

ENDING THE WAR IN AFGHANISTAN

(Mr. CICILLINE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Speaker, after more than a decade of war, the loss of 2,178 American heroes, thousands seriously injured, and the expenditure of nearly \$2 trillion, we must end our military presence in Afghanistan now, safely bring our troops home, and begin to focus on the urgent challenges we face here in America.

A sustainable, long-term peace can only be accomplished when the people of Afghanistan assume responsibility for their own security.

Yesterday, our colleague JIM MCGOVERN offered an amendment that directed the President to rapidly accelerate the transition of U.S. combat operations in Afghanistan to the Afghan government by December, and would have required congressional approval if the President sought to keep U.S. military forces in Afghanistan after that. Unfortunately, we were denied the right to have a debate and vote on this amendment.

We owe the brave men and women in uniform a clear plan to bring them home safely and soon and to end this war now.

After more than 12 years of war and the killing of Osama bin Laden, it is time to end the war in Afghanistan and instead focus our attention on creating jobs, rebuilding our infrastructure, providing care for our veterans, and focusing on the serious fiscal challenges facing our Nation.

HONORING DOUGLAS H. CAREY

(Mr. JOLLY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. JOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to extend my deepest condolences—and those of Florida's 13th Congressional District—to the family, friends, and fellow police officers of Mr. Douglas H. Carey, who tragically lost his life earlier this week.

Officer Carey began his service with the Clearwater Police Department as a patrolman on December 9, 1968. For nearly two decades, he assisted the people of Clearwater as a patrolman, a field training officer, and eventually as a detective. But his retirement from police work in 1987 was hardly the end of service.

Following his retirement, Officer Carey served on the security staff of Morton Plant Hospital. In 2010, he rejoined his brothers and sisters within the police department as a school crossing guard.

Officer Carey lost his life while doing what he loved and what he did best: protecting and serving his community. He was 70 years old.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to honor the life and service today of Officer Carey, who

is survived by his loving wife of 42 years, Jean; his son, Brian; his daughter, Toni; and his young grandson, Dylan.

Officer Carey will be greatly missed, but his spirit lives on through the many, many lives he has touched in our community of Pinellas County, Florida.

TOURETTE SYNDROME AWARENESS MONTH

(Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, last week, I had the opportunity to meet with a bright young boy who was diagnosed with Tourette syndrome and is working to bring attention to this disorder. His passion is an inspiration, and I want to share his own words about the importance of raising awareness.

Dear Congressman Luján. My name is Alexander Dennis. I live in Rio Rancho, New Mexico, and am 14 years old.

I grew up with a neurological disorder called Tourette syndrome. It causes me and about 200,000 others in the United States to make sudden movements and uncontrollable sounds. This disorder affects me daily and is a lifelong condition. There is no cure for Tourette syndrome.

I have to live daily with painful neck and full-body jerks. Others with this disorder have different severity levels and different types of movement. It is noticeable to others, but I do not know I am doing the movements sometimes.

There are not many doctors that are experienced with Tourette syndrome, and it took me 4 years to be properly diagnosed.

May 15 through June 15 is Tourette Syndrome Awareness Month, and I am writing to you because I am working to raise awareness to the challenges people face that have this syndrome. Any help that you can give will be greatly appreciated to me and all that suffer from this disorder.

Thank you, Alexander, for your voice and your efforts. I look forward to working with you on this issue.

BUDGET IMPACTS ON OUR MILITARY

(Mr. NUNNELEE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. NUNNELEE. Mr. Speaker, the most important function of our government is to provide for the common defense. That is why I am pleased that the National Defense Authorization Act blocks the administration's end strength reduction proposal, as well as redistribution of important National Guard aviation assets. But I do have some specific concerns.

Of specific concern of this misguided and shortsighted proposal is the impact on the Mississippi National Guard's 155th Heavy Brigade Combat Team. This unit has a proven history of defending freedom abroad. But recently, when our State was hit by devastating tornados, these were the first respond-

ers. They provided vital security and search and rescue. I commend these men and women that make up the 155th and express my concern for the support of their mission.

Congress cannot balance our budget on the backs of the men and women voluntarily serving our country, nor expect their families, who already give so much, to make further sacrifices.

To find areas within our Federal Government to responsibly cut, we must look at all forms of Federal spending, not just the discretionary spending alone.

VETERANS ADMINISTRATION

(Mr. FITZPATRICK asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, our veterans risked their lives in service of our Nation. When they come home, they deserve to be treated with dignity and respect, especially by those they count on to provide them with essential medical care.

The disturbing reports about the unethical treatment of our military men and women by the VA is not only an affront to those that we count on to protect our freedoms and our liberties, it highlights a systemic lack of accountability, starting at the top and permeating throughout the agency.

Mr. Speaker, no veteran should pass away waiting for the care they need or the benefits that they deserve. The ineptitude of the VA is an affront to the sacrifice of the veterans who are turning to this agency for assistance and the taxpayers whose hard-earned dollars should be funding this worthy cause.

While this week the House took action to empower the VA to rid itself of those who fail to meet their responsibilities with the passage of the Department of Veterans Affairs Management Accountability Act, there is still much work to be done.

I firmly believe that sunlight is the best disinfectant, and I will continue to work to shine a bright light on the situation until we can assure that the VA provides the service and respect that our veterans deserve.

HISTORIC PRAYER SERVICE

(Mr. BILIRAKIS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the inspiring prayer service between Pope Francis and Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew this Sunday at the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem.

These two spiritual leaders of 1.5 billion Christians worldwide are celebrating the 50th anniversary of the first historic meeting in Jerusalem between their predecessors: Pope Paul VI and Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras in 1964.

Sunday's meeting in the Holy Land serves to recognize mutual respect and admiration between the two churches that was reignited 50 years ago. It is fitting that it takes place at the birthplace of Christianity: Jerusalem.

I commend the leadership of Pope Francis and Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, who both glorify God and demonstrate that Christianity is characterized by love, peace, and compassion.

HONORING OUR VETERANS

(Ms. JACKSON LEE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, all that we do and all that America does is owed to the greatness of our Constitution and to men and women whom we will honor this coming Monday, Memorial Day.

I call today upon Americans, wherever they may be, to stop for a moment to honor them.

A few years ago, I passed unanimous legislation on this floor to honor all of those who had ever served in combat. But we honor those who fell in the line of duty. This coming week, we will remember them, as we should every year.

As I go home, I will be visiting one of my veterans hospitals to be reminded of those who still stand, and to commit that we will fix every problem that denies or undermines the health care system of our veterans.

I have introduced the Heroes Act to ensure that veterans who have gained many good skills in service can equate those skills to civilian work, that they are treated with respect and dignity as managers and leaders, because that is what they were when they served in the United States military.

And so we honor our fallen soldiers and their families. We will gather today as Americans this weekend. We will stand united under the flag, saying thank you, for you have told all of us that freedom is not free.

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NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT AND CURRENT EVENTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, I wanted to comment about the work done on the National Defense Authorization Act. I know Chairman McKEON has done a tremendous amount of work. I know, from dealing with him during this work on the defense budget, it has been extremely difficult for him.

I remain concerned where we have an administration that has kept our people in Afghanistan with less than favorable rules of engagement, where we

have people in harm's way and constantly being called on to be alert, be in positions where they may be in harm's way; and, yet, the authorization ends up being \$45 billion less than the President's own projection for fiscal year 2014 budget request, and \$30.7 billion less than that, that was enacted for fiscal year 2014 in the NDAA Public Law 113-66.

Back in the summer of 2011, I told our leadership that the deficit was a major problem, of course, as all of our conference realizes, as those on the other side of the aisle used to talk about until they got into the majority and blew the lid off the deficit.

To raise the debt ceiling, set up a supercommittee that I knew was going to fail, said it was going to fail because the Senate Democrats would never allow an agreement because they wanted to be able to blame Republicans for not getting a deal.

The mainstream media always buys whatever they said, even when they shut down the government, as HARRY REID did last September 30th, by refusing to take up even the most extreme compromises that this House was willing to make.

So they know they will get coverage from the mainstream media, and even some amazing examples of complete abandonment of any type of journalistic integrity. They knew they would be protected.

So they did refuse to allow an agreement. Even when Senators—Republican Senators reached out, indications were they thought they could get a deal, but I knew they were not going to allow the supercommittee to reach an agreement, no matter how far they bent over backwards, and that is what happened.

That meant the sequestration would occur. I had no problem with the amount of cuts in the sequestration. I had a problem with the number one job of the Federal Government, being to provide for the common defense, taking the biggest devastating hit in the sequestration. That was the problem.

So, because of that, I am still very concerned about the massive cuts to our defense when we are more hated than ever, trusted less than ever. Our previous friends are now reaching out to China and Russia because they can't trust us.

In trips abroad—I know the administration doesn't like Members of Congress to go abroad because we end up talking directly to people and finding out what they really think, so we don't get indirect misrepresentation, and you find out around the world, people don't trust this administration.

Our allies are saying: Are we going to be the next ally that you throw away, as you have been doing in recent years under this administration?

As I have said before, the elderly African in West Africa who told me how excited they were when we elected our first African American President, but ever since he had been President, he

said, the United States keeps getting weaker and weaker, and you have got to stop. Please tell the people in Washington to stop allowing the United States to get weaker.

As Christians, they knew, they said, where they would go when this life was over, but their hope, he said, for a more safe and free life here, even for a West African, would be when the United States does not get weaker, but stands against tyranny and stands against any threat.

Like Boko Haram, that threatens innocent Christians anywhere, it will ultimately be a threat to Christians everywhere.

I am also very concerned, as one who believes, as Abraham Lincoln says, as is inscribed in the north wall of the Lincoln Memorial, as part of his second inaugural address, that, as he quoted from scripture:

The judgments of the Lord are just and righteous altogether.

I am very concerned that, when our Nation is the most powerful Nation in the world, at the time when Christian persecutions, by number—not necessarily by percentage, but by number—are probably the greatest they have ever been in the history of the world, since Jesus was on earth, and we do nothing except watch the persecutions grow and grow, there will ultimately be some accountability if, as Abraham Lincoln said, as he and I believe, the judgments of the Lord are just and righteous altogether.

When someone is given much, of them, much is expected. We have an obligation. We have been put in a position where we can stand up for righteousness.

It did take a while for this Nation to get to the point where the Constitution meant exactly what it said, but what helped us get there was what was originally in the Declaration of Independence, a belief that we are endowed by our Creator, not endowed by government, not endowed by a monarch, but we are endowed by our Creator with certain unalienable rights.

When we fail to acknowledge that Creator, when we fail to stand up for those who acknowledge the Creator, when we fail to stand up and provide for the common defense, then there will be a price to pay.

Israel is feeling it. The mainstream media doesn't talk about it. Israel doesn't want to be considered a whiner, but they are being constantly under attack from rockets. Why? Because they are Jews and because they are in the Middle East, in the same location that was called the Promised Land where, around 1,600 years or so before Muhammad lived, King David was ruling in the land where they now are, and in the location, in Hebron, for example, where he ruled the first 7 years as King of Israel.

Some say, well, clearly, that is not Israeli land. People that worship Muhammad that came along 1,600 years after Christ—I'm sorry—after King