

seeking asylum. I ask the administration to follow the law, follow American law, follow international law. Let's do the right thing. Let's do the American thing. Let's reunite these families.

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, Congressman CORREA is a valued member of this body and one of the outstanding members of the Homeland Security Committee, where he is Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on Oversight and Management Efficiency.

We are here today to call upon the President, the Department of Health and Human Services, and the Congress of the United States to act without delay to ensure separated immigrant children are reunited with their parents in an expeditious manner.

On June 26, 2018, a federal judge ruled that unless reunification is not in the best interest of the child, a child under 5 years old must be reunited within 14 days of its order.

Yesterday was the deadline that this administration failed to meet.

To President Trump, I say "Time's Up!"

This act committed was not only mortifying, but an illegal act.

This individual has proven he lacks depth and experience, has violated the ethics that this country prides itself on, and he should be ashamed.

This is a senseless act that must not go unnoticed.

We must hold him accountable for these not clearly formulated decisions.

Yesterday, I met with faith and community leaders to bring attention to yesterdays' deadline, imposed by a federal judge, to reunite the youngest separated children with their parents due to the President's egregious "zero-tolerance" policy.

In our country, the rule of law and its implementation is an essential component of our democracy.

Twenty years ago, *Flores v. Reno*, also known as the Flores Agreement, established that migrants or immigrants could not be separated from their children for long periods of time.

Earlier this year, President Trump and his administration implemented a "zero-tolerance policy" of separating immigrant children from their parents upon arrival into the United States.

To be certain, the administration's plan was half-baked.

As the Founder and Chair of the Children's Caucus and as a parent and grandparent, I am outraged that the administration represented what they did not know and could not do.

They did not know the true number of the children separated, they could not reunite these children, and there is no plan for their reunification.

When Americans and the international community from all walks of life began to challenge this cruel and inhumane policy, the courts got involved.

It appears as if a fortnight was more than enough time for this administration to make a complete mess of this process, and in the process damage families—perhaps irreparably.

According to the American Civil Liberties Union, fewer than half of the migrant children who are under five years-old will be reunited with their parents.

Studies have documented that when young children are forcibly removed from their parents, the traumatic experience engenders long-term negative effects on their physical and mental health and well-being suffers.

Stressful situations that would usually prompt physiological responses in other people—increased heart rate, sweaty palms—would provoke nothing in the children forcibly removed from their parents because their fight-or-flight response system appeared permanently broken.

This is outrageous and unacceptable in a nation which has a long and noble tradition of providing sanctuary to the persecuted and oppressed.

Last Friday afternoon, July 6, 2018, the administration asked for more time to reunite these young children with their parents, which again was nothing more than a tacit admission that its plan for separating children was implemented without a way to eventually reunite them with their parents.

After it was ordered to reunite these children, and in asking for more time to comply with the federal court, the President's lawyers asked "can I keep these children away from their parents for a longer time?"

My response is "these children have been away from their parents long enough."

When I visited the border and the federal detention facilities that housed parents and children quarantined from one another, what I witnessed was horrific and was echoed in heartbreaking audio recordings released by the press revealing children crying, aching for their parents, as all face a fate uncertain, and inconsistent with the American ideal.

I will never forget the little children I met during my visit to the border.

One baby, 9-month-old Roger, had been taken from his 19-year-old sister after she was prosecuted for crossing the border illegally.

Their mother is dead, and they were coming here to find family.

Little Leah, was just one year-old and was taken from a grandmother and a sister.

The pain was no less visceral when speaking with mothers wondering where their children have gone.

In South Texas I met Gabby, from Honduras, who had a 45 day-old baby taken from her, and while housed at the facility had not yet been treated or given medical attention.

Yesterday, a federal judge ruled that the administration's argument in favor of child separation was "tortured."

Put another way, the Administration has no leg to stand on.

Trump knows that he is advancing a cruel and inhumane policy, but he refuses to accept responsibility for this matter blaming, alternatively: Congress, the courts and prior presidents.

This is no surprise, of course: all who have watched this president know his proclivity to shirk responsibility for any of his actions.

In a bizarre turn of events, the President actually tried to blame the courts for his own cruel child separation policy.

A federal judge appropriately chastised the President and cast as "cynical" any attempt to blame the courts for his mess, which is entirely of this Administration's own doing.

Tellingly, the judge went one profound step further and indicated that the President and his administration knew—at least for over a year—that there was no facility which would house parents and children together.

Thus, when it proceeded with this new immigration policy, the President knew that the segregation of children from their parents was inevitable and chose to implement this policy anyway.

The last time this nation had policies that promoted the forcible separation of children from newly arrived persons was slavery: a dark and shameful chapter in this nation's history that we cannot revisit.

Earlier this year, President, in proclaiming April as National Child Abuse Prevention Month, stated, "we must always remember that all children are blessings from our Creator" and endowed with value, purpose and human dignity."

It is time for this President and the administration he leads, to act with reason, foresight and compassion and immediately and completely rectify this crisis.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, while the Trump administration has clearly taken steps to reunite immigrant children with their families, there are still 100 children under the age of five in the government's custody. The court ordered deadline to reunite all of these children with their parents was yesterday. The Departments of Homeland Security and Health and Human Services must continue to make it a top priority to locate these children's parents and reunite these families in a timely manner.

The Trump administration's inhumane "zero-tolerance" policy was finally stopped by the President, but the terrible effects of this policy continue. DHS' poor recordkeeping has resulted in the prolonged separation of these children. Twelve of these children's parents have already been deported, making it much more difficult for them to reunite with their children. The Department of Homeland Security has had to resort to DNA testing to ensure that children are properly reunited, a costly and tedious process that prolongs the trauma these children are experiencing. This excess cost to American taxpayers could easily have been avoided had the Trump administration thought about the reunification process rather than solely focusing on separating children from their parents.

These children have already endured an incredibly dangerous journey from their home countries, and the Trump administration has subjected them to even more suffering. The American Medical Association has stated that separation from parents can cause lifelong psychological trauma for these children, particularly children who are under the age of five. Sadly, there are already reports of children who no longer recognize their parents after these prolonged periods of separation.

The Departments of Homeland Security and Health and Human Services must take immediate action to expedite the process of reunification, and Congress must use its legislative authority to hold these departments accountable and ensure that these human rights violations are corrected. Children have been taken from their parents, and it is all of our responsibility to ensure that this administration are reuniting them as quickly as possible.

#### HONORING CONGRESSWOMAN ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentlewoman from

New York (Ms. TENNEY) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. TENNEY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks on my Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from New York?

There was no objection.

Ms. TENNEY. Mr. Speaker, I am happy to stand here with my colleagues to honor our friend and our great colleague, Representative ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, who will be retiring at the end of the 115th Congress after more than 35 years in public service.

I know I speak for everyone on both sides of the aisle when I say that we will sincerely miss ILEANA's bright smile, strong leadership, and fierce advocacy for her constituents.

Today, we look back on her service with gratitude. We recognize her commitment to human rights, providing equal opportunity to all, supporting public education and especially our Nation's veterans. We recall our memories of her great sense of humor and wish her a fond farewell as she begins her next journey in life.

Representative ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN broke through barriers, becoming the first Hispanic woman to serve in the Florida statehouse and senate, later rising to become the first woman to chair the House Committee on Foreign Affairs. Her record of service is beyond reproach.

At the age of 8, ILEANA's family fled the oppressive communist regime of Fidel Castro in Cuba. This life-changing experience has guided her journey in public service and led her to remain committed to protecting human rights.

Although I haven't had the opportunity to serve as long as other Members alongside ILEANA, the time I have spent serving with her has been inspirational and an incredible honor.

One of my great memories with ILEANA was a congressional delegation where we traveled to South Korea, Taiwan, and India to study the issues impacting the region and our Nation's relationship with our important allies in Asia. Together, we met with U.S. servicemen and -women near the demilitarized zone in South Korea. Then, later on, we were received by His Holiness the Dalai Lama in the Tibetan community in exile in Dharamshala, India.

During our trip, ILEANA shared with me her experience in Cuba and her family's struggle and journey to the United States. Although the struggle facing the Tibetan people is different than the suffering the Cubans faced under the Castro regime, ILEANA has applied her experience and firsthand knowledge on human rights issues, including Tibetan autonomy and Taiwanese independence, which were highlighted on our trip.

While on the visit, ILEANA was presented with a sash for the Order of the Propitious Clouds, with a special grand cordon for her significant contributions to strengthening U.S.-Taiwan relations.

I thought it would be fun to share a cute story about ILEANA. As we were getting ready to give her this great award as the Propitious Cloud, the Taiwanese Government officials were placing her sash that she received on her. As they were adjusting it and putting it on her, she was so funny. She said: "I haven't been through this since I was Miss America," which I thought was really cute.

She worked as a teacher and a principal in the Miami-Dade County schools. She saw firsthand stories of financial hardship, which eventually inspired her to run for office.

Throughout her time in Congress, she passed legislation that helped thousands of teenagers go to college, and she fought for LGBTQ rights. ILEANA has a servant's heart and was a champion of issues that were of importance to her and the people of Florida.

Although Representative ROS-LEHTINEN may be retiring from her post in this Chamber, we know that she will continue to look for ways to serve the State and country she so dearly loves.

Today, we join with her team and her family in recognizing her many years of service. We all wish Congresswoman ROS-LEHTINEN, her husband, four children, and five beautiful grandchildren all the best in the next chapter.

For me personally, it was a deep honor to work with someone so committed to the greater good. The State of Florida, the United States, and countries throughout the world facing oppression are a better place because of ILEANA's fierce advocacy and commitment to our most vulnerable.

I am joined today by some of my colleagues, although we changed our time. We will be getting to people as soon as we can. A number of colleagues wanted to be here, and, hopefully, they will catch up with us, those people who worked with ILEANA over the years and even had more time with her.

I see in the Chamber we now have Congressman CHARLIE CRIST, who will be getting up and saying a few nice things about Ms. ILEANA and may be reflecting on his probably extensive experience serving side by side with her as a Representative in Florida.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Florida, Mr. CHARLIE CRIST, my colleague.

We are going to stand side by side for this one. ILEANA would love it.

Mr. CRIST. Mr. Speaker, this is very bipartisan. First, I thank Ms. TENNEY for putting this together. It is wonderful of the gentlewoman to do that.

Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to say a few words about ILEANA, what everybody knows. I am sure Mr. GAETZ will echo this, too. Just a wonderful lady, a great public servant, a heart of gold,

and always with a smile on her face. Around this place, that is very uplifting and wonderful to see.

I wanted to come down here and testify, if you will, on her behalf.

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What a wonderful shining light she really is. So, again, I thank CLAUDIA for organizing this and putting this together. It is great of her to do so.

And, ILEANA, if you are watching, God bless you and your wonderful family, and I know your future is going to be very, very bright. Thank you so much.

Ms. TENNEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman so much for his comments. I appreciate it.

I am a new Member, and the Congressman from Florida (Mr. CRIST) is also a new Member, but we have been touched by ILEANA. And part of the way I got to know her was through 1-minute speeches, which you all see us do on the floor of the House. We sit down in the front row. She is kind of the queen of 1 minutes. She gets to have position A on our side, and no one dares to sit in ILEANA's seat, although she is the most loving, kind person you could ever meet. That is how I got to know her.

She got me so excited and inspired about coming to Asia and joining with her and kind of taking on her love and her portfolio on human rights, particularly helping the people in Taiwan, and especially fighting for the Tibetan Government in exile in Dharamshala, India, with the Dalai Lama.

It was such an honor for me to actually go to Dharamshala with Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN and to be able to meet the Dalai Lama and sit there with him for an hour as he entertained us. He was really charming and just an incredible inspiration not only to the Tibetan people, but also to the world.

And we are now joined by our terrific colleague, the boy Congressman, our great freshman Representative from Florida's First District, MATT GAETZ. We are honored to have him.

I yield to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. GAETZ).

Mr. GAETZ. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from New York for yielding, and I also thank my colleague, the gentlewoman from Florida, ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, for her lifetime of service.

ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN was my State Representative the day I was born. This is a fact she does not frequently like being reminded of, but it shows the duration and the level of her commitment to the community in south Florida, to the country, and to the world.

What I always remember ILEANA's service for is the commitment that she had to vulnerable people. Whether it was children who were in need of good schools or seniors in need of hospice care, ILEANA could always be counted on to fight for the vulnerable, for those who might not have the fancy lobbyists

or the powerful special interests in their corner. But when ILEANA was in someone's corner, they had a pretty good chance to be successful, whether it has been in the Halls of Congress or in our State capital in Tallahassee.

I am perhaps most moved by the role model that ILEANA has set for women all over the world. Recently, I had the opportunity to travel with ILEANA to Jordan, where there are the initial sprout-ups of democracy. ILEANA met with young women who had an interest in the political process, running for office, campaigning, organizing in their neighborhoods and in their communities for a better life.

They were able to bear witness to this amazing American lady who had done so much, who had broken through so many barriers. It showed, through her life, the great potential that women have all over this world to be able to make such a meaningful contribution to their governments and to their communities.

For all Floridians, and particularly those in south Florida who have benefited from ILY's great service, I just want to thank her, thank her family.

I want to wish my friend, Dexter Douglas, ILEANA's spouse, the best of luck in all the extra time he will have with ILY. I know they are looking forward to spending time with their children and grandchildren, and I look forward to ILEANA's next chapter because I know that, even in her retirement from the Congress, she will never stop fighting for vulnerable people in my State, in our country, and all around the world.

Ms. TENNEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. GAETZ for his absolutely perfect description of ILEANA as a champion of human rights and the most vulnerable.

I would just like to mention her husband, Dexter. I haven't had the honor to meet him, but we talked about him quite a bit. Obviously, traveling to Asia, we had a lot of long flights, and it is really such an honor for me as a freshman Member—and you heard from me and Congressman GAETZ, Congressman CRIST, two freshmen Members, and now three who are just so inspired by Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN.

Now I am so honored to also invite one of our great women leaders in the U.S. Congress, Mrs. BARBARA COMSTOCK, Congresswoman BARBARA COMSTOCK, to say a few words about ILEANA. She has had a little more time to serve, but we are so honored to have our great Representative from Virginia.

I yield to the gentlewoman from Virginia (Mrs. COMSTOCK).

Mrs. COMSTOCK. Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak about our wonderful colleague, ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, and who I was first privileged to meet when I was a staffer here in Congress in the 1990s.

She has gracefully served the people of Florida's 27th District since 1989, and she embodies the type of success story that people think of when they

think of people, wherever they come from all over the world, who come here to the United States.

At just 8 years old, she escaped the brutal regime of Fidel Castro with her family to come to America in pursuit of a better life, to a place where she and her family could find success, and certainly they have found that. But she has never forgotten where she came from and always fought for the oppressed all around the world and those less fortunate.

So she was not only the first Hispanic woman in Congress who fought for all of the things that we have been illuminating here, but she was the first—she had many firsts here, but the first chairwoman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, where she was able to take that experience that she had at 8 years old and now, really, bring it all around the world and to be able to bring that kind of heart that we know ILEANA has.

Every bit of her heart is matched by a wonderful sense of humor. And you know when you see ILEANA on the floor, or wherever you see her anywhere, she is cheerleading for everybody. She is fighting for everybody, and she is always happy. She is here with her grandchildren, and she is just a joyful person. We will miss that great smile of hers.

She has been a mentor here to so many women. When she was first here in Congress, there were not many Republican women; and certainly as the first Hispanic woman, she was the first Republican Hispanic woman, also. So she was a great mentor for those of us who were staffers at the time, which is how I was first privileged to meet her. And she has taken this calling to heart as a public servant and has always done the best for her constituents.

She is a woman of great honor, a devoted wife, mother, and grandmother. She has changed this Congress and our colleagues for the better. She is someone for whom we join together in the ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN fan club. And there are, I think, pretty close to 435 Members you could have for that fan club.

We will miss her insight, her intellect, her graciousness, and, as I said, her sense of humor and her passion for representing her constituents, representing the oppressed, and representing human rights all around the world.

ILEANA, it has been a pleasure to serve with you—first as a staffer, now, for these past 3½ years as a Member of Congress where you were such a great mentor, and all of us know you will continue to serve your community even when you leave here in Congress. We know that is in your heart, and we know you will always be a woman who gives to others, and we are so proud to have been able to serve here with you in Congress. God bless.

Ms. TENNEY. Mr. Speaker, we really appreciate Ms. COMSTOCK's kind words.

And now BARBARA is my mentor, as well as one of the early women Repub-

licans who has been an inspiration and a hard worker and really instrumental in coming up with great legislation and really leading our communities.

One of the great honors, I got to be with ILEANA, actually, in, as I said, the Tibetan Government in exile.

I know we have a couple of Members we are waiting to come in. We had to change our time, but we have another Member. Before we get to him, I just want to say a couple of things.

I got to travel to the amazing Tibetan Government in exile, and, obviously, to meet the Dalai Lama in Dharamshala, India, and was greeted by amazing students. It was just a life-changing experience, and to be able to go there with Ms. ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, our wonderful Congresswoman.

We were able to get these scarves. I am going to wear this in honor of ILEANA. It is called the khata, and it is a Tibetan Buddhist scarf. When you are handed this scarf, the words are "tashi deley," which the children in Tibet and everyone greets you with when you go there. It is such an amazing experience. I want to wear this scarf in honor of ILEANA.

And, also, I might add, it is very long, and ILEANA is not as tall as I am, so we had to fold her scarf up a couple of times so she wouldn't drag it on the floor.

But it was such a beautiful memory to be able to receive this scarf and to know how important her advocacy has been on behalf of the Tibetan people, who have been suffering under an oppressive regime in Beijing that has really bullied this amazing community and left them in exile in India, and her fight to bring the Tibetan people back to their home country some day.

We are going to continue on that front, and I hope to carry on the tradition and carry on the fight, as ILEANA has, with compassion and with courage and the inspiration that we received from so many.

Now it is my great honor to yield to my colleague from California (Mr. LAMALFA) to say a few words about our great leader, ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN.

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, I thank Ms. TENNEY, my good friend from New York, as well, for leading this night and for this tribute. It is well deserved for the great friend ILEANA is and a great friend to us here, as well as an amazing Member for her district, for representing her people with energy and with all that it takes to be effective for the many years that she did so. And so you saw that level of energy here in this place and in our Conference.

I was always pleased to be able to work with her on issues, but just seeing her for a minute each time because she would—CLAUDIA talked a little bit about the height disparity, so for her and me, it is quite something else. But she would always come up to me. And me coming from a ranching background and farming background in

northern California, I have always got these cowboy boots on. So I just got the handle from her: Hey, Cowboy, how are you doing?

And I didn't really know what to call her, so I just went with "Cowgirl." So she is my Miami cowgirl friend. So that was just part of the fun of having such a great colleague like that, and I was really, indeed, disappointed to see and to hear and to know that she was deciding to hang it up here. But everybody—everybody—has that time.

She led here with, again, grace and dignity, but also with enough fire to get the job done. I know she was an amazing Representative for the people of her district and for all of us to hear the diverse sides of all the issues that affect her part of Florida and how that might contrast with my part of California. And you take that into mind because she is effective at getting a point across respectfully but, again, with the pizzazz it takes to be an effective leader here. So we will dearly miss her.

To my friend, from Cowboy: Cowgirl, enjoy your next endeavor here, and it has been a pleasure to work with you. God bless you.

Ms. TENNEY. Mr. Speaker, it is a beautiful tribute to a wonderful woman who has inspired us all. So much of what Mr. LAMALFA said about her sense of humor.

I always think of the great leaders that you meet. You think of some towering figure, but ILEANA was a towering figure in her very small body, and I think of a few things about her:

Her courage and her tenacity and her willingness to be truthful and to fight the fight. And also a couple of things that I learned from my father that I find that, when I find people with these rare qualities, like ILEANA, her unwillingness to succumb to victimhood.

She is a fighter. She has never felt sorry for herself. She is always fighting the good fight for other people who are less fortunate than she is. She probably doesn't even recognize that is one of her great, inspiring qualities that I saw in her.

And, also, her willingness to not hold a grudge and to be bipartisan and to reach across the aisle and to work with other Members without sacrificing her values and her integrity.

This may be the first Special Order that we are going to hear on the great Congresswoman ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, but I am not sure it is going to be the last. We still have, luckily, hopefully, a few more months, or several more months of her right to the end of the year, and we will be able to continue to honor this really amazing person who has graced this institution with leadership, with tenacity, with courage, with passion and compassion for those who are less fortunate.

I know that she is going to continue in her private life, outside of politics, on the same mission that she is on because that is who she is. She is going to fight the fight every day. She is going

to stand up for the most needy and the most vulnerable in our communities.

And just on a personal note, I am so grateful for this position and the privilege of serving New York's 22nd District, that I had the honor of being able to be in the presence of greatness, to be with Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN and her amazing inspiration. And I just want to say thank you so much to her and to her family and to Dexter, whom I hope I get to meet some day; and to her children and grandchildren, who are so lucky to be among someone and to be able to grow up with someone like ILEANA; and her constituents, who I am sure are grateful every day for the work that she has done in this institution and to change it forever for the better.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you so much for this tribute to Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker, the first Hispanic woman to serve in Florida state's House or Senate—went on to become the first Latina in Congress and rose to be the first woman to chair the House Committee on Foreign Affairs.

She's inspired many of us to follow her public service example.

For over three decades she's been a champion for the LGBTQ community, a critical voice in promoting democracy in Cuba and Venezuela, a leader in advancing the well-being of the Hispanic Community, and a tireless human rights advocate across the globe.

I've been proud to work with Rep. ROS-LEHTINEN on initiatives like:

BRIDGE

United States-Israel Agriculture Strategic Partnership Act

Hurricane Irma Disaster Relief in Florida

Hurricane Maria Disaster Relief in Puerto Rico

She has a gift of bringing people together. Floridians are proud to have had ILEANA as a public servant and her legacy will live on.

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#### 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, there was an interesting story in Politico this week titled: "The Secret Story of How America Lost the Drug War With the Taliban." It was written by Josh Meyer. It says: "As Afghanistan edged ever closer to becoming a narco-state five years ago, a team of veteran U.S. officials in Kabul presented the Obama administration with a detailed plan to use U.S. courts to prosecute the Taliban commanders and allied drug lords who supplied more than 90 percent of the world's heroin . . ."

Mr. Speaker, that is incredible. I have been hearing from DEA agents, local police, deputies, so many law enforcement people, about how incredibly abundant heroin is in America. How we had so many people that would get hooked on opioids, and then they would

ultimately find heroin was cheaper and more plentiful. It destroyed a lot of lives, and it continues to destroy lives in America.

To have this report come out that the Obama administration could have done something in a timely manner to have saved tens of thousands, if not hundreds of thousands of lives from being lost or being wasted in this opioid epidemic of addiction, it is really staggering to think that our United States Government, the Obama administration, with all of its tools, had the chance to do something that would prevent the massive personal destructions that we have witnessed, it runs over into the unconscionable area.

This article says: "The plan, according to its authors, was both a way of halting the ruinous spread of narcotics around the world and a new—and urgent—approach to confronting ongoing frustrations with the Taliban, whose drug profits were financing the growing insurgency and killing American troops. But the Obama administration's deputy chief of mission in Kabul, citing political concerns, ordered the plan to be shelved, according to a Politico investigation."

Now, I have not always been the biggest Politico fan, but this is extraordinary.

"Now, its authors—Drug Enforcement Administration agents and Justice Department legal advisers at the time—are expressing anger over the decision, and hope that the Trump administration, which has followed a path similar to former President Barack Obama's in Afghanistan, will eventually adopt the plan as part of its evolving strategy."

"This was the most effective and sustainable tool we had for disrupting and dismantling Afghan drug trafficking organizations and separating them from the Taliban," said Michael Marsac, the main architect of the plan as the DEA's regional director for Southwest Asia at the time. "But it lies dormant, buried in an obscure file room, all but forgotten."

"A senior Afghan security official, M. Ashraf Haidari, also expressed anger at the Obama administration when told about how the U.S. effort to indict Taliban narcotics kingpins was stopped dead in its tracks 16 months after it began."

"It brought us almost to the breaking point, put our elections into a time of crisis, and then our economy almost collapsed," Haidari said of the drug money funding the Taliban. "If that operation had continued, we wouldn't have had this massive increase in production and cultivation as we do now."

This is a photograph showing scoring a poppy to extract raw opium in April of 2004.

"Afghan drug lords have pledged financial support to the Taliban in exchange for protection of their vast swaths of poppy and cannabis fields, drug processing labs, and storage facilities."