nation’s grip on America’s throat. As always, any credible threat should be evaluated by whether an enemy possesses both the intention and the capacity to inflict harm. The despotic regime now governing Iran has been explicitly clear in its intention toward the United States. Official military parades in Iran have, for years, routinely featured a litany of slogans calling for death to Israel, death to America.

President Ahmadinejad was speaking to the whole world when he said:

And you, for your part, if you would like to have good relations with the Iranian nation in the future, recognize the Iranian nation’s greatness and bow down before the greatness of the Iranian nation and surrender. If you don’t accept to do this, the Iranian nation will later force you to surrender and bow down.

Does that sound like someone who thinks he knows something that we don’t? Ahmadinejad also said:

Israel is about to die and will soon be erased from the geographical season.

Then he added:

The time for the fall of the satanic power of the United States has come, and the countdown to the annihilation of the emperor of power and wealth has started.

Iranian Basij Commander Naqdi said:

As long as America exists, we will not rest. We must create the environment for the destruction of the United States.

Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has consistently denied the existence of the Holocaust, Mr. Speaker, calling it a myth or a fabrication. And in the same breath, he threatens to make it happen again by repeatedly calling for the destruction of the Jewish State, for Israel to be “wiped off the map.” He has said, point blank:

The wave of the Islamist revolution will soon reach the entire world. Anybody who recognizes Israel will burn in the fire of the Islamic nation’s fury.

And just today, Mr. Speaker, just today, Ahmadinejad called for the annihilation of Israel again.

Well, the fact is, Mr. Speaker, that Iran is pursuing the means whereby they could assist groups like Hezbollah to do exactly these kinds of horrifying things. The only components they lack to proceed are the nuclear warheads.

Mr. Speaker, there is no longer a single rational defense for the argument that Iran is not pursuing nuclear weapons capability.

And just today, Mr. Speaker, just yesterday, Mr. Speaker, the House just voted yesterday on another Iran sanctions bill that was so weakened and watered down by Mr. Obama and his supporters in the Senate that it is now barely worth the paper it’s written upon. The administration’s focus has been on sanctions, and weak sanctions at that, Mr. Speaker.

And even then, Mr. Obama has granted waivers to further weaken the sanctions already in place.

Now, I wonder if this administration has considered the fact that we have had economic sanctions against North Korea for over 60 years, and in recent iterations we have sanctioned North Korea nearly to starvation. And yet during that time, they have tested nuclear warheads twice. And it’s a genie that we cannot put back in the bottle, Mr. Speaker.

President Ahmadinejad has said of economic sanctions:

If they want to continue with that path of sanctions, we will not be harmed. They can issue resolutions for 100 years.

Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei said Iran’s nuclear policies would not change, no matter the pressure. He said:

With God’s help, and without paying attention to propaganda, Iran’s nuclear course
Mr. Speaker. If Iran is hell-bent on getting nuclear weapons, there is no diplomatic solution. In the popular revolt in Iran in 2009, the President could have assisted the dissidents and the peace-loving, decent people of Iran, of which there are so many, and their oppressors in the Iranian regime—or at least he could have changed all of that equation. But the President left them twisting in the wind.

To call Mr. Obama a bystander in all of this is to be charitable. The truth is, Mr. Speaker, he has been nowhere to be found. Many congressional Republicans have written and pleaded with this President numerous times on this vital issue to absolutely no avail.

The truth is, this President has waited too long. He has waited so long that the equation now before us has no good answer. His policies have only helped Iran accelerate their nuclear program. Iran is now tripling its uranium output, moving enrichment facilities deep under a mountain near Qom and restraining the IAEA from even inspecting weaponization facilities. The equation now before us has no diplomatic solution. But the President left them twisting in the wind.

Mr. Obama’s own Director of National Intelligence was asked by the Senate to testify whether sanctions had any effect on the course of Iran’s nuclear program. The answer was simple, Mr. Speaker, “No, none whatsoever.” I’ve said many times, starting long ago, that we should have pursued truly effective sanctions, dissident support, regime change, and political pressures to prevent Iran from becoming a nuclear-armed state. But without the conviction in the minds of the Iranian leadership that military intervention will occur if they continue to develop nuclear weapons, none of these other approaches will change their minds. Our greatest hope to prevent military action on Iran was to make sure their leaders understood that the free world would respond militarily before we allowed them to threaten it with nuclear weapons.

Unfortunately, Iran’s radical leaders concluded that Barack Obama simply lacked the understanding or the resolve to use military action to prevent their nuclear weapons development. And why would they conclude anything else, Mr. Speaker? Even now, the stated goal of the Obama sanctions policy is simply to get Iran back to the negotiating table where they can waste even more time and gain even more valuable advances. And if we do get them back to the negotiating table, Mr. Speaker, what compromise can we seek—maybe that Iran keeps only a small number of nuclear weapons? No, Mr. Speaker. If Iran is hell-bent on getting nuclear weapons, there is no diplomatic solution.

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Maybe now it is becoming clear why Israel is so very concerned, because for them, a nuclear Iran is not just an academic question—it calls into question their very survival—and the Obama administration has now placed Israel into an almost impossible circumstance. Mr. Speaker, given Israel’s President’s resolve to prevent an Israeli strike on nuclear facilities in Iran more than he has resisted a nuclear Iran. Israel has listened to Mr. Obama publicly criticize Israel more for building homes in their capital city than he has condemned Ahmadinejad for building nuclear weapons with which to threaten the entire free world. In fact, they have watched this administration systematically scrub references that Jerusalem is even the capital of Israel.

Consequently, I believe Israel has known for some time that they can no longer trust the Obama administration to act in their best interest. They know that Mr. Obama has waited so long that acts now to defend their own nation—and all of us incidentally—that they will suffer a far more damaging response from the radical regimes that surround them than they otherwise would have. Israel knows that if they wait much longer to attack, the Iranian nuclear facilities may well be beyond their conventional military capability. Israel desperately needs America and her greater ability to attack heavily fortified targets. They need us, Mr. Speaker, but they will act without us.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said simply and clearly, “One thing I’ll never compromise on, and that is Israel’s security . . . When it comes to Israel’s survival, we must always remain the masters of our fate.”

So what is this administration’s present strategy? “We’re trying to make the decision to attack as hard as possible, and the most grace-ful part of it is President Obama’s threat to withhold resupply from Israel to pressure them into his brand of inaction.”

So let me just see if I have this straight, Mr. Speaker. The President says, according to his own State Department, that the world’s greatest supporter of terrorism, a self-avowed enemy of America, with an advancing nuclear weapons program, has committed to destroy us and Israel and that the President’s goal is to prevent Iran—our best and most committed friend and national ally on this Earth—from defending themselves. Did I get that right?

Mr. Speaker, that’s why Israel will never trust this President with their national survival.

You see, Israel knows the very inconvenient truth that, when it comes to a nuclear Iran, if we are to prevent, we must preempt. They that the choice with Iran is no longer a choice between the way the world is now and the way the world might be after a military strike to prevent them from gaining nuclear weapons. Rather, the choice now is between what the world will be like after a preventative military strike on Iran or what the world will be like after Iran gains nuclear weapons.

So, Mr. Speaker, we should not deceive ourselves about this. Israel will tell Israel intelligence tells the prime minister that Iran is entering into that “zone of immunity” where Iran will no longer have the conventional capacity to prevent Iran from gaining nuclear weapons.

They will act knowing that many in the world will condemn them. They will act knowing that they will be blamed for any radiation releases from Iran’s nuclear facilities that might result. They will act knowing that thousands of Iranian, Hamas, and Hezbollah rockets and missiles will fall upon the cities of their tiny nation in retaliation. They will act knowing that it is now extremely difficult for them to succeed.

But, Mr. Speaker. Israel will act because they are students of history, and they will not be made to walk silently into the gas chambers again.

They will act because they know that whatever the consequences for their actions will be that they will pale in significance compared to what the consequences would be for them and for the whole world if the jihadist Government of Iran were to gain nuclear weapons.

And, if and when they do act, the Obama administration will owe an apology to the whole world for ignoring this grave reality for so long, but Israel will especially deserve an apology—an apology from this administration for leaving them with no choice but to act on behalf of all of us.

Mr. Speaker, now, with all of the things I’ve said today, it seems to now seems to be a profound new irony upon us. This administration finally seems to recognize that they have, indeed, waited too long. This administration is finally realizing that Israel can no longer stand and wait. It is now time to understand if Israel is forced to strike Iran’s nuclear facilities alone or if Iran tests a nuclear weapon before the November 6 election, that the American people and the world will damn the Obama administration for their breathtaking vacillation. Under such scenarios, the administration very likely sees the chances for Mr. Obama to be reelected as virtually zero.

So it has occurred to me, Mr. Speaker, that the Obama administration may have at last found sufficient rationale to move decisively against Iran’s nuclear weapons program. The President knows that, in times of military action, the American people often rally around their President. Consequently, in spite of the fact that it has blatantly ignored the national security implications of Iran’s nuclear program, it will now not surprise me at all if this administration launches an attack on
trators, small businesses, people concerned about the devastating impact of the looming sequestration spending cuts. Each of these groups, indeed, all of our constituents, deserve an honest accounting. How did we get in this predicament, and how can we get out of it without bankrupting our economic recovery and restores our fiscal health? Our situation results from the failure of the so-called “supercommittee” established in the wake of the debt ceiling crisis manufactured by Republicans last summer to come up with a deficit reduction plan. Instead, we’re faced with across-the-board cuts that would indiscriminately slash more than 8 percent from every national security and domestic account. Cutting with a meat axe instead of a scalpel is the most dangerous way imaginable to set fiscal policy. These cuts would come on top of the more targeted, but nonetheless significant, $917 billion in cuts and spending caps that the administration and Congress locked in.

In the case of defense spending, these earlier cuts were a result of a careful, strategic review by the administration, and they’ll save nearly half a trillion dollars over the next 10 years. As for defense, domestic innovation, infrastructure, research, and innovation, these cuts have already gone too far, slowing the recovery, and putting at risk our ability to compete in the global marketplace.

The House Republicans’ first order of business in the 112th Congress was to precipitate an unnecessary, confidence-shaking, government shutdown crisis to extract domestic spending cuts. From there, they moved to the needlessly months-long debt ceiling crisis, during much of which consumer confidence plummeted, and the economy posted 2011’s four slowest months of job growth.

By undermining confidence in the economy and withholding counter-cyclical investments that would boost the recovery and prompt future growth, Republicans have provided a case study in how not to make macroeconomic policy. Yet they want to do more of the same. According to the Economic Policy Institute, House Republicans approved a 2013 budget that would put 4.1 million people out of work by cutting investments in our future.

At root, Republicans are proposing a brand of European-style austerity, the same policy that has tipped many economies back into recession. Interestingly, with sequestration now looming and pressure from defense contractors mounting, a substantial portion of the Republican caucus on both sides of the Capitol has belatedly become aware of the concept of macroeconomics. All of the sudden, they’re talking macroeconomics. You might call it “defense Keynesianism,” the belief that large cuts create jobs, and that cutting it would result in job losses. In fact, the same argument applies equally to domestic investments in education and research and infrastructure, a truth Republicans have found it convenient to ignore.

The Republicans, by the way, can only thank themselves for the deep defense cuts in sequestration. One can easily imagine an alternative sequester scenario, in which the surcharge, in addition to less severe cuts to defense and domestic spending. But as was the case during these repeated unnecessary crises, Republican dogmatism kept revenue off the table.

It’s clear sequestration would devastate our defense, infrastructure, and research sectors, undermining our economy over the near and long term. It would also hobble critical functions from air traffic control to meat inspection and Social Security claims processing. It can’t be resolved in isolation or through half measures. Yet Republicans are now proposing staving off the impact of sequestration on defense alone, and they pay for it by again targeting health care for low-income women and children, food and nutrition assistance, and other safety net programs for the poorest Americans, in addition to locking in a 2 percent Medicare cut. Their plan would victimize the most vulnerable, it would hinder job creation, and jeopardize our ability to compete.

Mr. Speaker, there’s a better way. The impending fiscal cliff, which includes both sequestration and the expiration of the Bush tax cuts, offers an opportunity for all Members of Congress to set the talking points aside and act in our country’s best interest. I know we can chart a course to fiscal balance because we’ve done it before. In the budget agreements of 1990 and 1993, which set the stage for 4 years of budget surpluses, the formula was fiscal discipline on all fronts.

No area of spending can be sacrosanct. We should focus our limited dollars on boosting the recovery and making critical investments in our future because the most effective means of deficit reduction is a growing economy. As in the 1990s, we must be part of the solution. The President has already proposed a sensible plan allowing the Bush-era tax breaks to expire on income over $250,000 a year. Extravagant tax breaks for various special interests must be ended. The revenue raised could be used to pay down the deficit and to help fund the investments in education, research, infrastructure, and innovation that are critical to economic growth.

Most Americans agree with this comprehensive approach, but most Republicans still hide behind their anti-tax pledges. Their insistence that no additional revenue ever be raised, for example, by ending tax loopholes for oil companies or asking millionaires to return to their Clinton-era tax rates, is not only irresponsible but makes any credible budget compromise in Washington impossible.

As we approach the fiscal cliff, that fever has got to be broken. We must find our way...