

# HONORING THE U.S. COAST GUARD CUTTER "MOHAWK"

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to honor the brave work and the supreme dedication of the command and crew of the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter *Mohawk*.

The *Mohawk* has just returned from a 2-month deployment and is now home at Coast Guard Sector Key West. During their deployment, they were diverted to Haiti in response to the earthquake that hit on January 12. The *Mohawk* was the second cutter on the scene and the first to have Coast Guard crew members on the ground in Port-au-Prince.

On behalf of our grateful Nation, I thank each and every crew member for their role in this humanitarian mission. My most supreme appreciation goes out to Corpsman Second Class Elias Gomez. Corpsman Gomez will certainly be receiving commendations and awards in the coming months for his heroic actions in the gruesome scene that was Port-au-Prince.

Corpsmen Gomez set up a minihospital and triage directly in the streets of the capital. He set broken bones and he closed wounds, all the while having to create tools and making do with limited supplies. His actions were as resourceful, were as inventive and as innovative as they were lifesaving. Corpsman Gomez's "dirt medicine" was an example of American values at its finest. This great young American and father of four truly led by example, and I join with those whose lives he saved in thanking him for all that he has done.

Through efforts like those of Corpsman Gomez, the wonderful crew of the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter *Mohawk* helped save countless lives and performed their mission in accordance with the best traditions of the U.S. Coast Guard. Their assistance was both essential and invaluable.

We have all seen the devastation that is present at the island nation of Haiti, and it is beyond words. The United States has a unique duty to protect, to defend, and to support freedom, and all peoples, around the globe. As proven by the men and women of the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter *Mohawk*, this noble cause lives on in our Nation's oldest continuous seagoing service.

The efforts of the command and crew of the *Mohawk* have supplied a lifeline of humanitarian assistance to Haiti and will certainly help ignite the spirit of hope for recovery in that devastated island nation.

Every day, I give thanks to our local Coast Guard personnel, no matter how they serve. Their efforts are first and foremost to safeguard our Florida coastline. This fact is never lost on me or anyone else in south Florida. We feel their presence every day and take comfort in the fact that the men and

women of the Coast Guard Sector Miami, as well as the Sector Key West, truly lived their motto, "Always ready."

We as a nation can never repay those who serve, but we can take pride in knowing that those men and women have served not just our community but our neighbors in need as well. Their humanitarian mission reminds us all of what it means to be an American and why we should be so proud to say, every day, "I am an American."

The commitment of the U.S. Coast Guard is illustrative of how we must all do our part to help with continuing relief efforts in Haiti. To each and every crew member on the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter *Mohawk*, I say thank you: Commanding Officer Robert T. Hendrickson, Executive Officer John J. Driscoll, Corpsman Second Class Elias Gomez, and all of the crew as well as the families who support these heroes, thank you. Your works are testimony to our great Nation. "Always ready," and we thank you for it.

Thank you, U.S. Coast Guard. Thank you, Coast Guard Cutter *Mohawk*. Welcome home. Godspeed.

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

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

## ATTORNEY GENERAL ERIC HOLDER MUST BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE IN WAR ON TERROR

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. Mr. Speaker, several weeks ago, our Nation received a very vivid reminder that Islamic terrorists are still at war with our Nation and are bent on killing innocent American citizens. On Christmas Day, an Islamic extremist attempted to blow up Northwest Flight 253 as it was on its final approach from Amsterdam into Detroit Metro Airport with a sophisticated bomb that was smuggled onto the plane in his underwear. This terrorist had been radicalized by al Qaeda on the Arabian Peninsula and trained in camps in Yemen.

Following his capture in Detroit, he was only questioned by FBI agents for a total of 50 minutes. Then, after that initial questioning, the bomber was sent to the University of Michigan Burn Center, which is probably the best medical care in the entire world, all at taxpayer expense. Then Attorney General Eric Holder had to decide how to proceed.

Did Attorney General Holder and the Justice Department immediately share the information that they had gathered, the intelligence, with senior in-

telligence officials? No. Did Attorney General Holder declare this terrorist an enemy combatant and turn him over to the military for further questioning? No. Did Attorney General Holder have the FBI continue the questioning in order to obtain more actionable intelligence? No.

So what did Attorney General Holder have the FBI do? He instructed them to give full Miranda rights to this terrorist, including the right to remain silent, and gave him not one, not two, but actually three taxpayer-funded attorneys. And guess what? After he lawyered up, he shut up.

The Attorney General did this even though this terrorist had fresh, firsthand knowledge of al Qaeda on the Arabian Peninsula, even though he had previously given actionable intelligence. And now we have made it very difficult to obtain any further intelligence, intelligence that could have led to the disruption of other planned terrorist attacks or assistance in unwinding this terrorist network.

And we need to ask the question, "Why?"

I believe that Attorney General Holder has built a culture within the Justice Department that seems to put the rights of terrorists ahead of the safety of our Nation. Let us remember that prior to becoming the Attorney General, Eric Holder and his law firm represented many, many terrorists pro bono; that is, for free. These terrorists were held in the military justice system, and they argued for their transfer to the civilian justice system, wanting to give them full constitutional rights. As well, he has placed other attorneys who have also represented terrorists held by our government into high-ranking positions within the Justice Department.

The Attorney General, Mr. Speaker, has not answered questions as to why senior intelligence officials were not consulted on how to proceed or why this terrorist was not treated as an enemy combatant. Mr. Speaker, it almost seems like Attorney General Holder has gone into the Witness Protection Program with regard to the Christmas Day bomber. If this Congress is to do its duty to provide appropriate oversight in the handling of these issues, Attorney General Holder must answer these questions.

Unfortunately, the lack of his consulting with intelligence officials or senior national security officials is nothing new. Attorney General Holder did not consult with senior military or intelligence officials before deciding to try Khalid Sheikh Mohammed and other 9/11 conspirators in New York City. He did not consult with the police commissioner or the mayor about security concerns before making that decision. And now New York officials have finally come forward and objected to this trial being held just a few blocks away from Ground Zero because of

their security concerns and, of course, the cost that is associated as well.

The administration is now looking for new locations to hold this trial as well as budgeting \$200 million for the first year alone to cover security costs. So this decision not only makes us less secure and gives a terrorist a platform from which to spew their hateful, anti-American rhetoric, it will cost the United States taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars, all to extend a pre-9/11 mindset that views terrorism as a criminal offense instead of illegal acts of war.

Mr. Speaker, I would respectfully offer some advice to President Obama and Attorney General Holder: Hand over the Christmas Day bomber to the military and intelligence officials and allow for an appropriate interrogation that will yield additional intelligence that will protect America, and keep Khalid Sheikh Mohammed and the other terrorists slated for civilian trials in New York City or wherever they end up at, keep them at Gitmo and try them before military commissions. Just over a year ago, they were prepared to plead guilty before military commissions, before Eric Holder made the decision to give them special rights. We could have executed one of them by now.

I sincerely hope that the President and his Attorney General rethink their current approach which, I believe, Mr. Speaker, is very dangerous for America.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. KAPTUR addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

#### AMERICA'S BEST DOING INCREDIBLE WORK IN AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN

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

Mr. ING-LIS. Mr. Speaker, I'm just back from a trip led by our colleague, STEVE LYNCH, to Afghanistan and Pakistan, and what we saw there, Mr. Speaker, was America's best doing incredible work. The U.S. military is clearly the best trained, best equipped and most disciplined fighting force in the world.

I'm committed to keeping it that way and to supplying them with the resources they need to get their work done. I'm also committed to confining their mission to achievable objectives and to the protection of America's national security interest.

There are many memorable moments from this trip, Mr. Speaker. When we stepped off the plane in Pakistan, the first person I saw was Lieutenant Colonel Rick Simmons of Pickens, South

Carolina. Formerly the Veterans Affairs Officer of Pickens County, Colonel Simmons is now the Chief of Protocol in the Office of the Defense Representative to Pakistan.

Skipping a dinner with the delegation gave me the opportunity to have dinner with Colonel Simmons and seven other American service personnel at Simmons' apartment in Islamabad.

□ 2000

In Kabul, Afghanistan, I talked with Susan Anderson, who is serving in the American Embassy as an economic analyst. Susan is a graduate of Union High School and the College of Charleston.

In Kandahar, I met two members of the National Guard unit from Wellford, South Carolina, which deployed recently to Afghanistan. Justin McAbee of Travelers Rest and Zack Gregg of Pelzer. Justin's home is about 5 miles from mine. Passing by Benson Road as I travel on Highway 25 North will remind me to pray for Justin and those serving with him.

He is on the explosive ordnance detonation team. When I thanked him for serving our country and tried to compliment him on doing his very dangerous work, he gave me the standard response of our incredible all-volunteer force: "It's my job, sir."

At a dinner hosted by America's ambassador, Mr. Eikenberry, with female members of the Afghan parliament, we were called on to offer comments. I used my remarks to remember Geoff Whitsitt of Travelers Rest, who was killed last month by an improvised explosive device in Afghanistan. I wanted them to hear his name in Afghanistan, exactly one week to the hour after the Upstate paused for his funeral. I wanted them to know how precious his life was to his parents, to his brother, and to our mutual friends. I wanted them to understand that Geoff died for the protection of America.

I told them that we were willing to give our treasure in Afghanistan to help build their nation because we are sure that, using our creativity and entrepreneurship, we will make the money back. But, I told them we are willing to give the lives of our sons and daughters only for America.

On this point, Mr. Speaker, we must be clear. While we are hunting down terrorists, we are going to give the Afghan people the opportunity to reject al Qaeda outsiders and to build a future free of the Taliban. The Afghan people should seize the opportunity, as it will not last indefinitely.

At present, more of America's best are arriving in Afghanistan. They are there to kill terrorists. They are there to facilitate the work of an army of American civil servants and contractors who can show a way forward to a stable constitutional republic. They are there to serve America's national security interests by draining a terrorist cesspool.

But there will come a day when the brave men and women of America's Armed Forces will have completed their work. Not that they will have taken out every terrorist, for that would be impossible. But there will come a day when we will have destroyed enough of the terrorist networks in Afghanistan that America will be reasonably safe from murderous plottings, at least from within Afghanistan's borders.

Until then, we fight on, committed to finishing the job, clear-eyed and determined to avoid mission creep.

The trip also include crew rest stops in Romania and in Tunisia. In Tunisia, we visited the World War II North Africa American Cemetery and Memorial near Tunis, where 2,841 Americans are buried and 3,724 missing Americans are memorialized on a limestone wall called the Tablets of the Missing.

After a wreath-laying ceremony, the delegation walked among the graves. It was especially meaningful to walk among the graves with two of our young military escorts, Sergeant Rob Mennell and Sergeant Aaron Moss.

We tend to think of the members of the Greatest Generation as granddads, but they weren't granddads as they were serving in World War II. They were young, very young, as young as the two Army sergeants who were accompanying us on this trip.

I was grateful for the opportunity to tell those sergeants how much their service means to me and to all Americans, and I was grateful to remember why freedom is worth fighting for.

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

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

#### FORT HOOD

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CARTER) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. CARTER. Mr. Speaker, I hail from Central Texas, and I am very, very proud to say that I have the largest military facility in the world in my district, Fort Hood, Texas. If you are in the Army, you know where Fort Hood is. In fact, I think if you find any 20-year veteran of the Army, you will find out they have been to Fort Hood, some of them once, twice, three, four times, because it is a huge training post. And it is the great place, as they call it, in Central Texas.

The great place had a great disaster happen to us on November 5 of last year, when Major Nidal Hasan attacked and killed 13 soldiers and a baby in the womb, and wounded 43 others before two courageous police officers, responding to this violence at Fort Hood,