

transfer of power from the current Islamist government to a technocratic government that would oversee elections are alive, if not entirely well. But while a framework for the installation of a caretaker government remains, squabbling between the Islamists and the secular opposition has slowed the process and reintroduced uncertainty into Tunisia's fragile politics.

Political institution-building and creating a culture of good governance will require targeted assistance, training programs, and a lot of patience. Egypt and Tunisia may be a mess now but 10 years from now will not be the same as they are today, and we can play a role in helping to shape that future.

Think of some of the other countries that have democratized in recent years in Eastern Europe, Asia, and Latin America. The transitions have not been quick or smooth, and many of them are still ongoing. Amid the euphoria that accompanied the collapse of the Communist bloc in Eastern Europe, we were tempted to believe we were all witnesses to the "end of history," as one academic put it.

The reality has been far messier vestiges of communist oppression still remain throughout the former Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact.

These experiences hold an important lesson for the Arab states—that persistence pays and that democracy is possible, even where it had not existed previously. The United States must support these transitions, and we must be willing to use financial inducements and other levers to steer their political development in a direction that will best serve the Arab peoples and preserve regional and global peace. The partial cutoff of military aid to Egypt and the broader conversation it has sparked about how best to configure assistance may presage a new diplomatic strategy that is less reliant on military relationships devoted to the status quo and more supportive of civil society, economic and political reform.

This leads to the third area where the United States can play an important role—in trying to support the transition of Arab civil society from one that was imposed from above to one driven primarily by the needs and interests of its people. Free expression, women's empowerment and respect for minority groups are essential to the growth of democracy. Focusing assistance to groups in these areas can help to broaden the constituency for change and also give the young and disaffected an alternative to jihad.

Today's Arab twentysomethings face even greater challenges than the Europeans of the 1990s. But President George H.W. Bush and his successor, Bill Clinton, both understood that the investment in Eastern Europe was one that would pay dividends for decades. They were right and it has. I believe that we have a similar opportunity to help the Arab people. It will take longer and there will be setbacks. But the alternative is to watch a generation succumb to despair—a despair that is likely to have negative consequences for us and for our allies. I prefer to bet on hope and work for change.

AFGHANISTAN

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

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, at this point in our Nation's history, I believe both parties will acknowledge that we have major economic issues facing our country. As Congress just recently came to a temporary resolution which raised the debt ceiling by \$230 billion, it is incredible to me that we still found \$30 billion in aid to send to Afghanistan and \$1.6 billion in aid to send to Pakistan.

Mr. Speaker, at a time when America is drowning in debt, this is completely unacceptable. And even more important than the money are the American lives that have been lost—six in the time the government was shut down and one the weekend after.

As we work to fix our national problems, we should be wise enough to follow the lead of the nations who have interfered in Afghanistan before us—England and Russia are only two examples—and stop wasting lives and money on a country that will never change. History tells us that it is time to bring our troops home.

I want to thank ABC News for their effort each Sunday morning during "This Week with George Stephanopoulos" to faithfully list the names of the Americans who have been killed in Afghanistan, just as they did during the Iraq war. It is with sadness that I report that they have added seven names to this list over the last 3 weeks.

Mr. Speaker, on the poster beside me are the faces of two little girls, Stephanie and Eden, whose father, Sergeant Kevin Baldur, from Camp Lejeune Marine Base, which is in my district, was killed in Afghanistan. He and Colonel Palmer, from Cherry Point Marine Air Station, also in my district, were trying to train the Afghans to be policemen. One of the trainees turned their pistol on Palmer and Baldur and killed both of them. So these little girls are standing at Arlington Cemetery with their mom holding their hands.

Perhaps more disheartening is the fact that two of the most recent deaths in Afghanistan also were an example of Afghans that we were trying to train killing Americans. We were just trying to help them.

Mr. Speaker, a few weeks ago, I spoke on the floor about an article I read, entitled, "The Forgotten War" by Ann Jones. I also will submit an article written by an Iraq war veteran named Jayel Aheram, who now attends the University of Southern California, which is entitled, "Afghanistan War Must End Immediately." Both of these articles hold the same conclusion: the war in Afghanistan is a misuse of American youth, American money, and American military power.

It is time for the Congress of the United States to face the fact that we have our own problems here in Amer-

ica. To send over \$600 billion to Afghanistan to build roads, schools, and utility plants so the Taliban can blow them up makes no sense.

It is time for little girls like these two to have their daddies at home and not in a coffin.

[From the Daily Trojan, Oct. 7, 2013]

AFGHANISTAN WAR MUST END IMMEDIATELY (By Jayel Aheram)

Yesterday marked the 12 year anniversary of the war in Afghanistan. Americans have grown weary of the drawn-out conflict's undefined goals and increasingly unsustainable financial costs. According to a CBS News poll, support for the war in Afghanistan plummeted last year to its lowest with only 1 in 4 Americans agreeing that the United States is doing the right thing. President Barack Obama responded to this political reality when he announced last February that "by the end of next year, our war in Afghanistan will be over." But will there really be an end to the Afghanistan war?

There were three ends to the war in Iraq: The first was in May 2003, when President George W. Bush announced, "Mission accomplished," in an infamous speech aboard the USS *Abraham Lincoln* just two months after the invasion of Iraq. The second was in September 2010, when "combat troops" silently crossed the Iraqi border into Kuwait, an event Obama's MSNBC boosters were breathlessly proclaimed as the triumphant "End of the Iraq War." The third was in December 2011, when the Iraqi parliament refused to grant further immunity to U.S. troops beyond 2011, finally forcing to U.S. troops' withdrawal from Iraq. If Iraq had three "end of wars," how many will there be in Afghanistan? According to the Washington Post, a few thousand U.S. combat troops will likely remain in Afghanistan beyond 2014 to train and advise security forces. Despite this promise by Obama of the war's end, American presence in Afghanistan will merely add to the grim death toll after 2014.

According to Los Angeles Times, an American service member was killed last week in an "insider attack"—incidents where Afghan allies attack the U.S. troops who train them. This recent event follows another from the weekend before in which three U.S. troops were killed. According to NATO, in 2011 and 2012, 97 coalition members were killed by their Afghan counterparts in these insider attacks. Even as the United States shifts its role from combat to advisory and training, deaths from insider attacks will most likely continue. Taliban leaders, including Mullah Muhammad Omar, have urged their sympathizers and members to continue to infiltrate the security forces and kill American trainers and Afghan trainees.

Bob Dreyfuss wrote in The Nation that military commanders believe in an "insurgent math"—that is, for every civilian the U.S. military kills, 20 insurgents take their place. Approximately 6,841 civilians have been killed since the beginning of the Afghanistan war. Using this "insurgent math," that would mean the U.S. military has created more than 120,000 insurgents who continue to threaten the lives of U.S. troops and Afghans loyal to the Karzai regime. These newly created insurgents have empowered the Taliban as evidenced by a recent article by the Associated Press, which reported that Taliban fighters have started an insurgent campaign of regaining lost territories as foreign troops depart. After 12 long years, \$600 billion spent, more than 2,000 military deaths, 6,000 civilian deaths and tens of thousands of lives irrevocably altered, when will Americans muster the political will and courage to end America's longest war? Renaming the war is not progress, it is not

peace and it will certainly not stop American deaths.

HURRICANE SANDY 1-YEAR ANNIVERSARY

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

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, as a member of SEEC, the House Sustainable Energy and Environment Coalition, I rise today to recognize the 1-year anniversary of Superstorm Sandy. Today, we remember those who lost their lives during this catastrophe and salute those who continue the rebuilding efforts.

One year ago, Sandy ravaged the east coast, producing devastating floods and widespread power outages, disrupting cellular phone networks and transit systems. As a whole, the region suffered over \$65 billion in economic losses. Families lost their homes, their precious mementos, and reminders of their daily lives. Communities lost their businesses. Tragically, some individuals lost their lives.

While the east coast was the primary victim of Sandy, extreme weather knows no boundaries and other communities around the country are not immune from suffering the same fate. Floods, hurricanes, wildfires, and droughts are becoming all too common, all too intense, and all too costly. These events will continue to wreak economic havoc and uproot families, unless we take meaningful action to address climate change.

In California, climate change is increasing the frequency of extreme heat and prolonged drought, placing millions of Californians at greater risk of public health threats such as heat-related sickness, forest fires, and water scarcity.

At home, my constituents live under the constant threat of flooding, which is why I work relentlessly to strengthen our levees and upgrade our infrastructure. If extreme weather caused a levee to be breached in Sacramento, the damage would be similar to that experienced in New Orleans.

Mr. Speaker, events like Sandy can happen anywhere. They don't just threaten the coasts, but all communities in all States. Events like Sandy can happen at any time—and are happening with alarming frequency. This was not an isolated event that happens every decade.

We cannot continue to sit back and wait for the next disaster to happen before we take action. The time to act is not a year from now, not a month from now, not even a day from now. The time to act is today.

We must implement preventative measures to make our communities more resilient and be proactive in addressing climate change, the root cause of extreme weather events. Only then will we be able to safeguard the country from the destructive effects of extreme weather and ensure that the leg-

acy of Sandy is one of action and not despair and procrastination.

COLLAPSE OF AMERICAN HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Mr. Speaker, over the past few weeks, it has become obvious that we are watching nothing less than the collapse of the American health care system. Millions of Americans are losing their health plans and set adrift into a dysfunctional system where they cannot find comparable affordable policies.

Few are signing up on the ObamaCare exchanges. How few, we don't know. Because the numbers are so embarrassing, the administration refuses to report them. There are published reports that some 80 percent of the signups are pushed into the Medicaid system, which is itself nearing functional collapse as doctors simply opt out. Those who are able to keep their health plans are seeing their rates skyrocket to unaffordable extremes. Those few who can find affordable policies often discover they are losing their doctors.

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Many employers are dropping their employee health plans or reducing salaries or cutting back on work hours or laying off workers while trying to cope with increased costs. A constituent of mine reports her employer cut her salary 23 percent as it tries to cope with ObamaCare costs.

The ObamaCare Web site is a monument to governmental incompetence. This is a Web site designed to sell a single product that has been under development for more than 3 years at a taxpayer cost of more than \$600 million—more than was spent developing Facebook or Twitter—and it does not work.

But that is not the big problem.

The big problem is that, today, there are fewer people with health insurance—apparently, a lot fewer than before this program began less than 1 month ago. This is the disaster that Republicans tried to prevent or at least to delay, but that disaster is now unfolding before our eyes with dire consequences for millions of Americans.

With all its flaws, the American health care system was the finest in the world. It was the most innovative, the most advanced, the most adaptable, and the most responsive to the individual needs of patients, and now we are losing it.

The one question I keep hearing is: Well, what do the Republicans propose?

In fact, Republicans have had a comprehensive alternative for years. Spearheaded by Dr. TOM PRICE of Georgia and Dr. PHIL ROE of Tennessee and sponsored by the Republican Study Committee, this package would bring

within the reach of all Americans health plans that they could choose according to their own individual needs of their own families, that they could own and that they could control, but this package has never passed the House, and it is high time that it did.

It extends the same tax breaks we currently give to companies to employees so they can afford to buy their own health care, again, according to their own needs.

It expands Health Savings Accounts so people can meet their needs with pretax income.

It restores to people the freedom to shop across State lines to find the best policies to suit their needs.

It restores flexibility so that health plans can accommodate people with preexisting conditions while expanding risk pools to provide for those conditions.

It attacks cost drivers like medical liability law that are making health care unaffordable.

It restores pricing flexibility to plans so that a healthy young person can again purchase catastrophic insurance for next to nothing.

It takes the best of the American health care system, preserves it, and corrects its flaws.

Now, I realize the Senate is likely to bury this reform as it has so many, but it is important that the House pass it so the American people can see that there is still hope to save what was once the finest health care system in the world and that it can be again as soon as this fever dream of ObamaCare finally breaks.

We have just been through a government shutdown because Democrats refused to even consider delaying the ObamaCare train wreck. They got their way, and that train wreck is now upon us. I believe, in coming months, the American people will recognize the urgent warnings that the Republicans tried so desperately to convey, and they will be looking for a way out. We need to blaze that trail now.

For that reason, I ask the House leadership to bring the Republican health care reforms to the floor, to get them to the Senate, and then let the American people decide.

Mr. Speaker, freedom works. It is time we put it back to work.

PERSONALIZE YOUR CARE ACT OF 2013

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I started my day with my friend and colleague Dr. PHIL ROE, a Republican Congressman from Tennessee. We met with representatives from the American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine. These dedicated professionals deal with helping patients and their families contend with some of the most difficult circumstances any of us