

IT IS TIME TO QUIT LEADING FROM BEHIND

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address the crisis in Ukraine, Putin's rising aggression and intransigence in the face of increased international opprobrium, and the failure of American leadership that has allowed these recent events to transpire.

This is yet another example of Vladimir Putin looking at President Obama's foreign policy and making the calculation that he can do whatever he wants without fear that the White House will react with anything other than empty threats.

We have seen this time and time again, so much so that the President's lead from behind policy has not only eroded our influence and credibility around the world, it has hurt our relations with other countries, and it has shown tyrants like Putin, Assad, Maduro, Kim Jung Un, Khamenei, and the Castros that the U.S. lacks the courage of its convictions.

Putin has annexed Crimea, and we would be foolish to think that he will stop there as he seeks to reestablish Russia as more than just a regional power, and the Obama administration has misguidedly dismissed Putin and his provocations as those of a weakened Russia acting out.

This is an astonishing view to take and one that could seriously harm our U.S. national security interests if we continue to downplay these threats.

In 1994, the United States, along with Ukraine and Russia, signed the Budapest memorandum. In that agreement, all sides agreed to respect Ukraine's territorial sovereignty if Ukraine returned the nuclear weapons it inherited after the fall of the Soviet empire. We gave our guarantee to protect Ukraine's borders, a guarantee that we clearly did not keep.

What kind of message is the United States sending to the world again?

You can bet that Rouhani and Khamenei are sitting in Iran, and they are paying very close attention, Mr. Speaker. They are making the calculations right now, and they are betting that perhaps they will face no repercussions if they abandoned the negotiations and actively and openly pursue nuclear weapons.

President Obama's lack of leadership and strength has shown that the umbrella of U.S. security that so many have relied upon is not as wide nor as durable as they once thought.

The House and the Senate have acted to pass sanctions legislation against Putin over his actions in Crimea, but it is clear that Putin is not going to be deterred by this.

It may be a case of too little, too late because the administration failed to take decisive action from the get-go, just like it had in Iran and Syria before this and just like it is now failing to do in Venezuela.

While Obama threatens consequences for Putin over his Crimea provocations—and fails to act on these words—he hasn't even mustered up the fortitude to even feign strong condemnations for Maduro and his thugs in Venezuela, as they continue to brutally oppress the opposition in Venezuela, the opposition that is calling for reforms and democracy.

Mr. Speaker, I have here a poster of Maria Corina Machado, a valiant human rights leader in Venezuela, and she is just one of the many victims of Maduro's thuggery.

There have been 30 people killed as a result of Maduro's violent attempts to oppress dissent, while opposition leaders like Leopoldo Lopez have been unjustly detained over a month now in military prison, and Maria Corina Machado has been stripped of her seat in the national assembly, thus revoking her immunity, her protection, suggesting that Maduro and his goons will soon be coming to take her away to a military prison.

Yet again, President Obama chooses to lead from behind. The administration has repeatedly said that we need to work with the Organization of American States to hold Maduro accountable, but that body is even more afraid to call out Maduro than this administration.

Mr. Speaker, 5 years of failed foreign policy from this administration is really coming home to roost, and that means dire consequences for the American people, for the people of Venezuela, for the people of Ukraine, and for freedom-seeking people throughout the world.

It is time for the administration to take an active role in foreign policy for the sake of American national security and for the sake of the future of democracy. It is time to quit this leading from behind. It is time to restore American leadership, and that is the only way to make the world a safer place.

REPUBLICAN BUDGET MORE OF THE SAME

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

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, the baseball season begins this week, so I will quote the great Yogi Berra. "It's déjà vu all over again."

This year's Republican budget, which Chairman RYAN unveiled yesterday, is more of the same we have, unfortunately, come to expect. It is an exercise in partisan messaging, not a serious and honest attempt to invest in our priorities and pursue compromise toward a sustainable fiscal outlook.

Their budget rejects the balanced approach of spending reforms, new revenue, and investments in our economy called for by both the Bowles-Simpson and the Rivlin-Domenici Commissions, as well as by the Gang of Six in the United States Senate and by virtually

every economist. The Ryan budget cuts \$5 trillion without a single penny of new revenue, not even a hint of balance.

Moreover, Chairman RYAN's budget once again relies on the magic asterisk of hundreds of billions of dollars in spending cuts to important domestic programs. He doesn't say what programs we are going to cut; he simply says we are going to get the money.

He said that last year, of course, and it didn't happen. He gives virtually no details about the policies through which he expects to achieve these savings. To that extent, it is radically different from the chairman of the Ways and Means Committee's tax reform plan, which made real choices, showed real courage, and was a real document.

The Republican budget continues their obsession with repealing or undermining the Affordable Care Act, their 53rd attempt to do so. However, of course, they keep all the savings and revenues that the Affordable Care Act is scored as giving.

It would furthermore kick millions off their health insurance and turn Medicaid into a capped block grant, decimating the program and making life more difficult for all those millions who rely on it.

Once more, they are seeking to end the Medicare guarantee as we know it. They will say it is a choice, that at 55 you can make a choice whether you want to have private insurance with a voucher that you get from the Federal Government or go into Medicare. That's what they say.

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The reality is, however, they would make traditional Medicare far, far, far more expensive, driving people out of that program and eliminating it over time.

Their budget, in addition, would make it very difficult, if not impossible, for Congress to invest in our economy and our people by driving domestic discretionary spending well below the sequester's harmful level.

The American people ought to be outraged but not surprised. We have seen this movie before, and it never ends well for Republicans or, tragically, does it end happily for the American people. The new plot twist in this year's budget is that Chairman RYAN is going where no budget chairman has gone before, relying on the spurious gimmickry of so-called "dynamic scoring" to pad his numbers with budget savings that simply do not exist.

We have talked about this a lot. The 1981 tax cuts were supposed to boom the economy. In fact, we increased the national debt by 187 percent. In 2001 and 2003, we were promised that the tax cuts would grow the economy. In fact, during those 8 years of the Bush administration, we had the worst economy that anybody in this Chamber has experienced and, indeed, I would presume, in the gallery as well.

While Chairman RYAN claims his budget balances in 10 years, in reality, his projection for revenues in 2024 is less than his projection for outlays. In other words, no balance. That is the simple budget math. The only way Chairman RYAN can pretend his math works is by using Republicans' dynamic scoring trick.

This is the same trick that paved the way for the Bush tax cuts to turn record surpluses into record deficits, as I have said. It is sort of like a family making its budget and projecting: well, we are going to get a big raise because the boss is going to be doing better, the economy is going to be doing better, and we will get a big raise, so we will budget as if we had already gotten the raise. What happens is you don't get that raise and you are deeply in the hole. Americans get that. It is a shame their Congress doesn't get that.

Republicans have a bill on the floor this week to force the nonpartisan CBO to use the Republican math. The virtue of the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office was that it would give us honest numbers, but now the Republicans want to force them to give them their numbers that they want that make it easier for them to pretend that things are going to get better with their policies rather than putting their policies in place and then seeing if it does get better, and if it does, we have a bonus. Of course, if it doesn't, we run up large deficits as we did in the last administration, as we did in the Reagan administration, as we did in the first Bush administration, and, yes, slightly in the Clinton administration. But in the Clinton administration, over every Republican's objections, we balanced the budget for 4 years.

We need a budget, Madam Speaker, that reflects our real challenges and recognizes that we must compromise to make the difficult choices necessary to meet them. The American people deserve a budget that focuses not on gimmicks but one that promotes opportunity, growth, and security; compromise, not confrontation; pragmatism, not partisanship; what works, not what sounds good.

Our budget proposal should reflect our priorities and enable us to rise to meet our challenges. The Republican budget that is going to be voted on today in the Budget Committee does not do that.

The Wall Street Journal, Madam Speaker, wrote an editorial about the Ryan priorities, most of which I disagree with because I think their reliance, as RYAN does, on dynamic scoring is a "fool's errand" and has been proved to be such over the years that I have served in Congress over the last 33 years. But I do agree with their conclusion, and they say this:

But the Ryan outline does the service of showing the policy direction in which Republicans would head if they regain control of the Senate next year.

I agree with that. I think this is a litmus test for the American people. They

can review the Ryan budget. They can review its consequences to them, themselves, their families, their children, and their community. They can see the adverse consequences of a plan that will not work.

I predict, as I predicted last year, Madam Speaker, the Appropriations Committee, headed by HAL ROGERS, Republican chairman, will not bring appropriation bills to the floor that will pass on this floor that will implement the Ryan budget, notwithstanding the fact that RYAN's party controls this House. I predicted that last year, and I was right. As a matter of fact, no bills passed this House at the Ryan budget numbers last year—none, not one. Sadly, I think that is what is going to happen this year—sadly, for the American people; sadly, for this Congress; sadly, for our children.

Madam Speaker, we can do better. We can be real. We ought to do the job that the American people expect us to do and get this country on a fiscally sustainable path, not with smoke and mirrors but with sincerity and courage.

CONGRESSIONAL CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION CAUCUS

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, if you listen to probably the majority of the speeches provided on this House floor, they clearly indicate partisan bickering. If you listen to many of these speeches, it is pretty easy to find out what we disagree upon. There are some divides in beliefs and opinions. One of the things that is wonderful about this House is this is the people's House. It reflects a very diverse nation, and we have diverse opinions here on the House floor.

At the same time, there are individuals here that I work with, both sides of the aisle, that I think want to be problem solvers. They are willing to not talk about what we disagree about, because we don't even need to do that; we just turn on the news, and that is what is highlighted is what we disagree upon. But the fact is we do have individuals here that have the courage and willingness to come to the table, and that is step one; to sit at the table and define properly what the problem is, because without defining the problem, you really aren't going to come up with effective solutions that work; and third, be willing to state what do we agree upon, what can we agree upon and make that the beginning point, the foundation, for cost-effective solutions.

I am here today as part of a group that really does that. I rise today as cochair of the bipartisan Congressional Career and Technical Education Caucus. This is a group of Members from both sides of the aisle, diverse routes of the United States, who care about investing in opportunities for individuals

to be able to do better in life through education. My opinion is: it is not so important where you start in life; it is where you end up. The key to that stair or that ladder or that path is education.

The Career and Technical Education Caucus really, really focuses on that in a bipartisan way. It is about America's competitiveness. Because if America does not have a qualified and trained workforce, America doesn't have a future. So as appropriation season is upon us, we in the Congressional Career and Technical Education Caucus encourage our colleagues to continue this body's united commitment to ensuring that America remains competitive through an adequately trained workforce.

This can be achieved through an existing program. We don't have to create a new program. No need to reinvent the wheel. It is the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act. Perkins provides the principal source of Federal support for program improvement and helps to strengthen the integration of academic, career, and technical education at both the secondary and the postsecondary institutions.

Although deficit reduction must remain priority number one—it is one of our greatest threats for national security—during these fiscally challenging times, we must invest in CTE programs. We must also recognize that any reduction to Perkins funding would affect millions of career and technical educational students, the business community that relies on a qualified workforce, and the future competitiveness of this country.

Going into the fiscal year 2015, the Career and Technical Education Caucus is putting together a modest request for level funding for this program. I encourage my colleagues to support the efforts of the caucus and join in sending this important request to the Appropriations Committee.

LET'S PASS AN IMMIGRATION REFORM BILL

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

Mr. GUTIÉRREZ. Madam Speaker, on June 27, we will mark 1 year since our friends on the other side of the Hill in the United States Senate passed a bipartisan immigration reform bill.

Four Senators from each party worked together to get a bill introduced on April 16 of last year. By May, the Judiciary Committee was debating and marking it up, and by June, it was headed to the Senate floor. Then after debate and many, many, many amendments, it was voted on by the full Senate. Sixty-eight out of 100 Senators voted to replace illegal immigration with legal immigration, legalize millions of people who live and work in the U.S., and secure our immigration system in the workplace and, yes, at the border.