

the Medicare trust fund all in order to give the wealthiest Americans a tax cut is wrong.

I urge my colleagues in the Senate to reject this misguided proposal.

UNSEAL RECORDS INTO AGENT BRIAN TERRY'S DEATH

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

Mr. BIGGS. Mr. Speaker, in December 2010, U.S. Border Patrol Agent Brian Terry was killed with a gun that was traced back to the Department of Justice's Operation Fast and Furious. His family awaits answers.

Agent Terry's family recently testified before the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee that the Obama administration continually denied all efforts to release any additional information about his death. They are now calling on President Trump to finally unseal the records and expose the dirty secrets behind this tragic scandal.

It is shameful that the Trump administration has been repeatedly accused of collusion and coverups based on unsourced rumors, while little attention was given to the Obama administration's blatant efforts to cover up the truth into Agent Terry's murder.

Under Operation Fast and Furious, roughly 2,000 firearms were purposely sold to criminals, which were later smuggled into Mexico, and have been linked to multiple homicides.

The Obama administration stonewalled Congress, investigators, and Americans for years and, to this day, refuse to take responsibility for their mistake.

It is time for the truth. We have an opportunity to return transparency and trust to our government, and I fully support the Terry family's request for the records to be unsealed.

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN CHECHNYA

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

Mr. PANETTA. Mr. Speaker, during this Pride Month, I rise today to speak out about the human rights violations occurring in the Russian republic of Chechnya.

It has been reported that in that country, men are kidnapped, detained, tortured, and even murdered just because of their sexual orientation. Families have been shamed by these kidnappings and have resorted to taking their own sons' lives.

In April, I, along with 48 other Members of Congress, signed and sent a letter to Secretary of State Tillerson asking him to raise the issue of this horrible violence against innocent men with the Russian officials, but to date, neither Secretary Tillerson or President Trump or anybody else in the ad-

ministration have committed to taking action on this issue.

The United States must speak out about this atrocity, and Russia must investigate such human rights violations so that there is accountability for an end to these senseless crimes.

During this Pride Month, we here in the United States celebrate our equality. However, every month we must say and act for the men in Chechnya as we fight for equality across the globe.

THE CITIZENS OF PUERTO RICO HAVE EXPRESSED THEIR WILL TO JOIN OUR NATION

(Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN of Puerto Rico asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN of Puerto Rico. Mr. Speaker, the American citizens of Puerto Rico overwhelmingly voted in favor of becoming the 51st State of our great Nation. This is the second time in the past 5 years where my constituents have expressed their will to join our Nation.

Soon I will introduce legislation to set forth the terms of admission for the new State of Puerto Rico.

Our people have, in war and peace, made countless contributions to our Nation. They have fought in every conflict since the Great War. Many have made the ultimate sacrifice, and when they do, their casket is flown back to this country draped in an American flag bearing the 50 stars, but no star that represents them.

It takes a special kind of patriotism to fight for a nation that does not treat you equally, a nation that is a champion of democracy and self-determination, yet denies those same principles to 3.4 million of its own citizens in Puerto Rico.

Mr. Speaker, my constituents have spoken, and they deserve Congress' response.

IMMIGRATION HERITAGE MONTH

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

Mr. REICHERT. Mr. Speaker, during Immigration Heritage Month, I want to recognize the great spirit and desire for a better life that lives within our Nation's immigrants today and those before them.

America's immigrants have started companies big and small, contributed to their local communities, and have been our friends, family, and neighbors. But our immigration system is broken. It is failing the many children who are brought to the United States outside of their own control.

That is why I have sponsored and co-sponsored the BRIDGE Act and the Recognizing America's Children Act to protect these children who only want to live the American Dream.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that we have to work together, we must work to-

gether to pass a long-term immigration reform bill that secures our borders, yes, but just as importantly, protects our children, protects the families and the workers who want nothing more than to be a part of this great country and live the American Dream.

CANCEL THE AUGUST RECESS

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

Mr. GALLAGHER. Mr. Speaker, I stood before you in this very spot not long ago urging this Congress to do the work of the American people that the American people sent us here to do. Yet, 2 months later, not much has changed. Distrust in government is still at an all-time high, and it is not hard to see why. Our Federal debt continues to approach \$20 trillion. Our Tax Code remains broken and burdensome. Threats continue to rise abroad. And here at home, by the way, our veterans are still not getting the care they deserve despite the progress that we have made this week on that issue. From my perspective, this is unacceptable.

Despite the fact that Congress, by any metric we devise, is not doing the basic job the American people sent us here to do, in 7 weeks, we are going to adjourn on a month-long vacation without reforming the Tax Code or getting our appropriations done. And just 30 days after returning from the August recess, if we don't make some hard choices, the government may shut down, cutting our constituents from access to the programs they depend on for their livelihoods.

My message is simple: let's work through the August recess because in what other job would you grant yourself a month off if you hadn't gotten your work done?

I know we need to get back home to meet with our constituents, but more than anything else, I believe our constituents sent us here to do our job, to work together to fix problems, rather than punt them to the next generation.

So, please, let's stay here and let's do the work for the American people.

WASTE, FRAUD, AND ABUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DUNN). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. RUSSELL) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. RUSSELL. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. GALLAGHER).

CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

Mr. GALLAGHER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act.

Not only is this bill critical to giving American workers the skills they need to lead in an increasingly competitive world, but also to making sure that our

career and technical education is in stride with the major advancements that have been made over the last decade.

As I travel across northeast Wisconsin, businessowners routinely tell me they are hiring, but can't find workers with the knowledge and skills necessary to do the jobs they are hiring for.

Passage of this bill helps close the skills gap and boost economic growth by equipping students with the skills they need to fill the in-demand and high-skilled jobs in our local economies.

Schools in Wisconsin's Eighth District are prepared to lead the way when it comes to closing our country's growing skills gap, and it is time that we give them the tools that they desperately need to do exactly that.

I am proud to cosponsor this important piece of bipartisan legislation. I urge my colleagues to join me in support of this bill.

Mr. RUSSELL. Mr. Speaker, Solomon, who was often noted as the wisest man in the world, said: "A soft answer turns away wrath, but grievous words stir up anger."

If you were to ask the average American citizen would they like their elected officials to come to Washington and to work together, they would all say: Of course. They should. That is what we elect them for.

Yet, often in our history, we see emotions override the mouth and we raise our voices, distrust builds, isolation results, we don't get to know each other, we don't get to work with one another. As we isolate, then a distrust builds, and with distrust, then we don't want to hear what either side has to say. Ultimately, when we can no longer exchange ideas with a deliberateness, then we fall short.

Solomon also said in Ecclesiastes: "Two are better than one, for they have a good reward for their labor, for if the one fall, the other will lift up," and "A three-fold cord is not quickly broken."

As we look at our mottoes and our institutions, we have a phrase: "Out of many, one."

That phrase is not: Out of one idea, let's create many.

It is just the opposite.

One thing that I learned in my time as a soldier in negotiating and dealing with people groups that literally could not agree, to the point that they were shelling and killing each other and each other's women and children in their villages as they burned, that even in situations like that, they could find some overlapping circles and some common ground in between.

The events of the past week are a reminder not just to Members of Congress, who oftentimes we do know each other, we do work with one another, we do serve on committees with one another. We take great pride in developing those relationships despite our differences, but we have an obligation,

because, as a constitutional representative republic, we are a reflection of the people that send us here.

It is important that the lawmakers that the American people send to Washington to do that work be those that are willing to accommodate, that are willing to assimilate the things that we agree on, because if we can't accommodate and we can't assimilate—as I have viewed in war-torn battlefields in several different places through a career as an infantry soldier, if you can no longer accommodate or be willing to assimilate certain agreed ideas, then you are left with the third choice, which is elimination.

The United States has never had that as its pretext. We got close once in a period from about 1820 to 1860. We have faced tough times before and come together. I would hope, Mr. Speaker, that not just our body, as we take and deem these responsibilities with a lot of conviction, but that the American people would take their responsibility to be mindful of the words of Solomon: "A soft answer turns away wrath, but grievous words stir up anger."

Our country is bigger than any of us. When we leave it, God willing, it will continue on. And the words that are said in this Chamber, although recorded, few read. As time passes and as we govern our lives and go about our business, we have to remember the very principles that brought us together as a nation and that I nearly gave my life for in defense.

So my hope is, as we move in the coming days and weeks, that we will work on the things where the circles overlap and we will not negotiate the nonnegotiables. If we just focus on those things, we will have more than enough work to do to actually get stuff done.

□ 1130

As a message to the American people: accommodate, listen, dialogue, be kind, and be patient. I have seen the worst thing that human beings can do to one another in my lifetime. I have watched friends die on a battlefield. I have had to take human life. I have seen horrible and horrific things that no human being should ever do. But we are not in that place. We live in freedom. We live in great enjoyment of prosperity where our ideas, our work—the sweat of our brow—can go, and we can put it to good use with great liberty. We have to tone it down.

We have to be willing to put others before ourselves and to listen. I pledge to do that as a Member, one of 435 here. I hope the American people will pledge to be as committed to the United States as we all must be if we are to secure the future for our children and grandchildren.

One of the things that we often all agree on is efficiency in government—to turn the tone and the topic of the conversation a little bit in a different direction. Efficiency in government—nothing makes us more sad and dis-

appointed than to see hard-earned tax dollars wasted by inefficiency.

In my home State of Oklahoma, for every million dollars the government wastes, we have to have 96 Oklahomans work all year long to pay all of their taxes so that we can waste it. I have often highlighted these wasteful measures in a series called "Waste Watch." We just released "Waste Watch" number 7 where we, sadly, highlight over \$50 billion worth of waste in just one item and a total of \$70 billion worth of waste on a single topic. That is something that we all care about and that we all want to pay with our taxes. That is education.

For years, Americans have been paying more and getting less from our educational system. Over the past decade, national high school student proficiency test scores in math have consistently met the minimum or were below. Reading scores for high school students, over the past 20 years, have been consistently substandard with a continued downward trend.

As test scores remain low, available funding for education is often wasted. The solution is not simply to spend more on education without correcting the habits where the waste can occur. We need to spend our dollars wisely by eliminating educational waste, as well as many other forms of waste in government, and push those dollars where they actually count—to our teachers and to our classrooms.

Additionally, we have to change the perception that more money spent always equals a better outcome. If that were the case, we would be the most efficient government on the planet.

It is my hope to create motivation to protect taxpayers and assist in educating America's children with the resources available. It is not enough to point out the problems. That is easy. Anyone can be a cynic and a critic. But we must work together to fix them so that we can make our Nation stronger. Education is vital to our children and to our future.

What are some of these things that we are talking about? Well, how about this one: researchers at the esteemed Harvard University spent \$3 million to study if people were able to smell an unpleasant odor in their urine after eating asparagus, also known as asparagus pee, according to the research. The research was funded through a research grant from the National Institutes of Health with your tax dollars.

The NIH uses Federal tax dollars to fund its research and received \$30 billion in 2016. The NIH's mission statement is "to enhance health, extend healthy lives, and reduce the burdens of illness and disability."

We would all agree with that. It is good to try to fix problems with disease, fight the common cold, cure cancer, and cure Alzheimer's, all of those things.

However, the NIH has conducted life-saving research in the past and has been given broad authority in deciding

how to spend that \$30 billion, and now we see waste.

The NIH funds research grants to universities, and much of the NIH's funding is well justified and leads to lifesaving research. Funding a study that doesn't even explore the possible health benefits of eating asparagus but only if there is an odor after eating it does not fit into any mission of the NIH. It is akin to the taxpayers' money being flushed down the toilet.

This particular study was the result of a grant provided by the NIH to Harvard's T.H. Chan School of Public Health. Its purpose was to discover whether people could smell an asparagus effect. The researchers at Harvard received more than \$3 million in 2016, to survey 6,909 people of European-American descent to find if these people's urine smelled funny after eating asparagus, and the results were published in the *British Medical Journal*.

The results concluded that a "large proportion of individuals of European-American descent cannot smell" any effect. Sixty percent of the people surveyed, 58 percent of men and 62 percent of women, stated that they could not smell any urinary metabolites produced after asparagus consumption. However, Angus Chen, a reporter for the National Public Radio, stated in his report on this study that 4,161 people "were confused by the question." Do you think? We didn't need to waste \$3 million or have 260 Oklahomans work all year long to see if there was some effect in this madness.

Mr. Speaker, do you want to waste \$2 billion? Then give it to the Veterans Administration. In 2008, Congress passed the post-9/11 GI Bill updating the GI Bill from 1944, creating new benefits for servicemembers like myself, such as lengthening the expiration date following separation from the Armed Forces or retirement and offering living expenses as well as tuition. Another change made the benefits paid directly to the school of choice for the veteran—and here is where it began to go awry.

Initially, benefits from the GI Bill were paid directly to the servicemember for them to decide how and where to invest in their own education. This makes sense. They were responsible enough to defend our Republic; they can probably handle the funds—as they had for decades before. This change now comes with a litany of problems.

An audit conducted from 2013 to 2014, by the Office of Inspector General, for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs found that a 13 percent error rate in payments by the Veterans Benefits Administration to the schools of choice for servicemembers had occurred.

To conduct this audit, the OIG looked into 650 payments for 225 students to 50 schools. They found \$128,000 in improper payments; and eight students who withdrew from their classes still received \$2,400 in stipends, and this money was never recovered for the taxpayer. Extrapolating these numbers

to the full class of students, the Office of Inspector General estimated that, over 5 years, the Veterans Benefits Administration would process about \$205 million in improper payments—and you see it continue to go on and waste \$2.2 billion.

We can do better. We must do better. We must do better by our veterans. We must do better so that we do not allow people's insatiable appetite for non-existent government funds to continue to be consumed. We are a nation that is \$20 trillion in debt.

How many of you, if you came and I asked you: Hey, could I have \$100?

And you said: sure.

And I said: okay, but great, it is going to cost you \$105 because I am going to charge you \$5 to take your hundred.

Wouldn't that be pretty much absurd and in your face? Yet that is exactly what we do with a very popular program called the Pell Grant Program. The Pell grant was created in the 1970s and has since become the basic mechanism for the Federal Government to assist lower income families with higher education costs. The legislation mandates that students receiving the funds must be admitted and enrolled in an institution of higher learning. Fine.

While the Pell grant provides great opportunity for students who might not otherwise be able to attend college—something that we all think is good—the waste comes from a stipulation within the law that requires the Federal Government to pay a fee to give away their money. The \$5 payment goes directly to participating schools and is intended to help offset the cost of the Pell grant. So we let institutions of higher learning charge a fee to accept your money, the taxpayers.

While it is true that there are administrative costs involved with servicing Pell grants, schools should accept these costs as a part of doing business as they would if no Pell grant were provided and it was just your hard-earned money. If you were supporting one of your children in college, those fees would be incorporated within that same \$1,000.

For the 2015 and 2016 year, the maximum Pell grant available to an undergraduate student was roughly \$5,775. Based on the latest reports from the U.S. Department of Education for the same year or the year prior, the Nation's taxpayers provided \$30 billion to 8 million students. The average Pell grant received by students was roughly \$3,800. That all sounds good. While \$5 does not seem significant, when you put that \$5 towards 8 million students, you can see where the problem is.

It is an unnecessary and arbitrary fee that should be disallowed, and we need to restore it so that colleges and institutions do not scoop something off of the top. But people say: well, we have our administrative costs. We have overhead. We have our infrastructure. We have all of these things that we have to do.

Yes, and that is why we have allowed, for decades, the tax-exempt endowments so that as the endowments accrue wealth and they grow, they use those resources to sustain the infrastructure on the university.

We are \$20 trillion in debt. It would be great if we could not pay our bills to go to our next-door neighbor and say: Hey, I am a little short on my electric bill, can you help me?

Or: I need help on my house payment this month. Let me just get it from you.

Our neighbors would not take kindly to that. Yet we are allowing these institutions that have the endowed wealth and that have all of the ability to do the infrastructure. Yet what happens? They continue to waste money with administrative fees that only have increased by 300 percent since 1976.

Here is another one for you: How many of you would donate to a charity that had a 52 percent administrative overhead? No takers? I didn't think so. Yet that is exactly what you do when you have the National Science Foundation put forth research grants that were designed to help people in their health and fighting disease and many other things. The average fee that universities and institutions charge back to the Federal Government for these research grants is 52 percent. That borders on the immoral.

A practice in higher education grant making that is not widely known or understood by the American public is this practice of charging indirect cost as a part of a grant. So, for example, \$1 million that is coming to a university for research—we are all excited about that, it helps our communities—did you know that that university, in turn, will scoop, on average, 52 percent off of the top?

The typical grant has direct costs, and we all understand that. As they put forth their budget, they will list it with such things as researchers' salaries—fine—travel associated with research—understood. But beyond that, universities are able to claim, under our insane laws, that additional funds in the form of indirect costs are needed for infrastructure of the institution, and it is our responsibility, as taxpayers, to support that. Never mind that tax-free endowments were designed specifically for that purpose and already exist that they could use. But they never touch that wealth. They never touch that accrued wealth. They never touch that accrued interest.

The Office of Management and Budget defines indirect costs as expenses an organization incurs indirectly—and they get to define what that is. What does it translate to? Well, rather than pick on Harvard, let's pick on the Big 12, a region I come from. We will start with the University of Oklahoma.

□ 1145

Charging the government for indirect costs is expensive and, unfortunately, a

common practice among institutions of higher learning.

Here are the indirect costs for the schools in the Big 12. I am sure they are not the only ones. This is a nationwide epidemic, to the tune of \$55 billion. That is billion with a B. Even in Washington, D.C., that is real money.

The University of Oklahoma adds a 55 percent surcharge to its research on campus; Oklahoma State University adds 45 percent, and a 54 percent surcharge for instruction grant projects.

The University of Texas, 56 percent. We have a winner.

Texas Tech, 49 percent; Texas Christian, 54 percent; Baylor, 38 percent. They are a little more economical, but it is still nearly 40 percent of waste.

The University of Kansas charges a surcharge of 51.5 percent; Kansas State, 52 percent; West Virginia, 50 percent; Iowa State, 52 percent, meeting the median average.

Higher education officials rarely talk about it. When confronted with it, they will, with straight faces and degrees of education, argue that this waste is absolutely essential for them to continue.

A recent George Washington University student newspaper article revealed a higher education official's thoughts about indirect costs when he overtly referred to them as—you have got it—subsidies. He let it slip. Maybe Freudian, we don't know.

The George Washington Hatchet quoted Leo Chalupa, vice president for research, that "research is bringing in money to the university."

You think? It is \$55 billion worth.

However, Chalupa is not just referring to the direct dollars used to conduct research. We would all agree with needed research, but what we don't agree with is this indirect—more than half—plundering of what the dollars were designed and intended to do.

Let's switch to something that we should do to try to incentivize people to improve their educational experience. Sound confusing? It is—to the tune of \$7 billion was wasted.

Few Americans will argue that the Nation's schools do not need improvement. We would all say that they do. When one looks at test scores or compares American outcomes with other nations, it is easy to see that many of our K-12 schools are languishing.

One recent report evaluated testing outcomes against other industrialized nations, and America's students finished 17th out of 34—not something to be proud of. This led President Obama to direct more money at the issue, like so many previous Presidents before him, rather than looking at the underlying systemic concerns.

It is not the amount of money; it is the habit that is being created. While increasing funding can be a component of a solution, it is often not the most vital of the components. Without proper policy driving the expenditures, the money spent can become one more example of how inefficient Federal intervention in anything can be.

President Obama's Department of Education directed \$7 billion to a program known as the School Improvement Grants program, to which the Department of Energy named the 21st Century Community Learning Centers. The funds were directed to States with instructions that the funds should be directed to the poorest performing schools.

It sounds agreeable.

The measures used to identify the underperforming schools were graduation rates and readiness scores in reading and mathematics. Then-Secretary of Education Arne Duncan said, in 2009: "We could really move the needle, lift the bottom, and change the lives of tens of millions of underserved children"—something that all of us would agree on.

The School Improvement Grant program built on the race to the top efforts undertaken during the Bush administration, and the Obama administration efforts doubled the funds for the program.

The Department of Education described the purpose of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers in the following way: "This program supports the creation of community learning centers that provide academic enrichment opportunities during non-school hours for children, particularly students who attend high-poverty and low-performing schools."

Again, all of these sound laudable. However, according to a report released by the Department of Energy just a few days before the end of President Obama's administration, test scores, graduation rates, and college enrollment were no different in schools that had received these funds from School Improvement Grants as those that did not—\$7 billion gone.

A Washington Post article detailing the report quoted Andy Smarick, a fellow at the American Enterprise Institute: "Think of what all that money could have been spent on instead." Mr. Smarick is correct: \$7 billion in taxpayer funds were spent without any oversight or careful oversight whatsoever.

Congress must reexamine the role of the Federal Government in education because what is being done now does not work—billions upon billions of dollars.

How about if we can't solve it through \$7 billion wasted in trying to make people feel good about education and then that will improve their schools, how about we get them moving so we can fight obesity and cut down on diabetes, disease, and other things. That sounds good. Let's talk about that.

In 2010, with the assistance of First Lady Michelle Obama, the Let's Move! project began, with the hope of reducing childhood obesity in America. This is a real problem in Oklahoma. We have one of the largest obesity rates of all the States.

The program, costing as much as \$1 billion per year, focused heavily on im-

pressing upon children the need for proper exercise as well as bringing healthier food options into schools.

At first glance, it appears that the Let's Move! program produced results. In 2008, U.S. childhood obesity rates nationally were around 16.2 percent. During the next 3 years, 18 States saw those rates begin a modest decline, falling in some States by 5 percent.

This reduction could be attributed to the effectiveness of the program or a cultural change in how people view health choices and how they view their eating habits. But it should be noted, regardless, that this decline was already begun by the time the Let's Move! program was even enacted. Overall, and sadly, in the latest statistics, U.S. childhood obesity rates did not decline and, in fact, have risen to 17.2 percent in the last statistical year.

There are many, many things that we can continue to go on and talk about in waste. Let's end with this one.

Want people to eat healthy, something that sounds good? How many of you would be influenced by people dressing up like Fruit of the Loom, in outfits like green beans, grapes, tomatoes, and going to college campuses and then just seeing the sight of these people wearing these costumes say: You know, I think I need to eat some grapes or vegetables?

That is what this program did. It wasted \$14.7 million of your money. It is called the Get Fruved project.

I am not making it up.

Not only did this program waste \$14.7 million; it is still being funded by your tax dollars. The U.S. Department of Agriculture awarded \$4.9 million a year for this initiative, led by students and researchers at four American universities, which are the University of Tennessee, South Dakota, West Virginia, and the University of Florida.

The Fruved website reports that its goal is:

Our students are the best teachers. This is why Fruved has sophomores and juniors at each school peer-monitoring first-year students, helping them live a healthier life during their first year of college.

That includes dressing up in these outfits. That is \$14.7 million.

There are things that the Federal Government has a responsibility for and there are things that it does not. Abraham Lincoln said it best in a paraphrase where he said: The things that we can do ourselves, the government ought not to interfere. The things that we cannot do collectively, the government might have a role.

We know the government may have a role in education, certainly, with education funding and helping our facilities and our institutions. However, we do not need to waste \$70 billion. Imagine what that could do.

We will never change this idea if the American people do not demand of us to stop such madness and waste. When people come with straight faces and Ph.D.s and argue for dressing up in outfits, we have to push back on that and

say: \$20 trillion in debt, a weakened military, roads and bridges that are falling down and an infrastructure that needs improvement, modernization in our skies for the Federal Aviation Administration.

There are so many areas that the government truly does have a function and role. We will never get to it with asparagus urine studies and dressing up as fruits and vegetables.

Mr. Speaker, my hope is that all of us as Americans can find those overlapping circles and fight this absolute absurdity of waste in government, be responsible with American tax dollars, and sustain our great Republic for the future of our children.

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

PAKISTAN IS PLAYING THE UNITED STATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FASO). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) for 30 minutes.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, when our forces invaded Afghanistan in 2001, the goal was simple: remove the terrorist group, the Taliban government that sheltered the plotters of the 9/11 attacks on America, and destroy al-Qaida, a terrorist group. This was a NATO operation.

A little history is in order.

The United States was attacked. The member nations of NATO agreed that this was an attack on one nation, and NATO agreed to retaliate to the terrorist attack under article 5 of the NATO agreement. Article 5 has been talked about recently in the press.

So these 28 nations, NATO, went into Afghanistan, a haven for terrorists who sought to attack and kill Americans. That was 16 years ago. This is the longest war in American history, and yet it is still going on.

Let's examine how all of this is taking place and center on one nation, Pakistan, and their role in all of this.

The Taliban, since that attack, has waged an insurgency in Afghanistan, a neighbor to Pakistan, and destabilized the country, creating a perfect condition for terrorists to exploit in Afghanistan and spread that terrorist activity to other parts of the world.

The Taliban and al-Qaida have launched many of their attacks in Afghanistan from their neighbor, Pakistan. Recently, a Taliban sneak attack killed more than 160 Afghan soldiers, prompting the defense minister and the army chief of staff to resign.

The Taliban, a terrorist group, doesn't just stage attacks. They seize territory. The Special Inspector General for Afghan Reconstruction said, in January, that 172 Afghan districts are controlled, influenced, and contested by the Taliban.

Al-Qaida has a long history and loyalty to the Taliban—two terrorist groups working together. Osama bin

Laden swore his allegiance to the Taliban's leader, Mullah Omar, even before the 9/11 attack on the United States.

When bin Laden was killed in Pakistan, Ayman al-Zawahiri renewed that oath and cemented ties between al-Qaida and the Taliban. Wherever the Taliban is, you will see that al-Qaida is not far behind.

Since 2010, the United States incorrectly claimed that al-Qaida had just a little, small presence in the country, limited to only 50 or 100 fighters. Well, we know now that is absolutely incorrect.

Then, in 2015, the shocking U.S. raid in Afghanistan uncovered a massive al-Qaida training camp for terrorists, rounding up over 150 al-Qaida terrorist activity individuals. This was more fighters in one raid than the U.S. claimed existed in the entire country.

By the end of last year, U.S. officials announced that 250 al-Qaida terrorists were killed or captured in 2016.

The point here is that United States intelligence has been wrong about the activity of terrorists in Pakistan and in Afghanistan, but we are getting it right now.

Along with al-Qaida in Afghanistan, we have another terrorist group—I should have brought a chart to list all of these—the Haqqani Network.

Who are these folks?

It is another terrorist group linked to al-Qaida and the Taliban. The Haqqani Network is responsible for more American deaths in the region than any of the other terrorist groups that I have already mentioned.

□ 1200

The Haqqani Network attacks inside Afghanistan, and they have been directly traced back to Pakistan. All roads to terror lead to Pakistan.

In fact, in 2011, Admiral Mike Mullen, Chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, testified to the Senate, "the Haqqani Network acts as a veritable arm of Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence agency." What is that? That is the military arm of the Pakistan Government working with terrorist groups throughout the world.

The truth is, Pakistan has ties to about every terrorist group in Afghanistan, and we know that the Taliban terrorist group is based out of Pakistan.

It came as no surprise that when the U.S. drone strike killed the leader of the Taliban in 2016, guess where he was? He was in Pakistan hiding out.

There is a laundry list of evidence of Pakistan's support for terrorist groups, and I think a little more history is in order because this activity by Pakistan has been going on for years and has been below the radar. So let's just list some of the counts of the indictment against Pakistan and their terrorist activity.

Let's go back to 1980. Pakistan actively assisted countries like North Korea, Iran, and Libya in their efforts to build a nuclear weapon.

Now, where are we today?

Iran, the number one state sponsor of terrorism in the world, got some of its nuclear ability from Pakistan. North Korea, on the other side of the globe, guess what, they are developing nuclear capability, and we can trace some of their roots for their science back to Pakistan.

Since 1980, Pakistan has provided a safe haven and support, as I mentioned, for the Haqqani Network. The Haqqani Network operates many places in the world, including Lebanon, a threat to Israel.

Since the 1980s, Pakistan has hosted multiple madrassas that indoctrinate thousands of Pakistani young who join radical groups. That is a nice way of saying terrorist groups.

One Pakistan madrassa, which receives millions of dollars in state funding, has so many prominent terrorists in its alumni that it has the name of the University of Jihad.

I will continue. Since 1990, Pakistan has supported terrorist groups in Kashmir, like the Lashkar-e-Taiba, called the LeT, and other terrorist groups in its proxy war with India. These groups have carried out attacks inside India, such as the 2001 attack against the Indian Parliament.

Since the 1990s, Pakistan has allowed those terrorist groups like the LeT to openly fundraise in the country of Pakistan. Beginning in the 1990s, Pakistan provided training, advisers, intelligence, and material support for the Afghan Taliban, a specific terrorist group that operates in Afghanistan based in Pakistan.

Pakistan had forged the alliance between the al-Qaida and the Taliban before 9/11, and Hamid Gul, the former head of Pakistan's ISI, is called the father of the Taliban.

Pakistani nuclear scientists met with senior al-Qaida—this is a terrorist group—leadership in 1998, to discuss the terrorist group's desire to acquire nuclear technology.

In 1998, several Pakistani officers were killed in an al-Qaida training camp by the United States. Well, what were they doing there? They were training the al-Qaida in terrorist activities. This was a retaliation by the U.S. for the Africa Embassy bombings.

In 2001, Pakistan ISI helped revive the Afghan Taliban after it was defeated by the United States in the Northern Alliance. While Pakistan is fighting the Pakistani Taliban, it allows the Afghan Taliban, or what it refers to as the good Taliban, to operate freely in its territory.

Let me try to explain this. There is the Pakistani Taliban. It operates in Pakistan. The Pakistan Government goes after those people because they are causing crimes in Pakistan. But there is the Afghan Taliban that operates out of Pakistan that is supported by ISI and works in Afghanistan to kill NATO forces, including Americans. Pakistan says: oh, we are after terrorists. We are going after them. They are