

Then, of course, the Senate is debating the issue of the Violence Against Women Act, an act that as a new Member of Congress I had the pleasure of both cosponsoring and writing amendments as a member of the House Judiciary Committee, and it is sad that we have a divide on the Violence Against Women Act that has bipartisan support. This House should take up the Leahy bill immediately as it passed the Senate. Do you realize how many women are being killed a day, an hour, because of the domestic violence that this particular act helps to outreach, provide resources, counseling and opportunities to be able to nurture those women and to be able to ensure that they are safe?

As a former board member of the Houston Area Women's Center that has been a living example of protecting women against dastardly violence and, of course, men who are subjected to domestic violence, it is, unfortunately, a form of an epidemic in this country, as we have seen with bullying. We have to be able to bless America and have people turn internally. Let them seek help. But why stall the passage of the Violence Against Women Act which, in fact, will provide the nurture, comfort, and resources and the national statement that we abhor and stand against violence against women and others who are being impacted violently against this Nation.

As a Member who stood along Chairman Hyde many years ago, the late Chairman Hyde, the chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, a Republican who stood alongside of us to say he stands with legislation to protect women, get the Senate to do its business and let the House do its business. Let us bless America.

HONORING COACH PAT HEAD SUMMITT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to offer my praise to one of Tennessee's true living legends.

Born in Clarksville, Tennessee, in Tennessee's Seventh Congressional District, Coach Pat Head Summitt paved the way for women athletes at Cheatham County High School and then at the University of Tennessee-Martin. She was an exemplary student athlete, and today the gym at UT-Martin is named in her honor.

She took the reins at the University of Tennessee in 1974, and she has led the Lady Vols to an unprecedented 31 consecutive NCAA Tournament appearances. In her time as a coach, she has coached 12 Olympians, 20 Kodak All-Americans, and 77 All-SEC performers. After 1,098 career wins over 38 seasons, Pat Head Summitt is the all-time winningest coach in NCAA basketball history.

Pushing excellence both on and off the court, Coach Summitt prepared her

players to be successful women when they hang up their jerseys. We will remember her legacy at UT for two things: winning games and, most importantly, graduating players. Every Lady Volunteer—every Lady Volunteer—who finished their eligibility at the University of Tennessee graduated from college. That is a statistic to cheer about. Coach Summitt has dedicated her career and her magnificent journey to the great game of women's basketball and to the student athletes she has championed.

This week, we have welcomed Coach Summitt and her son, Tyler. They've been here in D.C. with us this week as we have saluted her career and as we cheer her as she now coaches millions of volunteers in fighting Alzheimer's and early onset dementia.

Thank you, Coach Summitt, for leading by example both on and off the court.

□ 1020

ISRAEL INDEPENDENCE DAY

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

Mr. HOYER. Ladies and gentlemen of the House, 64 years ago, the State of Israel was born out of the hope of a generation and on the heels of history's darkest human tragedy. Notwithstanding the many grave challenges that it has faced since that day and still in our time, Israel has achieved a thriving economy, a strong national defense, and an important role as a member of the family of nations.

Israel's existence itself is a powerful symbol of the Jewish people's resolve never again to permit its sons and daughters to face the threat of persecution or genocide. On my many visits to Israel, I have witnessed the triumph of a dream—a beautiful dream that sustained the Jewish people for 2,000 years and that has been fulfilled through the blossoming of a desert, the emergence of Israel's high-tech economy, and the freedoms of speech, press, and religion for its citizens of every faith.

Israel continues to impress the world with her achievements in business, technology, sports, the arts, and the defense of human rights. They are even more remarkable when considering the very real dangers Israel faces in the form of terrorism, regional instability, and the threat from Iran.

For Americans, Israel's peace and security has always been an important national interest of the United States of America. As President Obama has made very clear, our countries will continue to work closely together to prevent a nuclear-armed Iran. Not only do the United States and Israel share common interests; we also share common values. Democracy, equal opportunity, human rights, and a yearning for peace are the ideals we hold in our hearts, and together we have worked for 64 years to defend them and promote them.

On the anniversary of Israel's independence, Americans continue to stand side by side with Israel as it pursues peace and security for its people and, yes, for its region.

I pray for the peace of Israel and its people and for all the people of that troubled region. And I know the strong bonds between our nations will endure for generations to come. Those futures were what we worked so hard to make possible for thousands and thousands.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN OF COURAGE

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

Mr. DOLD. Mr. Speaker, in March, the United States recognized 10 women who were risking their lives to bring about justice in their countries. These women were honored in the United States as the 2012 International Women of Courage and visited Congress to share their stories and give a voice to the people of their countries who have nowhere else to turn.

I had the privilege of meeting with each of these women and listening to their stories and learning more about their fight to end human rights abuses and to make the world a better place. I was impressed with their strength, their courage, and want to share some of their stories with you here today so that we can continue to speak up for those who have no voice.

Maryam Durani is from Afghanistan. At age 27, she is the director of Women's Association for Culture and speaks out for the rights of women and girls in Kandahar province. Her life has been threatened numerous times, and yet she continues to fight for women in Afghanistan and has started the only female-focused radio station in the nation. She received the International Women of Courage Award for "striving to give a voice to women through the power of media, government, and civil society."

Pricilla de Oliveira Azevedo is from Brazil. She is 34 and serves as the General Coordinator for Strategic Programs for the Rio de Janeiro State Secretariat of Public Security. She is one of the most senior officers in the Police Pacification Units in her country and has worked to end drug-dealing operations in Brazil. She arrested a gang of criminals who had once kidnapped her and is working with the state and local governments to improve conditions throughout Brazil. She received this award for "integrating previously marginalized populations into the larger Rio de Janeiro community."

Zin Mar Aung is from Burma. At age 36, she is a democratic activist who was a former political prisoner and was held for 11 years because of her efforts to promote democracy, women's empowerment, and conflict resolution in Burma. She received this award for "championing democracy, strengthening civil society, and empowering individuals to contribute meaningfully

to the political transformation of Burma."

Jineth Bedoya Lima is from Colombia and at age 38 is an investigative journalist. While on assignment, she was repeatedly raped and left in a Dumpster. She was left in this Dumpster by her attackers and told that they were sending a message to the Colombian press. Since that horrific attack, she has spoken out against sexual violence and has become a role model for women in Colombia. She was given this award for "her unflinching courage, determination, and perseverance fighting for justice" all around the globe.

Hana Elhebshi is a 27-year-old architect from Libya who contributed to the proper documentation of the violence during the revolution in her country. She also is an advocate for women's rights in her country and received this award for "courageous advancement of the cause of freedom of expression and promotion of women's rights during times of conflict and transition in Libya."

Aneesa Ahmed is from Maldives and founded Hope for Women. She advocates for ending gender-based violence in Maldives and has served as the Deputy Minister of Women's Affairs. She received this award for "courageous advocacy of women's rights and protection from domestic violence."

Shad Begum is 33 and is from Pakistan. She is a courageous human rights activist. She provides political training, microcredit information and more to women in her country. There have been numerous attempts to end her life, but she remains committed to advancing women's rights and even won a local office in her country. She received this award for "fearlessly championing Pakistani women's political and economic rights."

Samar Badawi is from Saudi Arabia and at 31 monitors human rights in her country. She is the first woman in Saudi Arabia to file a lawsuit against the government demanding that women have a right to vote. She won this award for "demonstrating significant courage in her activism while becoming a champion in the struggle for women's suffrage and legal rights in Saudi Arabia."

Hawa Abdallah Mohammed Salih is from Sudan and is a human rights activist. Forced to flee Darfur, she lived in an internally displaced persons camp and has since spoken out against human rights abuses in these very camps and has advocated for women's rights in her country. She has been persecuted by the Government of Sudan and forced to flee her country. She received this award for "giving a voice to the women and children of Darfur."

Safak Pavey is a member of the Parliament in Turkey and is the first disabled woman elected to Parliament in her country. She is working to empower the disabled, women, and minorities in Turkey. She received this award for "her personal dignity and courage."

Mr. Speaker, I want to just simply say that these women act as a role model for all women across the country, across the world; and we must stand up for women's rights.

SMART SECURITY: A STRATEGY THAT INVESTS IN AFGHANISTAN AND ITS PEOPLE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, last weekend, the United States Government and Afghanistan reached a strategic agreement to define the terms of the relationship between our two countries in the near-term future.

First of all, this agreement affirms that our combat troops will not leave Afghanistan until 2014, which is far too slow a timetable. Don't we have enough evidence right here after 10-plus years that we're not making America safer with this war, we're not minimizing the terrorist threat, and we're not bringing stability and security to Afghanistan?

How much more will Americans be asked to sacrifice? How many more tens of billions in taxpayer dollars will be wasted when we have so many needs right here at home? How many more Americans have to come home in a casket? How many more will take their own lives because the mental health distress of serving in a combat zone becomes too much? How many more have to spend the rest of their lives in a wheelchair, or without a limb or limbs, because of injuries suffered in an immoral and unnecessary war?

□ 1030

Believe me, Mr. Speaker, there is not a minute to waste. Now is the moment to end this war and bring our troops home.

The meeting this weekend does, however, show the importance of a plan going forward, a plan that will define the terms of our engagement with Afghanistan after the war is over.

I've always said that ending the military occupation does not mean abandoning Afghanistan. The question is, what form will our partnership take? And on that question, the agreement signed this weekend provides very little guidance.

According to The Washington Post, in fact, and I'll quote them, they say: "The specifics of the U.S. commitment to Afghanistan have yet to be formally outlined."

Then The Post adds that "the document provides only a vaguely worded reassurance, leaving many to guess at what the U.S. commitment means in practice."

Well, Mr. Speaker, we need more than a guess. We need a clear strategy for investing in Afghanistan and its people. And while a lot of the talk has been about continuing to shore up Afghan security forces, we need a much more comprehensive approach.

In short, we need to implement SMART Security, the strategy that I've spoken of from this spot hundreds of times since 2004. SMART Security would replace our military surge with a civilian surge. It would put humanitarian aid in front and center. It would emphasize development and diplomacy instead of invasion and occupation.

It would mean, in place of troops and weapons, we send experts with tools and resources to rebuild Afghan infrastructure, hospitals, and schools. It would mean investing in programs to improve maternal health and child mortality. It would mean a focus on democracy promotion and rebuilding civil society in Afghanistan. It would also mean shifting the emphasis to peace-building, conflict prevention, and human rights education.

This approach would save lives. It would promote peace. It is a superior counterterrorism and national security strategy. It will keep the American people safe. It will advance our values in a way that a decade of war clearly has not.

We can't wait until 2014, Mr. Speaker. We need a SMART Security approach in Afghanistan, and we need it now. And we need to start by bringing our troops home.

HONORING OUR COUNTRY'S VETERANS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. DUNCAN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of our country's veterans, and I want to begin briefly by mentioning an organization that helps veterans that was recently brought to my attention, Patriot Outreach, a nonprofit organization to assist our military with getting the help they need to deal with the trauma associated with aspects of military service. You can learn more about that at PatriotOutreach.org, and I think they're doing a great service for our veterans.

Benjamin Disraeli once said that "the legacy of heroes is the memory of a great name, and the inheritance of a great example." In our country, some of our greatest heroes are veterans, individuals who answered our Nation's call to protect and defend our freedom.

Our veterans are one of our Nation's greatest treasures and, as such, our country has given them a firm promise. Because of their willingness to protect us with their service, when their service ends, we promise to take care of them. But, unfortunately, if you talk to veterans today, they don't believe that our government is living up to their promises.

When we made the commitment to take care of our troops when they returned home, we never said anything about making them jump through hoops or navigate a complicated bureaucracy. We promised our veterans