

has failed—failed miserably, and failed by any measure.

The Senator from Montana raised a question of who is holding our debt. Here it is: Japan—we now owe them \$685 billion. We owe China over \$250 billion. We owe the United Kingdom over \$230 billion. And in fourth place—who would have ever believed this—we now owe the so-called Caribbean banking centers over \$100 billion.

Now it comes to this year and a further continuation of the Republican plan to load the Nation with debt. I do not know how else you can term it because here is what has happened.

By the way, from 1998 to 2001, there was no need to increase the Nation's debt limit. In fact, we were paying down the Nation's publicly-held debt under the administration of President Clinton. But in 2002, we had to raise the debt \$450 billion; in 2003, we had to raise the debt \$984 billion; in 1 year, 2004, another \$800 billion increase in debt; and now, in 2006, they are seeking to raise the debt another almost \$800 billion.

You add this up and the debt will have already increased under this President by \$3 trillion. When he came into office it was more than \$5 trillion. And we now know, if his next 5-year plan is adopted, he will add another \$3 trillion to the debt.

This is not a sustainable strategy or plan, and it is time for Congress to face up to it. It is time to begin the debate on what we do to confront these rapidly growing debts.

I hope very much that we will have a chance for a full debate on the debt limit and to consider stringent pay-go legislation, the device which we have had in the past to provide budget discipline.

It simply says: If you want more spending, you have to pay for it. If you want more tax cuts, you have to pay for them. That is a basic notion that we used with great effect in the 1980s and 1990s to reduce what were then record deficits and debt levels—levels that have been greatly exceeded by the massive runup of debt under this administration. I hope we have that opportunity. The Nation deserves as much.

I thank the Chair and yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Pennsylvania is recognized.

THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

Mr. SANTORUM. Mr. President, I rise today to talk about some of the recent developments in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

We have a lot of activity today. There is a hearing in the Foreign Relations Committee, as well as some dissidents who are in town to talk about the state of affairs in Iran.

As many of my colleagues know, the Iranian Government's track record with respect to supporting acts of terror inflicted upon innocent persons and

inflicting damage on peaceful relations among Middle Eastern countries is abysmal. Iran's bad activities in the Middle East and, candidly, bad actions in the world—at the head of the list, from my perspective, is promoting terrorism activities and Islamic fascism ideology that undergirds that terrorist activity in the Middle East—have secured a designation by the U.S. Department of State as a state sponsor of terrorism. Iran supports terrorist organizations such as Hezbollah, the entity behind the 1983 suicide terrorist attack against U.S. military and civilian personnel in Lebanon. Hamas is another organization that they are now supporting, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command. All of these are reprehensible organizations that the Iranian Government is directly sponsoring as a state sponsor of terrorism.

Additionally, Iran has been implicated in the 1996 attack on U.S. military personnel at Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia.

Iran's reach into Iraq, which many of us have been complaining about for a couple of years and which is now being recognized by our Government, by our Department of State, and which is now being recognized by the world—Iran is one of the fomenters of terrorism within the country of Iraq. Iran's connection to the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq and the organization's Badr Brigades means that Iran has a hand in shaping the allegiances of both Iraq's police and military forces.

Iran's human rights violations, in addition to their terrorist activities, are no less chilling. The State Department reported that the Government of Iran engages in widespread use of torture and other degrading treatment and the Iranian Government continues to discriminate against religious and ethnic minorities. They do not discriminate as to who they discriminate against. Other Muslim sects—whether Sunni or Sufi or Jews or Christians, they discriminate against them all.

Iran's record of degradation of women is appalling and should not be tolerated by the international community. Iranian women are severely oppressed and their voices are constantly suffocated by the government. There are numerous examples of Iranian women who have been arrested and severely beaten for the simple fact they are females. One example is Dr. Roya Toloui, a women's rights activist and the editor of a publication that is now banned in Iran. She was arrested last summer in the wake of a 2005 July demonstration in the town of Mahabad. Dr. Toloui was held in prison for 66 days. While she was there, she was raped and she was tortured. Though she has since been released from prison, Dr. Toloui is in constant fear of rearrest and of death.

The State Department also noted Iran's continued restrictions on work-

ers' rights. In short, the Government of Iran oppresses its people and terrorizes the world and is a threat to the security of this country and to the security of democracies throughout the West.

The one additional aspect that has now taken a lot of press is Iran's pursuit of nuclear capability. This is very unsettling when you have a regime with this kind of track record to be in pursuit of nuclear capability. Iran, of course, is permitted to pursue peaceful nuclear research under the terms of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. Its record on transparency and the true purpose of its program, obviously, is very much in doubt. In November of 2003 the International Atomic Energy Agency reported that Iran has been developing an undeclared nuclear enrichment program for 18 years and had covertly imported nuclear material and equipment. Furthermore, the IAEA reported that Iran had conducted over 110 unreported experiments to produce uranium, metal, and separated plutonium, and had possession of designs clearly related to the fabrication of nuclear weapons.

In 2005, in August, following the election of President Ahmadinejad, Iran announced that the ongoing negotiations under the terms of the 2004 Paris agreement, the agreement that suspended activities brokered by the EU-3, were "satisfactory" according to Iran. Then they announced they were resuming the conversion of raw uranium into gas for enrichment. In January of 2006, Iran removed the IAEA seals on the research enrichment plant in Natanz.

Recently, the IAEA board voted 27 to 3 to report Iran to the U.N. Security Council, and in so doing noted Iran's many failures and breaches of its obligations to comply with the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. Iran's aggressive behavior and concealment of ongoing nuclear activities can only lead to one conclusion, and that is that Iran is seeking to enrich uranium to use for nuclear weapons.

In response to this nuclear gambit, I believe we need smart sanctions for the U.N. to impose. For example, the U.N. should consider imposing a travel ban on Iran's leaders, banning international flights from Iranian air, banning the transportation of cargo carried by Iranian Government-owned ships, and possibly to pursue legal action against Iranian leaders responsible for human rights and terrorism abuses, as well as executions.

I recently introduced legislation with my colleague, Senator NORM COLEMAN, that seeks to empower the forces of democracy in Iran and support efforts to foster peaceful change within Iran. It is S. 333, the Iran Freedom and Support Act. It seeks to make it harder for the Government of Iran to have access to revenue and foreign investment. Resources that those investments accrue are used by the Iranian Government to support terrorist organizations and to pursue nuclear activity as well as to repress its people.

The bill also codifies sanctions, controls, and regulations currently in place against Iran by Executive order. It codifies those in statute. The bill declares it should be a policy of the United States to support the Iranian people in their prodemocracy movements. We believe, and the bill says, that the people of Iran are entitled to self-determination, to free and fair elections, and we want to provide the resources in helping those groups attain those free and fair elections. We authorized \$10 million in this bill, but thanks to the effort on the supplemental the administration has sent up to the Congress, they have requested \$75 million for prodemocracy efforts in Iran. I hope the introduction of our legislation last year perhaps gave some encouragement to ask for such funding. They have asked for \$75 million. I will amend our bill to ask for \$100 million for those efforts.

The Iran Freedom and Support Act is a nonviolent way to try to effect change in Iraq. I agree with the President and all who have talked about keeping our military options on the table, but it is vitally important to try to use our diplomatic options first and foremost. At a time when the threat from Iran is real, it is not only real to this country, not only real to the Middle East and Iraq, but it is, obviously, real to their own people in the way they treat them.

This is an important piece of legislation. It is something I hope we can do. It is important in spite of what the President has done. I support his policies that we show the Congress is 100 percent behind his effort to do something about the nuclear gambit Iran is engaged in right now. I am hopeful we can pass this legislation in a timely fashion.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. GRAHAM). The Senator from Minnesota.

Mr. COLEMAN. Mr. President, I rise to join my colleague from Pennsylvania on underscoring the urgency that surrounds the threat to our Nation and the entire world community with Iran.

I listened to my esteemed colleague talk about the Iranian repression of women. I thought to myself, how sad; Iran was a country that at times led that part of the world in its respect for women and women's rights at a time few talked about it. And how low they have sunk.

It was 100 years ago Iran's constitutional revolution was the first genuine democracy in the Middle East, over half of the population of that part of the world. When we look where we are today, I have a touch of sadness in my heart as I reflect upon the plight of the Iranian people.

Make no mistake, as my colleague from Pennsylvania noted, Iran is a nation with painful rhetoric, rhetoric of its president, who says: Our goal is to destroy Israel. We should take people at their word that is the goal.

This is not, by the way, the rantings of a madman. This is the clear policy of

the regime backed by the ruling mullahs. It is the clear policy, not the rantings of some wild man. Take him at his word, that is his goal, his objectives, and Iran's goal and objective.

Painful rhetoric is backed by their concrete actions. They are the largest state sponsor of state-supported terrorism in the world. It is not just cheap rhetoric; it is a disconcerting and frightening reality we have to deal with.

Now we have a regime that is clearly in pursuit of nuclear weapons. We are dealing with a lot of security issues out there today. There is lots on the agenda dealing with concerns about port security. Let's not let this issue slip away.

Some say Washington is a town of a thousand issues and few priorities. This is a priority and continues to be a priority. As I said before, they have been clear about their regime and their desire to destroy Israel and the western civilization.

At the conference where Ahmadinejad talked about destroying Israel, I remember the picture behind him vividly, a picture of an hourglass. In this hourglass, the ball is dropping through. This is posted not by accident but by design. In the hourglass, the fragile glass ball is falling through the glass, about to be shattered. That is Israel. But already lying on the floor of the shattered glass is a shattered USA.

That is the vision, that is the plan. We have to understand that. Clearly, the vitriolic rhetoric is backed by a clear vision and plan and it merits immediate action by the international community.

All in all, the Tehran regime's previous and ongoing activities indicate that a nuclear-armed Iran would pose an unprecedented threat to American national security as well as to the existence of the State of Israel. Have no doubt about it; if Iran were to use a nuclear weapon in the Middle East, we are not protected, even being thousands of miles away. We will all be impacted by that. We are all in this. The outcome of Iran's vision and the destruction of Israel is unacceptable. Common sense and responsibility demand that action be taken now. Time is not on our side.

The scenario we face with Iran today has many parallels to the 1930s when the League of Nations failed to confront the aggression of the dictatorships in Japan, Italy, and Germany. Hitler said what he would do and the international community chose to ignore that very clear red flag. In "Mein Kampf," Hitler meant what he said. When he had the opportunity, he acted on that.

The President of Iran has not written a book such as "Mein Kampf," but he has been very clear about what his intentions are, public about his intentions to destroy Israel and the rest. And at the same time he is pursuing a strategy to campaign to obtain nuclear capacity. Will the international com-

munity continue to wring its hands and allow this murderous regime to align its intentions with its capabilities or will it take action? The answer must be yes. The answer must be now. And the United States must be part of leading that charge.

The IAEA has taken some action. There is a meeting of the board of governors March 6. They must continue to put pressure on Iran. But that is not enough. The reality is, negotiations are not enough. There is a Russian proposal on the table. The European three have been negotiating with Iran. The problem with this, it may seem as if there is something there, but when you pursue this negotiation you are presuming that the other side wants a solution. They are negotiating with someone who is not looking for a solution to divert a crisis but playing a cat-and-mouse game to buy time. You have to realize enough time for talk and we have to take action. Talk is what the other side wants as it buys time. It is clear they are not looking for a solution to avert a crisis. They have a vision. They have a path.

They have demonstrated time and again they are not serious about negotiating. They deserve no further opportunities to prevent them from being held to account for their intransigence. I think it is high time the international community called the Iranian bluff. They have had more than enough opportunities to negotiate and have brazenly violated every agreement. The Security Council must take strong action. This needs to be the focus of our policy now and in the immediate future.

While all of us recognize that actions must be taken to deal with the imminent threat of Iran's nuclear intentions, a true long-term solution to the problem with Iran lies in efforts to promote a free and democratic society. As Secretary Rice has noted:

Attempting to draw neat, clean lines between our security interests and our democratic ideals does not reflect the reality of today's world. Supporting the growth of democratic institutions in all nations is not some moralistic flight of fancy; it is the only realistic response to our present challenges.

In his State of the Union Address, President Bush made a direct appeal to the Iranian people and voiced our country's support for their right to freedom. Here in Congress, we need to act to convert moral support into concrete actions to help foster democratic change in Iran.

I commend my colleague, Senator SANTORUM, for his introduction of the Iran Freedom and Support Act of 2005. I am a cosponsor of that legislation. He has talked about that and clearly seeks to support the roots of democratic change in Iran. We need to support democracy in Iran. And supporting them is not being an American voice preaching moralistically about democracy; it is an opportunity to connect with the Iranians around the world, not just there. There are folks who have been

fighting for freedom in Iran. Some are still in Iran. We need to figure out a way to connect with Iranian voices, with dissidents in Iran and around the world, to let them know we are there to support freedom, we are there to support democracy.

I urge passage of Senator SANTORUM's bill. It is a step in the right direction.

Finally, I would note that March 20 and 21 is the Iranian new year. I say that because the regime is repressing the celebration of the Iranian new year. I want to conclude my comments by wishing the Iranian people a happy new year, one in which, hopefully, they will be closer to freedom, closer to freedom in the year to come. And we will take those steps necessary to help make that happen.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I commend the Senator from Minnesota. I think he is right on target. He is putting the burden where it should be, and that is directly on the United Nations to do what is right with regard to Iran.

Our President has tried to put the Europeans out front to negotiate with the Iranians. I believe they have been less than forthcoming about what they were doing the last 2 years with nuclear capabilities. Now it is time for us to all step in as world leaders and say to Iran: You must stop making nuclear weapons. And further, if you do not, there will be repercussions.

But it will take the entire world community, led by the United Nations, to make an impact on Iran. The United States cannot do this alone. We do not trade with Iran. We need the people who are trading with Iran to say there will be consequences if a nuclear weapon is produced in that country.

So I thank the Senator from Minnesota. I hope very much the United States will step forward with the other leaders of the world to say we are of one mind.

Mr. President, I wish to take a moment because today is Texas Independence Day.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Time for morning business has expired.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be allowed to speak for 5 minutes in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

170TH ANNIVERSARY OF TEXAS INDEPENDENCE DAY

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I wish to take a moment to read the letter of William Barret Travis from the Alamo. This is a tradition I continue that was started by Senator John Tower to commemorate Texas Independence Day, and that is today, March 2.

Today is the 170th anniversary of the signing of the Texas Declaration of Independence, a document that was

signed by, among others, my great-great-grandfather, Charles S. Taylor, and also his friend, Thomas J. Rusk, who first held the Senate seat I now hold. They both hailed from Nacogdoches, which is the oldest town in Texas—the town in which my mother grew up and the town in which I now own the home my grandfather built.

It is a very historic time for Texas. We celebrate Texas Independence Day every single year because we know that fighting for freedom has made a difference in what Texas is. We love our history. We fought for freedom. We were a republic for 10 years, and then we came into the United States as a State.

The defense of the Alamo by 189 courageous men, who were outnumbered 10 to 1, was a key battle of the Texas Revolution. The sacrifice of COL William Barret Travis and his men made possible GEN Sam Houston's ultimate victory at San Jacinto, which secured independence for Texas.

From the Alamo, Colonel Travis wrote to his countrymen the following:

Fellow citizens and compatriots: I am besieged by a thousand or more of the Mexicans under Santa Anna—I have sustained a continual bombardment and cannonade for 24 hours and have not lost a man—the enemy has demanded a surrender at discretion, otherwise, the garrison is to be put to the sword, if the fort is taken—I have answered the demands with a cannon shot, and our flag still waves proudly from the wall—I shall never surrender or retreat.

Then, I call on you in the name of liberty, of patriotism and of everything dear to the American character, to come to our aid, with all dispatch. The enemy is receiving reinforcements daily and will no doubt increase to three or four thousand in four or five days. If this call is neglected, I am determined to sustain myself as long as possible and die like a soldier who never forgets what is due to his own honor and that of his country—Victory or Death.

William Barret Travis, Lt. Col, Commander.

Colonel Travis's are the words of a true patriot. And his letter did inspire Texans to ultimate victory. In fact, his holding of the Alamo for so long did allow Sam Houston to muster his troops for the last stand at San Jacinto.

To show you one other example of how Texans love their history, the minister who opened our Senate today with prayer from Lovers Lane Methodist Church in Dallas, TX, showed me, at breakfast this morning, the ring he wears which is a replica of the ring of William Barret Travis that he wore at the Alamo. He put the ring around the neck of the daughter of one of those who was able to survive and leave the day before the onslaught that killed all of those men at the Alamo. So Susanna Dickinson's daughter had that ring around her neck—she was about 8 years old at the time—and that is why we know what the ring signified.

Another example of how history continues to inspire us: I, just 2 weeks ago, commissioned the newest amphibious ship of the U.S. Navy. It is an amphib-

ious assault ship, the first of its class, the USS *San Antonio*. The USS *San Antonio* has in its motto the words from William Barret Travis's letter "Never surrender, never retreat."

That is a great ship which is going to carry marines into battle. It will carry our marines with the very best of technology, the very best safety measures we can possibly give them. And the quote "Never surrender, never retreat" will carry them into battle to help protect the freedom of Americans for years to come.

I am proud to be the sponsor of the ship the USS *San Antonio*. It represents the spirit of our armed services today, just as 170 years ago when we fought for our independence from Mexico and later became a great State of the United States of America.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

USA PATRIOT TERRORISM PREVENTION REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2005—CONFERENCE REPORT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the conference report to accompany H.R. 3199, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Conference report to accompany H.R. 3199, an act to extend and modify authorities needed to combat terrorism, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 2:30 p.m. shall be equally divided, with 1 hour of the time controlled by the minority to be under the control of the Senator from Wisconsin, Mr. FEINGOLD.

Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be permitted to speak as in morning business for up to 15 minutes and that the time be charged to the Republican side. I further ask that Senator STEVENS be recognized at 12:15 for up to 5 minutes and Senator BYRD then be recognized for up to 35 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

LOBBYING REFORM

Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, I rise to speak on the very important subject of lobbying reform. When you think of our role in our constitutional system and how important it is that that role