

MO BROOKS OF ALABAMA VOTING "NO" ON ATTACKING SYRIA

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. JOYCE). The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. BROOKS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BROOKS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, President Obama, without consulting Congress or the American people, intervened in Libya's civil war, resulting in the murder of four Americans, including our Ambassador in Benghazi, while creating yet another fertile terrorist recruiting ground. Repeating its Libya mistake, in September 2012, the Obama administration declared that America will intervene in Syria's civil war and work "to support a Syrian opposition to hasten the day when Assad falls."

Shortly thereafter, I stood on this floor, stated my opposition to America's intervening in yet another civil war and argued that "America must stop spending our treasury and risking American lives for those who neither appreciate our sacrifices, nor believe in basic liberties like freedom of religion and freedom of speech."

I have participated in classified hearings with Secretary of State John Kerry, National Security Adviser Susan Rice, and many others. I have listened to President Obama. The arguments for attacking Syria are unpersuasive.

Absent substantially different circumstances, and consistent with my 2012 opposition to intervening in Syria's civil war, I will vote against attacking Syria, if and when Congress has that vote. I reject the President's argument that the best way to keep Syrians from killing Syrians is for Americans to kill Syrians. America has peaceful options. We should pursue them more vigorously.

There is not the required public support to attack Syria. Americans oppose attacking Syria by a two-to-one ratio. In Alabama's Fifth Congressional District, 1,272 citizens have contacted my office about Syria, and 1,267 citizens oppose attacking Syria. A scant five citizens out of 1,272 support attacking Syria.

The President last night told America that there is no evidence that Syria is a security threat to America that supports preemptive military action. Yet an attack makes Syria and its allies a security threat. President Obama erred when he made Syria's chemical weapons a red line. But a President's verbal gaffes don't justify war. A Syrian war costs money America does not have. Every dollar spent attacking Syria worsens America's deficit and debt, weakens our economy, undermines our ability to pay for national security, and increases the risk of even more defense layoffs and furloughs.

An American attack on Syria aids and abets Syrian rebels. Syrian rebels have beheaded Christians solely because they are Christians. One rebel leader killed a Syrian soldier, cut open his chest, took out his heart, ate it,

and then bragged about. Another rebel leader personally executed helpless prisoners of war. I question the wisdom of helping rebels who may be even more evil and barbaric than Syrian President Assad. Yet that is exactly what President Obama proposes.

The White House Syrian strategy is conflicting and amorphous. The President claims he does not seek regime change. Yet in 2012, his administration said the exact opposite. President Obama claims attacks will deter Syria's chemical weapons use, yet his Secretary of State insists that attacks will be "unbelievably small."

I have reservations about this administration's ability to handle a delicate foreign policy matter. This administration bungled its Fast and Furious gun-running program, killing hundreds of innocent Mexicans and an American Border Patrol agent. This administration botched Benghazi and threw in a coverup for good measure. This administration illegally uses the Internal Revenue Service to attack political adversaries. The list goes on and on.

President Obama has cultivated cheerleaders but not players on the field whose militaries will help America attack Syria. America cannot perpetually be the world's only policeman.

In sum, I believe attacking Syria unilaterally makes matters worse, not better. Absent a major international effort to punish Syrian President Assad for his inhumane and criminal use of chemical weapons, I cannot and will not in good conscience vote on the House floor or in the Foreign Affairs or Armed Services Committees to attack Syria.

WAR, PEACE, AND THE CONSTITUTION

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

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Mr. Speaker, amidst the international humiliation and farce that we've suffered with our abortive war with Syria, there are two good things the President has done, and they need to be noted. Last night, he stepped back from an international crisis that could have had catastrophic consequences by deferring to the Russian diplomatic initiative. Thank God. And last week, he stepped back from a constitutional crisis by deferring to Congress the decision over whether to go to war—as the Constitution requires.

I've been deeply troubled by suggestions from many otherwise responsible officials and commentators—from both parties—that the President has independent authority as Commander in Chief to order an attack on other countries when he deems it necessary. This cuts right to the core of our Constitution's design, and it evinces an alarming deterioration of the popular understanding of the separation of powers that keeps us free. There is nothing

more clear in the American Constitution than that Congress has the sole authority to decide the question of war or peace. Only after Congress has made that decision does the President, as Commander in Chief, have the authority to execute that decision.

For centuries, European monarchs had plunged their nations into bloody and debilitating wars on whim, and the Constitution's Framers wanted to protect the American Republic from that fate. They understood that a President, for example, might someday paint himself into a rhetorical corner and feel compelled to save face by exercising force. That is precisely why they entrusted that fateful decision to the Congress.

James Madison, the Father of the American Constitution, said that its single most important feature was the provision that gave the Congress, and not the President, the authority to go to war.

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Here's what he wrote in 1793:

In no part of the Constitution is more wisdom to be found than in the clause which confides the question of war or peace to the legislature, and not to the executive department. The trust and the temptation would be too great for any one man.

War is in fact the true nurse of executive aggrandizement. In war, a physical force is to be created and it is the executive will which is to direct it. In war, the public treasures are to be unlocked, and it is the executive hand which is to dispense them. Those who are to conduct a war cannot, in the nature of things, be proper or safe judges of whether a war ought to be commenced, continued, or concluded.

In Federalist 69, Alexander Hamilton wrote that one of the most important differences between the British King and the American President is that the King can plunge his nation into war on his command, but that the American President has no such authority.

The Constitutional Convention gave careful consideration to the clause that provides that "Congress shall declare war." They chose that word carefully to make sure that the only independent war-making power of the President is to repel an attack.

The War Powers Act makes this explicit, that absent congressional authority the President can only order our Armed Forces into hostility in response to "a national emergency created by an attack upon the United States, its Armed Forces, or its territories or possessions." Anything else requires prior congressional action.

The United Nations Participation Act, by which we entered the U.N., requires Congress to act before American forces are ordered into hostilities in U.N. actions. The War Powers Act specifically forbids inferring from any treaty the power to order American forces into hostilities without specific congressional authorization.

Now, some have used the past violation of this constitutional stricture—for example, in Kosova or most recently in Libya—as justification for its

violation now. That is precisely the point. If any violation of this fundamental constitutional provision can be used as justification for its outright nullification, well then any such violation must be vigorously resisted lest we lose for all time the most important check on the most momentous decision that a government can make: to go to war.

War is destruction on a massive scale. To unlawfully initiate such a thing is the highest crime that a public official could possibly commit. Indeed, if the power of impeachment were not intended for such an act as that, I cannot imagine what it would be for. The President was absolutely right not to cross that line.

ACCUWEATHER'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize 50 years of talented work and ingenuity by a company that is headquartered in State College, Pennsylvania, in Centre County, an area of central Pennsylvania that I proudly represent. AccuWeather, a content and media company that provides weather forecasting services worldwide, this year celebrates its 50th anniversary.

In November of 1962, Joel Myers, while serving as a one-man consulting firm initially forecasting the weather for just one gas utility company in Pennsylvania, laid the groundwork for AccuWeather. In 1971, AccuWeather began to serve television and radio clients, and later expanded to newspapers. Now home to the most professional meteorologists at any one location anywhere in the world, AccuWeather employs hundreds of individuals, many of whom are graduates of nearby Penn State University, at its global headquarters in State College, Pennsylvania.

Today, Mr. Myers and his team provide services to hundreds of outlets across the planet, including top-ranked newspaper publications, television networks, and thousands of other global locations.

Happy 50th anniversary, AccuWeather.

ECONOMY/UNEMPLOYMENT

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

Mrs. BLACK. Mr. Speaker, the latest jobs report released last week was a sad reminder of just how bad things have been in the Obama economy.

When the President's stimulus was passed in 2009, the administration predicted that our unemployment rate would have fallen to just 5 percent by now. But it hasn't. It remains stuck over 7 percent and would be closer to 10

percent if millions of Americans had not given up looking for work altogether.

In fact, this latest jobs report highlighted a deeply disturbing statistic: the percentage of Americans working or looking for work has dropped to its lowest level since the middle of the Carter administration.

What makes this situation even sadder for Americans across the country is that this does not have to be the case. The President could work with Congress to implement policies that would help our economy grow and help our Americans get back to work. The President could work with us to delay ObamaCare, which is devastating the hiring and employment practices of companies across this country and creating a Nation of part-time workers. The President could join a bipartisan consensus here in Congress and approve the Keystone pipeline that would immediately create 20,000 jobs. The President could drop his continued insistence on tax increases and work with this Congress to pass a comprehensive, revenue-neutral tax reform package that promotes economic growth.

The President has a Congress willing to work with him to help struggling Americans across this country. Whether he chooses to work with us is his decision.

HONORING THE LIFE OF MICHIGAN STATE POLICE TROOPER PAUL BUTTERFIELD

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

Mr. BENISHEK. Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor today to honor the life of Michigan State Police Trooper Paul Butterfield, who was tragically killed in the line of duty on September 9, 2013. Trooper Butterfield was an Army veteran who bravely served his community as a State police officer since 1999. He served at the Michigan State Police post in Manistee and in Hart.

Like all of our law enforcement officers, Paul risked everything to ensure our communities and neighborhoods were safe. He gave his life to protect us. His service and sacrifice will never be forgotten. Sadly, northern Michigan has lost a true hero.

To Trooper Butterfield's family, I am aware no words will ever match your deep sorrow. A loss this great can only be eased by the grace that is beyond all worldly powers. But I am hopeful that you will be embraced by the angels of Heaven and comforted by the knowledge that Paul is safely in the hands of God.

On behalf of the citizens of Michigan's First District, I thank Trooper Butterfield for his service and tremendous sacrifice to Michigan and our Nation.

I yield to my friend and colleague from Michigan (Mr. HUIZENGA).

Mr. HUIZENGA of Michigan. Thank you, Dr. BENISHEK.

As was said, Mr. Speaker, earlier this week, Michigan lost a true hero. Trooper Paul Butterfield died from a gunshot wound that he sustained while conducting a "routine" traffic stop in Mason County on September 9.

This senseless act of violence will no doubt shake communities throughout northwest Michigan as we wonder why this heartbreaking event ever took place, how it happened in Mason County, and how we make sure it never happens again. Trooper Butterfield's response to the situation has been described by the Michigan State Police as "perfect" and that he "did everything right."

This tragic loss of life serves as an ever-present reminder that there is no such thing as a routine traffic stop for police officers. And on this special day, September 11, we want to thank all of our first responders for the work that they do.

We must never forget or take for granted the work of the men and women who put their lives on the line for us every day as they protect our kids, our communities, and our country.

Paul, you will not be forgotten by me, the people of the Second District, or throughout Michigan. Again, my heart goes out to Trooper Butterfield's family, his fiancée, his friends, and his colleagues from the State police post in Hart as well as the State police post in Manistee.

Natalie and I and our family will keep you all in our prayers during this time of extraordinary need. And we just want to say to you: Paul, rest well, our friend. Rest well.

TWELFTH ANNIVERSARY OF ATTACK ON AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to mark the 12th anniversary of the attack on America of September 11, 2001.

In lieu of formal remarks, I would like to read "The Names," a poem written by then-poet laureate Billy Collins, which was read before a joint session of Congress in lower Manhattan just after the attacks.

"The Names," by Billy Collins:

Yesterday, I lay awake in the palm of the night.

A soft rain stole in, unhelpt by any breeze, And when I saw the silver glaze on the windows,

I started with A, with Ackerman, as it happened,

Then Baxter and Calabro, Davis and Eberling, names falling into place As droplets fell through the dark.

Names printed on the ceiling of the night. Names slipping around a watery bend. Twenty-six willows on the banks of a stream.

In the morning, I walked out barefoot Among thousands of flowers Heavy with dew like the eyes of tears, And each had a name—