

CONNECT THE DOTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. JEFFRIES) for 5 minutes.

Mr. JEFFRIES. Mr. Speaker, we have a reality show host masquerading as President of the United States of America who came to this Chamber yesterday in a Hollywood-style production and pretended to act Presidential.

But the question that we confront is one that Richard Nixon actually first raised, in November of 1973, when he said that the American people deserve to know whether or not the President is a crook. That was an observation that Richard Nixon made in the context of the Watergate scandal which began as a nickel-and-dime break-in at the Democratic National Committee headquarters in the summer of 1972, and, obviously, concluded with impeachment proceedings and the ultimate resignation of a President in disgrace.

Nixon made the observation that the American people deserve to know whether or not the President is a crook, and many people across the country are raising a similar question because 17 different intelligence agencies have concluded that the Russians, at the explicit direction of Vladimir Putin, interfered in our election for the purpose of helping Donald Trump. Yet, it is hard to get an independent investigation going in this place because my friends on the other side of the aisle continue to put party ahead of the country.

But that is just the beginning. We know that, as early as December of 2015, at least four different cronies of Donald Trump were in regular communication with Russian intelligence agents at the same time these individuals were hacking into the DNC, the DCCC, and the Clinton campaign, interfering with our democracy. These individuals were Michael Flynn, who came to become Trump's first national security adviser; Carter Page, who was his former foreign policy adviser; Paul Manafort, who was the chairman of the Trump campaign; and Roger Stone, a longtime affiliate.

If they were having these conversations at this time, we know they probably weren't talking about Russian vodka. What were they talking about? The American people deserve to know.

We also are aware that Michael Flynn had an illegal conversation, in December of 2016, with the Russian Ambassador where he discussed sanctions that were imposed on Russia because of their hacking. He then apparently lied about this conversation to the Vice President who then went out and misrepresented facts to the American people, and then Michael Flynn resigned in disgrace. But we still can't get an independent, nonpartisan investigation in this place.

But that is not all. We know that Donald Trump has not been bashful when going after our allies like Mexico or Australia or NATO or the European

Union or, this past weekend, France. He is not bashful about being critical, but he can't say a negative word about Vladimir Putin, a brutal dictator. It appears that this President is more determined to make the Kremlin great again.

But that is not all. He refuses to release his taxes despite promising the American people that he was going to do so prior to November of last year. What exactly is he hiding in these tax documents? Yet, we still can't get an independent investigation.

We also know that the White House Chief of Staff engaged in potentially unlawful conversations with the FBI, perhaps trying to get them to obstruct justice in the public sphere in the midst of an ongoing investigation.

All we are saying is connect the dots. This should not be a Democratic issue or a Republican issue. The American people deserve to know whether or not the President is a crook.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President.

MONROE COUNTY ROADS PROJECT

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

Mr. CURBELO of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor today to congratulate and express my gratitude to Monroe County leaders who recently took steps to address the impact sea level rise is having on roads and infrastructure in my district.

Earlier this year, the Monroe County Board of County Commissioners took action that sets new standards for determining elevation of future county road improvement projects to account for future sea level rise. This is a problem my district is already facing. The 2015 King Tides led to flooding that lasted more than 3 weeks in several neighborhoods, causing damage to homes and businesses and leaving my constituents unable to move freely to and from their homes.

Mr. Speaker, few cities or counties around the United States are as advanced in sea level rise planning and implementation as Monroe County. I am grateful for their leadership, and I am committed to continuing to support their efforts any way I can here in Washington, from advocating for transportation infrastructure research grants that will help ensure we have the best engineering at our disposal to working with my fellow members of the Climate Solutions Caucus to discuss and build consensus for proposals that will mitigate the effects of rising sea levels.

It is critical we continue to work toward an infrastructure package that will give our communities the funds they need to bring our roadways like those in Monroe County into the 21st century.

NATIONAL DEBT

Mr. CURBELO of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss one of the most serious issues facing the United States—the staggering national debt that will reach \$20 trillion this month, or \$62,715 per person living in our country. While the national debt grew over \$9 trillion under President Obama, we now have a new opportunity here in this Congress to work together with the new administration to propose and debate solutions that will address our country's debt and get our fiscal house back in order.

Every day, families across my district sit around the dinner table and make tough decisions about how they will spend their money. Most stick to their budgets because they don't have a choice, and their government should be no different.

In 2015, I was proud to support a 2-year bipartisan budget agreement that implemented new caps on discretionary spending for both fiscal years 2016 and 2017. Too often, enormous sums are wasted due to unpredictable budget cycles and government shutdown threats. With the adoption of this 2-year budget, Congress was able to reduce wasteful spending by providing certainty to agencies as they plan for the future.

The budget also included reforms to entitlement programs, which is the largest percentage of national debt. It is important that we protect programs like Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid—the invaluable safety net for those who need the help—while working to implement reforms to make these programs solvent for future generations.

Mr. Speaker, my constituents sent me back to Washington to continue to build consensus with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to advance solutions that will rein in our national debt, and that is exactly what I plan to do. It is our duty, as elected officials, to leave our children and grandchildren with the same economic opportunities as previous generations, and that will continue to be one of my main priorities here in Congress.

SMALL BUSINESS HIGHLIGHT

Mr. CURBELO of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I have never had much of a sweet tooth, but it has recently been brought to my attention that my district is home to some thriving small businesses that are putting south Florida on the map for desserts.

Not far from my district office, Night Owl Cookie Company, recently named Forbes 30 Under 30, is delivering fresh-baked cookies to constituents across West Kendall. Since starting the business in 2015, when he would make and deliver cookies from his parents' kitchen, Andrew Gonzalez's success has flourished to three brick-and-mortar locations across Florida.

Further south is Knaus Berry Farm in the Redlands where families from all across south Florida will travel to pick up fresh produce and, of course, to wait in line for fresh, homemade cinnamon

rolls. Founded as a family farm in 1956, Knaus Berry has since become a Miami staple, with generation after generation making the trip to south Dade to pick up fresh produce and baked goods. The farm's success has spread, leading to partnerships with other south Florida small businesses that use their cinnamon rolls to create Knaus Berry Farm-inspired doughnuts and ice cream.

It is important that we celebrate these small businesses, Mr. Speaker, because they provide hope, opportunity, and jobs to so many Americans in my district and across the country. It is critical for us to continue advancing policies in this Congress that will continue allowing these small businesses the opportunity to provide hope and jobs for so many Americans.

A NEW AMERICAN CENTURY

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

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, 100 years ago next month, on April 2, 1917, President Woodrow Wilson stood in this Chamber and asked Congress to declare war on Germany. While the proximate cause for America's entry into World War I was Germany's campaign of unrestricted submarine warfare, Wilson and his supporters were also motivated by the belief that they, and the force of American arms, could deliver Europe from its intractable squabbles and, in so doing, make the world safe for democracy.

It was not until the following spring that the American doughboys were committed to the Western Front in large numbers, but they provided not only the additional combat power needed to break the exhausted Germans within months, but also imbued a sense of moral purpose into what had been nearly 4 years of futile slaughter.

A generation later, millions of American GIs returned to help free Europe from Adolf Hitler, while millions more pushed Japan back from its imperial conquests in Asia. This time we stayed—the living to keep the peace and prevent one form of tyranny being replaced by another and the dead as silent witnesses to the cost of liberation.

The United States worked to create the United Nations and a host of other international organizations designed to bind together humanity and avoid another catastrophic world war. We extended aid and friendship to our former enemies through the Marshall Plan and rebuilt Western Europe into an alliance of democracies, a shining contrast to the Soviet Union's eastern satellites.

America's commitment to peace was matched by an equally resolute willingness to defend freedom. When the Soviet Union blockaded Berlin in 1948, in an attempt to force the Western allies out of their half of the city, American pilots flew missions around the clock for 11 months to keep the city supplied until the Soviets relented.

Walls, barbed wire, and stifling oppression characterized the Soviet bloc and Communist Asia. Against this, the United States marshaled its greatest weapons—individual liberty, democratic governance, and a market economy to discredit and defeat communism.

When the Cold War ended four decades after it had begun, it was the fall of the Berlin Wall that symbolized the triumph of freedom and seemingly heralded a new era of peace and prosperity.

Nearly three decades have passed since communism's collapse and the global harmony that many hoped for has been replaced by an international order more challenging to American leadership and American ideals than any we have seen in my lifetime.

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Intolerance, ultra-nationalism, and crude populism are rising across the developed world and threaten to undo the work of decades. After a century of American leadership of the international community, there was a sense among many here at home and around the world that we have lost our will to lead, that we will no longer honor President Kennedy's commitment to "pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and the success of liberty."

The world sees President Trump's executive orders on immigration and asks: Where is the America that welcomed millions to its shores?

Well, I am happy to say that America is alive and well in communities across this great Nation, where people from every continent live together, eat each other's food, celebrate each other's holidays, and it also lives on in the hundreds of State Department officials who signed a Dissent Channel memorandum opposing that policy.

The world sees President Trump's threats to withdraw from Europe and Asia unless our allies "pay up," and asks whether America will still defend its friends. That America, the one that stands shoulder-to-shoulder with NATO and South Korea, can be found in our troops stationed in the Baltics, Poland, and along the DMZ; and it can be found here in Congress, where there is broad support for our alliances and our allies.

The world sees President Trump threatening to drastically cut our foreign assistance budget, the literal difference between life and death for millions of the world's most vulnerable people, and asks: Where is America's legendary generosity?

That America, Mr. Speaker, is alive and well, too. Our USAID professionals, our Peace Corps volunteers, and the thousands of individual Americans working as medical missionaries or with NGOs are still making a difference around the globe every day.

The world sees President Trump's embrace of Vladimir Putin and his seeming disdain for key allies like Ger-

many and Australia and wonders whether we will remain committed to democracy and the rule of law, or we will abandon principle in favor of expedience and flattery.

That America—the America that stood with Solidarity in Poland, with Nelson Mandela in South Africa, and with Aung San Suu Kyi in Burma—is still here, too. Millions of Americans, Democrats and Republicans, the old and young, still stand with those who seek freedom, and we will never allow this President to abandon our ideals.

And finally, Mr. Speaker, the world has seen the rise of Donald Trump and wonders whether Americans will still fight for their own democracy—are we still worthy heirs to Washington, Lincoln, and Roosevelt? The answer to that is on display every day across this country. From the millions who clogged our nation's streets on January 21st, to the calls pouring into Congress every day to demand a full investigation of the Russia scandal, the American people are engaged and ready to fight for our democracy here at home and for freedom around the world.

To those who doubt us, or wonder whether we remain true to our ideals, whether we will stand up for what we believe, and defend not only America but the beautiful idea it represents, let me borrow a phrase from John Paul Jones, the Revolutionary War hero. "We have not yet begun to fight."

HAPPY 150TH BIRTHDAY, NEBRASKA

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

Mr. SMITH of Nebraska. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate my home State of Nebraska on 150 years of Statehood.

On March 1, 1867, Nebraska became the 37th State admitted to the Union. Today, as we celebrate this milestone 150 years later, we honor the legacies of the pioneers who took great risks and overcame countless obstacles in pursuit of opportunity.

Our State's pioneer heritage has always inspired me. I am proud to be a fifth-generation resident of Scotts Bluff County, Nebraska. My family was part of the Homestead Movement, settling in western Nebraska and working as sugar beet laborers to build a bright future for generations to come.

The pioneer spirit is still alive and well today, which is one of the many reasons the "Good Life" is such a great place to live. Nebraskans' work ethic is second to none. From the producers who have made the Third District the top-producing agriculture district in the country, to the small businesses which employ nearly half of Nebraska's workforce, productivity is a hallmark of our State.

In addition to our pioneer spirit, Nebraskans are known for their kindness. I am proud of our State's reputation as "Nebraska Nice" and enjoy introducing my colleagues in Washington, D.C., to Nebraska visitors any chance I get.

From Huskers football to world-class research facilities, from Runza to