

David T. Toomalatai; Pfc. George D. Torres; and Staff Sgt. Joshua Whitaker, as well as Carson resident Pfc. Daniel P. Cagle of Carson who were all killed in action.

Perhaps the most consequential victory of the War on Terror came earlier this year when Osama bin Laden's life was finally ended by a group of Navy SEALs who deftly carried-out a covert operation at bin Laden's secret compound in Abbottabad, Pakistan. I am extremely thankful for President Obama and his Administration's firm leadership in the effort to bring bin Laden to justice. With a renewed sense that justice has been served, we must return our focus now to protecting our citizens at home, and assuring our veterans a prosperous future.

As President Obama said earlier today "It's important for us to express our thanks in words, but it's even more for us to express our thanks in deeds." It is now our turn to stand up for our troops at home as they courageously stood up for us in battle.

Our troops are returning home to a tough economy. They are returning home to an unemployment rate for veterans that is 2.5% higher than the national average. I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to put aside our differences and come together in our commitment to ensure veterans returning home receive all the resources they need. No measure of action we take in Congress can ever truly repay our troops for their sacrifices, but I vow to do all that I can to ensure that the country they fought and sacrificed for gives back to them all that they deserve.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, while keeping the American people safe should always be our top priority, now we must refocus our priorities and our resources into protecting our homeland, educating, training and employing the American workforce, and ensuring our veterans a prosperous future in the nation they fought to defend. Over the last ten years, American taxpayers have spent billions rebuilding Iraq. We must now be willing to make the same investment of time and resources to rebuild our economy so that it provides a standard of living and quality of life worthy of the heroic sacrifices made by the men and women who risked their lives to defend our way of life and freedom.

RECOGNIZING THE 200TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE GRAND LODGE OF FREE AND ACCEPTED MASONS OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 14, 2011

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the 200th Anniversary of the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the District of Columbia.

Freemasonry has been active in the United States for over two hundred and fifty years. Since its founding in 1811, the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the District of Columbia has encouraged interaction and discourse among individuals of differing beliefs by promoting community service, civic responsibility, and civil debate.

The Grand Lodge of D.C. has participated in the development and strengthening of our na-

tional institutions of government, including the United States Congress and Judiciary, Presidency, and Executive Branch Agencies, as well as the Capital's historic landmarks such as the White House, Smithsonian Institution, Washington Monument, and Washington National Cathedral. The Grand Lodge of D.C. has been greatly involved with the enrichment of Washington, D.C., with members establishing prominent institutions such as the Corcoran Gallery and George Washington University, and has been actively engaged in charitable projects. The Masonic Foundation of DC has provided tens of thousands of dollars each year in financial scholarships to college students who attended D.C. public schools. Participation in numerous community service projects include Hands on DC, Adams Morgan Day, Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure, Department of Veterans Affairs Hospital, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Doctors Without Borders, So Others May Eat, St. Baldrick's Foundation for childhood cancer research, DC Community of Hope, DC Central Kitchen, and DC Special Olympics.

The Grand Lodge of D.C. has been involved domestically and abroad in countries such as Armenia, Cuba, and the Philippines. It also hosted the 2008 World Conference of Masonic Grand Lodges, the largest gathering of Masonic leaders in history, to discuss ways to build a global civil society.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in celebrating the 200th Anniversary of the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the District of Columbia. For 200 years, the Grand Lodge of D.C. has supported the Freemasonry founding principles of "Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth," and continues to do so today, supporting the American ideal that individuals can coexist peacefully and come together to form a community, regardless of background and differences.

IRAN THREAT REDUCTION ACT OF 2011

SPEECH OF

HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 13, 2011

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 1905, the Iran Threat Reduction Act.

I thank Chairwoman ROS-LEHTINEN and Ranking Member BERMAN for crafting this important, bipartisan bill. H.R. 1905 was reported out of the Foreign Affairs Committee by voice vote and comes to the floor with over 350 cosponsors—of which I am one.

We must make it clear to Iran that any pursuit of a nuclear weapons program is unacceptable. This bill is designed to significantly strengthen the hand of the Obama Administration in applying economic pressure on the Iranian regime.

Specifically, the bill targets Iran's petroleum sector by expanding the activities that could trigger sanctions to include making certain petroleum resource agreements with Iran. It also requires the President, subject to a national security waiver, to impose sanctions on entities doing business with the Central Bank of Iran if he determines the Central Bank is linked to the Iranian nuclear program. The

measure also requires entities filing with the Securities and Exchange Commission to disclose business ties with Iran.

By most accounts, the sanctions passed by Congress last year have ratcheted up pressure on the Iranian government. But Iran continues to increase its stockpile of enriched uranium. This measure is necessary to give the President the tools to penalize the Iranian regime for its continual refusal to heed the objections of the international community.

I encourage my colleagues who have not already expressed support for H.R. 1905 to join me in support of the bill.

OUR UNCONSCIONABLE NATIONAL DEBT

HON. MIKE COFFMAN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 14, 2011

Mr. COFFMAN of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, on January 26, 1995, when the last attempt at a balanced budget amendment passed the House by a bipartisan vote of 300–132, the national debt was \$4,801,405,175,294.28.

Today, it is \$15,060,274,082,298.88. We've added \$10,258,868,907,004.60 dollars to our debt in 16 years. This is \$10 trillion in debt our nation, our economy, and our children could have avoided with a balanced budget amendment.

IRAN THREAT REDUCTION ACT OF 2011

SPEECH OF

HON. JAMES P. MORAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 13, 2011

Mr. MORAN. Mr. Speaker, in June 2010 President Obama signed into law the most far-reaching and carefully targeted sanctions ever imposed on Iran. Later that same month, the Administration also succeeded in bringing the United Nations Security Council to issue further, multilateral sanctions. In May, the United Nations issued a report demonstrating that these multilateral sanctions were having a serious, deleterious impact on Iran's ability to pursue nuclear weapons.

The reason these sanctions are having such an impact is that they have garnered the cooperation of allies around the world, who saw that this Administration was willing to engage Iran. If those allies now deem that we are turning back from that posture of engagement, and returning to the unilateralism of the Bush Administration, I am concerned that our effort to isolate the Iranian regime will collapse. It is the comprehensive diplomacy of the Obama Administration that has unified our European allies and brought them on board. That could end.

And in addition, the sanctions called for by H.R. 1905, are less targeted and more indiscriminate. They will have an impact, but that impact will not be directly related to our justified concern over human rights or Iran's nuclear military goals. Rather, they would hurt Iranians of all walks of life, including those we hope will become an effective opposition to

the current leadership. The recent IAEA report shows that Iran is not complying with its obligations under the treaty. We urgently need to keep a united front on the goal of preventing Iran from advancing its nuclear military capability. These sanctions could undermine that effort.

This bill is the wrong move for the global economy as well. In the middle of a very fragile economic recovery, these new sanctions could wreak havoc in the world oil market, right in the middle of winter, a time of our highest consumption. Already, we see oil prices rising. According to the Wall Street Journal, new sanctions could increase the price of oil by up to \$1 per gallon. That would be terrible for U.S. consumers, businesses and the economy. But it would be very good for Iran's leaders.

In fact, the sanctions would do more to help Iran's Supreme Leader and President than hurt them. Last week, the fierce competition between President Ahmadinejad and Ayatollah Khamenei was threatening to boil over when an embezzlement scandal roiled the Iranian leadership. The Washington Post reported this week that President Ahmadinejad admitted that the country is having a hard team with sanctions, and that now is not the time to shake things up in the government. In other words, external pressure unified rival factions, and helped the repressive regime to achieve a united front.

These sanctions could also hurt Iranian Americans. Sanctions on Iran's Central Bank will make it hard for Iranian Americans to send money to relatives in Iran. That could mean that an Iranian living in the United States has no legal way of helping his parents or grandparents. It could force them to pursue unsafe and illegal channels to send legal remittances to family members. That would be a terrible injustice, and it would be bad for U.S. interests. The Iranian American community is our best way to reach out to people in Iran, and we should not be making it harder for them to do so.

The sanctions could also hurt innocent Iranians in other ways. Aside from making it harder to import food and medicine, this bill bans the licensing of sales of spare parts for civilian airliners. Iran's airlines are already among the most dangerous in the world because of the difficulty in maintaining them under sanctions. Over 1,000 people have died in air crashes in the last ten years.

Lastly, this bill is wrong because it would be an expression to the world that the United States is not interested in having a relationship with the people of Iran. As it stands now, we have very little understanding of what is really happening inside Iran. The Obama Administration has strengthened our capacity to know what is happening inside the country by adding to a network of diplomats in missions around the world focusing on developments in Iran.

But we have a long way to go. Recently Admiral Mike Mullen said that this absence of contact is hurting us. At a Carnegie Endowment for International Peace event shortly before he retired, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff said: "Even in the darkest days of the Cold War, we had links to the Soviet Union. We are not talking to Iran, so we don't understand each other."

I agree with Admiral Mullen: we need more contact with Iran—about Afghanistan, the drug

trade, and human rights—not less. Ambassador Tom Pickering, in a recent Newsweek essay, also criticized this bill because of the constitutional questions it raises about the separation of powers.

CISADA sanctions and U.N. measures are having a serious effect, and intensifying rifts in Iran's leadership. This bill would close those rifts as Iran's leaders circle their wagons, and would give them an excuse as to why things are bad on the economic front. I can't support it as it is written.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. MARIO DIAZ-BALART

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 14, 2011—

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, due to a family medical issue, I was unable to cast the following votes. If I had been present, I would have voted as follows:

December 7, 2011—

Rollcall vote 892—I would have voted "yes"
 Rollcall vote 893—I would have voted "yes"
 Rollcall vote 894—I would have voted "yes"
 Rollcall vote 895—I would have voted "no"
 Rollcall vote 896—I would have voted "no"
 Rollcall vote 897—I would have voted "no"
 Rollcall vote 898—I would have voted "no"
 Rollcall vote 899—I would have voted "no"
 Rollcall vote 900—I would have voted "no"
 Rollcall vote 901—I would have voted "yes"
 Rollcall vote 902—I would have voted "yes"
 Rollcall vote 903—I would have voted "yes"
 Rollcall vote 904—I would have voted "yes"
 Rollcall vote 905—I would have voted "yes"
 Rollcall vote 906—I would have voted "no"
 Rollcall vote 907—I would have voted "no"
 Rollcall vote 908—I would have voted "no"
 Rollcall vote 909—I would have voted "no"
 Rollcall vote 910—I would have voted "no"
 Rollcall vote 911—I would have voted "no"
 Rollcall vote 912—I would have voted "yes"

December 12, 2011—

Rollcall vote 913—I would have voted "yes"
 Rollcall vote 914—I would have voted "yes"
 Rollcall vote 915—I would have voted "yes"
 Rollcall vote 916—I would have voted "no"

IRAN THREAT REDUCTION ACT OF 2011

SPEECH OF

HON. TODD C. YOUNG

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 13, 2011

Mr. YOUNG of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1905, the Iran Threat Reduction Act of 2011. This bill promises to meet the threat the Islamic Republic of Iran poses and takes significant, tangible steps in limiting Iran's uranium enrichment and targeting Iran's nefarious activities.

The latest United Nations weapons inspectors' disclosure and International Atomic Energy Agency report on the Islamic Republic of Iran are substantial. The Iranian nuclear weapons program is in direct contravention to Iran's ratification of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, endangers regional stability, and poses an unfathomable threat to international security.

The Iranian Regime has defied international order and expectations in its undeniable pursuit of nuclear weapons and its close relationship with foreign terrorist organizations.

That is why the Iran Threat Reduction Act of 2011 is so important. These sanctions are right and just based on irrefutable evidence of malice on the international stage. We must declare that it is United States policy to deny, at every juncture, the ability for Iran to fund and pursue its nuclear program and its policy of inciting violence abroad. The Iranian regime's continuous circumvention of past sanctions and continued noncompliance require more aggressive actions.

The only way to ensure the Iranian regime cannot circumvent international will is to take definitive actions. The sanctions in the Iran Threat Reduction Act in conjunction with the language in the National Defense Authorization Act for 2012 to formally sanction the Central Bank of Iran, CBI, are the steps required at this moment to impede the progress of Iran's ambitions. By sanctioning the CBI and creating accountability to those that deal with Iran, we limit the Iranian leadership's ability to function and directly curtail the infrastructures that sustain Iran's illicit nuclear ambitions and its state-sponsorship of terrorist organizations.

I urge my colleagues to support the Iranian Threat Reduction Act of 2011 and stand with me against the threat posed by the Iranian nuclear program and Iran's known links to various terrorist organizations.

RECOGNIZING THE PARTNERSHIP OF RACHEL CARSON MIDDLE SCHOOL AND DOMINION POWER

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 14, 2011

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the partnership of Rachel Carson Middle School and Dominion Power in efforts to support green energy.

Through their partnership, Carson Middle School was able to recently install on its roof an array of 11 photovoltaic solar panels, which have already generated over 1,000 kilowatt-hours of electricity—enough to power a house for more than a month.

Rachel Carson Middle School is a Fairfax County public school with over 1200 students. The solar project was initiated in the spring of 2009 and driven by a group of former eighth grade students, its teacher sponsor, Mr. Kirk Treacle, and its Going Green Club, formerly established as Carson FREE—which stands for Future Renewable Energy Effort. The group was established in hopes that solar electric would be used in addition to several other prospective forms of renewable energy at school. The Going Green Club is researching wind, geothermal, solar thermal, and algae oil as future possibilities. The solar project was funded by grants from Dominion Power, the Earth Day Network, Lowe's, and InterfaceFLOR as well as donations from InScope International, Katydid Inc., the Carson PTA, and other individuals with no taxpayer money used.

The photovoltaic panels are "grid-tied" so the electricity they produce helps power the