

whose people burn down Coptic Christian churches.

For Israel's tenacity, courage, intelligence, creativity, inventiveness, and endurance over thousands of years, I stood in respect.

When Iranian leader Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said Israel must be "wiped off the map" and "the uniform shout of the Iranian nation is forever 'death to Israel'" and that the Western powers "launched the myth of the Holocaust . . . They lied; they put on a show and then they support the Jews," I stood up in support of Israel and stood against these hostile and hateful and false comments.

While Iran continues to develop nuclear weapons and openly threatens Israel and the Middle East and Europe, while some may cower in fearful silence, we will stand against nuclear proliferation by these rogue nations. That is why we passed strong sanctions against Iran and why we support all options to protect our friends.

We stood in support of Israel's continuous support of the safety and security of the people of the United States. When we were attacked by terrorists, Israel stood by us and continues to stand by us, and they take personal risks in doing so. We stood to show our gratitude to the people of Israel.

Now, like any relationship, ours is not perfect nor without differing thoughts and opinions. To be sure, there are times when we honestly disagree. That is the nature of governments elected by the people. There will be debate, but we must use these as opportunities to learn from each other, to reaffirm our promises, and to grow. All of that strengthens our bonds because we put respect, true resolution and a commitment to peace above all else.

Mr. Friedman would do well to understand the true issues behind our support. We are jointly committed to peace, to a two-state solution, to fighting terrorism, to supporting the tolerance of other religions, to supporting democracy, to standing up against those who would rain thousands of rockets on an innocent people.

We will not be silent. We will speak out against terrorism, and we will stand together.

So, for all of these things, I and others stood in respect, in support, and in an open show of our joint commitment to peace and civility.

And together we will stand again.

□ 1110

TRIBUTE TO STAFF SERGEANT VINCENT J. BELL

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

Mr. SCHIFF. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of Staff Sergeant Vincent J. Bell, United States Marine Corps. He was 28 years old, the son of Pamela Alexander-Bell and James Bell, the husband of Karen

Navarrete, and the brother of London Bell and Andrea Roe.

Staff Sergeant Bell enlisted in the Marine Corps on July 7, 2001, and became an artilleryman. During his career, Staff Sergeant Bell served his country with distinction and deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom with Battalion Landing Team 2/1; 2nd Battalion, 11th Marine Regiment; Battalion Landing Team 2/4; and 5th Battalion, 11th Marine Regiment.

On October 31, 2011, Staff Sergeant Bell deployed with the 2nd Battalion, 11th Marine Regiment, where he served as a Howitzer section chief for a 10-man team in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. On November 30, Staff Sergeant Bell was in Kajaki, Helmand province, Afghanistan, when he stepped on an improvised explosive device while on a dismounted patrol. He succumbed to his wounds, making the ultimate sacrifice for his country.

Staff Sergeant Bell loved being a marine. He said that "the ability to serve is the greatest calling an American could do, even more so to be a United States marine." Staff Sergeant Bell was well respected by his seniors and subordinates alike. His company commander, Captain Joshua Kling, said he "can't remember one conversation with Staff Sergeant Bell where he wasn't smiling and telling me how great it was. To suffer hardness and adversity with good cheer is the quality of a fine man. He was a rocket man, a cannoneer, a platoon sergeant, an entrusted marine who always got the job done."

His platoon commander, First Lieutenant David Waters, said that all marines who served with Staff Sergeant Bell "understood his sacrifice and will miss him as a brother and friend. He faced the fear and danger of this profession with a true heart. He had the heart of a warrior and spirit of a true patriot. I know he will be in heaven guarding the way."

Staff Sergeant Bell loved his marines and being a mentor to them. Previously, he served as an instructor with the 11th Marine Regiment's Artillery Training School where he provided advanced training to the section chiefs for the regiment.

Upon returning to the 2nd Battalion, 11th Marines, Staff Sergeant Bell was excited that he was with a unit getting ready for deployment. Captain Kling noted that he was "chomping at the bit to be challenged—for an opportunity to train, teach, and mentor marines." Sergeant Erick Granados described Staff Sergeant Bell as "an outstanding marine, a great leader, and most of all, a good man. Firm but fair, guidance was always there when we needed it, but he let us do our job. He empowered his marines to take responsibility and lead others."

Staff Sergeant Bell was devoted to his family, fellow marines, and friends. His brother said that "Vincent was an outstanding marine and a good man. He had courage, commitment, and

strong values. He believed in following orders, loved our country, and served our country with pride. He believed in doing the right thing for the right reason. Vincent had an amazing sense of humor, even in tough times. He had a very caring and nurturing personality and was a mentor to young people since he was a young man."

Staff Sergeant Bell told his mother that it was a privilege to serve under both President George Bush and President Barack Obama. In 2009, Vincent called his mother from Iraq and told her that he had reenlisted because he wanted to have the privilege to serve under the first African American President of the United States.

Staff Sergeant Bell's wife Karen said that "Vincent was a kind, giving man. I'll miss my husband every day of my life, but his spirit will remain alive with me, his family, and his marines." Karen's brother and sisters considered Vincent to be their big brother. Her parents shared a mutual respect for Vincent. They knew how much he loved and cared for her. In addition to his family and friends, Staff Sergeant Bell was also devoted to the family's wonderful dogs Nala and Nemo.

Staff Sergeant Bell's personal decorations include the Purple Heart, posthumously; the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal with one gold star; the Good Conduct Medal with two bronze stars; and the Combat Action Ribbon with one gold star.

Since Staff Sergeant Bell's death was announced, his unit has received condolences from marines across the globe who served with him. This reflects his professionalism, leadership, and the lives he touched as a United States Marine. Our Nation has lost a good man—a son, brother, husband, and a marine—who gave his life in defense of freedom. He will be missed, and his sacrifice will not be forgotten.

LEAVE NO MAN BEHIND

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

Mr. NUGENT. Madam Speaker, I rise today to remind all Americans that we still have troops in harm's way. As the Iraqi war comes to a close and we prepare to draw down in Afghanistan, we cannot forget those who serve us, the men and women. We cannot forget those that are still being held captive in those foreign lands. And these are our volunteers. These are young men and women that went to the fight and volunteered to go there willingly because America calls.

Several weeks ago, I sent a letter to the President, asking him for his continued commitment for those that we have left behind, those that have been held against their will in Iraq and Afghanistan. Unfortunately, I never got a response. I never received a response.

And recently, if you read the British tabloids, one of the British papers talked about PFC Bowe Bergdahl who

escaped from his Taliban captors in Afghanistan and was on the run for 3 days. Unfortunately, he was recaptured. It shows you that we have those that are still in harm's way as we pull out from Iraq and start to withdraw from Afghanistan.

But we can never forget—we should never forget—the sacrifice that these young men and women have given to this country. They truly are the 1 percent that need to be talked about because they have volunteered at great risk to themselves and to their families.

I have three sons that are currently serving in the United States Army. And I know what it's like to have a son go to war. On numerous occasions now, my sons have been called. And one still is in Iraq today. So we can never forget about the sacrifice not only of the men and women in our armed services but how about their families and loved ones that they leave behind.

The warrior ethos says, We never leave a man behind. And I call upon the President and I call upon this great body to make that same statement, that we will never leave a man behind, that we will do everything within our power to make sure that we get these kids back home. And I call them kids because I have three sons, and I still call them kids, even when they're 30 years old. It is about doing the right thing.

So today we're putting forth a resolution, this resolution, asking for the House to exert its will, to talk about our unending commitment to those that have given up their freedoms to protect us.

In this season of Christmas, we need to think about the families that are out there whose loved one is being held captive, either in Iraq or Afghanistan. We cannot forget them. We should not forget them. And this great country should stand up for those that have stood up for us. We should express our outrage and our feeling that we will never leave a man behind on the battlefield, ever.

Madam Speaker, I just want to implore this body to stand up and vote for this resolution, talking about the sense of this Congress and supporting those men and women who have given so much and have asked for so little.

God bless America.

□ 1120

AMERICA WELCOMES TROOPS HOME

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise today to join some of the calls of my colleagues and to indicate that I thought this a very special day, December 15, 2011. A few hours ago in Iraq, Secretary Leon Panetta performed the Casing of the Colors Ceremony, which is to acknowledge the col-

ors—the red, white, and blue—that our brave men and women fought under in Iraq.

We have soldiers still fighting around the world, and I was just speaking to my constituency. We know that one brave soldier from North Carolina even lost his life in the waning hours of the ending of this war.

And so at the beginning of December, in Houston, I called for the Yellow Ribbon Campaign and for America to wrap herself in yellow ribbons, both in respect of our returning soldiers, to acknowledge a job well done, and to welcome them home to an unsilent America.

I would like to thank Speaker BOEHNER, Leader PELOSI, Whip HOYER, and Majority Leader CANTOR for joining and indicating that they would support the wearing of yellow ribbons by our Members today and tomorrow, both in celebration and in recognition of the heroism of our troops and, yes, acknowledgment of our fallen heroes.

This war was almost 9 years, one of the longest wars that America has ever fought. It was a war that used \$800 billion, moneys that I hope we will invest in our returning troops and their families and all Americans as we go forward.

The loss of life was very painful, the idea of the burden on families. So I believe these yellow ribbons, although meager, will symbolize this Congress being unified as Americans, saying thank you to our troops. And, frankly, we have many other challenges that we should be addressing and making sure that our troops come home to a place that is welcoming.

This morning, our whip made a very important point about the maturity of America. Many remember the days of the Vietnam War. We know the passion in that war. But, unfortunately, it appeared that those who were called to battle by the Commander in Chief were the ones who received the ire of those who had a different opinion. America has now matured, and we recognize that whenever our soldiers accept the call of battle, they are for all of us. The treasure that they shed, the blood that they shed, has no respecting of anyone's political affiliation.

So I am grateful to have the opportunity to call upon us in a bipartisan manner to wear these ribbons that were put together by the Young Scholars Academy in Houston. The founding principal is Dr. Anella Coleman. They worked very hard on these ribbons, and I think it is important to teach our children early on to appreciate the democracy that they live in and appreciate the freedom that they have and to recognize those who are on the front lines.

I call upon the Iraqi Government as well. My point is that the soldiers have left them a gift—a gift which they can build on or they can undermine. A gift of democracy, freedom, the understanding of friendship, taking care of children, even in spite of what may be

violent outbursts. Will they have a democratic government? Will they allow those who are in Camp Ashraf, who are stated to be in a camp that will close by December 31, will they resettle the refugees in this camp non-violently, peacefully, Iranian exiles who fled to Iraq? They are concerned about their refugees in many countries, as they do these refugees. I will be calling upon countries to treat the Iraqi refugees fairly, as we all would. But it is a burden on the present Government of Iraq to live peacefully, to accept religious differences and promote religious freedom and the First Amendment and the right to the dignity of life.

And so let me thank the leadership for joining us. Members will find these ribbons in their Cloakroom, each Cloakroom. Let us join together and say: Thank you. Welcome home to our troops, a job well done. God bless you, and God bless America.

ENERGY SECURITY

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

Mr. SHIMKUS. Madam Speaker, what does the Iranian nuclear threat to Keystone XL pipeline and the payroll unemployment insurance, doc fix, and jobs bill all have in common? Well, I'm going to use this 5 minutes to tie them together.

Yesterday on the floor, we addressed a concern of the Iranian nuclear threat. We did so with two pieces of legislation: H.R. 1905, the Iranian Threat Reduction Act; and H.R. 2105, the Iran, North Korea, and Syria Non-proliferation Reform and Modernization Act.

Why did we bring these bills to the floor? We brought these bills to the floor because of our concern of a nuclear Iran that has threatened its neighbors and one of our closest allies, Israel.

So what's the Iranian response? Well, I would turn your attention, Madam Speaker, to an article published yesterday, December 13, from FOXNews.com, with the title, "Iranian Official Threatens Military Drill Sealing Off the Strait of Hormuz."

I will read the first two paragraphs:

"A high-ranking Iranian official has said Iran's military will practice sealing off the Strait of Hormuz, the world's most important oil transport channel, in a provocative move that illustrates Iran's capability of disrupting the world's oil supply."

"The announcement Monday by Parviz Sarvari sent oil prices up about \$3 to \$100 a barrel based on the speculation of a disruption during the military drills."

Sarvari, a member of the Iranian Parliament's National Security Committee, is quoted as saying, "Soon we will hold a military maneuver on how to close the Strait of Hormuz," in a statement reported by Reuters. "If the