

Iran's nuclear facilities before the November elections to protect itself politically, even if it is done in concert with Israel to make it appear less politically motivated.

While I believe the American people will see such an action for what it is, if a Presidential campaign will finally motivate this administration to get serious about our national security and Iran's nuclear program, then so be it, Mr. Speaker. It would still be far better for the administration to do that than to stand idly by and force the tiny state of Israel, our closest friend and ally on this Earth, to undertake such a monumental task alone, with all the odds against them and facing such crushing consequences whether they succeed or fail.

But it didn't have to be this way. There was a time when Iran's nuclear weapons ambitions could have been arrested with far less cost.

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The President has waited too long.

Mr. Speaker, President Ronald Reagan gave an address in 1983 when the world faced a similar threat in the growing strength and nuclear ambition of the Soviet Union. Mr. Reagan said:

I urge you to beware the temptation to ignore the facts of history and the aggressive impulses of an evil empire, to simply call the arms race a giant misunderstanding and thereby remove yourself from the struggle between right and wrong, good and evil.

Mr. Speaker, there were those in 1938 who deemed the ambitions of Adolf Hitler and the Third Reich a giant misunderstanding. The free nations of the world once had opportunity to address the insidious rise of the Nazi ideology in its formative years when it could have been dispatched without great cost, but they delayed, and the result was atomic bombs falling on cities, 50 million people dead worldwide, and the swastika shadow nearly plunging the planet into Cimmerian night.

Mr. Speaker, let the world's free people resolve once and for all, for the sake of our children and for future generations, that we of this generation will not stand by and watch a similar dark chapter of history be repeated on our watch.

God help this administration to wake up, and God help us all as Americans to be awake in this destiny year for our beloved country.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

THE FISCAL PATH FORWARD

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. PRICE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, in recent weeks, every Member of Congress has heard from a broad range of interests: education leaders, State and local officials, defense con-

tractors, small businesses, people concerned about the devastating impact of the looming sequestration spending cuts. Each of these groups, indeed, all of our constituents, deserve an honest accounting. How did we get in this predicament, and how can we get out of it in a way that accelerates our economic recovery and restores our fiscal health?

Our situation results from the failure of the so-called "supercommittee" established in the wake of the debt ceiling crisis manufactured by Republicans last summer to come up with a deficit reduction plan. Instead, we're faced with across-the-board cuts that would indiscriminately slash more than 8 percent from every national security and domestic account. Cutting with a meat axe instead of a scalpel is the most dangerous way imaginable to set fiscal policy. These cuts would come on top of the more targeted, but nonetheless significant, \$917 billion in cuts and spending caps that the administration and Congress have already locked in.

In the case of defense spending, these earlier cuts were a result of a careful, strategic review by the administration, and they'll save nearly half a trillion dollars over the next 10 years. As for domestic investments in education, infrastructure, research, and innovation, these cuts have already gone too far, slowing the recovery, and putting at risk our ability to compete in the global marketplace.

The House Republicans' first order of business in the 112th Congress was to precipitate an unnecessary, confidence-shaking, government shutdown crisis to extract domestic spending cuts. From there, they moved to the needless months-long debt ceiling crisis, during much of which consumer confidence plummeted, and the economy posted 2011's four slowest months of job growth.

By undermining confidence in the economy and withholding countercyclical investments that would boost the recovery and prompt future growth, Republicans have provided a case study in how not to make macroeconomic policy. Yet they want to do more of the same. According to the Economic Policy Institute, House Republicans approved a 2013 budget that would put 4.1 million people out of work by cutting investments in our future.

At root, Republicans are proposing a brand of European-style austerity, the same policy that has tipped many economies back into recession. Interestingly, with sequestration now looming and pressure from defense contractors mounting, a substantial portion of the Republican caucus on both sides of the Capitol has belatedly become aware of the concept of macroeconomics. All of the sudden, they're talking macroeconomics. You might call it "defense Keynesianism," the belief that only defense spending creates jobs, and that cutting it would result in job losses. In fact, the same argument applies equally to domestic in-

vestments in education and research and infrastructure, a truth Republicans have found it convenient to ignore.

The Republicans, by the way, can only thank themselves for the deep defense cuts in sequestration. One can easily imagine an alternative sequestration approach, triggering a tax surcharge, in addition to less severe cuts to defense and domestic spending. But as was the case during these repeated unnecessary crises, Republican dogmatism kept revenue off the table.

It's clear sequestration would devastate our defense, education, infrastructure, and research sectors, undermining our economy over the near and long term. It would also hobble critical functions from air traffic control to meat inspection and Social Security claims processing. It can't be resolved in isolation or through half measures. Yet Republicans are now proposing staving off the impact of sequestration on defense alone, and they pay for it by again targeting health care for low-income women and children, food and nutrition assistance, and other safety net programs for the poorest Americans, in addition to locking in a 2 percent Medicare cut. Their plan would victimize the most vulnerable, it would hinder job creation, and jeopardize our ability to compete.

Mr. Speaker, there's a better way. The impending fiscal cliff, which includes both sequestration and the expiration of the Bush tax cuts, offers an opportunity for all Members of Congress to set the talking points aside and act in our country's best interest. I know we can chart a course to fiscal balance because we've done it before. In the budget agreements of 1990 and 1993, which set the stage for 4 years of budget surpluses, the formula was fiscal discipline on all fronts.

No area of spending can be sacrosanct. We should focus our limited dollars on boosting the recovery and making critical investments in our future because the most effective means of deficit reduction is a growing economy. As in the 1990s, revenue must be part of the solution. The President has already proposed a sensible plan allowing the Bush-era tax breaks to expire on income over \$250,000 a year. Extravagant tax breaks for various special interests must be ended. The revenue raised could be used to pay down the deficit and to help fund the investments in education, research, infrastructure, and innovation that are critical to economic growth.

Most Americans agree with this comprehensive approach, but most Republicans still hide behind their anti-tax pledges. Their insistence that no additional revenue ever be raised, for example, by ending tax loopholes for oil companies or asking millionaires to return to their Clinton-era tax rates, is still the largest obstacle to a sensible budget compromise in Washington. As we approach the fiscal cliff, that fever has got to break. We must find our way

to the comprehensive balanced approach that will enable our country and all of our people to prosper.

I yield back the balance of my time.

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UNITED STATES-AFRICA TRADE RELATIONS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. RUSH) is recognized for the remainder of the hour as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. RUSH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend my fellow colleagues in the House for their leadership, for their vision, and for their votes today to strengthen the U.S.-Africa economic and trade relations. Passage of H.R. 5986 will also solidify the U.S. long-term investment in Africa.

I want to commend my colleagues for voting to extend AGOA, the African Growth and Opportunity Act. And I would also like to applaud all of those advocates who worked tirelessly to pass H.R. 5986, the long overdue extension of the African Growth and Opportunity Act, AGOA, including the third-country fabric provision as a part of AGOA.

This third-country fabric provision will enable eligible countries in sub-Saharan Africa to ship thousands of goods to the United States without paying import duties. This provision, which has been set to expire this September, on September 30, waives the duties on clothing from most AGOA countries, even if the yarn or fabric is made in a "third country," such as China, South Korea, or Vietnam. With passage of this important legislation, sewing jobs for hundreds of thousands of African workers will be protected and also created.

The first beneficiaries for this bill will be the women of Africa, because about 70 to 80 percent of the workers in these burgeoning apparel and textile industries are women. Mr. Speaker, when women are working, families are fed and stability is a result.

I am so pleased, Mr. Speaker, that once again AGOA will become the law and that the President will sign this law in the near future.

THE DEATH OF GHANAIAAN PRESIDENT JOHN ATTA MILLS

Next, Mr. Speaker, I stand in the House well today to send my deepest sympathies, the sympathies of the people of the First Congressional District of Illinois, and to send our prayers to the Ghanaian people and to the family of the recently departed President John Atta Mills, the late president of Ghana. His death is a terrible loss not only for Ghana and its people, but for the entire world.

Mr. Speaker, President Atta Mills was a tremendous leader. He solidified the foundation for peace and prosperity in the nation of Ghana, creating confidence in the Ghanaian political, so-

cioeconomic system that led to massive foreign direct investments in Ghana, which resulted in the creation of millions of jobs for the Ghanaian people. He will be greatly missed.

I also want to congratulate His Excellency, Mr. John Dramani Mahama, the new leader of Ghana.

Mr. Speaker, the peaceful transition of power in Ghana clearly demonstrates that Ghana has embarked into an unwavering path and process for democracy and the democratic principles we all hold near and dear. Within hours of the passing away of the President, late President John Atta Mills, the Vice President was sworn in as the new President.

The political violence that we witnessed after the passing of President Umaru Yar'Adua of Nigeria and President Bingu wa Mutharika of Malawi simply did not occur. This, Mr. Speaker, is evidence, sheer evidence that Ghana's democratic institutions are viable and are getting much stronger day by day.

This just did not happen. It took strong leadership from previous Presidents of Ghana in order to lay the right foundation for this smooth transition of power in Ghana over the last week. People like former President Jerry Rawlings, who was elected in 1996. And lest we not forget Mr. Rawlings' party lost with a narrow margin, but he didn't try to fight and hold back the willful decision of the Ghanaian people. He conceded the election without any controversy.

I also commend former President John Kufuor for his strong stance in support of the Ghanaian democratic march, the principles, and the democratic values that we cherish here in the United States.

It is for these reasons that I stand here today to commend the Ghanaian people, the Ghanaian leadership, and the Ghanaian institutions for their stable, forward-thinking, and mature leadership. I commend them all this evening.

NIGER DELTA CRISIS

Mr. Speaker, on my final note before this body, I rise today to also urge this Congress to pass H. Con. Res. 121, a resolution to save the Niger Delta region, which is located in Nigeria. Over the last few years and months, a lot has been said and a lot has been written about the Niger Delta crisis that is occurring right now in Nigeria as we speak.

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Just about a year ago, the United Nations Environment Program released a report, a startling report, a report calling for an urgent response to reverse the environmental destruction and devastation in the Ogoniland region of the Niger Delta wetlands. That report again was startling, intense, and accurate. It also called for the establishment of a \$1 billion cleanup fund to finance the restoration and the cleanup of the Niger Delta region.

Mr. Speaker, to give you some perspective on the scope of the destruction and on the devastation, it is estimated that the cleanup of the Niger Delta could take as many as 30 years to complete. Of course, Mr. Speaker, strong voices have begun to emerge and strong actions have taken place to do more to publicize these environmental atrocities.

Just recently, I watched a movie directed by a brilliant Nigerian-born filmmaker whose name is Jeta Amata. It was a movie titled "Black November: Struggle for the Niger Delta." This movie raises the awareness of the tragedy of the Niger Delta and the Niger region. "Black November," the movie, is based upon the true story of the people of the Niger Delta, the communities in the Niger Delta that suffer extreme environmental degradation and extreme poverty in this oil-rich Niger Delta region.

Mr. Speaker, the people of this Nation, we cannot, the American people cannot remain indifferent to the struggle of the people of the Niger region, the Niger Delta, as they struggle to clean up the pollution created by mostly American and other Western oil and petroleum companies. Most of the Niger Delta's 31 million people live on less than \$1 a day, although this region is the very backbone of Nigeria's economy, with oil and gas extraction accounting for over 97 percent of Nigeria's foreign exchange revenues.

The Niger Delta region, which consists of nine states, makes up about 12 percent of Nigeria's total land mass, and it is one of the world's 10 most important wetlands and coastal marine ecosystems.

Mr. Speaker, the social unrest, the criminality, illegal oil trade, the bunkering, and the general corruption have hindered oil and gas investment and production, as well as the Niger Delta region's development.

Mr. Speaker, these numbers are alarming. The World Conservation Union and the representatives from the Nigerian federal government and the Nigerian Conservation Foundation calculated in 2006 that up to 1.5 million tons of oil had been spilled in the Niger Delta over the last 50 years—1.5 million tons. That is 50 times, that's right, 50 times, Mr. Speaker, the pollution released in the Exxon Valdez tanker disaster in Alaska a few years ago.

This pollution, this oil spill, this devastation has severely limited the local inhabitants' access to clean water and has largely destroyed the fishing stock that the majority of the delta inhabitants depended on to make their daily living. A result also has been that illegal oil and gas refineries have become a source of income for these poor people who have unfortunately diverted their activities from fisheries destroyed by the oil spills. Illicit oil trade and illegal refineries are booming, and they are consequently threatening the economy, the security, and the environment of this very vital region in the world.