

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

PROMOTING STABILITY AND PROSPERITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GOLDMAN of Texas). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2025, the gentleman from Utah (Mr. MOORE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MOORE of Utah. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on this Special Order.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. MOORE of Utah. Mr. Speaker, last Monday marked a somber milestone. It was 500 days since the horrific attacks on October 7, 2022, when Iranian-backed Hamas terrorists launched the most harrowing assault on Israel and the Jewish people since the Holocaust.

We witnessed an unprecedented act of violence that shocked the world 500 days ago. We will never forget the 1,200 innocent lives Hamas murdered and the 240 civilians they took hostage that day, as well as those affected in the months following the October 7 attacks.

My House Republican colleagues and I are grateful to President Trump and Prime Minister Netanyahu for securing the recent ceasefire agreement which has led to Hamas releasing American and Israeli hostages. As we remember this day, we are more motivated than ever to stand with Israel and the Jewish people. I am grateful to my colleagues for joining me this evening to discuss this solemn anniversary.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. WILSON).

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I thank and very much appreciate Republican Vice Chairman BLAKE MOORE of Utah for holding this Special Order hour.

Last Monday, February 17 marked 500 days since the heinous attack in Israel where drug-induced Iranian puppet Hamas launched the most cowardly, murderous assault against Israel and the Jewish community since the Holocaust. The world will not forget the mass slaughter of 1,200 innocent lives by Hamas and the 240 civilians taken hostage, including Americans.

It is a remarkable achievement that under the leadership of President Donald Trump and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that a ceasefire agreement was reached and led to the release of many hostages, though many remain.

Prime Minister Netanyahu has been successful in eliminating the leadership of Hamas and Hezbollah. He will face the nuclear threat of Tehran.

Americans will continue to reaffirm our unwavering support for Israel and the right of its citizens and Jewish people to live in peace. With the leadership of President Donald Trump, Secretary of State Marco Rubio, and Ambassador Mike Huckabee, Americans will not stop until we bring home every hostage and achieve victory over the Iranian regime and its puppets.

The people of Iran can be inspired by the courageous patriots of Syria who liberated Damascus on December 8. Additionally, the new government in Beirut is positive for the people of Lebanon.

With the courageous patriots such as Ahmed Albasheer in Iraq, the people of Iraq will free themselves from Iranian domination for independence, achieving stability with prosperity.

Dictators around the world are losing in the war of dictators with rule of gun invading democracies with rule of law. War criminal Putin is failing in Ukraine with Ukrainians inspired by President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

In Georgia, the legitimate president, Salome Zourabichvili, is respected worldwide.

In Belarus, the legitimate president of Belarus, Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, has been warmly welcomed at the Munich Security Conference, supporting freedom for the people of Belarus.

In conclusion, God bless our troops as the global war on terrorism continues. Open borders for dictators put all Americans at risk of more 9/11 attacks imminent as warned by the FBI. Trump is reinstituting existing laws to protect American families with peace through strength.

Mr. MOORE of Utah. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from South Carolina (Mr. WILSON). I always appreciate his perspective on these foreign policy issues.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. LAMALFA.)

SUPPORTING OUR INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. MOORE for leading this opportunity to cover important subjects that we are working on in the House in D.C. and in tandem with the excellent effort coming out of the Trump administration. It is a more positive outlook we have had lately. With the economy moving in the right direction, it gives people more freedom.

The foreign relations are going to improve. I think it is important that we have strong relations. I think NATO is extremely important and that we support and remain part of NATO. I am encouraged to see that NATO countries under President Trump are moving to step up a little bit more and take some more of their own responsibility for their defense. It shouldn't all be on the burden of taxpayers of America, but indeed with more and more of that self-starting, I would say. We are seeing that talked about in Germany a little bit more right now.

It is always important that we maintain the NATO alliance and that the

United States remain part of that, as well as our relationship with Israel. It is such an excellent partnership that we have with them; how we are able to work together in tandem as two different nations with the technology that has been developed.

They do amazing things in concert with our knowledge and our technology in this country, for example, on agriculture water-saving technology. They have to irrigate in a desert. In my home State of California, we have a rather arid climate, but we do have a very plentiful water supply. It comes from the Sierras in the north and the east. Israel has shown the way on how to make water go much farther with their drip irrigation systems. It comes from working together on these technologies, as well as defense systems.

That is important. Israel puts so much effort into defending itself, and America has worked in tandem with that to develop missile defense systems that are helpful for us. They are helpful with our other allies around the world and Israel, as well; them with the Iron Dome, ours with the Patriot, and newer technology that has come since then.

When we consider Israel, they have really been under the gun ever since they were reconstituted back in the late 1940s. No sooner were they were put in place and set up shop than the neighboring countries immediately attacked them. For the Israeli people, it is really an existential situation. They are constantly under threat.

To hear what they are trying to do and the way they advocate for constant peace and coexistence—I mentioned that a little bit earlier today—Israel would like to get along, and they have many folks of Arab descent that live within their country.

When I have been able to listen to different seminars on that, those folks are asked would they like to move out of Israel if they feel like they are an Arab in Israel and may or may not be having a good go of it. They said that, no, they like it there. They want to stay there. We see that cooperation within on people that have that understanding.

Marking recently the 500 days since the horrific attack by Hamas on October 7, when an Iranian-backed group inflicted an incredible amount of damage, death, destruction, and terror on a group of people that were just peacefully enjoying the day, for the next 500 days we have hardly gotten much cooperation. More recently, we have been able to negotiate hostage releases; but they still have more.

Hamas, that terror regime in Gaza that has been there and set up shop not long after the whole Gaza Strip was decided over basically—and Israel withdrew in good faith, land for peace back then. What is the reward for that? Before the ink is even dry on agreements, the mortar rounds are being set up and launched indiscriminately into Israel.

What are they supposed to do? Are they supposed to just let that happen?

Of course, they are going to defend themselves. We have seen that since October 7 or approximately 500 days ago, Israel has done what it must do in order to defend itself from these indiscriminate terror attack that happened from within Hamas and still holding many hostages, both Israeli and even some Americans.

How do we negotiate with that? They are doing the best they can. They are doing their best to keep peace. They are doing their best to be a good neighbor. That doesn't seem to be rewarded in that part of the world.

I think it is perfectly appropriate and I think in a way our duty as an ally to people with a lot of kinship with us that we remain strong as a support of Israel and ultimately eradicate Hamas from what they are doing there. I don't know what the overall long-term solution is going to be in Gaza. What they have going now is not working.

As long as they want to continue to inflict that kind of damage as a bad neighbor, then Israel is going to have to take steps to defend itself. When it does, it does so surgically. It isn't indiscriminately bombing out areas there. I know there have been many, many casualties. We get that.

When Hamas is using their people in Gaza, their own neighbors as human shields, and expecting Israel to not make a move where the terrorism or the rocket attacks are emanating from, what are they supposed to do? Hamas is the one that is evil, using their own people, their own neighbors, their own kind as human shields. Somehow the rest of the world wants to blame Israel for what is going on there. It is nonsense.

□ 1830

As these 500 days have passed and we remember the 1,200 innocent lives lost, taken, butchered, and at the time the 240 hostages that were taken, we must stand strong with them.

I appreciate what President Trump has been able to set up, in just a month, to send a signal there that the United States is going to stand strong with Israel and that Prime Minister Netanyahu recognizes that and will do everything he can to find a solution to forge that peace amongst that and still be strong for his nation and for his people that is essential for its continued existence.

It is an existential threat every day. I have toured the country and met with folks more toward the southern part of Israel. They live on a 15-second alert status basically. They have to be ready at any time to be able to find shelter within 15 seconds in certain sectors of more southern Israel for what might come in as a rocket attack upon them. What a way to live.

On the other hand, it seems they take it in stride. It is amazing. They are amazing, resilient people, time and time again. All they want to do is get along, to peacefully coexist.

I made this comment a little bit earlier, but I don't see the "Coexist"

stickers on the back of the military vehicles or automobiles that are in the Gaza area or the Hamas vehicles. They aren't interested in coexisting. They ultimately have to be defeated and moved out of there, because this is not going to work long term. You can't deal with unreasonable people who want to eradicate who you are, so I don't blame Israel.

Of note here in Congress, we were able to accomplish an important budget resolution just last night. It is amazing the rhetoric that flies out of here about what we are trying to do.

Government needs to be accountable, much more accountable than it has been. Since the COVID era, when spending went up dramatically, and we are dealing with \$2 trillion deficits—how do we even say that so easily and add that number every year to our national debt? We are fortunate interest rates aren't worse off, because the management of that debt, the servicing of that, the interest on that, would consume the rest of our budget if it got too much more out of control.

What we are trying to do and what the Trump administration is trying to do by identifying the fraud, the needless spending that is happening with these organizations, should be commended.

In our budget resolution last night, as this leads us toward the budget reconciliation process, that indeed is trying to find things that will more streamline and clean up our budgeting process. That is a good, honest, earnest effort here.

Hearing the rhetoric flying around on the other side of the aisle or coming out from the media that they are going to make draconian cuts to Medicaid, nowhere in that document is there even mention of Medicaid or certainly cuts to it or some of the other programs that people have come to depend on.

That is going to be an ongoing discussion in the budget reconciliation process of where are we going to find these reductions. If DOGE can keep doing its work without being unfairly criticized for the effort being made, then we are going to find more and more. We are finding billions already, finding bogus contracts, things that the average American is not interested in having their money—\$40 million here, \$15 million there, billions on certain things. That is not in the American people's interest because they have their own difficult time.

There was a lot of discussion about the price of eggs. When the Biden administration caused an overreaction to bird flu, 160 million chickens had to be eradicated in this country. Yeah, it is going to have an effect on the price of eggs and poultry and other things. When the government does things, there is a cause and there is an effect.

I am hoping with this budget being resolved here and moving forward with the reconciliation conversation—again, it is going to be on national TV in a

committee process, open hearings, as these numbers are wrestled with.

It isn't easy. If we can just reset back to pre-COVID spending, with perhaps an adjustment for inflation since then. However, the inflation we need to be adjusting to is something more normalized, like in the first Trump era, instead of the dramatic inflation caused by the Biden policies on energy and massive spending, such as the Infrastructure Act—which, hey, there is some good infrastructure in there, but there is a lot of spending that really isn't infrastructure. On top of that, the American Rescue Plan and then, ultimately, the so-called Inflation Reduction Act, which was another trillion-dollar spending spree of pet programs and green projects that the Democrats seem to love.

Maybe we can salvage a bit of that money and channel it into good things. That is some of the effort here, but a lot of that needs to be limited and cut off longer term. That is the effort that needs to be made here.

I keep coming back to my home State's high-speed rail project. There was an additional \$4 billion dumped on top of that right at the end of the Biden administration. That is where these eleventh hour pronouncements and executive actions really need scrutiny.

I am glad we have the Congressional Review Act to look at those, some onerous regulations on last-minute spending, on monuments that are all around the country, with massive amounts of acres declared under the Biden administration as national monuments and areas that are not going to be available.

For example, one ocean monument that was set here that is about 625 million acres. How big is that area? Let us do the math on that. Basically it boils down to a million—it really boils down to, in easy numbers, a 1,000-mile square. That is how much those acres add up to, 625 million. That is basically a no-go zone for doing normal things like certain types of fishing, or if there is an area that is rich in oil, being able to take advantage of that and do offshore drilling that would be helpful to our economy.

We know how to do it right. Yet, when there is a massive declaration by the President, just by the stroke of a pen, under abuse of the Antiquities Act, it puts us in a hard way, a difficult way to be energy independent and sustain our own needs as a country when these willy-nilly declarations just keep happening.

Thankfully, that has come to an end, and we can review some of these things and say: Is this really what is effective under the Antiquities Act for our country, for the landscape we have, and for the resources that are available?

I am hoping for good things, and I think good things will happen. We need the American public to have faith and see what has been happening so far with the DOGE process. What we would

be seeing under budget reconciliation is that we want to put the power back with the people, for the people, and not have it just be vested in government.

Government run amuck becomes abusive. Your rights are limited and your property rights abused, as we see so much of in the West where people are being sued for a 150-year-old fence and charged criminally for a fence line that has been undefined, for example. This is in South Dakota. The Forest Service is going after them for that when it was unsettled. They hadn't even done a survey on it to see if there was something right or wrong with that particular fence line. Property rights are being trampled and people are being intimidated by their government in this sense.

Let's reset on this and put government back in a position where it is accountable directly to those who are elected, who are accountable directly to the people. We will be much better off with that. It is moving in a good direction, I certainly believe, as we have more accountability for the spending. Where is it going? Is it something that is effective? Is it a good value for the American people?

That is why I am happy with the DOGE process. There are some imperfections in it. We will figure that out. We will hammer that out.

The budget reconciliation process will be underway very soon and, hopefully, will be successful. This is something that Republicans have stood for for a long time, the accountability to the American people, accountability for how their tax dollars are being used, and accountability for those working in the government and who are supposed to be showing up and providing a service. Government jobs are not supposed to be a jobs program. They are there to deliver a service to the people that give us the charge to bring them aboard and start these agencies.

Somehow, they think it is supposed to be 100 percent job security. That isn't available anywhere else in the country in the private sector, especially when overactive government and overactive regulators can sweep away your right to farm, to mine, to ranch, to have a business or have it taken away by eminent domain, such as we have seen on the Point Reyes National Seashore, where 12 ranching families there, dairy and beef ranchers, have had that swept away from them after they finally relented back in the early sixties to sell the land, because the government came and bullied them off of it. Now they are kicking them off all the way, if that is allowed to stand. I hope we can put a stop to that, because that is not right and that is not the American way of doing things.

There is a lot of energy to do the right things for the American people coming from the administration and from this House. Hopefully, the Senate can take up what we send over there and have success on that. It is really

about, again, resetting and making government accountable to the people and doing what is best for them, not what is best for the expansion of the government and the furthering of the little fiefdoms that go on in it.

Mr. Speaker, I am really grateful for the opportunity here. I am grateful that our House was able to pass the budget resolution and continue the process. It is going to be one I think we can ultimately be proud of.

Mr. MOORE of Utah. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from California, and I always appreciate his participation.

I thank the rest of my colleagues for being here tonight and taking time to speak on the horrific assault against our ally and the Jewish community.

On October 7, 2022, the world was shocked at the atrocities carried out by Hamas terrorists against Israel and the Jewish community. Nearly 3,000 Hamas fighters crossed into Israel by land, air, and sea, killing around 1,200 people and taking more than 250 Israeli and foreign hostages.

October 7 will forever be a turning point in history.

As we reflect on the events of that day and the 500 days that have followed, it is imperative that we also recognize the broader implications of this attack.

It was not just an assault on Israel. It was an attack on the American vision for a safe and secure Middle East, which was led, perpetuated, and financed by the Iranian regime.

The Hamas perpetrators not only set out to destroy the very existence of the State of Israel, but they sought something larger. They wanted to prevent a seismic shift in the region from taking place. I am, of course, referring to the early success of the Abraham Accords, negotiated by the first Trump administration, and the long-term goal of a Saudi-Israeli peace and normalization agreement.

Iran and its terrorist proxy groups, like Hamas, Hezbollah, and the Houthis, could not bear to see Israel accepted by its neighbors or folded into the community of nations where it rightly belongs. Instead, they chose to commit unspeakable acts of violence, rape, terror, and slaughter.

As we mark 500 days since the October 7 attack, we must also look at the ongoing suffering of those affected by this violence. There are countless families and individuals living with the scars of that day. It is our duty to honor their memory and ensure that attacks like this never happen again.

We must remain vigilant against the threats posed by extremist groups and continue to champion freedom and democracy around the world. We must also work to strengthen the Abraham Accords, push hard for Saudi-Israeli normalization, and ensure that Iran's plan to destabilize the Middle East fails. We have a plan. We have a vision for success in the region and now is not the time to take our foot off the gas pedal.

House Republicans will remain steadfast in maintaining a strong relationship with Israel to continue to ensure that freedom and democracy endure.

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

HIGHLIGHTING NOTABLE BLACK LEADERS FROM MICHIGAN'S THIRD CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2025, the Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Michigan (Ms. SCHOLTEN) for 30 minutes.

Ms. SCHOLTEN. Mr. Speaker, I welcome my friends, family, and constituents back home in west Michigan to my Special Order hour honoring notable Black west Michiganders and the impact they have made on our wonderful community.

Black History Month is not just about reflecting on the past. It is also about acknowledging the incredible individuals who have shaped our communities and continue to inspire future generations.

Black history is woven into the very fabric of America, and it is our duty to honor it, not just in February but every single day of the year.

As the Representative of Michigan's Third Congressional District, I am privileged to highlight some of the remarkable Black leaders, educators, athletes, activists, and artists who have left their mark on west Michigan. Their stories are ones of perseverance, excellence, and resilience in the face of adversity. They remind us that history is not just something written in textbooks, but it is alive in the people who have worked tirelessly to break barriers and uplift their communities. I want to first tell you about Lyman Parks first.

Lyman Parks, Grand Rapids Mayor: After moving to Grand Rapids to serve as a pastor of the First Community AME Church in 1968, he was elected as the first Black commissioner in the city's history.

Lyman Parks holds a special place in our history as the first and only Black mayor of Grand Rapids. His leadership throughout the 1970s marked a turning point for the city, proving that Black leaders could and should have a seat at the table in shaping the future of our communities.

In 2003, Parks was awarded the GIANT Among Giants Award, an annual award presented by the city of Grand Rapids since 1983 to recognize exceptional contributions by African Americans to the greater Grand Rapids community.

Rillastine Wilkins, City Council: At age 18 and with \$3 in her pocket, Wilkins made her way to Muskegon, where she had an aunt. She became active in the civil rights movement and attended school board meetings and Muskegon Heights City Council meetings.

Rillastine Wilkins shattered glass ceilings, becoming the first female city