

overwhelmingly came out of committee, and I would hope that the gentleman would, with his staff, review and consider adding that bill as well to the suspension calendar at some time in the future.

I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. MCCARTHY of California. Again, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Yes, we have had those conversations, and I appreciate the continual conversations.

As the gentleman knows, the Science Committee has several manufacturing and jobs bills before it, and I am confident they are reviewing and giving all due consideration. The bill that you speak of that passed out of the last Congress was changed within this Congress, and I know the process in which it is going. I do not anticipate any coming up next week, but we will certainly notify the Member of any consideration in the House in the future.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman, and I appreciate his comments.

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

#### MOTION TO INSTRUCT CONFEREES ON H.R. 3230, PAY OUR GUARD AND RESERVE ACT

Mr. BARBER. Mr. Speaker, I have a motion at the desk.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HOLDING). The Clerk will report the motion.

The Clerk read as follows:

Mr. Barber moves that the managers on the part of the House at the conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the House amendment to the Senate amendment to the bill H.R. 3230 (an Act to improve the access of veterans to medical services from the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes) be instructed to—

(1) recede from disagreement with section 701 of the Senate amendment (relating to the expansion of the Marine Gunnery Sergeant John David Fry Scholarship); and

(2) recede from the House amendment and concur in the Senate amendment in all other instances.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 7(b) of rule XXII, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. BARBER) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MILLER) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona.

Mr. BARBER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise today in strong support of the Veterans' Access to Care through Choice, Accountability, and Transparency Act of 2014, which was passed by the Senate 93-7 on June 11 of this year.

This critical piece of legislation is one that must be implemented immediately to provide solutions to the many problems that have been discovered at the Department of Veterans Affairs and to provide the necessary care and assistance that our veterans deserve. We must move immediately on an agreement with the Senate and not further delay the long overdue care

that our veterans need and have earned.

The most expeditious way to do this would be to move forward with the Senate bill, one, as I said, that was supported by 93 Senators—Republican, Democrat, and Independent alike. I know that my colleagues in the House and Senate are committed to serving our veterans. Services for our veterans, I am pleased to say, is an issue of great importance and is one that continuously receives strong bipartisan support in both Chambers.

I want to applaud Chairman MILLER and the Veterans' Affairs Committee and Ranking Member MICHAUD for their hard work in bringing to light the many problems and the terrible corruption that we have discovered in the VA, and for working to improve the care for our veterans.

I am here to fight for the veterans and the military families in my district and for those across the country. Mr. Speaker, this is a deeply personal issue with me. My father was a veteran of World War II. He joined the Army Air Corps, and probably lied about his age so he could go serve his country.

□ 1300

He served in World War II. He went on to serve in Korea and Vietnam, and when he left the Air Force, he extensively used the services of the veterans administration.

Were he alive today, I know he would be enraged by what has been discovered about the neglect, misconduct, and manipulation of the VA waiting lists, so that top executives could receive financial rewards and bonuses.

The 85,000 veterans I work for in southern Arizona—and countless more nationwide—deserve better from us and from the Department of Veterans Affairs than they have been getting.

I have been pressing for better access to health care for our veterans since I first came to Congress in 2012. One of the first bills I introduced was the Veterans Health Access Act, to ensure that veterans could get the health care they needed in their communities, without long commutes and even longer wait times, and I am pleased that the House and Senate are now working to address this issue.

We must improve the quality and timeliness of care to our veterans, and that is why, today, Mr. Speaker, I stand before you to call on my colleagues in the House and the Senate to support the Senate bill that increases access to care and takes many more steps to improve services and support for our veterans and their families.

Included in the Senate-passed bill is the expansion of the Marine Gunnery Sergeant John David Fry Scholarship, so that surviving spouses may have a chance to further their education and take care of their families.

The Marine Gunnery Sergeant John David Fry Scholarship is a current education benefit for the surviving children of our fallen military servicemem-

bers. It has sent many sons and daughters of fallen heroes to college and given them the opportunity to get the American Dream.

However, it is important that we also offer this benefit to the spouses who are left widowed and must singlehandedly care for their families. This scholarship could provide many spouses an opportunity to get the education they need and the jobs that will help them succeed and support their family.

This scholarship was originally created in memory of John David Fry, who was a leader of marines from Lorena, Texas. Gunnery Sergeant Fry, a member of the explosive ordnance disposal community, demonstrated true service to his country and to his fellow marines in Iraq.

With only 1 week left on his tour in 2006, he injured his hand and was given the option to return home early with a Bronze Star. Fry declined the offer and volunteered to go on one last patrol, to defuse bombs for his fellow servicemembers.

Sadly, Gunnery Sergeant Fry was killed that day by an improvised explosive device in Anbar province, Iraq, leaving behind his wife and three small children.

Mr. Speaker, this type of courage and sacrifice has been witnessed countless times in the past 13 years by our men and women in uniform. For example, just recently, on May 12, a soldier from my district with 29 years of military service succumbed to the wounds he received in Afghanistan.

Command Sergeant Major Martin R. Barreras of Tucson was the enlisted leader of his infantry battalion in Harat province and was on his sixth deployment to Afghanistan.

While on patrol with his soldiers, Gunny—as his family likes to call him and remember him—was fatally wounded by small-arms fire while leading his troops into battle.

This was not the only time this respected leader saw combat. In 2003, Sergeant Major Barreras helped rescue former prisoner of war Jessica Lynch from an Iraqi hospital. At the time, he was the enlisted leader of the Army battalion that conducted the mission.

He personally handed Lynch to another soldier to transfer her to the helicopter that evacuated her from the area and to safety. According to reports, he then fended off multiple attacks to retrieve all nine bodies of the other U.S. soldiers missing in action.

Everyone in our country owes all of our fallen heroes, such as Gunnery Sergeant Fry and Command Sergeant Major Barreras, a debt of gratitude for their service and their courage, but we must also remember the silent courage of spouses of our servicemembers who must cope with the rigors of military life and who must live with only the memory of their fallen husband or wife.

These unsung heroes are the ones who maintain the homefront for our deployed men and women in uniform. They are the ones who maintain the

morale of our troops. They are the ones who unite with other military families to develop a support network for those spouses and children while their loved ones are in harm's way.

They are the ones who live with constant worry of their servicemember's safety, and they are the ones who must bear the burden in the absence of their husband or wife.

Our military spouses play a pivotal role in our Nation, and it is one that we must never forget. This is a good way to honor that service, by providing a scholarship in memory not just of Gunnery Sergeant Fry and Command Sergeant Barreras, but all of the servicemembers who died for our country and have left behind a loving family.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support this motion to instruct, to support the expansion, with no limitations, of the Gunnery Sergeant John David Fry Scholarship.

I further urge swift passage to pass the Veterans' Access to Care through Choice, Accountability, and Transparency Act of 2014 in its entirety. We must act now to enact this legislation and get our veterans the care that they deserve.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the motion to instruct and yield myself such time as I may consume.

As we have already heard, the motion to instruct would require the House to recede to the Senate amendment to H.R. 3230.

Solving the problem of timely access to health care and imposing the rule of accountability is absent at VA, and I think that is our first and most important obligation because it is the source of many of the problems that exist within the Department, many of the problems that were uncovered because of the oversight from both Republicans and Democrats on the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

We are making good progress with our negotiations with our Senate colleagues, and now is not the time to try to tie the hands of the negotiators with what I believe is a partisan play.

Moreover, yesterday, Senator SANDERS indicated that he wanted to expand the scope of the conference committee's work far beyond what the Senate bill itself had encompassed, by adding VA's request for an additional \$17.6 billion into the mix.

So today, I say to my colleagues I am not even sure that the Senate could recede to the Senate amendment because they keep moving the goalposts.

As I said yesterday, on the last motion to instruct, the inspector general and the GAO have both stated on multiple occasions during our hearings that they do not have confidence in VA's numbers.

Moreover, at every VA budget hearing, the Secretary has been asked: Do you have the dollars you need to take

care of the veterans that you are tasked with taking care of? Invariably, we get the answer, every single time, yes.

So why should we believe that, suddenly, VA sees the need to add an additional \$10 billion to hire 10,000 new clinical staff and \$6 billion in new construction without having those numbers vetted?

When our staff was briefed yesterday on this request for \$17.6 billion—actually, I don't even know if it is a request yet, but when the Secretary talked about it, they came to brief our staffs, and they brought three sheets of paper to justify a \$17.6 billion number.

To the Members on both sides of the aisle, I caution that, despite the urgency of the current crisis, we have got to root out the cause that has been affecting timely access to care and accountability, not secondary issues, many of which we all support, including the Fry Scholarship fund expansion.

If we don't, those of us fortunate enough to be here years from now will be right back where we are, debating, once again, how things went wrong at the VA.

I would point out again, as I did yesterday, there are dozens of bills sitting, languishing in the Senate, including the authorization of 27 clinics. The motion to instruct yesterday talked about receding to the Senate bill that had 26 clinics.

The House bill was passed in December of last year—27 clinics. If the Senate would just bring it up, pass it, send to it the President, we could immediately make a difference.

I also talked about the expansion of the Fry Scholarship program. That is something that we certainly should look at, but it will do nothing, nothing to increase the care and break the backlog, the lines that our veterans are waiting in now to get the health care that they have earned.

So I would ask the Senate to pass the dozen bills that sit over there on their side, send them to the President today, and I would also point out that I am willing to discuss—and I think most Members on our side—the Fry Scholarship issues, but we don't think that they are in the scope of the emergency that exists today.

Part of the reason that I believe that, section 701 of the Senate bill does not address timely access to care or the cultural corruption that exists within the Department.

A surviving spouse—as my colleague, Mr. BARBER has already said—who has a spouse that was killed on active duty is already entitled to receive financial benefits that include 45 months of GI Bill-type education benefits, \$500,000 in death benefits, and \$1,215 in monthly dependency and indemnity compensation benefits.

In short, I don't believe it is time for us to be talking about expanding the benefits without expressing them through regular order here on the

House floor, especially in the face of what I now understand is the Senate's new effort to move the goal line in our conference committee work.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BARBER. Mr. Speaker, could you advise me on how much time remains?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Arizona has 22 minutes remaining.

Mr. BARBER. Mr. Speaker, I want to introduce a series of Members who would like to speak to this issue, but before I do, I would just say this: I have been here now a little bit more than 2 years, and I have learned a few things.

One of those things I have learned is that, when you have the public's attention and when you have this Chamber's attention and when you have the Senate's attention on an issue of importance like this, you act, and you do as much as you can to not only take care of the corruption, the systemic problems within the VA, but other issues that have been pending for a long time. To that end, I hope that we will, in fact, recede to the Senate version of the legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to my colleague from Arizona (Mrs. KIRKPATRICK), ranking member on the Oversight Subcommittee of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, who has been a strong fighter for our veterans her entire time in Congress.

Mrs. KIRKPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I support this motion to instruct the conferees. The Senate amendments go beyond a short-term solution to solving the patient access crisis at the VA.

As a member of the conference committee, I continue to push for the provisions in the Senate amendments because they are good for veterans and their families.

We must seize this opportunity to pass meaningful reforms at the VA. Our veterans and their families deserve better than piecemeal, short-term fixes, especially with report after report of veterans struggling to receive timely care and benefits and struggling to find good-paying jobs.

One provision in the Senate amendment will give post-9/11 GI benefits to surviving spouses of servicemembers who have given the ultimate sacrifice for our country.

We cannot forget about surviving spouses. A surviving spouse struggles with the loss of a loved one and often struggles with a financial loss that can make it difficult to provide for the family left behind.

Servicemembers are able to transfer GI Bill benefits to their spouses and children, but the benefits and the ability to transfer this benefit are based on time served on active duty.

We can all agree that surviving spouses should not be cut out of receiving full bill benefits if they lose a loved one before that loved one has served 36 months on active duty.

The Post-9/11 GI Bill will give surviving spouses the opportunity to receive education and training so they

are better able to provide for themselves and their families. It would be wrong of the conference committee and Congress to pass up this opportunity to give surviving spouses this benefit.

We cannot delay passing meaningful veterans legislation. If we do not take this opportunity now, then Congress will once again fail all the American people, veterans, and their families by refusing to act.

□ 1315

Passing VA reform legislation in a meaningful way that gives GI Bill benefits to surviving spouses should be an easy decision for every Member of Congress.

For those who are holding up the progress of this legislation, how will you go home to your district in August and explain to veterans and constituents why Congress was unable to pass something as simple as giving GI benefits to surviving spouses?

I know that all of my colleagues sincerely wish to help veterans and their families, but it is not enough to pay lip service to our military and veterans. Congress must act now. At the very least, the conference committee should agree to this provision in the Senate amendments.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I hope that the last speaker did not imply that anybody on the conference committee from the House was trying to delay the progress on this particular bill.

With that, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BARBER. Mr. Speaker, next I would like to yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Nevada, Congresswoman DINA TITUS, a member of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee, who has introduced legislation here in the House, H.R. 3441, the Spouses of Heroes Education Act, which would expand this scholarship.

As a university professor at UNLV for more than 30 years, Congresswoman TITUS understands the importance of education and has been a strong leader in education issues both in Nevada and here in Washington, as a former member of the Education and Labor Committee.

Ms. TITUS. I thank the gentleman from Arizona for yielding to me.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of a provision that has been highlighted by my colleague from Arizona in his motion to instruct and was also discussed by the chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee.

As a member of that committee, I am working hard to ensure that our veterans in Las Vegas and throughout the country have access to high-quality health care in a timely fashion. So it is critical that this conference committee quickly finishes its work so we can send a reform package to the President for his signature.

The gentleman from Arizona's amendment highlights a critical piece of the Senate proposal, which is iden-

tical to the legislation I introduced along with Senator JEFF MERKLEY from Oregon just last year, H.R. 3441, the Spouses of Heroes Education Act. Our important legislation amends the post-9/11 GI Bill to expand the Fry Scholarship, which you have heard described most eloquently by the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. BARBER), by making surviving spouses of the members of the armed services eligible for this education benefit program.

The scholarship provides full instate tuition, fees, a monthly living stipend, and a book allowance to children of servicemembers who have died in the line of duty. Our change would allow spouses to receive those same benefits.

When a servicemember tragically loses his or her life on the field of battle, we owe it to their spouses to do all we can to support them and their families—not just in the immediate aftermath of the tragedy, but going forward. We can ensure that they have all the educational opportunities they need because this will enable them to further their careers and increase the financial stability of that family.

I was pleased that the Senate included this bicameral, bipartisan legislation in the McCain-Sanders agreement that passed 93-3, and it is very important that our conferees continue to fight to maintain that provision. I was also very glad to hear the chairman say that he is so supportive of our looking at that provision here in the House as a stand-alone bill, and I hope to see that move also. So I thank them for their work on this important issue.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BARBER. Mr. Speaker, next I would like to yield 3 minutes to my colleague from Arizona, Congresswoman KYRSTEN SINEMA. If you know Congresswoman SINEMA, you know that when she gets her dander up, she fights like hell for whatever the issue is, and that has certainly been true in the fight that she has waged on behalf of our veterans.

As you know, the first evidence of corruption and misdeeds was discovered in Arizona at the VA in Phoenix, and from the very beginning, Congresswoman SINEMA has been on that issue. So I am very proud and pleased to yield to her to speak on this bill.

Ms. SINEMA. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Arizona (Mr. BARBER) for offering this motion to instruct and for his leadership and work on behalf of veteran and military families in Arizona.

This motion urges conferees to expand the Marine Gunnery Sergeant John David Fry Scholarship to include spouses of fallen servicemembers. Currently, the scholarship covers the children of servicemembers who are killed in the line of duty. After their tragic loss, the surviving spouse is frequently left to provide for her or his family. It is important that Congress take action to expand this benefit to spouses and to help these military families begin to rebuild.

It is also important that Congress and the Department of Veterans Affairs take action to get veterans the care they need. Veterans in my district, which is home to the Phoenix VA, are still waiting for Congress to produce a bipartisan VA reform bill to send to the President's desk. But in Arizona, we are not waiting idly for Washington to take action; we are doing it ourselves.

In Phoenix, we have established a working group of community providers, veterans service organizations, and the local VA to work together to improve access to services. We also recently cohosted our Veterans First Clinic, which brought together community providers, the Phoenix VA, and over 20 veteran-serving organizations to help veterans in a variety of ways. Approximately 400 veterans and their families attended and got the care that they earned and that they deserve.

These are examples of the good that results when we set aside partisanship and focus on putting veterans first to help meet their needs, but more action is required.

I appreciate the bipartisan leadership and work the House—especially Chairman MILLER and Ranking Member MICHAUD—has done on this issue, and I call on the conferees to move quickly to produce a bipartisan bill and get it on the President's desk. By working together, we can address this crisis and create a VA system that our veterans deserve.

Let's get this done for our veterans.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, might I inquire as to whether or not the gentleman from Arizona has any further requests for time?

Mr. BARBER. I have no further requests for time, but I do have some closing remarks.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, again, I would urge my colleagues to not support this motion to instruct. And I would also remind my colleagues that even though the number 93-3 has been used for the passage of the Senate bill, the House bill, itself, which was much more narrowly tailored to actually deal with the crisis that exists today, with access to care, passed unanimously, 426-0, in this House. Just prior to the final vote, there was a motion to recommit that did, in fact, want the House to recede to the Senate amendment.

The problem is, again, the goalposts are changing. The House has been working with the Senate. We have made an offer on our particular side. We are waiting for the Senate to return a counter. Things changed yesterday, unfortunately, because of the additional \$17.6 billion that was brought forward by the Department themselves.

So we continue to stay focused. Our intent is to complete this bill and get it to the President's desk before we leave in August.

I appreciate my colleague's comments today.

With that, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BARBER. Mr. Speaker, could I ask for the balance of time remaining.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Arizona has 13½ minutes remaining.

Mr. BARBER. Mr. Speaker, let me just close with these thoughts.

I came here, as you well know, following the resignation of Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords, for whom I worked, when she was a Member. Her commitment to veterans was complete and deep. I am pleased to have picked up that mission and have tried to move forward with it in every way possible.

I also came here in the spirit of bipartisanship, looking for partners on both sides of the aisle to move important legislation for our country, and I am very pleased to say that I have found bipartisanship in full measure in the manner with which we have worked together to ensure that our veterans are properly served. Now I call on my colleagues, the conferees, to move quickly to bring our two bills together, to strike now while the opportunity presents.

Back home, when I meet with veterans, they say, What are you waiting for? We need you to act, and act now.

I urge our colleagues to adopt the motion to instruct so that we can get this job done expeditiously and in full measure.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All time for debate has expired.

Without objection, the previous question is ordered on the motion to instruct.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion to instruct.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the yeas appeared to have it.

Mr. BARBER. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

#### **HOOR OF MEETING ON TOMORROW**

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 11 a.m. tomorrow; and when the House adjourns on that day, it adjourn to meet on Tuesday, July 22, 2014, when it shall convene at noon for morning-hour debate and 2 p.m. for legislative business.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

#### **ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE**

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will recognize Members for Special Order speeches without prejudice

to the resumption of legislative business.

#### **JOBS BILLS STUCK IN THE SENATE**

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

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, 5 million Americans have given up on their search for a job. For 59 months straight, invisible unemployment has remained above 10 percent. The number of long-term unemployed Americans is double the prerecession figure.

Mr. Speaker, among the 294 bills the Democrat-controlled Senate has failed to act on are over 40 House-passed bipartisan pro-jobs bills that would help put Americans back to work. We have passed legislation to help the long-term unemployed get training for new jobs, a measure to restore hourly wages cut by the 30-hour workweek mandate, and regulatory reform bills to cut the red tape holding back key energy and construction projects that will help create jobs and boost our economy. These measures are commonsense solutions that our country needs right now, policies that reward hard work and provide opportunities for Americans to be self-sufficient.

Where are the jobs? Where are the jobs bills? We hear that over here on the other side of the aisle. You can find them over in HARRY REID's dusty desk drawer waiting for action in the Senate. However, the Senate has refused to vote on them, has refused to take action to help our economy, and has refused to consider any approach but bigger government.

It is time for the Senate to get to work and take action on the jobs bills Americans need.

#### **SAFE CLIMATE CAUCUS**

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

Mr. TONKO. Mr. Speaker, last week's Energy and Water Appropriations bill provided another glaring example of an opportunity squandered. We could have invested more in clean energy and certainly weaned our Nation off its heavy dependence on fossil fuels. We could have heeded the warnings of the scientific community and taken greater steps to reduce emissions and adapt our dams and ports and coastal infrastructure to new conditions. We did neither. Even worse, the bill contained riders to prevent the modeling and study of climate change.

The climate deniers are condemning us to a future of crisis management. Organizations, including global manufacturers, governments, aid organizations, and the insurance industry are examining risks to key infrastructure of supply chain disruptions, water shortages, and increased political unrest.

Instead of suing our President for taking action, we should be joining him and organizations around the world in the effort to understand and meet this formidable challenge. Failure to do so will be costly, and failure to do so will be tragic.

We must do better. We should start by doing something.

□ 1330

#### **GAZA**

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

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in solidarity with our good ally and friend, Israel, as it defends its people from Hamas' deadly rockets.

Every nation, Mr. Speaker, has the right to defend its citizens; indeed, it has a moral obligation to do so. And no people ever ought to live in constant fear that their homes, schools, businesses, places of worship, and hospitals might be the target of terrorists' rockets.

Mr. Speaker, there is a town in southern Israel whose name is Sderot which has been the target of over 6,300 rockets since 2007. Mr. Speaker, I have been to Sderot, and I have talked to some of the families there. As the rockets fall, they gather their children in bomb shelters and sing them songs. I have been in the recreational gymnasium. It is itself a bomb shelter. Preschoolers learn to run for cover before they learn to read and write.

If American communities were subjected to what the residents of Sderot—and now cities even as far north as Tel Aviv and Jerusalem—have had to endure, I doubt very seriously whether we would show as much restraint as Israel has shown.

There are two major challenges I hear to Israel's exercise of its legitimate self-defense, and I want to address both of them. First, undertaking this necessary response was not an easy choice for Israel, nor was the decision to agree to a cease-fire on Tuesday. Israel abided by the cease-fire without any commitment from Hamas, and Prime Minister Netanyahu even fired—removed—his deputy defense minister for questioning that decision, so committed was the Israeli Government to trying to reach a cease-fire and cessation of danger to Israelis and to Palestinians.

Tragically and appallingly—but I suggest not so surprisingly—Hamas not only rejected the cease-fire, but continued to rain missiles upon Israeli communities even while Israel had unilaterally stopped its defensive strikes. Secondly, Israeli forces have continued to do everything possible to prevent civilian casualties as they strike Hamas' leadership and its rocket launchers.

Mr. Speaker, it is shameful that Hamas' reign of terror extends not only