

at the conclusion of his tenure as commander of U.S. Strategic Command and on his upcoming retirement from the U.S. Navy.

Admiral Haney has been an exemplary officer, and he has been an outstanding leader. Over the course of his 38-year career in the Navy, he has made countless sacrifices for our country. I commend his service and the sacrifices of his family, including his wife Bonny, his daughter Elizabeth, and his two sons, Thomas and Joey. I express our great appreciation for his leadership and devotion to our Nation's security.

I first met Admiral Haney in 2013, when he was nominated to succeed General Kehler as the commander of STRATCOM. Over the past 3 years, it has been my great pleasure to work with him, and I am grateful for his wise counsel and his firm resolve to always do what is best for our Nation and for the men and women he leads.

Secretary Carter has pointed out on many occasions that our nuclear forces remain the bedrock of our Nation's security, and as the commander of U.S. Strategic Command, Admiral Haney spent the last 3 years ensuring that this bedrock remained strong. Every day our Nation relies on its nuclear forces to deter strategic attack on the United States and our allies. Admiral Haney has ably led the forces that comprise our nuclear deterrent as they perform this highest priority mission.

He has also been a strong advocate for the modernization of our aging nuclear infrastructure—no small task in a time of capped budgets. His ability to work closely with Members of Congress and his clear-eyed assessments—such as the statement he delivered to the Committee on Armed Services last year that “there is no margin to absorb risk” in our plans to modernize our nuclear enterprise—have helped maintain congressional consensus on the importance of following through with those modernization commitments.

Admiral Haney has also shown strong leadership and provided valuable advocacy with respect to the other capabilities for which the command is responsible. For example, he led the effort to establish the Joint Interagency Combined Space Operations Center, which will become a crucial command and control node, ensuring our Nation has the ability to protect and defend critical national space infrastructure.

Admiral Haney's selection as commander of the U.S. Strategic Command was a fitting capstone to a career of service that never strayed far from the nuclear mission. He began his career in 1978 as a distinguished graduate from the U.S. Naval Academy. Rising quickly through the Navy, he went on to command the USS *Honolulu*, Submarine Squadron 1, Submarine Group 2, and to become the director of the Submarine Warfare Division and the Naval Warfare Integration Group. In 2010, he became the deputy commander of U.S. Strategic Command, after

which he served as commander of the U.S. Pacific Fleet.

In each role, Admiral Haney has set a strong example for those under his command by faithfully discharging his duties with professionalism and dedication.

With nearly four decades of dedicated service to our Nation, Admiral Haney deserves our most heartfelt gratitude and praise. So I thank the admiral and wish him the best and also the best to his family.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CASTRO REGIME

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, it was Armando Valladares, a Cuban dissident and poet who was imprisoned for 22 years under the Castro regime, who so powerfully observed in his memoir:

My response to those who still try to justify Castro's tyranny with the excuse that he has built schools and hospitals is this: Stalin, Hitler and Pinochet also built schools and hospitals, and like Castro, they also tortured and assassinated opponents. They built concentration and extermination camps and eradicated all liberties, committing the worst crimes against humanity.

This week we witnessed a powerful moment for people all across the country and especially for Cuban-Americans like myself. Cuba's longtime oppressive dictator Fidel Castro is dead. Let me be absolutely clear. We are not mourning the death of some revolutionary romantic or a distinguished statesman. We are not grieving for the protector of peace or a judicious steward of his people. Today we are thankful. We are thankful that a man who has imprisoned and tortured and degraded the lives of so many is no longer with us. He has departed for warmer climes.

This brutal dictator is dead, and I would like to pay tribute to the millions who have suffered at the hands of the Castro regime. We remember them, and we honor the brave souls who fought the lonely fight against the totalitarian Communist dictatorship imposed on Cuba. Yet, at the same time, it seems the race is on to see which world leader can most fulsomely praise Fidel Castro's legacy while delicately averting their eyes from his less than savory characteristics. Two duly-elected leaders of democracies who should know better, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and American President Barack Obama, have been leading the way.

Mr. Trudeau praised Castro as a “larger than life leader who served his people for almost half a century” and “a legendary revolutionary and orator,

[who] made significant improvements to the education and healthcare of his island nation.” Tell that to the people in the prisons. Tell that to the people who have been tortured and murdered by Fidel Castro.

Mr. Obama likewise offered his “condolences” to the Cuban people and blandly suggested that “history will record and judge the enormous impact of this singular figure.” Now, he added, we can “look to the future.”

What is it about young leftists, what is it about young Socialists that they idolize Communist dictators who torture and murder people? Fidel Castro and Che Guevara and all of their goons were not these sexy, unshaven revolutionaries on posters in college dorm rooms that make leftists go all tingly inside; they were brutal monsters, and we should always remember their victims.

Earlier this week, I publicly called that no U.S. Government official should attend Castro's funeral unless and until his brother Raul releases the political prisoners—first and foremost, those who have been detained just since Fidel's death. Unfortunately, in this administration, my call went unheeded. Two high-level U.S. Government officials attended Fidel's memorial service yesterday. This unofficial delegation included Ben Rhodes, assistant to the President, National Security Advisor for Strategic Communications, and Jeffrey DeLaurentis, the top U.S. diplomat in Cuba.

Yesterday, when asked about a U.S. presence for the memorial service, White House Press Secretary Josh Earnest said, “We believe that this was an appropriate way for the United States to show our commitment to an ongoing future-oriented relationship with the Cuban people” and that “this is an appropriate way to show respect, to participate in the events that are planned for this evening, while also acknowledging some of the differences that remain between our two countries.” I am afraid I must ask Mr. Earnest whether any of these “differences” were publicly acknowledged while Rhodes and DeLaurentis were commemorating the legacy of Fidel Castro. How exactly do you commemorate it—cheers to the tyrant? I suspect that those “differences” were not mentioned in the funeral pamphlet. Mr. Earnest also claimed last night: “Certainly no one from the White House and no other delegations will be sent to Cuba to participate in any of the other events.”

Well, that is comforting. Let's hold him to those words. My hope and prayers are that these officials do not attend the funeral. Although I must say, it is quite convenient that Rhodes had a preplanned trip to Cuba this week. Earnest remarked that “Mr. Rhodes has played a leading role in crafting the normalization policy that President Obama announced about two years ago” and “he has been the principal interlocutor with the Cuban government from the White House in

crafting this policy and implementing it successfully.”

I suppose it is appropriate that the Federal Government official who played an integral role in allowing billions of dollars to flow to Cuba—to flow directly to Raul and Fidel Castro—be there to commemorate Fidel’s death. It is billions of dollars that have gone to strengthen the repressive machinery, to strengthen the regime. If a U.S. company or a European company wants to hire a Cuban worker, they can’t do it. It is against the law.

It is unlike many other countries. It is unlike China or other places where you can hire a local worker. Instead, you must hire the government. There is one and only one person you can hire. The foreign companies pay the Cuban Government, and the Cuban Government, in its benevolence, keeps 93 cents of every dollar and pays the Cuban workers 7 cents out of every dollar.

Ninety-three cents of every dollar of the billions that Barack Obama has funneled to Castro has gone to the government of Raul Castro and Fidel Castro to fund the secret police, to fund the prisons, and to fund the torture, while our diplomatic brigade pat themselves on the back as to what enlightened diplomats they are.

The life and legacy of Fidel Castro is no cause for celebration or commemoration. His contributions consist of a ruined country and a broken people. Cuba is almost like the land that time forgot. You can go and see cars from the 1950s—meticulously maintained, held together almost with rubber bands and chewing gum. It is not that the citizens there have a fondness for antiques. It is that the repressive communist economy has trapped them, has mired them in poverty where 1950s cars are all they have, and where the last 60 years didn’t happen, other than the jackboot of the oppressive police state.

I will point out that on this issue I am not a disinterested observer. My own family’s experience has been acute. My father, born and raised in Cuba, fought in the Revolution. He initially believed in the principles of freedom that he thought the Revolution was about. He fought against Batista, a cruel dictator, and was tortured and imprisoned by Batista’s police state.

Then my aunt, Tia Sonia, who is younger than my father, stayed and was there after the Revolution occurred and suddenly discovered the Revolution was based on a lie. The kids who thought they were fighting for freedom discovered instead an even worse tyrant than that who preceded him—a communist dictator who would line up dissidents and shoot them.

My Tia Sonia participated in the counterrevolution. She fought against the Castro tyranny. I will tell you, when she was a high school girl, she and her two best friends were arrested, were thrown into prison by the Castro regime, and, like her brother, she faced terrible treatment in a Cuban prison.

What they did in Cuban jails to teenage girls should not happen to anyone.

This is the legendary figure that Trudeau and Obama celebrate. The night that the news broke that Castro had died, I received a text from my cousin Bibi—my Tia Sonia’s daughter and someone whom I grow up with like a sister. Bibi texted me. She said: Fidel Castro is dead. I am glad that I was able to make that call to let my mother know.

I image when Bibi called my Tia Sonia it was an extraordinary moment. My aunt was asleep at the time. Bibi sent me a second text. I couldn’t help to think about all the conversations at the dinner table with my grandparents about the day that Castro dies. Texts just like that millions of people sent all over the world, especially in the Cuban-American community. People had dreamed for years, for decades about the day this tyrant would die and face eternal judgment.

The betrayal, brutality, and the violence experienced by my father and by my aunt were all too typical of the millions of Cubans who have suffered under the Castro regime over the last six decades. This is not the stuff of Cold War history that would be swept under the rug simply because Fidel is dead.

Consider, for example, the dissidents Guillermo Farinas and Elizardo Sanchez, who came to the United States. I had the opportunity to sit down and visit with them and interview them both. They warned me in the summer of 2013 that the Castros, then on the ropes of the reduction of Venezuelan patronage, were plotting to cement their hold on power by pretending to liberalize in order to get the American economic embargo lifted. Their motto was Vladimir Putin’s motto—his consolidation of power in Russia, which Sanchez called “Putinismo.”

Their plan was to get the United States to pay for it. Sadly, it worked. The year, after I met with Farinas and Sanchez, Mr. Obama announced his famous “thaw” with the Castros, and the American dollars started flowing. As we know now, there was no corresponding political liberalization—simply, American dollars funding a brutal dictatorship. Last September, Mr. Farinas concluded his 25th hunger strike against the Castros’ oppression.

Then there is the case of prominent dissident Oswaldo Paya, who died in 2012 in a car crash that is widely believed to have been orchestrated by the Castro regime. His daughter, Rosa Maria, has pressed relentlessly for answers on her father’s apparent murder, and, thus, she has become a target herself. Just 3 years after her father’s death, the Obama administration honored the Castros with a new embassy in Washington, DC, and at the launch of that embassy, Rosa Maria tried to attend the State Department press conference as an accredited journalist. She was spotted by the Cuban delegation, who demanded that she be removed if

she dared to ask any questions. The Americans complied, in an act of thuggery more typical with Havana than Washington.

What does it say of John Kerry and the State Department? What does it say of the Obama administration when a communist tyrant or their police force says: There is a dissident, a journalist who might ask inconvenient questions; will you silence her and muzzle her? And the response from the Obama administration is only too happy to comply—no inconvenient questions about the apparent murder of your father. We have different priorities.

Last summer I had the honor to meet with Dr. Oscar Biscet, an early truth teller about the disgusting practice of postbirth abortions. I want you to think about that concept for a second—postbirth abortions, otherwise known as the murder of infants, which are far too widespread in Cuba. Dr. Biscet has been repeatedly jailed and tortured for his fearless opposition to the Castros.

I asked him, as I had Mr. Farinas and Mr. Sanchez, whether his ability to travel signaled a growing freedom on the island? He answered—just as they had 3 years earlier: No. In fact, he said, the repression had grown worse since the so-called thaw.

Didn’t we realize, he asked me, that all those American dollars were flowing to the Castros’ pockets and funding the next generation of their police state? That is the true legacy of Fidel Castro—that he was able to institutionalize his dictatorship so that it would survive him.

Fidel Castro’s death cannot bring back the thousands of victims, nor can it bring lasting comfort to their families. For 60 years, Fidel Castro systematically exploited and oppressed the people of Cuba, and now that tyrannical reign has fallen to his brother Raul, every bit as vicious as Fidel was.

I was with my father shortly after he found out the news that Fidel Castro was dead. I asked my dad: What do you think happens now? My father shrugged and said sadly: Not much of anything. Raul has been in charge for years now. The system has gotten stronger.

What Obama has done in funneling billions of dollars to the Castros has strengthened tyranny just 90 miles from our shores. Those billions—those American dollars—are being used to oppress dissidents. In 2016 roughly 10,000 political arrests occurred in Cuba. That is five times as many as occurred in 2010. What does it say about President Obama’s foreign policy that under him political arrests have increased to 500 percent where they were just 5 years ago? This tyrannical regime has gotten stronger because of a weak President and a weak foreign policy.

There is a real danger that we will now fall into a trap of thinking that Fidel’s death represents material change in Cuba. It does not. The moment to exert maximum pressure

would have been 8 years ago, when Fidel's failing health forced him to pass control to his brother Raul. Rather than leverage the transition in our favor, the Obama administration decided to start negotiations with Raul in the mistaken belief that he would prove more reasonable than his brother. It is an unfortunate pattern that this administration has repeated with Kim Jong Un, Hasan Ruhani, and Nicolas Maduro. They don't seem to learn the lesson about the brutality of tyrants. The administration lifted the embargo that had been exerting economic pressure and having real meaningful effect.

Efforts to be diplomatically polite about Fidel's death suggest the administration still hopes that Raul can be brought around. All historical evidence points to the opposite conclusion. Raul is not a different Castro. He is his brother's chosen successor, who has spent the last 8 years implementing his dynastic plan. Unlike Cuba, however, the United States has an actual democracy, and our recent election suggests there is significant resistance among the American people to the Obama administration's pattern of appeasement and weakness toward hostile dictators. We can, we should, and we are sending clear signals that the policy of weakness and appeasement is at an end.

Among other things, we should halt the dangerous "security cooperation" we have begun with the Castro regime, which extends to military exercises, counternarcotics efforts, communications, and navigation—all of which places our sensitive information in the hands of a hostile government that would not hesitate to share it with other enemies, from Iran to North Korea.

I hope all my colleagues will join me in calling for these alterations. The Communist dictator Raul Castro is not our friend, and we should not be sharing military secrets in military cooperation with his military only to have those used against us. A dictator is dead, but his dark, repressive legacy will not automatically follow him to the grave. Change can come to Cuba, but only if America learns from history and prevents Fidel's successor from playing the same old tricks.

It is very much my hope and belief that with a new President coming into office in January, President Trump and a new administration, that U.S. foreign policy—not just with Cuba but with our enemies, whether they be Iran, ISIS, or North Korea—will no longer be a policy of weakness and appeasement but instead will use U.S. strength to defend this Nation and press for change. This ought to be a moment where Cubans are dancing in the street because they are being liberated, but, instead, if anyone dances in the street right now, they will be thrown in jail.

Obama is sending his condolences to the Cuban people on the passing of a dictator who has imprisoned, tortured, and oppressed them for 60 years. Those

are condolences they can do without. Cuba is not a free society. You aren't allowed to speak or worship freely. They tear down churches. They repress the most basic liberty to worship God.

We need leadership to prompt real and meaningful change in Cuba. Valladares wrote in his memoir:

The mass execution was ordered by Raul Castro and attended by him personally. Nor was it an isolated instance; other officers in Castro's guerrilla forces shot ex-soldiers en masse without a trial, without any charges of any kind lodged against them, simply as an act of reprisal against the defeated army.

I have never been to my father's homeland. I have never been to Cuba. My father has not returned to Cuba in over 60 years. I look forward to one day visiting Cuba, hopefully with my dad, my Tia Sonia, my cousin Bibi, and seeing a free Cuba where people can live according to their beliefs without fear of imprisonment, violence, or oppression, but under the dictator Raul Castro, today is not that day.

The people of Cuba need to know that there are still those in America who understand that and stand with them, not the corrupt and vicious crime family that has oppressed them for so long, that has enriched themselves, accumulating millions and millions of dollars in personal wealth, living like emperors and kings while they have oppressed the people of Cuba.

Those in Hollywood, those in the academy, and those in the Obama administration think that communism is about equality. There is nothing equal about Cuban communism other than a quality of suffering, other than a quality of misery, other than a quality of hopelessness. In the Cuban Communist regime, the army acts as the enforcers for the dictators who live opulent lifestyles while oppressing the masses. There is a word for that. It is called evil. It is not simply an interesting way to govern a society. It is the face of oppression, the face of dictatorship, the face of evil. Let there be no mistake, Fidel Castro was evil. Anyone who systematically murders, tortures, and oppresses people for over six decades embodies it, and I have no doubt that right now, today, Fidel Castro is facing the ultimate judgment. That is cause for celebration, and I look forward to celebrating the end of his dictatorship and repressive regime and the return of freedom to Cuba.

I thank the Presiding Officer.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LEE). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PERDUE). Without objection, it is so ordered.

DACA

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, our Nation's immigration system is

broken. There would be scant, if any, disagreement with that proposition in this Chamber. There would be no disagreement among anyone who is familiar with this broken immigration system. Far too often, that system is not only broken but violates the essential fundamental values and core convictions of the American people, values that are embodied in our Constitution, in the daily ethics we preach and live about fairness and welcoming people who are different from ourselves, people who have come here to escape persecution in their native lands, much as my father did in 1935 at the age of 17.

He came alone, he spoke virtually no English, had not much more than the shirt on his back, and knew virtually no one. That is the way people still come to this great country, the greatest country in the history of the world.

The immigration system that enabled him to come here is now fraught with strictures and failings and irrational barriers that work against not only the interests of people seeking freedom and opportunity but our national interests. That interest is best served when we make possible the talent, gifts, and energy of immigrants. We are a nation of immigrants, and we should be working to reform the immigration system for our national interest.

No one exemplifies more poignantly and eloquently the flaws in our present system than young people known as the DREAMers. For a while, not that long ago, I resolved that I would come to the floor every week with a photograph of a different DREAMer from Connecticut who would demonstrate with a face, if not a voice, why some relief for our DREAMers is essential to our national interests.

DREAMers are members of our society, brought to this country as children, some before they even learned to speak, but now, for almost all of them, English is their native language. This Nation is the only home they have ever known. They pledge allegiance to the flag in school and at events with their hand over their hearts, just as we all do and just as we begin every day the proceedings of this Chamber. Many of them know and never take for granted the gifts of living in the greatest, freest, strongest nation ever to exist on the planet. They know it. They never take it for granted because they hear stories from their aunts and uncles, maybe even their parents about what life was like in the place they left when they were brought here as infants and small children.

So they go to our schools. They learn skills. They go to colleges, and many go on to higher education. They have skills and training and gifts and talents that would be extraordinarily useful and important. There is one problem: They are not citizens. They are not citizens. They are in constant danger of deportation. They are stuck in a potentially illegal and devastating situation because they have no path to