

while burning ours, cursing our government and our President, and vowing that our laws mean nothing to them.

Are these people who share our allegiances? Should we not demand a lawful immigration system so that we can determine who we let in? Is not a secure border a prerequisite for that?

We must increase penalties for illegally crossing our border. Earlier this year, I cosponsored the Zero Tolerance for Illegal Entry Act, which would make doing so a felony. This would encourage legitimate asylum seekers to do so at authorized points of entry. This should be a component of reform.

Just this week, in a story we have seen over and over, agents arrested illegal border crossers with over 100 pounds of meth. Without our border agents, these dangerous drugs would be in our schools and in our communities.

We made a promise to our constituents to build this wall. We must prioritize the interests of the American people. I am willing to fight for this, and I hope that my colleagues are as well.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for his leadership.

Mr. MEADOWS. Mr. Speaker, as I close out this particular Special Order, I think it is appropriate for us to remind the American people that there is a bad case of Potomac fever up here in Washington, D.C. They forget what they promised the American people, yet what they must do is not forget this time.

Mr. Speaker, we are going to back up the President. If he vetoes this bill, we will be there. But, more importantly, the American people will be there. They will be there to support him. Let's build the wall and make sure that we do our job in Congress.

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

SOMEONE PLEASE WAKE ME UP

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

Mr. GARRETT. Mr. Speaker, someone please wake me up. I think I am having a nightmare.

What if I told you that, in the Middle East now, there is a place where Christians, Muslims, Arabs, Kurds, Assyrians, Yazidis—women and men—all sit together at the same table, as the result of the beginnings of a democratic process where tolerance and pluralism is a core value, and where we have seen safety, security, and prosperity emerge from the ashes one of the most horrific conflicts of the modern age. What if I told you that.

What if I told you that a foreign state actor spent \$10 million a month, to our reckoning, to influence thought in Washington, D.C., alone, to tell lies about this fledgling, tolerant democracy in the Middle East.

What if I told you that the very Iranian regime that took the lives of

American women and men on the battlefield in Iraq was celebrating right now along with Vladimir Putin and Bashar al-Assad and Turkey's neo-Ottoman fascist Erdogan.

I can tell you all those things because they are true.

Someone please wake me up. I think I am having a nightmare.

I just spent my Thanksgiving and 2 weeks of my life—a lot of money and a lot of time—away from my family to meet with brave people spanning multiple ethnicities who, like the First Continental Congress, have the recognition of exactly no foreign governments as a legitimate emerging government; who are different from you and me only by virtue of the happenstance of fate that they would be born somewhere as opposed to another place; who have quite literally shed the lifeblood of their children on battlefields that most Americans have never heard of, from Deir ez-Zor, Manbij, Jarablus; people who fought, bled, and died in homes that their families had inhabited in the Kabul River valley, the Jazeera province; and who were the tip of President Trump's spear in rooting out the combat components of a radical, warped, hateful ideology embodied by Daesh or ISIS.

And today, without warning, we said good luck.

The Syrian Democratic Council is not a Kurdish experiment in north and eastern Syria. It is an experiment that was largely started by Kurds, yes, but it is an experiment that includes men and women from across the ethnic and religious diversity of the region.

What we read about in any publication that comes out of Turkey, which has about the worst press freedom on the planet, is how the PKK has been engaged in terrorist activity in Turkey, and anyone affiliated with the PKK by virtue of the accident of their birth as a Kurd is somehow a terrorist. Folks, this is not true.

I met with everyone, from chief executives down to city councils. When you go to Deir ez-Zor, where the bulk of the population is Arab, the city council is Arab. And when you go to Manbij, the leadership is Arab. And when you go to Jazeera, the leadership is Kurdish and Christian, and it is male and female.

This Chamber that we stand in, in this venerated body, exists not only because of the blood and sweat and tears of innumerable Americans not only in the Revolution but throughout our history, but also because foreigners were willing to stand up in support of an idea that was freedom and self-determination: Lafayette, Pulaski, Kosciuszko, von Steuben—German, Polish, French.

Yet again, we betray those who have shed their blood to advance American policy.

Look, don't make the commitment to begin with. It is one thing to learn that the United States has equivocated on its policy and people died. It is an-

other thing to learn that the United States is equivocating on its policy and people with whom you have broken bread are about to die.

I told them when I was there: I am here on my own time. I do not formulate American policy. I happen to be a Member of Congress, but, by God, I will stand up and be heard so that you might have the right that was bequeathed to you, not by a political administration anywhere, but by God, to live free of fear, to sleep soundly in your ancestral home, to worship or not worship as you choose.

Ain Issa is the name of the town where, by happenstance, the Syrian Democratic Council has put some functions of its government. Ain Issa translates to English as the "Eyes of Christ." You can't make this up.

In my entire life, I have been proud of the 1 in 26 luck that I had to slip from the womb the son of Lois and TOM GARRETT in the Commonwealth of Virginia, born in Georgia, in the greatest country on the face of the planet.

But how many times must we muck up the endgame: the bloodletting in Cambodia and Laos, the purges in Iraq after 1991, the betrayal of the Kurds in 1985, the ignoring of vindictive revenge killings in 2004, the encouragement and then withdrawal in 2017.

Ironically, Mr. Speaker, the Russians are far more loyal friends than the Americans are. It is beyond me.

Somebody wake me up. I am having a nightmare.

To say that ISIS is defeated and that was our sole mission is, at the very least, to exhibit a complete lack of understanding of what is going on, on the ground.

I stood on the front lines near Jarablus by a building that was shot up that day by the Free Syrian Army, who we funded, at a military post manned by people of various ethnicities. And the Free Syrian Army did this while the Turkish military watched.

Iranians seek to build a land bridge to the Mediterranean. Hezbollah is a wholly owned subsidiary of Iran—it functions in Israel—and is the only terrorist organization I know of that has taken human life on every single inhabited continent—Oceania, Australia, Asia, Europe, Africa, South America, North America. And we are just opening up the door.

Eighty-seven people were killed in Deir ez-Zor province within 24 hours on either side of the time I visited. This wasn't a long time ago. This was Thanksgiving.

This fight is long from over. Frankly, if I am an ISIS recruiter, the idea that, "Look, the Americans are leaving," will only strengthen their position.

So let me make this metaphor, Mr. Speaker. We have a patient. That patient is Syria. It is stricken with four cancers. There is the regime in Russia; there is Turkey; there is Iran; and there is ISIS. We have just eradicated the bulk of one cancer, dropped the scalpel, left the surgery room, and declared that the patient is healed.

Candidly, the people in north and eastern Syria would be far better off if we had never come to help, because the brave women and men who have stood up to lead a democratic movement have identified themselves for extermination.

I sat down in Manbij with the military council, with an individual, it is my understanding, who was attacked with an IED the next day, and we have declared victory. This was 2 weeks, 3 weeks ago.

So let me be clear, and let me counter some propaganda. When the only people celebrating this decision are Turkey, Iran, and Russia, it might be a bad decision. When you hear that the Syrian Democratic Council and the forces in north and eastern Syria are Kurds, that defies the reality on the ground, the reality that I saw, and the people with whom I spoke.

The definition of insanity, Mr. Speaker, is doing the same thing again and again and expecting a different result. Let me tell you what I know, so that a month from now, I can say, "See, I told you so," and maybe I will have that because 4-plus-or-minus million people in north and eastern Syria won't even have so much as their homes.

□ 2130

Turkey is going into Manbij. They have been telling us that for a month. They said: We have got to get the Kurds out of Manbij. Guess what? The Kurds aren't controlling Manbij. The Syrian Democratic Forces, which includes some Kurds, are in Manbij, but they are out.

This is like post-World War II Japan or Germany saying: You need to get the African-American soldiers out of Berlin. It is racist on its face, ridiculous, and denies the reality on the ground, and apparently, nobody in the decision-making scheme has bothered to figure out what the actual truth is.

So the Turks are going into Manbij. Now, what will that look like? Well, we know what happened in Afrin and al-Bab. They fly the Turkish flag over the courthouses. They have changed the street signs to honor Ottoman sultans. I can show you a video, Mr. Speaker, of a paramilitary police force raising their right hands in a Hitleresque salute shouting: "Long live Erdogan," in Turkish. This is on Syrian soil.

The children are educated in a different language. And the hospital in Afrin, which used to have a sign outside in Kurdish and Arabic, now has a sign outside in Turkish. In Jarabulus, the commanders with whom we spoke said when Turkey came in and said they rooted out ISIS, we looked through the field glasses the next day and lo and behold, the same people that were there the day before in ISIS uniforms were there in uniforms sanctioned by Turkey.

Oh, by the way, I just learned that we are going to sell \$3.5 billion worth of Patriot missile batteries to Turkey to

go along with the F-35 fighters that I guess they can use to bomb the sovereign nation of Iraq like they did last week in U.S. F-16s, perhaps this time more effectively. This is insanity.

And I am not anti-this administration. I am not anti-this President. I am anti-foolish policy that will cost human lives that will be perpetuated and exacerbated by foolish foreign policy which preceded it.

I am not suggesting we attack anybody. I am suggesting we don't turn and walk away. People who depended upon us and took us at our word are going to die, and we are worried about what we get for Christmas.

I mean, I don't have words. So, Mr. Speaker, I don't know what more I can do. But I will not stop.

With great power comes great responsibility. Contrary to what some people might say, we live in a great Nation. Our policy sucks. And to walk away from commitments that we made because it is politically convenient is beyond shameful. This matters. Iran is giddy. Erdogan is giddy. The Russians have punked us, to use the jargon of the day. And the band played on.

I don't know. Somebody wake me up. I am having a nightmare. I mean, I represent the citizens of the Fifth District of Virginia, and I love them. I love my district. But I value human life, and I believe that if we make commitments, we should keep them. And if human life is lost because we can't keep our word, we need to take a long, hard look at exactly who we are.

Mr. Speaker, with that, I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT).

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, I just want to applaud my friend's efforts on behalf of people who have counted on us. The 2 weeks he spent over there have been invaluable to the people who were counting on us. Some of that time was spent with a dear friend named Dave Eubanks.

Mr. GARRETT. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. GROTHMAN).

Mr. GROTHMAN. Mr. Speaker, I will just take a minute of your time to follow up on what Congressman GARRETT just said. It seems to me, in my lifetime—I am not an expert on foreign affairs—there are good things the United States has done, and bad things. But the worst things are, when people who are counting on us, people who we set up and relied on us, we decide to leave them to whatever will happen.

I think, in particular, a much bigger thing is when we stopped funding people in Vietnam. Obviously, during the Obama administration leaving Iraq, we left all sorts of people who were our friends, and created a huge vacuum. I am just very afraid today, and I would encourage President Trump to reconsider the decision to withdraw what troops we do have in the Syrian area because we have a lot of allies who felt they could count on the United States, whom I am afraid now will be left to whatever other forces in the region—

who are not friendly to Western values—left to whatever they want to do with them. And I hope that is being taken into account right now.

Mr. GARRETT. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Maine (Mr. POLIQUIN).

Mr. POLIQUIN. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. GARRETT for the opportunity to address the House.

Mr. Speaker, it is the responsibility of the United States House of Representatives, this body, and also the United States Senate, to protect our families. There is nothing more important as dictated by the United States Constitution, than to protect our families.

Mr. Speaker, we have one heck of a problem on our southwest border with Mexico: in California, New Mexico, and Arizona. We have a very dangerous and very unhealthy situation just on the other side of the fence, in particular now, with Mexico. I am asking the President tonight, if he is watching, to please, publicly ask the House Republicans, while we are still in the majority, please ask us to pass a real strong border security and immigration bill.

We did this several months ago. Goodlatte-McCaul One, as they called it, got 193 votes. It has everything that the President wanted, his four pillars and a heck of a lot more. Why in the world do we want to negotiate for peanuts when we can have the whole ball of wax?

Goodlatte-McCaul One, has \$25 billion, Mr. Trump, \$25 billion for border security, including the wall where necessary; \$25 billion—not \$5 billion—\$25 billion over 5 years. It ends the visa lottery. It reins in chain migration, and it reforms the asylum process.

It is more than the President wants. This will happen, Mr. Speaker, only if the President of the United States publicly asks House Republicans to pass this bill or something really close to it.

The votes are there. Over the past 2 weeks, I have talked to every single member of the Republican Conference, 235 Members of the House. I have spoken to every single one, except for about five or six. We have the votes to do this. It is not too late, but it is getting late.

After the Democrats take control of this body, they have told us what they will bring or try to bring to the President's desk. It will not be what the President wants. It will not be what America wants.

It will be some form of open border, sanctuary cities, and amnesty. There is no better deal. There is no longer an opportunity to hold out for a better deal. We have the votes to pass Goodlatte-McCaul One or something real close to it.

But I ask the President, he must publicly ask the House to do it. That will give enough of our Members the support they need to vote for it, and it will cause leadership to act.

Again, why would we want to negotiate for peanuts when we can get the

whole ball of wax? I appreciate and I thank Mr. GARRETT very much for yielding to me.

Mr. GARRETT. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT).

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, how much time is remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Virginia has 8½ minutes remaining.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my friend, TOM GARRETT, for arranging this Special Order. He is on his way out, and he cares so deeply about this country and this country's allies that he would put his life at risk and go and spend time with another American hero.

In fact, Dave Eubanks is a hero, and he is someone who has dedicated his life as a Christian, as an American, trying to make the lives of others in the world better, and I thank my friend, Congressman GARRETT, for spending that time with him. We shouldn't turn our back on our friends.

Sometimes it seems that Mr. Erdogan is not our friend, but we certainly have had a tremendous amount of friendship and lives lost in the Kurdish community, standing up for us, with us, in defense of freedom.

That is important. And I also want to address the issue of the wall on our southern border. It appears clear, since we lost over 70,000 American lives last year—that is more than all of the precious American lives we lost in the whole time of the Vietnam war—and we lost those in 1 year from drugs.

Most of those drugs coming across our southern border in the form of opiates and other hallucinogens, including fentanyl, are coming from Mexico. So if you want to see another 70,000 Americans die again next year, you don't want a wall. Let's not build a wall.

If you would like to have illegal aliens continue to pour into this country in the hopes that they will be able to vote illegally, you don't want a wall, even though you supported one in the past. You don't want one now because you may get those votes if you can stop a wall from being built.

If you want Mexico to remain as a country with so much incredible potential whose people are suffering and keep the people of Central America suffering at the hands of the drug cartels, you don't want a wall. Because if we build a wall where we need it, we build a fence where we need it, we totally secure the border, what happens? The money, by the tens of billions, pouring into the drug cartels south of the border dries up.

That means the corruption in Mexico and south of there dries up. That means Mexico, with its incredible national resources—the natural resources of that Nation are incredible. Its location, actually, for commerce is even better than the United States.

□ 2145

It sits between two continents. It sits between two oceans. Its potential is

unlimited. But what limits it is the corruption from the drug cartels that America is continuing to fund.

So do you want that to continue?

Yeah, you don't want a wall.

Our elected leaders in the House and the Senate—the Republican elected leaders in the House and Senate—were not in favor of a wall or total border security in the last election in 2016. It was unfortunate.

The President knew and heard the voice of the American people, and he echoed it. But that is why back in September of this year at our conference—and I know it wasn't popular and people didn't like me saying it—but I had to make clear, it was clear to me, if we don't get money for a wall, then the people, the voters that put President Trump in the White House will not come out in the same numbers, and we will not likely remain in the majority. I said it 2 weeks in a row, and the response was to cancel that last week of votes before the election.

We didn't fund the wall. We said: Oh, let's wait until December.

My comment then was: This will be my 14th December in Congress, and I have lived through 13 where we were told we will fight in December.

We have yet to fight in December.

Now is the time. I know people want to go home. I want to go home. But this is our chance to protect America for our future. Let's help the President keep our promise. Let's help him keep our promise.

I know the Speaker and the majority leader were not big on this 2 years ago, but most of America heard commercials from our majority leaders saying: Help KEVIN MCCARTHY and President Trump build the wall.

Well, now we need Americans to help remind our Republican leaders to help our President build the wall like we said. If that doesn't happen, I don't think the Senate can count on being back in the majority. They won't be. It is that serious.

I have heard that the feeling in the Senate among Republicans now is, let's not do reconciliation so we only have to pass the money for a wall with 51 votes. We don't want to do that.

If you don't do that, get money passed for the wall, then you are not coming back in the majority. Maybe you would enjoy the minority. Get used to it. That is where you are heading in 2 years.

It doesn't have to be that way. We can still have the White House in 2020. We can still have a majority in the Senate in 2020. We can get the majority back in the House in 2020. But if we drop the ball on this biggest campaign promise, then we are not going to have the majority in either the House or the White House.

And that, to quote my friend from Houston, my fellow former judge, that is just the way it is.

Mr. GARRETT. Mr. Speaker, very quickly back to Syria, if anyone tells you that this is Turks versus Kurds,

they should tell Sheikh Bandar, the leader of thousands of Arabs who fight alongside the Kurds and the SDF. If anyone tells you it is Turks versus Kurds, they should tell that to Commander Johannes, the leader of thousands of Christians who fight alongside Arabs and Kurds.

This is not a Kurdish experiment; it is a human experiment. It is an experiment in democracy. We made a commitment. We should keep our word.

Mr. Speaker, if anyone is watching, I hope they will contact their political leaders and ask them to stop the sale of Patriot missiles and F-35s to the aggressive Turks. I hope they will know the Iranian military is on the ground in Syria right now everywhere in the form of the IRGC, except the place that we are about to abandon.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the men and women across the world who stand up for the basic idea that all people are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights, and among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

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

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 48 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 0118

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. BYRNE) at 1 o'clock and 18 minutes a.m.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, December 19, 2018.

Hon. PAUL D. RYAN,
The Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on December 19, 2018, at 10:55 p.m.:

That the Senate agrees to the amendment of the House of Representatives to the amendment of the Senate to the bill with a further amendment H.R. 695.

With best wishes, I am,
Sincerely,

KAREN L. HAAS.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to: