

IRAN-NORTH KOREA

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

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, a bad deal is a bad deal under a Republican President or a Democratic President. This Iran nuclear deal is a bad deal because we have seen this movie before. We know how it ends.

I have repeatedly stated that Iran has been following the North Korean playbook on exactly how to extract concessions from the United States and the international community while simultaneously continuing to improve its nuclear program, expand its infrastructure, and support its illicit activities.

Many analysts have made the same observations, including Alan Dershowitz in a Jerusalem Post article last week.

It is not just how the process unfolded and how the international community fell for the tricks of the rogue regimes that are so scary.

Because, obviously, Iran saw North Korea as having been the victors in its battle over its nuclear program; so, naturally, it would want to replicate that.

But it is alarming and striking just how similar the rhetoric is between President Clinton's announcement of a nuclear agreement with North Korea and President Obama's announcement of a nuclear agreement with Iran.

Let's look at the similarities that Mr. Dershowitz noted between President Clinton's remarks in 1994 and President Obama's from earlier this month. Then, Mr. Speaker, it will be easy to understand why so many of us oppose this nuclear deal.

In 1994, President Clinton said that the North Korea agreement will make the U.S., the Korean Peninsula, and the world safer. Earlier this month President Obama said that this deal will bring about change that makes the U.S. and the world safer and more secure.

In 1994, President Clinton assured the world that the North Korea deal "does not rely on trust. Compliance will be certified by the International Atomic Energy Agency."

Last week President Obama proclaimed, "This deal is not built on trust. It is built on verification."

President Clinton predicted—as we now are painfully aware, inaccurately—that the North Korea agreement would be "a crucial step toward drawing North Korea into the global community" and predicted the end of the rogue regime's isolation.

Similarly, last week's statement poses that the Iran deal "offers an opportunity to move in a new direction" because we have taken a different path that "leads to more integration into the global economy, more engagement with the international community, and the ability of the Iranian people to prosper and thrive."

And, of course, there was the spurious promise to an ally to assuage them that we didn't just put their national security in jeopardy.

First, President Clinton reaffirmed our commitment to protect South Korea. Now, President Obama, already knowing that Israel vehemently objects to this deal and feels as though this gives Iran—an existential threat to its existence and a regime that has promised to wipe the Jewish state off of the map—the ultimate weapon to achieve its goals, promises to "continue our unprecedented effort to strengthen Israel's security, efforts that go beyond what any American administration has done before."

Not only are these empty words, Mr. Speaker, but they are disingenuous to boot.

When the North Korea deal was reached, one of the most significant flaws was that it failed to dismantle any of North Korea's nuclear infrastructure.

The deal was designed merely to delay the North Korean bomb, not prevent it. That is what this nuclear deal with Iran is designed to do.

We saw what happened with North Korea, and we can be sure that Iran plans to follow suit.

The totality of this deal hinges on a bet by the administration and the rest of the P5+1 that the Iranian regime will see the error of its ways and wants to be part of the global community and forsake its support for terror and other illicit behavior.

That is a dangerous gamble to make with U.S. national security, and it is not a gamble that I or any one of us should be willing to take.

That is why, Mr. Speaker, we must reject this deal and demand a better deal or else reimpose the sanctions and use the only thing, the only tactic, that Iran understands—strength—to force it to abandon its nuclear ambitions.

PUERTO RICO

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

Mr. GUTIÉRREZ. Mr. Speaker, yesterday I spoke about Puerto Rico's debt crisis and how there must be a sense of urgency because, without action, bondholders will be paid, but teachers, cops, and nurses won't.

I want to continue today and make two points. Number one, let's not let bondholders bleed Puerto Rico at a discount. Number two, let's work together on what unites us, not what divides us.

Because the only way we will make any progress is if the people of Puerto Rico come together to make a plan and demand that the Congress of the United States work with Puerto Rico on Puerto Rico's plan.

Without consistent and persistent pressure from Puerto Rico, Washington will do nothing, as both the administration and the Congress are content to

let the bondholders on Wall Street call the tune.

We all know Washington should start with H.R. 870, the bankruptcy bill. It is simply a bill that will allow Puerto Rico to declare bankruptcy and restructure its debt within the U.S. legal system.

This would allow an orderly and fair restructuring of the debt in a court of law. It is an important step, but will not solve all of Puerto Rico's problems.

What Puerto Rico should do right now is demand to know what Wall Street vulture capitalists are paying for the bonds.

We hear a report that the bonds are selling for 15 and 20 cents on the dollar, yet the bond owners want a full dollar's worth of interest.

I say Puerto Rico should pay interest based on the price the billionaires actually paid and that they should disclose this amount, just as a congressman does in this Congress every time we make an investment.

Then Puerto Rico can service its debt based on what was paid to buy the debt. I came here to protect people, not the profits of billionaires on Wall Street.

Secondly and most importantly, for the time being, we must set aside politics and get away from the smoke-screen of the status issue in Puerto Rico.

Whether Puerto Rico should be a State, an independent nation, or remain a commonwealth cannot be the priority right now before this Congress.

If everyone leaves Puerto Rico—and they are leaving by 5,000 a month—it will not matter what kind of government is left behind.

Mr. Speaker, nobody should use the current debt crisis as an opportunity to score political points for their party.

At a time when the people of Puerto Rico must be clear, precise, and unified, the status issue divides Puerto Ricans.

I read in The New York Times the argument of the Resident Commissioner of the Statehood Party that the only solution to Puerto Rico's problems is to make it a State.

Really? That is going to solve the debt crisis? The power crisis? The public employees' pension gap crisis? The Medicare Advantage budget crisis?

We should be working together to figure out how Puerto Rico is going to pay teachers and honor their pensions, how we will make sure health care is delivered to all and bridges do not collapse. A statehood bill is not going to provide housing, create a job, or heal a sick child.

When Members of Congress ask me about Puerto Rico, they ask me: Which is it? Is it statehood? Do you want a bankruptcy bill? Do you want more Medicaid?

We have to prioritize. We have to be clear and put aside the status issue. Please, we need to work together.

I would like to use my remaining minute to restate my call to action in Spanish.

(English translation of the statement made in Spanish is as follows:)

Politics and divisions could destroy the chances of forcing Washington to help resolve Puerto Rico's debt crisis.

Puerto Rico must have a common plan that has support across all of the parties, and most importantly, across the Island.

The Governor must find a way to work with the Resident Commissioner and the Resident Commissioner cannot view this crisis as a campaign tool for higher office.

Puerto Rico will only be helped by this Congress if and when there is a consistent and persistent call on Congress by Puerto Ricans to act. And Puerto Ricans need to specify what they expect Congress to do.

The Bankruptcy Bill is only part of it. If we still have the Jones Act and the same economy and economic prospects as we have now, we will not advance.

The people must tell Wall Street that Puerto Rico is not some store to be looted and that the Puerto Rican people will not sit and starve as Wall Street counts its profits.

If Wall Street is buying bonds at a discount, they should be paid at a discount.

But most importantly, we have to work together for the betterment of Puerto Rico. And we cannot let political divisions over statehood divide us.

I commit to putting aside my own passionate feelings about Puerto Rico's status and working with other Puerto Ricans in the Congress and other leaders in both Parties who will help us. But we must first come together, begin helping ourselves, and have a clear plan.

La política y las divisiones podrían destruir las posibilidades de obligar a Washington a ayudar a resolver la crisis de la deuda de Puerto Rico.

Puerto Rico debe de tener un plan común que cuente con el apoyo de todos los partidos y sobre todo, a través de la Isla.

El Gobernador debe encontrar una manera de trabajar con el Comisionado Residente y el Comisionado Residente no puede ver esta crisis como una herramienta en sus campañas para un puesto más alto.

El Congreso sólo ayudará a Puerto Rico siempre y cuando haya un llamado constante y persistente de los puertorriqueños exigiendo que el Congreso cumpla. Y los puertorriqueños tienen que indicar lo que esperan de parte del Congreso.

La Legislación de Bancarrota es sólo una parte. Pero si todavía tenemos la Ley Jones y la misma economía y perspectivas económicas que tenemos ahora no avanzaremos.

El pueblo debe decirle a Wall Street que Puerto Rico no es una tienda para ser pirateada y que el pueblo de Puerto Rico no esperará a morir de hambre mientras Wall Street cuenta sus ganancias.

Si Wall Street está comprando bonos con descuentos, deben ser pagados con descuentos.

Pero sobre todo, tenemos que trabajar juntos por el bien de Puerto Rico. Y no podemos dejar que las divisiones políticas sobre la estadidad nos dividan.

Me comprometo como siempre lo he hecho a poner a un lado mis propios sentimientos sobre el estatus de Puerto Rico y a trabajar con otros puertorriqueños en el Congreso y otros líderes en los dos Partidos que estén dispuestos a ayudarnos. Pero primero tenemos que unirnos, empezar a ayudarnos a nosotros mismos, y tener un plan claro.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Illinois will provide a translation for the RECORD.

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SOUTHERN PIPING COMPANY

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

Mr. HOLDING. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize an outstanding family business in my home State of North Carolina.

When Southern Piping Company opened in 1965, it had two employees and a loan from the Small Business Administration. The two employees were Peggy Williford and her husband, Buren, who was one of the first licensed mechanical contractors in North Carolina—SPC, a classic family business, with all three of Peggy and Buren's sons—Chris, Mark, and Tim—continuing to lead the company.

Since 1965, the Willifords and the SPC family have weathered recessions and hard times, and over the years, through good old-fashioned hard work, they have grown.

Starting with one office in Wilson, SPC has expanded their plumbing, heating, and air-conditioning business to four offices statewide, and their SPC trucks are a familiar sight on the roads across North Carolina, but the biggest story is the family they have built through SPC, today providing jobs to 450 people.

When it came to building the company, Buren Williford always had a commonsense philosophy. He said: "Successful companies look for like-minded people to do business with."

Today, Southern Piping Company is adopting a new name—SPC Mechanical—to more accurately describe its growth and success. The Williford family still practices the old-fashioned principles of integrity, safety, and giving back to their community, for example, by offering young employees scholarships to attend nearby Barton College.

This year represents a landmark for the Williford family. They have now been in business for 50 years. It is my pleasure today to recognize the accomplishments of Peggy and Buren Williford.

RECOGNIZING CONNIE JEAN HUMPHREY

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

Mr. HINOJOSA. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise to recognize my longtime chief of staff, Connie Jean Humphrey, who is retiring after a long and distinguished career on Capitol Hill.

It is an honor and a privilege to recognize Connie's many years of service and achievements. She has proven herself as a talented and dedicated public servant, who has made innumerable contributions in the service of my constituents residing in Texas' 15th Congressional District along the Rio Grande Valley.

Connie has compiled a long list of accomplishments throughout her career and as a senior member of my staff, and she has earned an impeccable reputation on Capitol Hill among her peers and my colleagues in the Texas congressional delegation with whom she has worked very closely in support of our mutual objectives for our great State of Texas.

Connie brought an array of talents and experience as my chief of staff. She has a thorough understanding of Federal policy, particularly in the areas of health care, education, transportation, the environment, and on women's issues.

She is fluent in many other policy areas important to my constituents in the valley, and she has been an invaluable source of guidance and counsel during my appointments on the House Education and the Workforce Committee, as well as on the Financial Services Committee.

Connie approaches her position as the leader of my office with the training and detail-oriented scrutiny of an attorney, who graduated from the University of Maryland, and with the policy expertise of a congressional aide who served in staff leadership positions for nearly three decades.

She was instrumental in helping me lead the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2010, which is aiding organizations like Workforce Solutions, based in McAllen, Texas, and is committed to the success of the employers and workforce of the Rio Grande Valley by matching them with skilled, productive employees and upgrading the skills of their current workforce.

Connie has been particularly effective in helping me address urgent needs in deep south Texas. Latino students aspiring to attain the dream of a college education are that much closer to realizing their hopes, thanks to Connie's involvement, resulting in passage of the Higher Education Opportunity Act and the student loan and healthcare reconciliation bill of 2010, among the largest investments in higher education since the GI bill, particularly for Latino- and minority-serving higher education institutions in our country.