

The events that transpired on July 18, 1994 served as a perilous forewarning of the emerging threat of radical Islamist militants in the Hemisphere and their state-sponsors.

The attack on the AMIA Jewish Community Center of Buenos Aires took the lives of 85 men, women, and children, and left over 300 others wounded.

This precise location was targeted because it serves as the symbol of Jewish cultural life in a country that is home to the largest Jewish community in Latin America.

The attack is consistent with the Iranian regime's attitude toward the Jewish people in general, and toward the State of Israel in particular.

Only two years earlier, Islamic Jihad—a violent extremist organization with ties to Hezbollah—claimed responsibility for a similarly deadly attack on the Israeli Embassy in Buenos Aires.

Israeli officials determined that Iran, including high-ranking regime officials, had been informed about the plans for the embassy attack and had, in fact, given the authorization for its execution.

Tehran has made no effort to hide its anti-Semitic spew or its intent to destroy the State of Israel.

And in the years since, the Iranian regime has only deepened its network of proxy extremist groups and its unapologetic support of deadly activities worldwide.

This is evidenced, not just by its continued alliance with extremist entities which target civilians to advance their destructive agenda, but also by the fact that those directly responsible for the attack, as determined by the Government of Argentina, continue to serve as high ranking officials in the Iranian regime.

One such example is the current Iranian Defense Minister, Ahmed Vahidi.

Vahidi is facing an international arrest warrant issued by INTERPOL, but he remains a prominent figure in the regime.

In fact, at the invitation of Evo Morales, Vahidi travelled to Bolivia just last month to attend the opening of an ALBA military academy.

Encouraged by Venezuela's Hugo Chavez, Iran has forged an unholy alliance with several countries in the region based on their shared rejection of freedom and democratic values.

Even in the wake of Iran's brutal crackdown on its citizens after the fraudulent so-called "elections" in 2009, the ties between the Iranian regime and the ALBA countries has only strengthened.

These alliances, and the resources and capacity they provide to Iran, are especially disturbing as the United States and other responsible nations are working to isolate the Iranian regime for its support of extremism and pursuit of nuclear weapons.

And so, as we remember the attack on the AMIA 17 years ago, we must do so within the broader, stark, and growing threat posed by the regime.

On that note, Mr. Speaker, I would draw attention to the strongly bipartisan Iran Threat Reduction Act, which I recently introduced together with Ranking Member BERMAN, and which has almost 200 cosponsors.

This legislation builds upon current law, closes loopholes, and provides for comprehensive action to address the totality of the threat posed by Tehran.

I look forward to its consideration by the whole House.

Mr. Speaker, I would also note that earlier this week, INTERPOL issued Red Notices for the arrest of four members of Hezbollah, which is sponsored by Iran, after they were indicted by the Special Tribunal for Lebanon for their roles in the assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri in 2005.

This should serve as a further reminder of the lengths to which Iran and its allies are ready, willing, and able to cause destruction and to wantonly violate international norms and obligations in multiple regions.

On July 18, 1994, the world was witness to an act of true evil perpetrated by the ruthless Iranian regime.

And as we mark the 17th anniversary of this attack and honor the victims and survivors of that day, we must recommit ourselves to holding the Iranian regime accountable for the AMIA attack and for the threat it poses to U.S., regional, and global security.

HONORING GERONIMO JI JAGA PRATT

HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 18, 2011

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the extraordinary life of Geronimo ji Jaga Pratt. A powerful human rights activist, a decorated veteran, a loving partner, father, grandfather, brother, mentor and friend, Geronimo was also a survivor and a fearless harbinger of change. He was a man who inspired so many to advocate for social justice, civil rights and judicial reform, and his story of resilience will be a timeless call to action for all who stand for justice. Geronimo was taken from us too soon on June 2, 2011, in his adopted country of Tanzania. Today, let us find comfort in the joy he inspired and the extensive legacy of his life's work.

Born Elmer G. Pratt on September 13, 1947, in rural Morgan City, Louisiana, Geronimo was the youngest of seven children born to hard-working parents. After high school, where he was a football quarterback, Geronimo joined the Army, earning two Purple Hearts and emerging a sergeant after two tours in Vietnam. Geronimo moved west, where he attended the University of California, Los Angeles to study political science and play football. In 1969, his political inclinations and commitment to social justice led him to assume a leadership position with the city's Black Panther Party.

As the leader of the L.A. Chapter of the Black Panthers, Geronimo became a target of the subversive and immoral FBI COINTELPRO counterintelligence campaign against perceived enemies of the U.S. government. In a tragic series of events, Geronimo was falsely accused, convicted and imprisoned for a crime he did not commit, in fact, he was nearly 400 miles away from the scene of the crime. His subsequent 27-year imprisonment, including eight years in solitary confinement, galvanized Free Geronimo campaigns throughout national and international progressive communities. By the time of his overturned conviction and release in 1997, Geronimo had become the symbol of an era and the unceasing fight for human rights.

Rather than dwell on the atrocities that had been committed against him, Geronimo be-

came a positive mentor for young men and women who he believed to be wrongfully convicted of crimes. He later divided his time between Louisiana and Tanzania, where he fostered humanitarian programs for the poor, including projects to provide water and solar power for hundreds of African families.

It is with a very heavy heart that I say goodbye to Geronimo today. As a young mother, bagging groceries, working on the survival rallies, selling newspapers, helping to organize the Panther school, and raising money for candidates of the Black Panther Party, my life was touched by Geronimo's leadership and strength. It was through that often tumultuous experience, and the inspiring people I met, that I entered the political arena. During the time of Geronimo's imprisonment, I remember leveraging my position as the chairwoman of the State Legislature's Black Caucus to bring his case to greater prominence. Despite the injustices he endured, Geronimo was an uplifting force and a great inspiration to me and the entire global community. I will miss him dearly.

Today, California's 9th Congressional District salutes and honors Geronimo ji Jaga Pratt. His life was about seeking justice for those who had no justice. And, his legacy will serve as a reminder that we must always be vigilant of those who aim to suppress freedom, opposition and basic human rights. Geronimo will be remembered for his strong sense of dignity, humility and his generous service to others. He truly epitomized the indomitability of the human spirit. We extend our deepest condolences to Geronimo's family and his extended group of loved ones. He will be deeply missed.

DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2012, H.R. 2219

HON. BETTY MCCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 18, 2011

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, since the start of the new Congress in January, the Tea Party Republican majority has been telling the American people our country is "broke." During debate over the Federal budget, the majority has argued the unprecedented fiscal crisis facing Congress demands huge spending cuts to programs our constituents need and to investments that make our communities and country strong. Then, starting with H.R. 1, Republicans voted overwhelmingly for massive cuts to food safety, public safety, schools, life-saving health research, roads and bridges, clean energy alternatives, and nutrition for hungry children and nursing mothers.

Cut \$650 million from emergency nutrition assistance for hungry infants and mothers? Republicans said yes.

Cut \$35 million from food safety and food inspectors that keep families healthy and safe? Republicans said yes.

Cut \$1.3 billion from community health centers for the poor? Republicans said yes.

But now that the \$649 billion Pentagon funding bill for Fiscal Year 2012 (H.R. 2219) has reached the House floor, Republicans' dire fiscal warnings and collective eagerness to cut government spending are going out the window, and the spending spigot is being turned on full blast.

The numbers tell the story. The Republican majority is proposing a \$17 billion increase to the defense budget while slashing funding in every other appropriations bill. At \$649 billion, the Pentagon's budget amounts to more government spending than all other Federal agencies combined and accounts for over 50 percent of all discretionary spending in the Federal budget. The party that lectures endlessly about deficit reduction, cutting government spending and shrinking the size of government is increasing the Federal Government's largest spending category.

Republicans claim these increases in defense spending are essential for national security. But Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Mike Mullen doesn't agree. In fact, Admiral Mullen is making the opposite argument, saying the Pentagon has not been forced to cut unnecessary or ineffective spending. In an April 28, 2011 speech in Washington, he said: "with the increasing defense budget, which is almost double, it hasn't forced us to make the hard trades. It hasn't forced us to prioritize. It hasn't forced us to do the analysis. And it hasn't forced us to limit ourselves . . ."

Since 2001, the Pentagon's budget has increased by seventy percent. The enormous size and rapid growth of the defense budget means that any Member of Congress who is not working to cut the defense budget is not serious about deficit reduction.

Mr. Speaker, I am serious about confronting the fiscal crisis facing America. And, as an appropriator, I take seriously my job of eliminating unnecessary spending and ineffective programs in every appropriations bill and every Federal agency—including the Department of Defense.

That is why I reviewed the 2012 defense budget to identify spending cuts that would promote fiscal responsibility without compromising national security. During debate on H.R. 2219, I offered three amendments to accomplish this goal. The first of these amendments cuts \$124.8 million from the Pentagon's \$324.8 million budget for military bands. The second cuts \$150 million for the military's Task Force for Business and Stability Operations in Afghanistan which supports business development, not a core function of the Defense Department, including such initiatives as sourcing cashmere for New York fashion designer Kate Spade. Finally, my third amendment limits taxpayer dollars being spent by the military to sponsor NASCAR, the National Hot Rod Association, and other motorsports racing teams to \$20 million, down from an estimated \$63 million.

Military music. Mission creep. Corporate handouts. That is what my amendments target for cuts. The dollar savings from my amendments are modest by Pentagon standards. Still, in the midst of a fiscal crisis, I feel a responsibility to cut spending that is not central to the military's core mission of protecting the American people. Based on all the anti-spending rhetoric from House Republicans, the American people may expect strong bipartisan support for these ideas. Instead, with America watching, Republicans fiercely opposed my common-sense spending reductions.

My Republican colleagues argued that limiting spending on military bands to \$200 million next year would be "highly detrimental to our armed forces." Republican Members claimed my amendment to limit taxpayer sub-

sidies for NASCAR to \$20 million "may result in thousands of young Americans missing out on the chance to serve our nation in uniform, earn G.I. Bill benefits and ultimately attain a college degree." These wildly inflated claims have no relationship with reality or national security.

Most disappointing, some House Republicans dismissed my amendments as insignificant reductions in the context of the overall budget. But that is not the "every dollar counts" approach they took when slashing funding for domestic agencies. Republicans justified their \$35 million cut to food safety by arguing it was imperative for deficit reduction. My \$124.8 million savings in the military band budget is much larger—and it won't put America's children at increased risk of food-borne illness.

Representative BARNEY FRANK offered House Republicans the opportunity to vote for the significant budget savings they claimed to seek. The Frank amendment cut the proposed increase in the Pentagon budget by half. I strongly supported this amendment to save taxpayers approximately \$8 billion and force the Pentagon to do what Admiral Mullen has not yet been asked to do: analyze, prioritize and make tough choices in a time of fiscal crisis. But Republicans overwhelmingly voted to defeat the Frank amendment when it failed 181–244.

The debate on the Fiscal Year 2012 Defense Appropriations bill (H.R. 2219) should be a wake up call for America about Republican hypocrisy. The Republicans' fight to protect wasteful subsidies in defense while cutting programs that protect American families from deadly outbreaks reveals they are not opposed to government spending—only the spending they don't like. The opposition to deficit reducing amendments that I and other Democrats offered shows House Republicans aren't opposed to growing the size of government—as long as that growth occurs at the Pentagon, in the tax code, and other areas they support.

Seventy-three amendments were offered to H.R. 2219. Only one amendment to reduce spending in this \$649 billion bill was approved by the House—my amendment to cut \$124.8 million from the military band budget. Some of my colleagues called it a symbolic victory. I see it as a symbol of a much bigger problem.

Staring in 2001, wasteful tax cuts and two wars gave America the fiscal crisis we face today. Admiral Mullen has testified to Congress the nation's dire financial outlook is "our biggest national security threat." America finds itself confronting a strange reality of needing to cut the Pentagon to secure the country.

Without Republican support for cuts to defense spending, it will be almost impossible to put the country back on a sustainable fiscal course. But if my Republican colleagues will fight to protect \$324.8 million for military bands it is unlikely Congress will have the votes to make much harder choices on Pentagon reforms that produce significant deficit reduction, such as repositioning our forces in Europe, cutting failed weapons programs, or updating our nuclear weapons strategy. And if the Tea Party-controlled House rejects my attempt to limit taxpayer spending on racecar decals and drivers to \$20 million, Americans should question the Republican majority's commitment to deficit reduction.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in opposing H.R. 2219.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. CAROLYN MCCARTHY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 18, 2011

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably absent on July 11, 2011. Had I been present, I would have voted on the following: rollcall No. 534—on agreeing to the amendment (Tierney)—"aye;" rollcall No. 535—on agreeing to the amendment (Graves)—"nay;" rollcall No. 536—on agreeing to the amendment (Scalise)—"aye;" rollcall No. 537—on agreeing to the amendment (Woodall)—"nay;" rollcall No. 538—on agreeing to the amendment (McClintock)—"nay".

GOOD LUCK TO THE 2011 SOLAR CAR CHALLENGE TEAMS

HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 18, 2011

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and welcome the 2011 Solar Car Challenge taking place in the 26th Congressional District at Texas Motor Speedway over four days: Monday, July 18th through Thursday, July 21. The 16th annual Solar Car Challenge is a solar-powered car race for high school students. This year's challenge is a four-day closed track race that provides high school students from across the country a hands-on experience in designing, engineering, building, and racing their own roadworthy solar cars.

Each event is the end product of a two year education cycle. On odd-numbered years, the race is a cross-country event. On even-numbered years, the event is a track race around the 1.5 mile oval at Texas Motor Speedway. The team driving the most laps accumulated over the four days of racing will be declared the winner.

I am proud that out of the sixteen teams participating in this year's challenge, two are from my congressional district. Racing in "Cat 2.0", the Bobcats Solar Racing Team of Byron Nelson High School in Trophy Club is captained by Matthew Klauser; their advisor is Darren Klauser. Liberty Christian School in Argyle will be racing in "Aurora"; their team captains are Cameron Balkey and Preston Collins; advisor is Ken Marko.

I would like to salute Dr. Lehman Marks, the Solar Car Challenge Event Coordinator, as well as all the Solar Car Teams' advisors, captains, and members who were instrumental in the support and building of these remarkable vehicles.

Mr. Speaker, I proudly rise today to commend the hard-working and visionary students comprising the Solar Car Challenge Teams and wish them a great competition. It is an honor to have this event take place within the 26th District at Texas Motor Speedway for the sixth time.