

knew him and all the many capacities we dealt in together, I never had one other person come and complain to me about Sean—no constituent, no fellow staff member, no lobbyist, no member of another office. All of them thought they were his best friend.

Now, he was pretty good at that and would give you a pretty good opinion later about whether they were really a friend or not, but the point is everybody that knew him liked him, and everybody believed that he liked them back.

Sean's lifelong profession, and, really, it began when he was quite young, was his passion for politics. He took it first as a volunteer, and then it did become the manner in which he lived his life.

Now, his gentle nature hid an extraordinarily competitive personal spirit. Politics, I like to say, is an adult team sport, and Sean played it exceptionally well. He was astute in his judgment about people and about politics.

In all the many issues we discussed over many years, both in terms of dealing with political campaigns and dealing with the politics of the House, itself, both on the floor and in our Conference, I never got a piece of bad advice from Sean. But with Sean, politics always had a purpose, and that purpose was always to achieve some greater good, some more important goal.

He wasn't just good at winning; he was good at governing. He, frankly, never sold out. He had plenty of opportunities to go and make a lot more money than I could have ever paid him, but he worked for principle. He always put his country and his party and people above anything that might benefit himself. And he believed in the things that he worked for, and he worked to make a difference in this country each and every day.

Frankly, he cherished this institution above all else. He enjoyed not only the politics, but those rare moments of drama when great things happen on the floor of the House; and he made sure that any Member he worked for—and I wasn't the only one—had an opportunity to impact those events thanks to his good advice, thanks to the wonderful staff that he built and created, and thanks to his shrewd strategy.

All of us that knew him believed that he left us far too soon, but that is pretty presumptive, Mr. Speaker. Who are any of us to say something like that? God chooses the time that we come and the time that we go. How can you be bitter when your friend went to his bed, innocent and untroubled, and woke up in Heaven with our Lord and Savior?

But God does allow us to miss him, and miss him we all will. He will be missed as a husband and a father and a friend. He blessed all of us with his life. And for me, in particular, Mr. Speaker, I will miss him for all my days.

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

□ 1300

#### CALIFORNIA'S WATER SUPPLY

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

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, we just heard a few moments ago a colleague of ours, Congressman CHARLIE DENT, who has served with great distinction and honor, a classmate of mine.

I simply want to say that he is a role model for all of us in terms of how to legislate in a thoughtful and deliberative fashion, and to reach across the aisle in a way that I think is conducive to getting things done. He certainly is a great example of how we should all reflect in terms of our work here every day.

We will miss him, and we wish him the best of luck in his next endeavors.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to talk about the challenges that we face in California as it relates to our water needs.

The San Joaquin Valley, that I have the honor and privilege to represent, is one of the largest agriculture regions in the entire country, and, therefore, the world. We grow half of the Nation's fruits and vegetables, 70 percent of the world's almonds, 50 percent of the world's pistachios, the number one dairy State in the Nation, and the number one citrus State in the Nation.

The list goes on and on and on, over 300 commodities that we have the ability to grow because of an incredible Mediterranean climate, and water, which is the crucible, because we like to say in the Valley that: Where water flows, food grows.

Clearly, the ability to have water reliability is so essential to ensuring that we can continue to maintain our agricultural production, which every night puts food on America's dinner table and, therefore, allows American consumers to have the healthiest, the best, nutritious quality of varieties of food and food products at the most economical cost to them and their families anywhere in the world.

We are so good at it, in producing food, not only in California, but around the country, American agriculture, that I think sometimes Americans take it for granted, because less than 3 percent of our Nation's population—as in California, less than 3 percent of our State's population—is directly involved in the production of food and fiber.

I sometimes feel that the majority of Americans believe that their food comes from a grocery store. Well, it doesn't. I mean, you get it at the grocery store, or you get it at your favorite restaurants, wherever that may be.

But before that food gets to the grocery store, or before it gets to those restaurants, it comes from farmers and ranchers and dairymen and -women across this great land of ours, and certainly California plays a key role.

We have had difficult, difficult drought periods in California. We had a 6-year prolonged drought that reminded us that the climate continues to change. What impacts we, as people, have on the change of that climate is debated. But clearly we know that we have an impact, and it continues to change.

Therefore, to be responsible, we have to plan to ensure that we have adequate water supplies to maintain our agricultural production, for it is the sustenance of life: water. Where water flows, food grows.

It is so important, obviously, throughout the country, but critical in maintaining our incredible cornucopia of agricultural production in California. You should understand that 99 percent of our agriculture in California is irrigated.

I have, for over 30 years, worked to strengthen the water reliability, not only in the San Joaquin Valley, but throughout California.

In a State like California, where we have so many resources and so many cutting-edge technologies, in terms of efficient irrigation methodologies, drip irrigation and conserving and trying to figure out ways in which we can recharge our aquifers, we are using all of the water tools in the water toolbox.

When I was in the California Legislature, I authored legislation to create the Kern County Water Bank. I led two successful water bond measures that provided more than \$2 billion to improve California's water system and provide for safe, reliable water drinking.

We have places in California, and other parts of the country, where our groundwater has gotten contaminated. Therefore, we need to make adjustments to make sure that every American—every Californian—has clean drinking water.

In Congress, I have secured approval for the Madera Irrigation District Water Bank, the San Luis Intertie, and the North Valley Regional Recycled Water Project, bringing hundreds and thousands of acre-feet to secure more water, a more reliable supply of water, for the San Joaquin Valley, but also for other parts of California, as well.

If we cannot solve the water problems in California, I really am very concerned about the future of our Nation and our planet. Again, we don't think about it, but food is a national security issue. It truly is. We take it for granted.

We not only have the ability throughout the country, and in California, to produce enough food for every American, but we produce more than we can consume and, therefore, we export many of our food products throughout the world.

But again, with the impacts of climate change, oceans rising, the planet that 2 years ago clicked 7 billion people, by the middle of the century will have 9 billion people.

Guess what happens when you add 2 billion more people to the planet? You

have to feed them. Therefore, food not only for America, but for the world, is a national security issue.

But you can't have that abundant supply of food, that reliable supply of food, unless you have a reliable supply of water.

Let me give you some perspective. Two hundred years ago, we had 1.7 billion people on the planet. So, in 200 years, we have gone from 1.7 billion to 7 billion, and by the middle of the century it is estimated that there will be 9 billion people on the planet that, yes, will need food. Only if we have reliable water supplies can we ensure that we have that reliable supply of food.

If we can't figure out ways in which to manage our water resources in California—the fifth-largest economy now in the world, a cutting-edge State in technology—if we can't solve our water problems in California, I am truly concerned about other parts of the world that depend upon reliable water supplies to feed their population.

Throughout the years that I have been both here and in Sacramento, I have worked on a bipartisan basis to pass water infrastructure improvements for our Nation. The WIIN Act, that we passed some 2 years ago, was signed into law in December of 2016.

It was part of an overall effort to provide solutions, using all the water tools in our water toolbox, that will make it more flexible to move water through California's system of waterways—the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta System—in which we can have the flexibility, but still try to deal with the environmental concerns and maintain water quality for our cities, but also provide water for our farmers.

In addition to that, provide to the State over \$355 million for water infrastructure projects, including matching Federal funds for new surface storage in California: for the Temperance Flat project, for raising the San Luis Reservoir, for creating the Sites Reservoir, and for other important funding purposes in which a Federal authorization will allow us to match both State and local dollars.

In all of my time in working to improve the lives of the people of the Valley that I have the honor and privilege to represent, rarely have I been presented with a project that has such obvious potential as the New Exchequer Dam that was built a number of years ago.

The water that is currently impounded—actually, it is a dam that was built in the twenties and expanded in the late fifties—provides irrigation for an incredible amount of productive ag land in Merced County. It also allows for groundwater replenishment in many of the nearby communities, and it also provides environmental benefits for fisheries and wildlife refuges downstream from the dam.

Recently, the Merced Irrigation District performed a detailed analysis of the hydrology of the watershed upstream from Exchequer Dam, which is

the mountains that California has been blessed with—the incredible Sierra Nevada mountain range, over 600 miles in length, 150 miles in width, and mountains that go from 12,000 feet to 14,000 feet—that provides the snowpack for California. It is Mother Nature's icebox for California.

For those of you who are not from California, you should understand that we get all of our moisture in California from November to March. Above 4,000 feet or 5,000 feet, that rain turns to snow. Then, in the springtime, it melts. It comes down, and it fills our rivers and the reservoirs that we have on our rivers, and it allows us to have a supply of water throughout the summer. We don't have any rain in the summer.

Recently, this project, as an example, it was determined by the district, the Merced Irrigation District, that if we raised the spillway gates by 8 feet, that Lake McClure, behind this dam, could add an additional 57,000 acre-feet of water.

Fifty-seven thousand acre-feet of water is a good additional supply, without impeding Merced's wild and scenic river designation. We maintain that. But, at the same time, we add 57,000 acre-feet of water to the supply. That is important.

However, to move forward with raising these spillway gates, the flood control and operations manual for Exchequer Dam must be updated, and that is the responsibility of the Army Corps of Engineers.

You should understand that many of these water projects in California, and other States across the country, have multiple purposes. They not only supply water for people, they not only try to benefit the environment, but they also provide water for farmers. At the same time, many of these projects provide hydroelectric power, and they provide flood control protection.

So, in this case, when you increase the spillway gates 8 feet, the Army Corps of Engineers has to modify the flood control manual so that when we have heavy storms and rains, as we did a year ago in California, we are able to operate the facility in such a way that also provides flood control protection.

Unfortunately, the current manual that is in place was from 1959, when the dam was expanded the second time. Army Corps of Engineers policy requires that flood control manuals be updated, therefore, to reflect the new data and the changes to a project that would occur as a result of raising these gates.

In 2017, the Merced Irrigation District wrote the Army Corps of Engineers, requesting a revision of the flood control manual. That is what this legislation that we are introducing will work on. The Army Corps indicated that they could not update the manual at the time, citing budgetary constraints.

The Merced Irrigation District proposed to pay for the public process to

update the flood control manual, to incorporate this new hydrological data, if, in fact, the gates were raised.

The Army Corps responded by saying that it didn't have the legal authority to accept funds for the purpose of a non-Federal Section 7 like this New Exchequer Dam, despite being able to do so for other Army Corps facilities.

Thus, the Non-Federal Reservoir Operations Improvement Act legislation that I have introduced would resolve this disparity by allowing the owners of a non-Federal reservoir, in this case, the Merced Irrigation District, that are regulated by the Army Corps to provide protection for flood control, to contribute the funds so that we can update the manual, so that we can, in fact, raise the gates 8 feet, which the Merced Irrigation District is going to pay for, along with their water users—that is how they pay for it—as well as paying the Army Corps of Engineers to update the flood control manual.

□ 1315

Now, this sounds like a lot of common sense, doesn't it? I think so. So that is the purpose of this legislation.

It is part of a long effort that I have been engaged in to improve the water supply, the water reliability, the water quality, the environmental benefits for the challenges that we face in California as it relates to maintaining the water needs for a State that has 40 million people, the fifth largest economy in the country, the number one agricultural State in the Nation.

So we know that with the growing demands, the competing demands on water, that crucible, the critical, absolute must resource to ensure that we can survive as people, so that where water flows, food will grow, that we can maintain the ability as a national security issue to ensure that all Americans have the kind of sustainable, good, quality, nutritious food that is so critical to our diet and to our well-being, that is really what this is all about.

This is a local project, but it is a part of a much larger effort that I have been engaged in with my colleagues on a bipartisan basis to address the needs, the long-term needs of California's water supply. That is what is at the heart here.

So we will continue to work together. I hope that this legislation will be enacted this year so that the Merced Irrigation District can be able to go ahead and plan and construct the increase of water supply for the needs of the people of Merced County and the surrounding area that will have a multitude of benefits.

This is a part of an overall effort that I will continue to be engaged in in Merced County, in Madera County, and in Fresno County, throughout our valley and throughout our State to ensure that, in the long term, in the 21st century, we can count on the fact that we have a long-term water supply for all Californians that will allow us to continue to maintain our agricultural

economy and, at the same time, provide water for people who live in the cities, improve our water quality, and ensure, at the same time, that we protect the environment.

Those are the goals. It is complicated; it is complex; and it is never easy.

Mark Twain supposedly was credited, over 100 years ago, with saying, having spent some time in the West, that it was clear to him that, when we talk about water and water resources and the incredible demands on those water resources, 100 years ago, supposedly Mark Twain said that, in the West, it was clear to him, "whiskey was made for drinking and water was made for fighting."

We hope that we won't fight over our water resources but that we will work together on a bipartisan basis to solve these problems. That is what we are sent here to do: to work together on a bipartisan basis to solve a whole host of issues that we deal with. But it is very important that we focus, in this instance, on this legislation by passing a bill that makes a great deal of common sense.

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

#### ISSUES OF THE DAY

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

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, it is an important day for people who knew and loved the three individuals who were being held improperly by North Korea. They have now been released due to the negotiations with our prior colleague Mike Pompeo—our, now, Secretary of State—and also President Trump.

It is interesting, Mr. Speaker, for those who have not spent a lot of time studying American history, they have not realized what a benefit it can be to have an American President who is deemed to be a person who cannot be properly accounted for. His actions may be of interest to foreign leaders.

Frankly, I enjoy hearing people in other countries say they are just not sure what to make of President Trump. They are not sure if he is crazy; they are not sure if he might push the button to launch missiles; they are just—he is so unpredictable. But, actually, I think he is very predictable. The man knows how to negotiate.

As I pointed out to him a couple of times, if you look through our history, people who were considered to be the most educated, some said the highest intellect, greatest intellectual ability—you have people like John Quincy Adams, who is a hero of mine because of his dedication to bringing an end to slavery. It didn't happen during his 4 years of being President. It didn't happen during his 16, 17 years in the House of Representatives, but he was so dedicated to his purpose that he materially

affected the young freshmen who sat at the back of the room for 2 years, overlapping about a year with Adams before his fatal stroke on the House floor just down the hall.

John Quincy Adams, when he was President, for all his education, intellectual ability, I mean, the man wrote books in German, loved the French language, read books in other languages like French and German, probably kept the best journal of anyone who was ever elected President, but he really didn't accomplish much of anything at all when he was President. Some of that had to do with the election controversy surrounding that.

Look at people like Woodrow Wilson, a former college president, supposedly high intellectual ability, but, yes, he did get us involved in World War I. He drug his feet. There were things that could have been done, but nobody had any concern worldwide for Woodrow Wilson. He was considered very predictable, and it got us into some trouble because people didn't think he had the nerve to stand up when it was needed.

Jimmy Carter was touted as being some sort of nuclear engineer, went to the Naval Academy, but the fiascos in which he was involved as President showed a man who was a nice man but rather inept when it came to foreign affairs. Obviously, the Iranians had no fear of him. He had such poor judgment that he encouraged the removal of the Shah of Iran. Not a nice man, but he was an ally. And Carter didn't have the foresight to see, kind of like President Obama when he was dealing with Qadhafi—Obama with Qadhafi, Carter with the Shah of Iran, they figure: Well, he is not a nice guy, so we will run him off. We will encourage him being run off.

In the case of Qadhafi, if it weren't for Obama's planes and the missions to take out those defending Qadhafi, Qadhafi would probably still be in charge in Libya, and ISIS and al-Qaida elements would not have gained the incredible foothold they have had. There wouldn't be the chaos there is today in Libya.

President Obama was touted as being of high intellectual capacity, yet just one fiasco after another when it came to foreign affairs as we have seen in the news recently, President Obama's efforts to get \$100 billion to \$150 billion, some of it on pallets with just cash, American dollars on pallets with forklifts, moving those from the United States into the hands of the Ayatollah Khamenei and his bloodthirsty religious zealots in Iran, the biggest supporter of terrorism in the world. So deemed to be an intellectual President Obama was, and yet just incredible malfeasance when it came to foreign relations. People were not afraid of him.

It was interesting to see polls, while President Obama was our Chief Executive Officer, showing that, although nations where Muslims were the majority, they didn't have much respect for

President George W. Bush, but there were polls indicating that they had even less respect for President Obama.

How could that be?

They didn't see him as being very decisive. Indicative of that was, when he drew a line in the sand, had a red line, and Syria crossed that line, he did nothing about it, in essence. So that encouraged our enemies.

I know there are those who said that things that happened at Guantanamo Bay, Abu Ghraib, other places, actually hurt America badly because it inflamed our enemies, whereas, actually, nothing inspires our enemies like the showing of weakness. As President Reagan once said:

Of all the wars that occurred during my lifetime in which America was involved, none of them occurred because America was too strong.

So when other nations perceive weakness, it is provocative, and that is what has happened in our 200-plus-year history. If we are perceived as being weak, it is provocative.

President Obama oversaw a number of such weak, provocative incidents. Some weren't weak, they were just foolish, like encouraging the taking out of Qadhafi. He was not a good man, had blood on his hands from back in the 1980s, and yet when President George W. Bush sent troops into Iraq, Qadhafi had an epiphany and invited us to come in and tell him what weapons he could keep and what he had to get rid of because he was afraid that he would be the next nation to be invaded.

When it comes to North Korea, President Clinton, educated in what are considered by some to be quite elite schools, Ivy League schools, and yet he oversaw, as President, negotiations with North Korea. This is just a rather short summary, but basically Madeleine Albright as Secretary of State and President Clinton's approach to North Korea was: Look, we will make sure that you get all the nuclear material you need to make nuclear weapons; we will make sure you get all the technology you need to create nuclear weapons.

□ 1330

We will get you in a better situation as far as the ability to have nukes than you could ever have possibly done on your own. And all we ask in return, in essence, is you sign a document saying that you won't use the technology and the materials to make nuclear weapons.

I can just envision the glee, the celebrations behind the scenes in North Korea over how crazy and foolish American leaders are, during the Clinton administration, because they are going to give us everything we need to have nuclear weapons, and all we have got to do is put a signature on a document.

Then we saw history repeat itself when John Kerry played the role of Madeleine Albright, this time with Iran; and, of course, we did have