

that we have been ignoring for years, and the taxpayers are the worse for it. We cannot continue to do that. This institution is a better body than that, and we ought to give more respect to it.

AMERICA'S CHALLENGES IN THE 21ST CENTURY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from California (Mr. DREIER) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. DREIER. Madam Speaker, as we all know from listening to our colleagues and, even more importantly, from listening to the American people, the United States is currently facing a host of critical and complex challenges that have an enormous impact on our daily lives.

Fuel prices have skyrocketed, creating a ripple effect throughout our entire economy. We pay ever increasing prices at the pump, at the supermarket and nearly everywhere we buy the everyday goods that our families need. We all feel the strain of these rising prices. At the same time, we see our economy softening because of the housing crisis.

The threat of radical extremism persists throughout much of the globe, including, of course, in Afghanistan and in Iraq, where our brave men and women in uniform are fighting. We, of course, constantly face the problem of illegal immigration, which exposes the weaknesses of our borders and further strains our economy.

Madam Speaker, these challenges are as diverse as they are complicated. They did not develop overnight, but have arisen over time. They contribute to a growing and pervasive frustration by the American people. These challenges are daunting, but they are far from hopeless.

I believe the key to finding the solutions to the challenges of the 21st century is not to view them as isolated problems. We need a broad, visionary approach that sees these issues for what they are: the interconnected challenges of a smaller and smaller world.

Growing demand for energy in both China and India, combined with volatility in the Middle East, central Asia and the Niger Delta contribute to rising gas prices here in the United States. Natural disasters combined with rising fuel prices contribute to a global food crisis that threatens a billion people. Weak and corrupt governments perpetuate poverty in the developing world, which is exacerbated by the growing food crisis, contributing to growing unrest and ripe conditions for radical extremism.

Every single day, Madam Speaker, every day, people who have not been screened for a criminal or for a terrorist background enter our country through porous borders. Of course, we know all too painfully well the cabal of

20 hijackers from 7 years ago this coming September 11. They fed off the deep discontent that poverty and ignorance breed. They trained in Afghanistan, received funding through international financing schemes. They entered the United States by way of a broken immigration system and perpetrated, as we all know, the worst terrorist attack on U.S. soil.

These issues are not isolated from each other. Any 21st century agenda for America must recognize the fundamental nature of these issues and take a comprehensive view towards solving them. I believe this demands an approach that looks inward as well as outward.

First and foremost, we need to look at how American policy is affecting American problems, and we need to find an American solution. Second, we need to look at the reality of this interconnected world about which I've spoken and give our approach a global view.

Our energy crisis provides a good illustration of exactly what I mean. There are a number of contributing factors that are driving up prices, as I've mentioned. There is growing demand abroad. There is volatility in many oil-producing regions, but we are also suffering because we have failed here at home to develop our own domestic solutions.

Technology in the oil and gas industry has become so advanced that we can explore and drill without damaging our environment. Yet we have vast resources untapped in ANWR and way off our shores. An increased supply of oil does very little good without the capacity to refine it. Yet we have not built a new refinery in three decades.

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We all know that nuclear energy is the cleanest, safest, most cost-effective energy source known to man, and yet we have also not built a new reactor in three decades. Furthermore, despite the fact that we in the United States and in my State of California are the world's leaders in innovation, we have not invested nearly, nearly enough in new green technologies that diminish our dependence on fossil fuels and allow us to use the energy we have more efficiently.

Madam Speaker, these are American failures. We need a comprehensive overhaul of our national energy policy to increase our domestic production, improve efficiency, and make us more self-sufficient. But at the same time, there is no escaping the global oil market and the reality that prices are driven by global factors. By promoting our own responsible energy agenda, we don't extricate ourselves from the global market. We shape it, we shape it, Madam Speaker, through our leadership. By increasing supply while diminishing demand through technology improvements, we can help to stabilize and reduce global prices.

By neutralizing the acute crises caused by out-of-control prices, we can

help to reduce the volatility that drives up prices to begin with. In other words, we need a uniquely American solution without losing sight of our place of leadership in this interconnected world.

Madam Speaker, the same is very true for the problem of illegal immigration. Failure on this issue is a failure of our border security. We cannot address this problem without addressing our borders. The solution begins with substantial resources for the border patrol and increased technology, including fencing along our border. We simply must strengthen and modernize our first line of defense.

Yet we would be hopelessly short-sighted if we didn't recognize that the problem does not begin, the problem does not begin at the border. It begins in the poor villages of our neighbors to the south. Nowhere else on Earth do a developed and a developing country share a 2,000-mile border. Nowhere else on the face of the earth is a border of 2,000 miles existing between a developed and a developing nation. As we seek to hold back the tide of illegal immigration with a strong border, we must also endeavor to diminish the flow of that tide in the first place.

In the long run, Madam Speaker, growth and opportunity in Mexico is the key to ending the scourge of illegal immigration. As their economy grows and jobs are created, the desire to attempt to cross our border will greatly diminish. Because of this, a permanent solution to the problem demands that Mexico pursue sound economic policies so that there is opportunity on both sides of the Rio Grande.

Our policy toward Mexico must be focused on encouraging them to be accountable to the Mexican people for making the necessary economic reforms which will lead to this important growth. And because strong economies require strong institutions, we must also encourage them to pursue efforts to build their own capacity.

Greater bilateral engagement will ensure Mexico's continued effort to liberalize their economy, to modernize and train their law enforcement and judiciary is important, to build the capacity of their Federal, State, and local government institution is also key, to strengthen the rule of law and provide an environment where economic opportunity can flourish is critically important. It will also ensure that we have an able and effective partner in our efforts to stem the illegal flow of people and narcotics across our border.

Madam Speaker, we have already seen, and this doesn't get much attention, but we have already seen some positive results from our engagements. Mexico has taken a number of important steps toward reform, liberalization, and institutional capacity building. President Felipe Calderon put forth a bold reform agenda in his presidential campaign. Since then, he has taken very positive steps in instituting

economic reform, strengthening the rule of law, and very important—and they're suffering greatly from this as you know, Madam Speaker—combating corruption.

But we know very well that a great deal of hard work lies ahead for Mexico. Millions, millions still live in poverty, and good jobs are all too rare. Many key institutions are still very weak, exposing shortcomings at all levels of government. The criminal justice system in Mexico is still woefully strained in its efforts to combat the illegal trafficking of drugs, guns, and people.

These remaining challenges have left us no choice but to get tough on the issue of border security. But they also demand that we recognize that fundamental reform in Mexico is absolutely essential to tackling illegal immigration in the long run.

Again, these are solutions, Madam Speaker, that demand a robust agenda here at home with a view toward the broader international context out of which these challenges arise.

The need for development, opportunity, and growth abroad extends well beyond illegal immigration into the tremendous threat we face from the spread of radical and violent extremism. When confronting any national security threat, we know that our Armed Forces are the guarantors of our security. We need a strong, modern military to protect our homeland and fight our battles overseas. But the terrorists' designs of radical extremists will never be thwarted through military might alone. Their ability to perpetrate attacks originates with their efforts to exploit the frustrations and disaffection in the developing world.

Madam Speaker, with over a billion people living on less than \$1 a day, the potential for exploitation is virtually limitless. Poverty breeds hopelessness, ignorance, and intolerance. These circumstances are made possible by weak or corrupt governments. They do not have the ability to strengthen the institutions that make economic opportunity possible or provide a voice for their people's frustrations.

The result, as we all have tragically found, is fertile ground for terrorism. Development is the only long-term sustainable solution because it is the only approach that addresses the root problems. We must pursue greater economic engagement so that new opportunities can be created, and we must also work to strengthen institutions so that governments are more accountable and economies are more open.

In March of 2005, I had the great privilege of joining with my colleague, DAVID PRICE, under the leadership of Speaker Hastert and now Speaker, then-minority leader, NANCY PELOSI, as we founded the House Democracy Assistance Commission. I had the privilege of leading the Commission when we were in the majority.

Today we continue that very able work under, as I said, my colleague,

Mr. PRICE. Our Commission endeavors to engage in precisely the kind of capacity building that I have been discussing. We work with 12 legislatures around the world in new and re-emerging democracies providing guidance and training in legislative functioning. Our mission, Madam Speaker, within the broad goals of capacity building, is very specific: to strengthen the representative bodies of these fledgling democracies so that they effectively meet the needs of the people they represent.

A strong, effective legislature is critical to enacting the economic policies that create both growth and opportunity. It ensures a check on an over-reaching executive branch, and it gives a voice to those with grievances, all of which contribute to a vibrant, a very vibrant, prosperous, and peaceful democracy, all of which are necessary to ensure that radical extremism cannot take root.

Madam Speaker, clearly our struggle against terrorism demands a global development agenda. Once again, we see that the solution to the challenges we face requires that we look inward as well as outward. We cannot guard against terrorist attacks without a strong national defense, but we cannot overcome terrorism without engaging worldwide.

The challenges of the 21st century are not isolated problems, and we cannot hope to address them by isolating ourselves from this interconnected world. Of course, moving forward on these great challenges also demands that we, as Americans, find common ground.

In many ways, we, as a Nation, are currently grappling with very fundamental philosophical questions on the problems that we are confronting. A central question we all have is how to apply our core American principles to the new challenges that we face. How do we secure ourselves against new threats without diminishing the civil liberties that we hold so dear? How do we wage a war against Islamist extremism without appearing to treat those of the Muslim faith with the very intolerance that fuels extremism? How do we end the scourge of illegal immigration while continuing to be that shining city on a hill to the many legal immigrants who have always helped to make this country the great Nation that it is? How do we engage in the worldwide marketplace while ensuring that Americans can successfully compete in a very dynamic economic environment?

There are those who say that America is bitterly divided today over these questions. Madam Speaker, it's certainly true that there is great diversity of opinion in how to address the security and economic challenges that we face. But if we are willing to engage each other in honest and open debate, this diversity of opinion is our great strength, not our weakness.

As we face these substantial new challenges that I discussed, we need

that great clash of ideas just as our founders intended. Unfortunately, resorting to inflammatory talking points has supplanted sincere and honest debate. The shrill voices of "talking heads" are no substitute for true engagement.

Madam Speaker, I believe Americans have grown weary of politics-as-usual, of the endless fighting that takes place right here in Washington, DC, but not because of the existence of opposing views. Americans have grown weary of the obstinacy, the hardened positions and intolerance of differing opinions. The refusal to truly engage in an open and substantive way is something that has frustrated most Americans. Now, Madam Speaker, in a country of over 300 million people there will never, there will never be uniformity of opinion, but there can and should be a deep respect for the clash of ideas and an interest in reaching broad consensus on the great issues of our day.

Madam Speaker, this is the essence of the United States of America. And it is the essence of what we just celebrated earlier this month on July 4th: the freedom of ideas, all ideas to be debated, debunked, or developed in this messy process of democracy. I truly believe that our country will rise to the challenges we face today just as we have always done. We will accomplish this through open, sometimes heated and passionate, but always respectful debate. We will accomplish it by applying the core American values that we have long held while maintaining a global perspective on the challenges of the 21st century.

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Whether the issue is soaring gas prices, illegal immigration, terrorism, or any other challenge that we face, we must set our priorities as Americans. But we must tackle our problems with a worldwide focus, boldly asserting our global leadership role. By doing so, we will make our borders safer, our economy stronger, and our future ever brighter for our children.

PEAK OIL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. BARTLETT) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland. Madam Speaker, I want to begin this evening's discussion by reading a little reminiscence that was written by one of my staff members, Dr. John Darnell. He's imagining that he is talking to his granddaughter at some future date, and this little reminiscence is called, "Making It Through the Energy Crisis—Future Reminiscences with my Grandchildren."

"Grandfather, tell us the story about the men who went to the Moon and barely made it back—and how that was like when the world discovered there wasn't enough oil."