

and are promised. I feel we are falling woefully short should another attack occur. We must be prepared better than we are.

PREGNANCY DISCRIMINATION AMENDMENT ACT

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

Mr. POLIQUIN. Mr. Speaker, I ask all Members of our House today to join me in support of H.R. 2800, the Pregnancy Discrimination Amendment Act.

This important piece of legislation expands upon existing law to help protect pregnant women from workplace discrimination, and I am proud to be a cosponsor.

Women account for nearly half of the workforce in our country, so it is particularly hard to believe, in today's society, women are still denied jobs or lose their jobs because they are pregnant. Every time this happens to a mom, it hurts her, it hurts her family, and it hurts our economy.

We must ensure that hardworking moms and moms-to-be are protected from unfair employment decisions. As a society, we should encourage and support all workers. We should help ensure that moms and dads are physically and financially healthy and secure as they approach parenthood.

As a single father myself, who raised my son from the time he was in diapers, I know firsthand how important it is to have a support system. That includes a supportive work environment where soon-to-be parents are not worried about being fired or about being overlooked for jobs or promotions because they have decided to have children.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2016—VETO MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES (H. DOC. NO. 114-70)

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KELLY of Mississippi) laid before the House the following veto message from the President of the United States:

To The House of Representatives:

I am returning herewith without my approval H.R. 1735, the "National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2016." While there are provisions in this bill that I support, including the codification of key interrogation-related reforms from Executive Order 13491 and positive changes to the military retirement system, the bill would, among other things, constrain the ability of the Department of Defense to conduct multi-year defense planning and align military capabilities and force structure with our national defense strategy, impede the closure of the detention facility at Guantanamo Bay, and prevent the implementation of essential defense reforms.

This bill fails to authorize funding for our national defense in a fiscally re-

sponsible manner. It underfunds our military in the base budget, and instead relies on an irresponsible budget gimmick that has been criticized by members of both parties. Specifically, the bill's use of \$38 billion in Overseas Contingency Operations funding—which was meant to fund wars and is not subject to budget caps—does not provide the stable, multi-year budget upon which sound defense planning depends. Because this bill authorizes base budget funding at sequestration levels, it threatens the readiness and capabilities of our military and fails to provide the support our men and women in uniform deserve. The decision reflected in this bill to circumvent rather than reverse sequestration further harms our national security by locking in unacceptable funding cuts for crucial national security activities carried out by non-defense agencies.

I have repeatedly called upon the Congress to work with my Administration to close the detention facility at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and explained why it is imperative that we do so. As I have noted, the continued operation of this facility weakens our national security by draining resources, damaging our relationships with key allies and partners, and emboldening violent extremists. Yet in addition to failing to remove unwarranted restrictions on the transfer of detainees, this bill seeks to impose more onerous ones. The executive branch must have the flexibility, with regard to those detainees who remain at Guantanamo, to determine when and where to prosecute them, based on the facts and circumstances of each case and our national security interests, and when and where to transfer them consistent with our national security and our humane treatment policy. Rather than taking steps to bring this chapter of our history to a close, as I have repeatedly called upon the Congress to do, this bill aims to extend it.

The bill also fails to adopt many essential defense reforms, including to force structure, weapons systems, and military health care. Our defense strategy depends on investing every dollar where it will have the greatest effect. My Administration's proposals will accomplish this through critical reforms that divest unneeded force structure, slow growth in compensation, and reduce wasteful overhead. The restrictions in the bill would require the Department of Defense to retain unnecessary force structure and weapons systems that we cannot afford in today's fiscal environment, contributing to a military that will be less capable of responding effectively to future challenges.

Because of the manner in which this bill would undermine our national security, I must veto it.

BARACK OBAMA.

THE WHITE HOUSE, October 22, 2015.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The objections of the President will be spread at large upon the Journal, and the veto

message and the bill will be printed as a House document.

Pursuant to the order of the House of October 21, 2015, further consideration of the veto message and the bill are postponed until the legislative day of Thursday, November 5, 2015, and that on that legislative day, the House shall proceed to the constitutional question of reconsideration and dispose of such question without intervening motion.

SYRIAN DISPLACEMENT CRISIS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as the Syrian displacement crisis has consumed seven nations in the Middle East, among them Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, obviously, and Syria itself, and has spawned the largest refugee crisis Europe has faced since World War II.

The scope of the damage is incredible. This protracted conflict has decimated Syria's infrastructure and has already taken the lives of over 250,000 civilians, has displaced over 4 million people, and has subjected tens upon thousands of children in that nation to Assad's horrific barrel bombs. Most everyone who remains in Syria endures power and water cuts, the threat of shelling, galloping inflation, and rampant speculation about: What will happen next? Who will help us, the innocents?

With roads often subject to ambush, freedom to travel has been heavily curtailed. Checkpoints and concrete blast barriers have become accepted adornments of daily life. Institutions such as schools, hospitals, and offices remain open in government-held areas, though many schools have become shelters for the legions of war injured and homeless. Truly, it is grim. Often, classes are held in double shifts to make room for the extra students. This is everyday life in Syria.

Five years into the conflict that has ravaged this once-modern nation, more than half of the Syrian population is displaced, with over 4 million refugees in neighboring countries and tens of thousands moving toward Europe. We see this on television every evening.

My hometown of Toledo has taken in 8 weary Syrian families—refugees who have now again found hope in the liberty that America offers—but fewer than 2,000 Syrians have come to the United States, though the war has displaced more than 12 million since 2011. The free world simply cannot allow this savage slaughter and dislocation to continue.

We ask ourselves: Where is the leadership for resolution?

□ 1715

Now, in addition to daily airstrikes against civilians by the Syrian Government violating international humanitarian law, Russian warplanes are

striking medical facilities and residential areas in non-ISIL areas where rebel forces are fighting to overthrow the Assad regime while Russia publicly proclaims its aim of eliminating ISIL targets.

I brought a map to the floor here that essentially shows most of Syria, who holds it. If one looks at these red dots here, the Russian planes are mainly bombing in the rebel-held areas, not in the ISIL-held areas. So we see a complex situation that has developed on the ground.

As Putin moves with defiance to maintain the Syrian dictatorship, his actions simply must be checked because it tells us that, in the future, there will be more slaughter with what remains if those moderate forces are not allowed to survive.

Since Russia began airstrikes at the end of September, at least 127 civilians, including 36 children and 34 women, have been killed by Russian airstrikes, according to the opposition Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.

For the sake of liberty in Syria, in Europe, and around the world, America, NATO, the Transatlantic Alliance, and our allies in the Middle East must lead the region to peaceful settlement.

I happen to represent a region in America where Syrian Americans have lived for over a century. I can't even explain to you how they feel about the total destruction of their homeland, its artifacts, and its history. I am not even able to contain it in words here.

They came to see me last week, and they asked if I would read some of their words into the RECORD, which I promised I would do this evening. They want the American people and the world to know:

The biggest killer of civilians in Syria is the Assad regime's use of barrel bombs. Packed with TNT and shrapnel, these dumb bombs have no target and are just dropped from helicopters on civilian neighborhoods. These bombs cause massive destruction and casualties. Thousands upon thousands of children have been killed and injured by these helicopter flights.

And they said to me: Congresswoman, if you can say one thing to the Congress and to those in Washington who can make a difference, please tell them to disrupt and stop these helicopter flyovers. So the barrel bombs aren't coming out of the F-16s obviously flying over Syria, but they are coming from helicopters that the Assad regime is dispatching across that country.

The most important step that can be done to save lives would be the imposition of a no-fly zone. A no-fly zone will turn the tide of war, and bring down the regime of terror and force Assad to negotiate his exit.

We know there is resistance to that, but the world community must meet this latest test in order to secure a better life for the people that remain in Syria, those who may wish to return, and, obviously, the millions that have fled and are in refugee camps throughout that region and now as far as Western Europe.

I would urge the President of our country to consider the appointment of a special envoy without portfolio for Syrian peace to work full-time to bring all relevant nations together to resolve this unfolding tragedy and aim at a civil military strategy for transition and settlement.

I include for the RECORD Anthony Cordesman's writings.

[From the Center for Strategic & International Studies, Oct. 1, 2015]

THE LONG WAR IN SYRIA: THE TREES, THE FOREST, AND ALL THE KING'S MEN

(By Anthony H. Cordesman)

Clichés are clichés, but sometimes it really is hard to see the forest for the trees. In the case of Syria, the "trees" include the UN debate between Obama and Putin over Syria and the fight against Islamic extremism, Russia's sudden military intervention in Syria, the failure of the U.S. training and assist missions in both Syria and Iraq, and the developing scandal in USCENTCOM over exaggerated claims of success for the U.S.-led air campaign in Syria and Iraq.

The most important "tree," however, is trying to negotiate an end to the fighting from the outside, as if Assad was the key issue and as if it would be possible for some diplomatic elite or mix of power brokers to bring Syria back to some state of stability if only Assad would agree to leave and the United States and Russia could agree on how to approach the negotiations.

FOCUSING ON THE TREES WHEN THE FOREST IS BURNING

The problem is that the "forest" is dying, burning, and occupied by four broad sets of fighters that have little reason to cooperate with any UN-led negotiating effort, outside agreement over Assad—with or without U.S. and Russian cooperation.

To shift from one cliché to another, Syria presents far more problems than Humpty Dumpty. "All the king's horses and all the king's men" couldn't put Syria back together by negotiating a solution from the outside even if there was one King instead of a divided mix of the United States, Russia, Iran, Turkey, Iraq, the other states surrounding Syria, the Arabian Gulf states, Egypt, and France and the other interested European powers.

It shouldn't take a child's nursery rhyme to point out the obvious—although it is one whose origins may date back to England's civil wars and first appeared in print shortly after it became fully clear that there was no way English could ever bring the 13 colonies back under its control. To begin with, there is no equivalent of Humpty.

PUTTING FOUR HUMPTYS TOGETHER WITH NO KING AND NO UNITY AMONG THE KING'S MEN

The problem is not simply ISIS or Assad. ISIS is one of the four "Humptys" in a shattered Syria, but ISIS controls only a limited part of Syria's population even in the east. ISIS occupies both parts of Syria and Iraq. It continues to systematically purge any religious and ideological dissent while neither government in Damascus or the government in Baghdad have shown any clear ability to gain support from a major portion of the Sunnis in the area that ISIS controls.

So far, neither the forces of the Syrian or Iraqi government have had much military success against ISIS, and U.S. claims that Iraq has regained some 35% of the territory it lost to ISIS are little more than dishonest spin. They are based on the maximum line of ISIS advance before any fighting took place and before ISIS established any level of governance or control. They include vast areas

of unpopulated desert: areas where no one controls anything because no one is there.

THE KURDS

The second Humpty consists of the Syrian Kurds—who have gone from a partially disenfranchised minority to the equivalent of a mini-state in the north and east of Syria, and have been the only real U.S. military train and assist success. They have no reason to support Assad or any of those who support Assad. They too are divided, and some have ties to Turkish Kurds, some to Iraqi Kurds, some to both, and some are independent.

At the same time, they have no clear economic viability as a state, face growing water problems, and would need to grab a significant part of Syria's limited oil and gas resources in the East to be viable unless they somehow united in a broader Kurdish entity—one that included Turkish and/or Iraqi Kurds and would be likely to create a new set of regional conflicts.

Furthermore, these Administration claims and maps that talk about liberating 35% of the area that ISIS occupied ignore the fact that control of much of the disputed populated areas in Anbar remains undecided, and that it was the Iraqi Kurds which not only recovered much of the lost populated areas that did matter, but grabbed a large additional part of Iraq—including Kirkuk and its oil fields—and created a whole new dimension of the Kurdish problem and its tensions with Iraq's Arab and the Turks while the corrupt government in the Kurdish zone of Iraq has divided and threatened to create a new round of internal power struggles.

THE OTHER SUNNI FIGHTERS

The third Humpty consists of an uncertain coalition of other Sunni fighters. They control—or are fighting for control—in many of the most populated areas in Syria. There are no reliable unclassified estimates of the number, strength, and ideological character of these factions but there are well over 20 groups—and some estimates go well over 30.

Some, like the Al Nusra Front—one of the most successful in military terms—are linked to Al Qaeda. Others are less radical Islamist factions, but are scarcely secular or moderate, also have no ties to the hollow outside efforts to create moderate governments in exile, and are being backed by Arab states like Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE. The small groups being given limited support with U.S. weapons and Special Forces assistance are at best petty and uncertain players.

This is also a group of fighters that is fighting the pro-Assad forces in what is increasingly becoming a wasteland. The fighting on the ground, Assad's barrel bombs and the threat of poison gas, deliberate isolation and efforts to starve out rebel held areas have created one of them most serious humanitarian disasters in any one country in modern history.

Many of the more than 4 million Syrian refugees that had left Syria lived in the area where this fight takes place. The same is true of the well over 7 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) that no longer have a real home, job, business, or access to key services like health and education.

Many of the more than 250,000 Syrian civilian dead, and at least 500,000 seriously wounded are the product of this fighting—although it is important to note that the UN ceased to be able to make meaningful casualty estimates well over half a year ago, and the estimates of refugees and IDPs have ceased to increase because (a) there no longer is a basis for guesstimating the increase, and (b) many of the remainder are simply too poor to leave.

To go back to cliché number one, this is the area where the forest has now been burning for some four years. This was one of the

most populated and developed parts of Syria. It is an area where Syria's already poor economy probably now has a GDP around 20% of what it was in 2011 and has no clear basis for recovery. It is an area where no top down negotiation between Assad or his backers and any outside faction can begin to put even one Humpty back together again.

THE ASSAD FACTION(S)

The fourth version of Humpty is the group of factions and fighters supporting Assad. It is important to note that this is not a unified group. No one has given most of those in the area Assad control a choice as to who controls them. The majority of the population is Sunni and other non-Alawites. The Alawites are not Shi'ite, and are a gnostic religious group that may have political ties to Iran and the Hezbollah, but Alawites are not Muslims in the normal sense of the term.

There are no reliable data on Syria's population. The CIA estimates, however, that some 17-18 million people remain in Syria, it estimates that 87% are Muslim (official; includes 74% Sunni 74% and 13% that are a mix of Alawi, Ismaili, and Shia). Some 10% are Christian (includes Orthodox, Uniate, and Nestorian), and the final 3% are Druze and some small number of Jews who remain in Damascus and Aleppo).

If one looks at the maps of Syria's sectarian and ethnic divisions before the fighting, they are also distributed into a series of small enclaves, many near the coast. They have no clear "region," and it is far from clear how many of the Sunnis in the regular Syrian forces, the real Shi'ites and other minorities in Syria, or the more secular Sunni businesspersons and civilians would support either Assad or any mix of Assad supporters if they had a choice.

It is also important to note that the World Bank rated the Assad regime as having some of the worst governance in the world before the uprising began in 2011. It was also rated as deeply corrupt. Transparency International rated it as the 159th most corrupt country in the world—out of 175—in 2014. The Arab and UN development reports warned that the younger Assad was no better in moving the country towards real economic development than his father, and that the massive population increase in Syria had created a "youth bulge" for which there were often no real jobs.

The Syrian GDP per capita was at best around \$5,100 even in Purchasing Power Parity P terms in 2011 before the upheavals began—and ranked a dismal 165th in the world. It now may average half that level. Some 33% of the population is 0-14 years of age; 14% is 15-24, and over 500,000 young Syrian men and women now reach job age each year in a country where direct (ignoring disguised) unemployment is estimated to be 33-35%, and the poverty level was well over 12% before the fighting started.

A TIME FOR HONESTY, TRANSPARENCY, AND REALISM

One cannot ignore trees, anymore than one can ignore the forest. The failure of U.S. policy and military efforts, Russian and Iranian support of Assad and major Russian military intervention, and the conflicting ways in which other states intervene will all make things worse. The impact of religious warfare and extremism, and failed Syrian secularism, are even more serious problems.

It is time, however, to stop focusing on either ISIS or Assad, to pretend that Syrian "moderates" are strong enough to either affect the security situation or negotiate for Syria's real fighters, and act as if a shattered nation could be united by some top down negotiation between groups that hate each other and have no competence in dealing with the economic, social, and governance challenges Syria now faces.

The first step in solving a problem is to honestly assess it. No negotiation can work that does not deal with grim realities and divisions created by years of fighting. No amount of U.S. and Russian intervention and argument can bring security or stability. No UN effort at conventional negotiation can survive encounter with reality, and no effort of any kind that does not address the sheer scale of Syrian recovery and reconstruction.

Ms. KAPTUR. Anthony Cordesman, probably one of the most respected thinkers on this subject, ends a very significant analysis of the situation in Syria and greater Europe with this admonition. He tells America: "We face a moment of facing up to honesty, transparency, and realism."

And he tells us, "One cannot ignore trees anymore than one can ignore the forest," related to Syria. "The failure of U.S. policy and military efforts, Russian and Iranian support of Assad and major Russian military intervention, and the conflicting ways in which other states intervene will all make matters worse. The impact of religious warfare and extremism, and failed Syrian secularism, are even more serious problems.

"It is time, however, to stop focusing on either ISIS or Assad, to pretend that Syrian 'moderates' are strong enough to either affect the security situation or negotiate for Syria's real fighters, and act as if a shattered nation could be united by some top-down negotiation between groups that hate each other and have no competence in dealing with the economic, social, and governance challenges Syria now faces.

"The first step in solving a problem is to honestly assess it. No negotiation can work that does not deal with grim realities and divisions created by years of fighting. No amount of U.S. and Russian intervention and argument can bring security or stability. No U.N. effort at conventional negotiation can survive encounter with reality, and no effort of any kind that does not address the sheer scale of Syrian recovery and reconstruction" can work.

I commend his writings to my colleagues and the major studies that have been done this year by the Center for Strategic and International Studies as providing a glimmer of the road that we must walk toward.

I want to just thank my colleagues for the opportunity to place this in the RECORD tonight.

I want to thank the Syrian Americans that live in northern Ohio for their patriotic citizenship and their deep concern about what more the United States of America could do to bring resolution to this deeply troubling conflict in Syria that has precipitated such unrest, not just through that region but, indeed, to all of greater Europe.

I yield back the remainder of my time.

PRESIDENTIAL VETO OF NDAA

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. EMMER of Minnesota). Under the

Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentlewoman from Missouri (Mrs. HARTZLER) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. HARTZLER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the subject of my Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Missouri?

There was no objection.

Mrs. HARTZLER. Fifty-three years ago is a long time. In 1962, John F. Kennedy was President. Gas was 28 cents a gallon. The first Walmart opened. The U.S. Navy SEALs were created, and the Cuban Missile Crisis was on everyone's minds.

Now, we have gone through a lot as a nation since then, but one thing has remained constant: the U.S. Congress and the President of the United States have fulfilled one of our primary obligations according to the Constitution of providing for the common defense by passing a National Defense Authorization Act. You may say that Congress hasn't always passed legislation that is needed, but on the National Defense Authorization Act, we have gotten it right. For 53 years in a row now, our Nation's national security needs have been taken care of.

Sadly, that might not be the case this year. The reason? Not because the Representatives of the people did not do their work. It is because the Commander in Chief has chosen to use the military as political pawns to advance his domestic agenda by choosing to veto the NDAA.

Never before in our Nation's history has a President vetoed the National Defense Authorization Act in order to leverage concessions on other areas of government spending. Let me say that again. President Obama's veto stems not from defense policy but, rather, from his desire for more domestic spending unrelated to national defense. This is unprecedented.

Four times during the past 53 years, Presidents have vetoed the NDAA, but it was over specific defense-related provisions in the NDAA itself. Differences were able to be worked out with Congress and concerns quickly addressed so the bill could move forward and our men and women in uniform would have the tools, equipment, and resources they need to keep us safe. Not this year.

Just minutes ago, our President vetoed our Nation's most important bill, which provides for full funding for our military.

Let me share with you what provisions are in this bill and why it is so important. It provides: a 1.3 percent pay raise for our troops; retirement benefits for the 83 percent of our troops who currently see none; the authority for commanders to allow soldiers to