

base for terrorists who want to kill as many of our people as they possibly can.”

These are clear words, Madam Speaker. Those words, if they were U.S. policy, would give solace to our allies, to the Afghans, to the Pakistanis and to our own troops taking the fight to the Taliban. But our actual intentions in Afghanistan are not clear, even though General McChrystal’s report states explicitly that without more troops in the next year, the United States faces mission failure where defeating the insurgents is no longer possible. That’s the view of a respected general, the commander handpicked by President Obama, who works in Kabul and travels around Afghanistan every day.

So why is it that the Obama administration is sending mixed signals to the American public and to the rest of the world? Why is his national security adviser on Sunday morning talk shows saying that Afghanistan is not in imminent danger of falling to the Taliban? After many years of fighting in Afghanistan, after many years of two steps forward and one step back, we cannot flinch. We must let our allies, our military and the Afghans and Pakistanis know right now that we will do what it takes to provide stability and security.

Governing is about tough decisions. We must make the tough decisions to give General McChrystal the troops he needs to finish this mission. We must protect the population and assure them that we’re not going anywhere. That’s our only hope of winning over the Afghan people who fear that if they work with us, they’ll be slaughtered by the Taliban when the Americans leave. As President Obama said just 2 months ago: “This will not be quick nor easy. But we must never forget: This is not a war of choice. This is a war of necessity.”

Let’s hope that he has not forgotten.

CYBERSECURITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BURGESS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BURGESS. I thank the Speaker for the recognition.

I come to the floor tonight to talk about cybersecurity. We all hear about data breaches. They’re so common, it seems like you can hardly pick up the newspaper without reading about another occurrence. And unfortunately, the rate at which they’re occurring is also increasing. A report in 2009 found that more electronic records were breached in 2008 than in the previous 4 years combined. Almost 10 million United States adults were victims of identity theft in 2008. These are expensive. A 2009 report found that the average cost of a data breach had risen to \$202 per customer from last year’s \$197. Over \$600 is lost out of pocket per second to identity fraud, costing consumers and businesses over \$52 million a day.

Examining some of the sources of the breaches, 29 percent come from government and military, 28 percent are from educational institutions, 22 percent in general business, 13 percent in health care companies, 8 percent in banking, credit card and financial services. Within the government itself, on the May 2008 Federal Security Report Card, the Department of Interior, the Department of Treasury, the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Agriculture all scored failing grades.

Within the military, the personnel data of tens of thousands of United States soldiers has been downloaded by unauthorized computer users. The data included Social Security numbers, blood type, cell phone numbers, e-mail addresses and the names of soldiers’ spouses and children. A 2006 Department of Veterans Affairs data breach put almost 30 million veterans’ names, addresses and Social Security numbers at risk.

Within the retail segment, in 2009, a Miami man was charged in the largest case of computer crime and identity theft ever prosecuted. He, along with two unknown Russian coconspirators, were charged with taking more than 130 million credit card and debit card numbers from late 2006 to early 2008, and they did it as an inside job. They reviewed lists of Fortune 500 companies, decided where to aim; they visited the stores to monitor the payment systems used; they placed sniffer programs on corporate networks; and the programs intercepted credit card transactions in real time and transmitted the numbers to computers in the United States, Netherlands and the Ukraine. An expert said the case provided more evidence that retailers and banks needed to strengthen, needed to harden, industry standards.

And finally, educational institutions. As I noted earlier, second only to government and data breaches are educational institutions, probably the most disturbing statistic. In 2007, the number of data security breaches in colleges and universities increased almost two-thirds from 2006, and the number of educational institutions affected increased by almost three-quarters. In August of 2005, hackers stole almost 400,000 electronic records of current, former and prospective students in my congressional district at the University of North Texas. The hackers got away with names, addresses, telephone numbers, Social Security account numbers and possibly credit card numbers.

So what can we do? Of the breaches, 87 percent are considered avoidable if reasonable controls had been in place. Madam Speaker, now is the time for Congress to enact a meaningful national standard to protect commercial and government data. This requires leadership at the top levels of an organization to take an active role in ensuring that their systems are secure. Federal Government subcontractors

that have access to sensitive and personally identifiable information should be required to comply with the same standards as Federal agencies and departments. Finally, we must all be involved from the top down and the bottom up. We must encourage leaders of government agencies and private enterprises to actively manage and rigorously protect the data collected and stored within their institutions. We must make this a priority, and Congress should take up and pass House Concurrent Resolution 193.

This bipartisan resolution, introduced by myself and CHARLIE GONZALEZ of Texas, expresses the Sense of Congress for the need to pass meaningful legislation to protect commercial and government data from data breaches. There are a lot of disturbing statistics. Let’s take action now so that the occurrence, cost and individuals affected do not continue to increase.

CONGRESS MUST BE TRANSPARENT WITH VITAL LEGISLATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Michigan (Mrs. MILLER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Madam Speaker, our Nation currently has an unemployment rate of nearly 10 percent. In my home State of Michigan, it’s actually over 15 percent. In the last fiscal year, our Federal budget deficit was over \$1.4 trillion; and the Obama administration projects that over the next 10 years, our deficit will be over \$9 trillion.

When dealing with our budget, difficult times like these require very decisive actions. Unfortunately, over the last year or so, as this Congress has racked up record-breaking deficits, we have seen legislation brought to the floor that forced massive new debt on the American people while giving Members little or no time to read any of the legislation.

Last fall, the Bush administration and the leadership of this House asked the House to vote on a \$700 billion bailout for Wall Street with no strings attached on how the money would be spent. I was proud to vote “no” on that Wall Street bailout. Unfortunately, that bill did pass this House, and it became law. The result has been a program that has been widely rejected by the American people.

Then in February, President Obama asked Congress to pass an economic stimulus plan, and many on our side of the aisle were ready to help. In fact, we proposed a bill that, according to a formula used by President Obama’s own economic advisers, would produce twice the jobs at half the cost. Instead, the Democrats crafted a bill behind closed doors. They filed a 1,073-page conference report in the middle of the night and asked Members of this House to vote on \$787 billion of deficit spending while not one single Member of this

House, nor the American people, had the chance to read the bill before we cast our votes.

Then in June, this House voted on a cap-and-trade national energy tax that would fundamentally change our economy. This bill totaled 1,428 pages, including a 300-plus page manager's amendment. The Rules Committee and the Democratic leadership gave us about 16 hours to read the bill and the amendment before it was voted on. Only after the fact did we see a memo produced within the Obama administration that indicated that the bill would cost every single American household an average of \$1,700 per year in higher energy costs.

Madam Speaker, we will soon consider health care legislation that will have a far-reaching impact on one of the most personal issues facing every American, and that is how they will protect the health of themselves and their families. Nobody knows what this legislation will look like. Nobody knows how much it will cost. Nobody knows when it will be brought to the floor. But every American has a vital stake in the outcome of the legislation.

Many Members of this House from both parties have had enough and are insisting that we bring transparency into the process before a vote is taken, and the American people are demanding the opportunity to be able to read the legislation that their Representatives will be voting on before the vote so that their voices can be heard. That is why I am proud to cosponsor H. Res. 554 which would require that all major legislation, significant amendments and conference reports be available in their entirety on the Internet so that Members can read the legislation before casting their votes and so that the American people can have some opportunity to have their voices heard. If legislation that will govern more than one-sixth of our economy comes to the floor, don't Members as well as the American people deserve a chance to at least read it?

President Obama ran last year on a platform of openness and transparency, but unfortunately, it has been business as usual in Washington. We have had limited to no transparency. We have not had a chance to read important legislation before asking for us to vote on this legislation. I would urge my fellow Members who have not signed on as cosponsors of this important resolution to join us in an effort to bring transparency to the process, to join us in demanding that we in Congress cast an informed vote on important legislation that will impact every American, to join us in allowing the American people to have their voices heard. The Members of this House and, most importantly, Madam Speaker, the American people deserve no less.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. PAULSEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. PAULSEN addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

THE CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS HOUR

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. FUDGE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. FUDGE. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members be given 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks in the RECORD on this topic.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Ohio?

There was no objection.

Ms. FUDGE. I appreciate the opportunity to join my colleagues of the Congressional Black Caucus for this special hour. Currently, the CBC is chaired by the Honorable BARBARA LEE from the Ninth Congressional District of California. My name is Representative MARCIA L. FUDGE, and I represent the 11th Congressional District of Ohio. CBC members work diligently to be the conscience of the Congress and provide dedicated and focused service to our congressional districts and families nationally and internationally. The vision of the founding members of the Congressional Black Caucus is to promote the public welfare through legislation designed to meet the needs of millions of neglected citizens. It continues to be a focal point for the legislative work and the political activities of the Congressional Black Caucus today. As Members of Congress, CBC members also promote civic engagement and active participation in the legislative process.

The United States is the world's longest-existing democracy. Americans understand that our ability to elect our leadership through a democratic process is precious, and we recognize the need for greater civic engagement. Madam Speaker, I have been joined by my friend and colleague, the Honorable SHEILA JACKSON-LEE from Texas.

I now yield to my friend.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Thank you so very much, Congresswoman FUDGE. Your opening remarks are framed excellently, the reason for our presence here tonight. There are many issues that the Congressional Black Caucus, led by Chairwoman BARBARA LEE, focus on. The disciplines of the members are varied. The chairmanships of the members are varied, including full chairmanships on a number of committees which really enhance the opportunity for a very full agenda.

As I listen to you speak about civic participation, I would venture to say—and probably would not be incorrect—that all of the members of the Congressional Black Caucus and our colleagues

here, Republicans and Democrats, engaged in civic participation before being elected to the United States Congress.

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They may have started in their early educational days, if you will, primary and secondary school. Some may have started in college. Some may have been activists or locally elected officials. But they understood under this democracy, as you have indicated, the importance of participatory process.

I have the privilege of serving on the House Judiciary Committee with Chairman JOHN CONYERS, and our committees embrace this whole question of fair election laws, the right to vote, and the protection of that privilege and that right to vote.

You may be well aware that in the early days of my tenure, if you will, there were a number of occasions during the presidential election years that members of the Congressional Black Caucus came to the floor of the House to challenge the counting of the electoral college. You may be reminded that in the particular year of 2000, Ohio was in the crosshairs. I know how active you were, having gone to Ohio, having worked with you and, of course, your predecessor, walking the streets with you, remembering discussions that you had about ensuring that you had a election. As you recall, Ohio was quite upset and, therefore, it was the Congressional Black Caucus that went to the floor of the House, in particular your predecessor, the late Stephanie Tubbs Jones. We joined her in challenging the counting of the electoral votes of Ohio. Many people would wonder is that civic participation? And it is. It is making sure that any process is fair.

So I come to emphasize where we are today in pivotal elections that will be coming up on November 3, 2009. As I reflect on those elections, I want to remind people that the best of America was the times in which it moved to remove the barriers of voting. To remove the distinctions between slave and nonslave took a very long time. But to remove the distinction between landowner and nonlandowner were some of the first efforts to create an opportunity for all to vote.

In 1920, of course, there was the amendment to create the opportunity for women to vote. African Americans, however, and language minorities had longer periods of time, and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 came around and then its amendment, which, by the way, the language minority provision in the Voting Rights Act was placed in that act by the Honorable Barbara Jordan, my predecessor. But the idea was to increase participation.

And as I listen to my colleagues on the other side of the aisle recounting maybe the dismay that they have in some of the major changes that are being made by both this White House and Congress, might I say that it is a