

second-in-command, a former Taliban finance minister and two Taliban shadow governors. These were the most significant captures of Afghan Taliban leaders since the start of the war in Afghanistan. Building the capacity and reinforcing the will of other countries to strike at al Qaeda will, I believe, be critical toward eliminating this threat forever. President Obama's administration deserves to be congratulated for its progress on both fronts.

Importantly, this administration understands that we need a comprehensive strategy to prevent terrorism. Just as you cannot effectively rid your backyard of poison ivy by just cutting off all the leaves, we cannot effectively destroy terrorist cells unless we take them out by the roots, cutting off the supply of recruits that feeds them. So, in addition to ramping up our missions to capture and kill terrorists, we are also now placing a greater emphasis on taking the necessary measures to prevent the recruitment of violent extremists.

Mr. Speaker, with the responsible new steps being taken by our Commander in Chief, with the outstanding leadership by our commanders on the ground, and with the unrivaled dedication and courage of all of our men and women in uniform, I have no doubt that our Nation is safer today than it was 3 years ago. We have come a long way in keeping America safe from future terrorist attacks.

UNDERSTANDING THE BUDGET SURPLUS

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

Mr. BARTLETT. Mr. Speaker, during the Clinton years, Washington was telling the American people that we had a budget surplus and that we were paying down the debt. After a number of months of bragging about this budget surplus we had and about how much we were paying down the debt, we had to raise the debt limit ceiling.

Now, I asked our leadership, Isn't it going to be a little difficult to explain to the American people why we have to raise the debt limit ceiling if for these many months we have been paying down the debt? Why would you have to raise the debt limit ceiling if you've lowered the debt?

Well, you may not be surprised that what comes out of Washington is not always altogether truthful.

I have a little chart here that helps to explain what happened and why we had to raise the debt limit ceiling when we had a so-called "budget surplus" and were telling the American people that we were paying down the debt.

Now, we had surpluses in Social Security and we had surpluses in Medicare, and we had a lockbox. You may remember the lockbox. We had a lockbox on Social Security and Medicare surpluses. The lockbox said that

you couldn't transfer those moneys to the general Treasury, that you had to pay down the public debt with those moneys. So what we did was take the surpluses from the Social Security trust fund and the Medicare trust fund—and there were surpluses there—and we paid down the public debt; but for every dollar we paid down on the public debt, we incurred another dollar debt in the trust funds.

You see, the national debt, the debt that really counts, is the sum of the public debt and the trust fund debt. So, if you simply decrease the public debt by increasing the trust fund debt, you've done nothing to the national debt. It's a little bit like taking money from your right-hand pocket and putting it into your left-hand pocket. Obviously, if you do that, you are neither richer nor poorer after you've taken money from your right-hand pocket and put it in your left-hand pocket. That is what we were doing.

Now, very few people know that there is a difference between the public—oh, the public debt is the Wall Street debt. That's all those instruments that we give to people when they loan us money. The trust fund debts, of course, are debts that we owe to our trust funds because, for many years, we've been taking moneys from the American people for Social Security, for Medicare, and for about 50 other trust funds—the Highway Trust Fund and so forth—and we presumably are taking that money and putting it into trust for them.

Is that what happens? No, that is not what happens.

What happens is we take that money, and if we have any surplus money after meeting our Social Security and Medicare obligations, we then take that money and immediately convert it into a nonnegotiable U.S. security. We move it over to the general trust fund and we spend it. So there is, in fact, no money in the Social Security trust fund or in the Medicare trust fund. That is really a misnomer. It is not a trust fund. I guess you might call it a "trust debt" because there is nothing there but IOUs.

Now, this year, for the first time, we've spent more money on Social Security than we took in in Social Security. We didn't expect that to happen for several years, but we still have about, I think, \$2.5 trillion of surpluses in the Social Security trust fund, so we'll be paying Social Security for a while if we can collect or can borrow enough money from other places to make up for the money that we took from the Social Security trust fund and spent.

So, for those months and a couple of years, we were telling people we were paying down the debt. I talked to the CBO, and I think there was never a moment in time, if we kept our books on the accrual method—which, by the way, we require every small business to do—when the national debt went down.

Now, another thing: The debt will always go up more than the advertised

deficit. How can the debt go up more than the advertised deficit? The debt goes up more than the deficit because we make the silly statement that the Social Security surplus and the Medicare surplus offset the debt. Of course, if you take that surplus and spend it, it simply incurs another kind of debt.

Well, I hope this helps you to understand. I just thought you'd like to know.

PRAISING THE OUTSTANDING WORK OF OUR FIGHTING MEN AND WOMEN

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

Mr. BRIGHT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to praise the outstanding work of our fighting men and women stationed overseas. Too often, their work goes unnoticed, but our safety and security is contingent upon their success. On Monday, however, the entire world took notice of their excellent work.

Two of al Qaeda's top leaders were killed in a joint effort between Iraqi and U.S. forces. General Odierno said it was "potentially the most significant blow to al Qaeda since the beginning of the insurgency."

Their success has not been by accident nor has it been limited to Iraq. Our allies across the region are beginning to actively engage in the fight against terrorism, and it is yielding successful results. We must send a loud message that those who seek to do us harm will pay the ultimate price. I anticipate our progress will continue in the months ahead because we have a strategy and clear-cut goals in Afghanistan.

The administration and the commanders on the ground know we must root out the terrorists who still reside in the same country from which the 9/11 terror attacks originated. As a result, terrorist leaders are being captured and killed on a regular basis. Special forces and Predator drones, in coordination with the governments in Pakistan and Afghanistan, have captured or killed more than 600 of al Qaeda's fighters and associates in 2009 alone, far more than in 2008. This is more than triple the amount from the period of 2004–2008 combined.

The new counterinsurgency strategy in Afghanistan helped lead to the capture of, among others, the Taliban's second in command, a former Taliban finance minister, and two shadow governors of Afghan provinces. These are the most significant captures of the Afghan Taliban leaders since the start of the war in Afghanistan.

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However, as we continue to move forward in Iraq and Afghanistan, we must never forget about our number one target. That's Osama bin Laden. The man who was behind the 9/11 attacks must be brought to justice in order to send a

clear message that no act of terror will be able to go unpunished.

Last year I twice visited Afghanistan as part of a congressional delegation to the regions. We received briefings from both American and Afghani political leaders and their military leaders. The question I asked nearly everyone who would listen to us was, Where is Osama bin Laden, and what are we doing to capture or kill this man?

Our recent success in killing and capturing his allies gives me confidence that the appropriate steps are being taken to bring this murderer to justice. In fact, Commander of U.S. and NATO forces in Afghanistan, General Stanley McChrystal, recently confirmed that the military is actively trying to find and kill bin Laden. I was very pleased to hear General McChrystal confirm his commitment as he continues his excellent service in Afghanistan.

The strategy in Afghanistan and Iraq is two-pronged and not only a military endeavor. In addition to wrapping up our missions to capture and kill terrorists, we are also now placing a greater emphasis on preventing the recruitment of violent extremists by preventing these countries from returning to the conditions that fueled such hate in the past.

In fact, just a couple of hours ago, I participated in a video teleconference with the 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team in the 3rd Infantry Division of the U.S. Army. The "sledgehammer brigade," as they are nicknamed, told me about over 120 projects they have completed or will soon be completed in a five-province region in Iraq. Their efforts are a big reason we have seen significant progress and stabilization in Iraq over the past 2 years.

I look forward to working with my colleagues to continue to support our forces in these two endeavors.

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

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

SAN JACINTO DAY

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, today is April 21, and when I grew up in Texas April 21 was a holiday. We didn't go to school, and the reason I thought we didn't go to school was because April 21 is my mother's birthday and she always led me to believe that school was out because it was her birthday.

Later I learned that wasn't actually correct, that we had celebrated April 21 as a State holiday in Texas because it is one of the most, if not the most important day in Texas history. Because

on April 21, 1836, 174 years ago, Texas gained complete independence from Mexico and became a free and independent nation for over 9 years.

A little history is due, I think. It all started when Mexico was a republic, a democracy, similar to the United States. Texas belonged to Mexico. But a person by the name of Santa Ana became President of Mexico. When he became President, he abolished the Mexican constitution and became dictator. And once he became dictator, he eliminated civil rights for everybody that lived in Mexico, including what is now Texas. So Texas sought independence, and on March 2, 1836, Texas declared independence from Mexico and cited the reasons, because of the dictator, the tyrant who had denied civil rights to all those living in Texas.

At the same time a group of 187 volunteers, of all races from all the States in the Union and many foreign countries, assembled at a beat-up old Spanish church in central Texas called the Alamo. That's right, 187 volunteers stood in defiance of Santa Ana's army, who invaded Texas. Several thousand enemy soldiers came in. We all know the history, that after 13 days of fighting those battles, the Alamo fell and all the defenders were killed.

However, that battle allowed for General Sam Houston, who was commander of the Texas army, to build an army to fight back. As William Barrett Travis said at the Alamo, who was the commander, a 26-year-old individual from South Carolina, that victory will cost the enemy more dearly than defeat. And he was right. Because of the massive losses of Santa Ana's forces at the Alamo, he had to regroup. He started then chasing Sam Houston.

Sam Houston was moving east. He was headed toward the Sabine-Neches area, the Sabine-Neches River, which is next to the United States. We call that Louisiana. He had yet to fight a battle. Santa Ana's armies had been very successful in defeating the Texas armies in almost every battle. And Sam Houston had yet to fight, but he found himself, on April 21, 1836, between the Buffalo Bayou and the San Jacinto River in a marshy land called San Jacinto. There he stood to fight.

Most battles are fought in the morning after sunrise, but on April 21 the Texas army was so eager to fight that at 3 o'clock in the afternoon they decided to march on Santa Ana's forces, which outnumbered the Texans over two to one.

The Texas army was an odd-looking bunch. They were volunteers, but they were from, once again, all over the country. They were frontiersmen. They were shopkeepers. They were lawyers and doctors. They were made up of Texans and of Hispanic dissent. We call those Tejanos. They were led by Captain Juan Seguin, and his Tejanos were part of the calvary. So as not to be mistaken for the Mexican army, because the Texans had no uniforms, Juan Seguin's troops wore a playing

card in their hat band to make sure that the Texans knew who they were.

So the Texans marched on Santa Ana's forces completely by surprise and defeated them, an overwhelming defeat, one of the biggest upsets in military history. Half of Santa Ana's forces were killed; the other half were captured. The battle lasted 18 minutes, and one-third of the land in the United States, which is now the United States, switched hands.

This is a map of the way Texas looked after April 21, 1836. Texas claimed all of the land, which is part of Texas, part of Oklahoma, New Mexico, Colorado, Wyoming, and Kansas.

Texas became a free and independent nation that day, stayed a republic for 9 years, and then joined the United States. Texas only got into the United States by one vote when a Louisiana Senator finally changed his mind and allowed Texas to come into the United States.

I mention this, April 21, because it's an important day not only for Texas but for all people who believe in freedom. That these freedom fighters, these volunteers in 1836, many of them gave their lives for that word "liberty." A word that we still fight for today. In our history a lot of people fought for that word and died for independence, both for Texas and for the United States.

So we honor those brave Texans on this April 21, the anniversary of San Jacinto Day.

And that's just the way it is.

HONORING ISRAELI INDEPENDENCE DAY

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

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. DEUTCH. 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 the subject of this Special Order.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. DEUTCH. Mr. Speaker, as the Nation's newest Member of Congress, it is truly an honor to have my first remarks on the floor be in commemoration of Israel's 62nd anniversary.

Today I proudly rise in support of House Concurrent Resolution 260, which recognizes the independence of the Jewish state of Israel and reaffirms the unyielding friendship and unshakable alliance between our two great nations.

As Israelis and Jewish communities throughout the world celebrate Yom Ha'atzmaut, this resolution holds a special significance for me and my constituents in Florida's 19th District. I proudly represent a district with one of the Nation's largest number of Jewish