

asked questions as to did your daddy and mom lose their job.

People who thought they made it into the middle class, which is the economic heartbeat of this great Nation, moved into communities with higher rents or higher expenses in terms of their homes; and then they were hit by this economic nightmare. Through no fault of their own, they lost their jobs, their homes, their savings, their hope. And they are out there, and we are saying that they don't want to work, that they enjoy being unemployed?

You know, this great Nation has the Constitution as its foundation, but there's something that's not written there, and that is, if you can make your way to America, you can improve, not just your status, but the status of your kids and your grandkids.

Something has happened with this dream as it becomes a nightmare, and it has to do with disparity of the income because if you are born into poverty, chances of getting out of it in the United States of America is far less than in some other countries. That's not us. That's not what we believe in.

And no one is asking for a class war. We're talking about a class in understanding the economy of this great Nation. Less than 1 percent of Americans own 42 percent of America's wealth. And worse than being poor, more Americans who thought they reached the middle class wake up each and every day and find out that they're back into poverty.

Can't we find some way to realize that this is not a party issue, that these are the principles of the United States of America?

Don't we know that these debates that we're having as to who can be the meanest and most ridiculous is causing us, as a Nation, to lose the principles? And aren't these principles how do we treat the lesser of our brothers and sisters in this country? Isn't the question of how we treat our children, is that gone out of the window? Our aged, our sick and those in poverty?

Isn't there something when middle class people have to watch the cash register when they're paying out at the counter to make certain that they didn't pick up more than they can pay for?

What about having your possessions put in the street for nonpayment of rent?

They're looking for unemployment compensation checks as a way of life? They have to explain this?

No, we have to get back our dignity as a Nation, and it doesn't include the gridlock that we have in the House of Representatives. Sure, getting elected is important. But fulfilling the American Dream is far more important than anything this Nation's based on.

Yes, God bless America. Yes, in God we trust. Let's hope that God trusts us.

PLANNED PARENTHOOD INVESTIGATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. OLSON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. OLSON. Madam Speaker, last week, seven former Planned Parenthood employees wrote a joint letter to the Energy and Commerce Committee detailing the facts that many of my colleagues and I have long believed to be true. Planned Parenthood is grossly misusing taxpayer funds.

These former employees revealed that clinic staff failed to properly follow correct billing procedures to prevent Federal tax dollars from being used to fund abortion services as demanded by law. They outlined other horrific violations, including failure to properly notify parents when a vulnerable young girl may have been a victim of rape and is seeking an abortion.

These former employees also wrote that abortion is indeed offered as a means of family planning, in blatant violation of Federal law. For years, we feared that Planned Parenthood was engaged in several of these abuses, and now we have the inside information from brave folks who have confirmed these fears.

In an effort to shed light on how much taxpayer money is at stake and to keep a promise I made to the people of Texas 22 when I was first elected, I requested a GAO report to give the public a full accounting of exactly how much Federal money is sent to organizations that perform abortions each year. We learned that over a 7-year period, the taxpayer price tag to these organizations is almost \$1 billion.

And last week I was further sickened to learn that, according to the former Planned Parenthood employees, between Federal and State contributions, Planned Parenthood alone receives roughly \$1 million per day of taxpayer funds. And yet they're accountable to no one, including the taxpayers who morally oppose these funds being used to end an innocent life.

I thank my Energy and Commerce colleague, Subcommittee Chairman CLIFF STEARNS, for launching an investigation into this matter. And I'm confident that the full committee will do a thorough audit of this corrupt organization. An investigation is sorely overdue.

Madam Speaker, behind me is a picture of one of the largest Planned Parenthood clinics ever built. Tragically, it's located right outside of the district I represent in Houston, Texas. It's surrounded by four low-income minority neighborhoods, Planned Parenthood's target audience.

This massive building has an entire floor dedicated to abortion services and rumored late-term abortions. And because of the seven former Planned Parenthood employees, we know doctors and clinic employees have illegally encouraged young girls to abort an unborn child as a means of family planning, all on the taxpayer dime.

Americans should be outraged to learn of this horrific and possibly illegal use of their tax dollars. Planned Parenthood must be held accountable.

I will continue to fight to cut off every single tax dollar that Planned Parenthood and similar organizations receive. We can never tire. We can never rest in our moral obligation to protect our Nation's unborn children.

□ 1050

Federal tax dollars are legally prohibited from being used for abortions. Under our Constitution, the Obama administration has a duty to enforce these laws. Under the same Constitution, the Congress has a duty to ensure that the executive branch follows the law of the land. I applaud those Americans who bravely raise their voices on behalf of innocent children who don't have one and maybe never will.

BILL OF RIGHTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Washington (Mr. McDERMOTT) for 5 minutes.

Mr. McDERMOTT. Madam Speaker, today we celebrate an action that took place 220 years ago when we passed the Bill of Rights. But I rise today to express my dismay at the passage of the National Defense Authorization Act yesterday. Not only did this bill curb our ability to keep America safe, it made a mockery of our constitutionally protected rights.

But there is a larger point about the state of this country which is worth noting. Over the past several months, this body has wasted precious time writing a defense authorization bill with so many unsavory provisions the President threatened to veto it.

National security officials from all political spectrums condemned it as dangerous and unnecessary. In the end, the bill was watered down in response to many of the serious concerns about the bill, though it did not go nearly as far as it should. The final bill still contains restrictions on transfer of Guantanamo detainees and grants the President the power to indefinitely detain without trial American citizens in military custody. It shows just how far along the slippery slope our country has moved since 9/11 in authorizing sweeping powers to the President at the expense of our civil liberties.

Let's be clear. The over-militarization of our counterterrorism efforts goes against American values and civil liberties, though some people continue to justify it through fearmongering. We saw this after the horrific events of 9/11 when President Bush signed into law the Patriot Act that dramatically expanded law enforcement agencies' ability to search telephone, email, and financial records without a court order in the name of intelligence gathering.

One section of the Patriot Act even allows the FBI to review library

records, to look at which books you're reading.

In short, what we've done over the past decade is embrace national secrecy over national security. And the NDA bill took the Patriot Act to a whole new radical level. What the advocates of this bill don't seem to realize is that the American public is already paying a price in the name of keeping our Nation safe.

In September the Center for Investigative Reporting and NPR conducted a joint investigation into private security at the Mall of America in Minneapolis. They found that the mall security personnel stopped an average of 1,200 people a year. Nearly two-thirds of those people belong to racial and ethnic minorities. Personal information from the suspicious activity reports from the mall were sent to the FBI. So they've got an FBI file. Some of these people were reported for looking at the security guard in a "suspicious" way.

An Army veteran was questioned for nearly 2 hours about a video he made inside the mall. One man left his cell phone on a table in the food court, and an FBI agent showed up at his family's home asking if they knew anyone who might want to hurt the United States.

These intrusions create a chilling effect that causes law-abiding Americans to think twice about exercising their basic constitutional rights to speech and assembly.

James Madison, as you heard, wrote the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, and he once said, "The means of defense against foreign danger historically have become instruments of tyranny at home."

That could not ring truer than yesterday. This is a sad day for our liberty and freedom when we give to the President—we may like the President, we may think he's a great man—but to give that office the power to hold Americans without trial in military custody indefinitely is eroding our right to a free trial and an ability to confront our accuser. Those things that are in that Bill of Rights are being taken away from all of us.

Now, we think it won't happen to me. Be careful. That's what people thought in a lot of other places in the world. And suddenly, as Martin Niemöller said in the German prison camps, "And then they came for me, and there was no one to stand up."

SUDAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WOLF) for 5 minutes.

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, I was pleased this morning that The Washington Post did a story on a shameful development here in Washington; namely, that Bart Fisher, a Washington lawyer, was granted a license by the Office of Foreign Assets Control, OFAC, at Treasury, to represent the genocidal government of Sudan. I sub-

mit a copy of the Post article for the record.

The Sudanese people have long been brutalized, marginalized, and terrorized by their own government. Yet, unbelievably, it seems the same regime has been afforded the privilege of legal representation in Washington by the Obama administration.

According to a news report earlier this week in Africa Intelligence, Mr. Fisher was hired with the express purpose of trying to "lift American sanctions against it." In documentation posted on the Department of Justice Web site, it appears that Mr. Fisher was granted a license by the Office of Foreign Assets Control at Treasury to provide this representation, and that he plans to engage in political activities, among them "representations, including petitions to U.S. government agencies regarding sanctions."

I'm appalled that this has been permitted and someone or Mr. Fisher's political contributions were a factor. The administration should reverse this approval.

Martin Luther King famously said, "In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends." The Obama administration should remember the words "the silence of our friends."

What must the people of Sudan be thinking at this particular juncture when the administration struggles to find its voice on their behalf, while at the same time seemingly empowering the voice of their oppressors?

Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir's crimes are well known and documented. This is the same man that is accused by the International Criminal Court of five counts of crimes against humanity, including murder, rape, torture, extermination, and two counts of war crimes.

I've been to Sudan five times, including in July of 2004, when Senator Sam Brownback and I were the first congressional delegation to go to Darfur. We spoke with women who had been raped just days earlier. The Arab Janjaweed militias, armed by Khartoum, the government of Khartoum of Sudan, told these women that they wanted to make "lighter-skinned babies."

In addition to horrific human rights abuses and crimes committed by Bashir and his National Congress Party, Sudan remains on the State Department's list of State sponsors of terrorism. It is well known that the same people currently in control in Khartoum gave safe haven to Osama bin Laden in the early 1990s. Moreover, Khartoum was a revolving door for Hamas and other designated terrorist groups.

But Bashir's crimes are not merely a thing of the past. At the recent Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission hearing on the crisis in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile states in Sudan, a former Member of Congress and President of United to End Geno-

cide, Tom Andrews, spoke about his experiences while visiting the region.

He said there were reports of "Sudanese armed forces and their allied militias going door to door targeting people based upon their religion and based upon the color of their skin." And yet the Obama administration gives them the right to have somebody in this town represent them.

□ 1100

A recent delegation from the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom visited Sudan and met with refugees in Yida camp. They returned with similar reports. All of the pastors with whom they spoke said they fled southern Kordofan after learning that the Sudanese military was undertaking house searches for Christians and SPLM-North supporters.

We stand just blocks from a museum that cries out, "Never again." Meanwhile, it appears that this administration is complicit in allowing a genocidal government to have an advocate in Washington.

The people who have the authority and the power to stop this from happening are President Obama, Secretary of State Clinton, Secretary of the Treasury Geithner, Adam Szubin, who is the head of the office of OFAC, and David Cohen, the Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence at Treasury.

History will be the judge if they fail to act.

[From the Washington Post, Dec. 15, 2011]

SUDAN HIRES WASHINGTON LAWYER

(By Dan Eggen)

The Obama administration has allowed the Republic of Sudan to hire its first U.S. lawyer in years, prompting strong objections from human rights groups and some members of Congress.

Bart S. Fisher, a veteran international trade lawyer, is being paid \$20,000 a month by Sudan to help the strife-torn African nation in its attempts to have U.S. economic sanctions lifted and be removed from the State Department's list of terrorism-sponsoring governments, according to federal registration documents.

The hiring has angered U.S. human rights activists and some lawmakers because of the Sudanese regime's history of alleged genocide and other atrocities against its citizens during a decades-long civil war. Fighting has flared again this year along the border with newly independent South Sudan, displacing an estimated 400,000 people and prompting new accusations of indiscriminate bombing and illegal killings by the Khartoum government.

Rep. Frank R. Wolf (R-Va.), a longtime critic of the Sudanese regime, attacked Fisher in the House and during a news conference this week for agreeing to work for "a genocidal government" that "has blood on its hands." He also said he suspected the administration may have issued a license to Fisher because of the lawyer's past campaign contributions to President Obama, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and other Democrats.

"I don't know how Mr. Fisher sleeps at night," Wolf said on the House floor Tuesday, adding later: "If he has received one penny from the government of Sudan, he should return it immediately."