

those close to the President who are making millions, apparently because of the proximity to the President; those people demand scrutiny from watchdog agencies; and, in this case, it requires an investigation of Carl Icahn by the SEC.

Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD my letter to the Honorable Jay Clayton, the chairman of the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, of last week.

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
Washington, DC, March 8, 2018.

Hon. JAY CLAYTON,  
Chairman, U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN CLAYTON: I write to request that you and your agency immediately investigate possible illegal insider trading by Mr. Carl Icahn, a longtime friend of President Donald Trump, who according to his SEC filings sold \$31.3 million worth of stock in a company heavily dependent on steel just days before the President announced plans to impose import tariffs on steel and aluminum.

According to Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) filings submitted in February, Mr. Icahn disclosed that he sold nearly 1 million shares of Manitowoc Company, Inc., which is heavily dependent on steel to manufacture cranes and lifts. Approximately seven days later, his good friend President Trump announced plans to impose steep tariffs on steel imports. On that news, Manitowoc stock plunged and lost 6% of its value, but Mr. Icahn had already cashed out.

The announcement of tariffs on the heels of Mr. Icahn's stock sale is highly suspicious. The close relationship between the President and Mr. Icahn adds to the appearance of wrongdoing. This is also not the first time Mr. Icahn has been suspected of using his relationship with the President for his personal benefit. It was widely reported that Mr. Icahn stepped down from his role as "special adviser" to the President because of potential conflicts of interest.

As a member of the House of Representatives I am required to report my assets and liabilities yearly and to report within 30 days of a transaction any securities I buy or sell. The purpose of these rules is to ensure transparency and to help prevent personal profiteering from insider information that Members of Congress may have access to while serving. In other words, if I were to dump a stock a week before Congress took action that would impact that stock's price, I would most certainly be investigated resulting in possible sanctions, removal from office or jail time.

It is hard to believe Mr. Icahn's actions with regard to unloading voluminous shares of Manitowoc stock right before the President's is just a coincidence. It undoubtedly warrants a federal investigation. Thank you for your attention in this matter and I look forward to your agency taking swift action and your response to this request. To contact me about this request, please call me at my Washington DC office.

Sincerely,

LUIS V. GUTIÉRREZ,  
Member of Congress.

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

## WE SHOULD DEBATE A NEW AUMF REGARDING AMERICAN TROOPS IN AFGHANISTAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) for 5 minutes.

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, 1 week ago, BARBARA LEE and TOM COLE sent a letter to the Speaker of the House that was signed by 100 Members of Congress, including myself, asking the Speaker to authorize the committees of jurisdiction to bring an AUMF—that is an Authorization for Use of Military Force—so that we can have a debate.

The last time we had a policy debate on Afghanistan was 2001, 17 years ago.

I have been on the floor for the last 5 years because I am frustrated that we can't get a debate. It is our constitutional duty. And our young men and women are around the world in different locations, half we don't even know about, yet we can't debate an issue of war when young men and women go and die for this country.

That 5 years included calling on John Boehner to authorize an AUMF. Now we are calling on PAUL RYAN. I think my name has been on 15 letters going back to the days of John Boehner.

In the 17 years, we have spent over \$1 trillion, over 2,300 Americans have died, and over 20,000 wounded; yet we in Congress are not meeting our constitutional responsibility.

I have Camp Lejeune in my district. I have talked to many Active Duty marines who have been there five, six, seven times. It is so chaotic now, that the Russians are working with Karzai and trying to get back in with the Taliban.

It is a no-win situation. It is time to have a debate and let Members vote whether they want to stay or come home.

Mr. Speaker, to make things worse than ever, on February 15, Pamela Constable wrote an article in The Washington Post titled, "Taliban appeals to American people to 'rationally' rethink war effort."

They are our enemy, but it is not bad advice, to be honest with you.

Pamela Constable mentions many portions of a longer letter written by the Taliban to the United States. I have a copy of this article and I read it yesterday.

Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD the article written by Pamela Constable.

[From the Washington Post, Feb. 14, 2018]  
TALIBAN APPEALS TO AMERICAN PEOPLE TO  
'RATIONALLY' RETHINK WAR EFFORT  
(By Pamela Constable)

KABUL.—Taliban insurgents on Wednesday issued an extraordinary, 17,000-word appeal to the "American people," asking them to pressure U.S. officials to end the 16-year-old conflict in Afghanistan and asserting that the protracted American "occupation" had brought only death, corruption and drugs to the impoverished country.

The letter, whose authenticity was confirmed by a brief telephone conversation

with insurgent spokesman Zabiullah Mujahid, was primarily aimed at a U.S. audience. Unlike previous statements issued by the Taliban, it used statistics and logical arguments—not just ideological harangues—to convince Americans that their government's investment in the war has been a dire mistake.

"Prolonging the war in Afghanistan and maintaining American troop presence is neither beneficial for America nor for anyone else," the document said, calling on U.S. citizens, legislators and others to "read this letter prudently" and evaluate the costs and benefits of continuing to fight. "Stubbornly seeking the protraction of this war;" it added, "will have 'dreadful consequences' for the region and the 'stability of America herself.'"

The letter, sent under the banner of "The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan," was issued just weeks after a blitz of deadly insurgent attacks in the Afghan capital have left the government struggling to cope with increased public anxiety and anger. It also came as the Trump administration is ramping up a new military strategy, involving thousands of additional troops, to expand the Afghan security forces and train them to defend their country independently.

While insisting that "our preference is to solve the Afghan issue through peaceful dialogues," the letter also warned that Taliban forces "cannot be subdued by sheer force" and that seeking a peaceful solution does not mean "that we are exhausted or our will has been sapped."

This combination of outreach and threat has been a hallmark of Taliban statements, including a shorter one issued shortly after the spate of attacks last month that killed more than 150 people in urban population centers. The insurgent group has said it would not revive peace talks unless foreign troops leave the country, and it has rejected feelers from the administration of President Ashraf Ghani.

A spokesman for Ghani, Shah Hussain Murtazaw, responded sharply to the letter, saying, "We never negotiate with groups who resort to crime and the brutal killing of people and then claim responsibility for it. The door of peace is shut to them, but the door of peace is open to those groups who have expressed their hatred for such crimes."

The letter's talking points included a list of goals that the U.S. government had set out to achieve in entering the war, including eliminating terrorism, establishing the rule of law and eradicating drugs. It then systematically presented arguments, backed up with international statistics but also exaggerated for effect, to show that these efforts had failed or had extremely negative consequences.

"As confirmed by your own military authorities, 3546 American and foreign soldiers have been killed, more than 20,000 American forces injured and tens of thousands more are suffering mentally," the letter said, asserting that the actual casualty figures were much higher but were being "concealed" by U.S. leaders. The casualty figures track with those provided by the U.S. military.

A second argument said reports by the U.S. Office of the Special Inspector General for Afghan Reconstruction estimated that "sixty percent of Afghan territory is now under the control of Taliban." The figure is actually much lower, but the inspector general and other agencies have said that insurgents control or influence more territory than at any previous time in the war and that the area continues to widen.

The letter also said that there had been 751 U.S. airstrikes in September, which appears to be an accurate figure. "You should ask your generals that despite using such force,

have you retaken even a single inch of land from the Taliban," the letter suggested.

A third assertion was that previous U.S. administrations had cited the "prevention and eradication of narcotics" as a justification to "invade" Afghanistan, an inaccurate claim. But the letter correctly cited figures from the U.N. Office on Drugs and Crime showing that opium poppy cultivation has "skyrocketed" in the 16 years since the military intervention and that the number of Afghan drug addicts has reached more than 3 million.

The overall message of these arguments was that the American people should make a "rational" assessment of the war effort, realize that it is backfiring and prevail upon their leaders to withdraw.

"You proclaim to be a developed and civilized nation," the letter said. "We leave it to your judgment to decide" whether the prevailing conditions of "insecurity, chaos" and soaring drug problems in Afghanistan constitute "reforms or crimes against humanity."

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, it is ironic because many of us in the House of Representatives do think and would agree with the Taliban: It is time to rethink the policy in Afghanistan.

Mr. Speaker, I must have at least 35 or 40 posters that I have been using on the floor of the House for the last number of years. This one is of a woman who lost her husband, in tears, and the little baby girl sitting in her lap. She doesn't know why there is a man in a uniform kneeling before her mother with a folded flag.

There is just so much that we are missing as Members of Congress because we won't debate the war in Afghanistan.

Afghanistan is a graveyard of empires. I think one day that Afghan graveyard is going to have a headstone that says, "USA," because we are going broke trying to fix a country that couldn't care less about our values and our system. But that is the way it works around here. You can't even get a debate on sending young men and women to die for this country.

Mr. Speaker, I ask Mr. RYAN to please let us have this debate. Members of Congress in both parties want to debate. You can vote for staying in Afghanistan, or you can vote for getting out of Afghanistan, but let us meet our constitutional responsibility.

I ask God to bless our men and women in uniform, and God to bless America.

#### YABUCOA AND VIEQUES, PUERTO RICO

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Puerto Rico (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ) for 5 minutes.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, as we speak today, the people of Puerto Rico continue to suffer. Currently, 200,000 families and businesses, 16 percent of the island, remain without power. That is not 6 days after the hurricane or 6 weeks. We are talking about 6 months.

For those still without power in Puerto Rico, they are now living

through the longest blackout in modern history.

While parts of the island are recovering, it is the rural, far-flung portions of the island that continue to suffer the most and where aid has been slowest to reach. For example, if you go to my hometown of Yabucoa, where Hurricane Maria made landfall, it looks like the hurricane struck yesterday. Two-thirds of the residents living there are without electricity.

For decades, Yabucoa's baseball stadium stood as an important symbol of that town's community. The people there love baseball, and the stadium was a community anchor, a symbol of the town and its people. Those who live in Yabucoa are proud of their baseball diamond, as this town fielded Puerto Rico's team in the 2017 Junior League World Series.

Today, the baseball stadium sits empty, now a symbol of how the people of Yabucoa struggle daily to survive. Meanwhile, basic services are hard to come by, with hospitals relying on generators to provide lifesaving treatment. Older, rural parts of Puerto Rico continue to suffer immensely.

Thirty miles east of Yabucoa's coast sits the island of Vieques. As an island off an island, Vieques also has been neglected, waiting for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to restore power.

Just a few weeks ago, I was there and I saw this on the road: power poles dangling from electric wires, just waiting to snap.

Can you imagine seeing that in the mainland United States?

Again, this is not 1 week or 2 weeks after the hurricane. It is close to 6 months later. Meanwhile, the island's connection to the main power grid has been cut off, and some workers think it will take years to fully restore the undersea cables.

Those are just two towns in a commonwealth of 3.3 million American citizens, but all across Puerto Rico there are rural areas that have been hit hard and are still suffering today.

We cannot afford to forget what has happened there. These are fellow American citizens. For 120 years they have fought, shed blood, and died in our wars, defending our freedoms. Now they need our help to recover from a humanitarian crisis.

I implore my colleagues, we must not forget Puerto Rico. We must allocate additional aid and help. We must rebuild Puerto Rico stronger and better than ever before. Until we do, we will be failing the people of Puerto Rico, we will be failing our fellow Americans.

#### SEE SOMETHING, SAY SOMETHING

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KUSTOFF of Tennessee). The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MARSHALL) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MARSHALL. Mr. Speaker, last night, 406 of my colleagues and I voted to pass the STOP School Violence Act and the Securing Our Schools Act.

As a father of four, when I dropped each of my kids off at Jefferson Elementary School in Great Bend, Kansas, I felt confident that they were going to have a safe place where they could learn and grow; but, today, we have seen time and time again that we need to revisit how we are protecting our children.

The STOP School Violence Act will train students, teachers, faculty, and local law enforcement on ways to identify threats and report them. It goes back to the message we have been relaying for ages: see something, say something.

□ 1015

This bill recognizes that sometimes our children and educators often do not have the training to spot some of the warning signs, and that is why it is critical that we provide training so students and personnel can recognize and report threats before they occur.

We also looked at ways to better our reporting process so that, when a threat is made, we have an effective way to log and intervene. To do so, this bill provides funding for States to upgrade their technology and develop an anonymous reporting system through a mobile app, hotline, and website. Not only does it allocate funds for violence, prevention training, and modernize our reporting protocols, it also allocates funds to improve school security equipment.

The STOP School Violence Act, coupled last night with the Securing Our Schools Act, grants funds for schools to install panic buttons and further hardening and protection of our schools. These are steps forward that approach the issue of school safety from several angles, and I am proud to have cosponsored both pieces of legislation.

I want to make sure that my message to everyone back home today is clear. The House of Representatives is listening, and our school grounds should no longer be soft targets. After last night's vote, the STOP School Violence Act and the Securing Our Schools Act joins the Fix NICS Act that has been waiting on a vote from the Senate since last December. Fix NICS would strengthen background checks and close critical loopholes.

Today I urge my friends in the Senate to pass these bills so that our Nation's schools and children can be safer.

#### RECOGNIZING RESILIENCY OF KANSANS

Mr. MARSHALL. Mr. Speaker, as droughts continue to worsen across Kansas, now impacting all 105 counties, we are again at the point of seeing wildfires whip across the State of Kansas. While so far none of them have come close to the size of last year's Starbuck fire, there is reason to be concerned.

Today I want to recognize the resiliency of Kansans who have been coming together to help neighbors and strangers alike, as well as soldiers from