

Iran already possesses enough nuclear fuel to build two nuclear weapons. Even while negotiations were taking place, Iran continued to enrich uranium in defiance of five United Nations Security Council resolutions, increasing its supply of uranium and becoming more and more dangerous each and every day.

While there are many domestic issues that demand the attention of us in Congress, we must not forget an Iranian call for a world without a United States or an Israel. A nuclear-armed Iran threatens the safety of American troops in the region. It is a threat to Israel's existence, emboldens terrorist groups Hamas and Hezbollah and leads to a perilous nuclear arms race in the Middle East.

These are all things we cannot accept and must not tolerate.

□ 1800

Passage of the Iran Refined Petroleum Sanctions Act takes an important step to counter the Iranian threat to our national security and to that of our strong democratic ally Israel.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maryland (Ms. EDWARDS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. EDWARDS addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

AFGHANISTAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DOGGETT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DOGGETT. Madam Speaker, President Obama is certainly to be commended for the thoughtful and thorough consideration that he has given to our alternatives in Afghanistan. In essence, given the mess that he was bequeathed there, he was asked to choose the least bad alternative.

My personal belief is that a good man made the wrong choice. But I think it is incumbent on this Congress to do as our President did and give thoughtful and thorough consideration of what our alternatives are there and whether there is a better way than dispatching another 30,000 American troops to Afghanistan to assure the security of our families.

We have had now almost a decade without a debate of Afghanistan policy in this Congress. I believe we must take a hard look at how hundreds of billions of taxpayer dollars and thousands of the lives of young Americans are being put on the line in Afghanistan and ask if this is the most effective way to defeat terrorism.

Some were, of course, pleased that the President indicated in his speech that July 2011, a period of a little more than a year and a half, would mark a point in this long war at which we would see the beginning of the end of

the war and some of the troops that were being dispatched there would begin to return home.

Almost as soon as the speech ended, administration officials began to explain that deadline away. First we learned that not all the troops would get there until the fall of next year. They're not going for the weekend or a 2-week stay or a stay of less than a year. And then Secretary Gates made clear in interviews the nature of this July 2011 deadline. He said that at the time of July 2011, some "handful," in his words, or some small number or whatever the conditions permit might be departing Afghanistan at that time but that we would, in his words, "have a significant number of forces there for some considerable period of time." It was only a few days after that that Afghan President Hamid Karzai indicated just how long that commitment might have to be when he announced that "for another 15 to 20 years Afghanistan will not be able to sustain a force of that nature and capability with its own resources."

We are talking about a very extended commitment of more and more American troops and more and more American dollars, ironically, at a time that some of our allies who've been in Afghanistan, like the Canadians, like the Dutch, are making plans to withdraw their troops as our troops enter the country.

I have heard from not a few constituents expressing their concern about this decision to escalate the war in Afghanistan. Whether we agree or disagree on whether this is the best approach, we all agree that our objective is to work together to keep our families safer. One person to whom I presented the Veteran of the Year award just last month in Bastrop, Texas, Retired Colonel Bill Stanberry, twice awarded the Legion of Merit and inducted into the Infantry Officers Hall of Fame, offered this observation:

"There is no sign or promise of a viable leadership in the government in Afghanistan, an ingredient that is absolutely essential to the success of the program. We are allowing our adversaries to determine the kind of wars we fight and how we fight them. We need to find ways to exploit our strengths and not be lured into battles of war where our substantially weaker adversaries have the advantage by dictating how we fight."

Our strategic choices in Afghanistan, I believe, are not narrowly limited to either escalating rapidly, as the President has proposed, or departing immediately, but they include more effective ways of using the resources that we have already committed to accomplish our original objectives. And apparently, our Ambassador in Afghanistan, former Lieutenant-General Karl Eikenberry, had some of the same concerns that I do. It is widely reported that he sent at least two classified cables to Washington before the announcement expressing deep concerns

about sending more U.S. troops to Afghanistan without a meaningful demonstration by President Karzai, who just had stolen a million votes to stay in power, that his government would be able to tackle corruption and mismanagement that has fueled the Taliban's rise in strength.

We went to take out al Qaeda, not to change it into Switzerland. Let's keep that commitment and do it in the most cost-effective way.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

CUBA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, just last week we observed another Human Rights Day without freedom in Cuba.

As to be expected, the regime had its thugs out in full force to harass and attack all who dared to walk the streets in support of this important day and what it represents to the world community. For 2 days, the members of the peaceful Ladies in White group were pursued and harassed by agents of the regime. Marches and peaceful demonstrations in support of human rights and fundamental freedoms came to an abrupt end as state security forces rounded up, detained, and brutally attacked some of the participants.

Yusnaimi Jorge Soca, wife of Dr. Darsi Ferrer, was one of the many apprehended by the secret police on her way to one of the planned marches at the Villalon Park in Havana. Dr. Ferrer is an Afro-Cuban civil rights leader currently imprisoned by the dictatorship. His alleged crime? "Illegally" purchasing materials to repair damages to his home. The truth? Dr. Ferrer has worked tirelessly to expose the reality of Castro's apartheid health care system and the abysmal disregard for fundamental freedom and human rights. Yusnaimi was threatened on this Human Rights Day by the Cuban dictatorship, as well as her husband, in an attempt to intimidate them into submission and silence.

Those seeking freedom in Cuba, however, have shown time and time again that they will not waver in the face of repression.

The Castro tyranny does not limit the application of its repressive tactics to the oppressed Cuban people, however. For example, Chris Stimpson, Second Secretary of the British Embassy, was also pursued and chased away by the regime's mob apparatus on Thursday. And on Friday, an American

citizen was detained, likely in response to U.S. efforts to support the inalienable rights of the Cuban people. We are hopeful, Madam Speaker, for his immediate and safe return home soon.

For the people of Cuba, every day is a desperate struggle to maintain a glimmer of hope for a brighter future. Hundreds and hundreds remain behind bars due to their refusal to give up on that brighter future. We must never lose sight of the plight of those living under this dictatorial regime. We must also not turn our backs on these individuals by cutting deals with their oppressors. We must not put principle over profit, security before popularity. Though the Castro tyranny may try to convince the world otherwise, it will never miss an opportunity to tighten its iron grip on liberty.

It is time that the cruel veil of hypocrisy be lifted. The Cuban people are no less worthy of freedom and human rights than any other oppressed population. Nations and organizations and leaders worldwide, they do not hesitate to denounce the genocidal regime in Sudan, and I agree with them, or the brutal military junta in Burma, and I agree with them. However, they remain silent, and I don't agree with them, when it comes to the cries of those dying in Castro's jails because they seek freedom and democracy for their Cuban nation. How much more must the Cuban people suffer before the world acts decisively against this cruel regime and its communist leaders?

Those who ignore the struggles of the Cuban people serve as willing accomplices to their brutal oppressors. As Cuban dissident Dr. Ferrer said in his jail cell in his call for all Cubans to peacefully commemorate Human Rights Day: "Governments, institutions, organizations, and human beings in general have an obligation to promote respect for fundamental rights and freedoms as well as ensure the recognition and universal and effective application."

Dr. Ferrer continued: "Our appeal will be for the recognition in every corner of the Earth for the inherent dignity and equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family."

Today, Madam Speaker, let us renew our commitment to bring the light of freedom to those living in the darkness of oppression, wherever that darkness is. Today, let us make clear that we will not stand for another Human Rights Day without freedom in Cuba.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mr. NADLER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. NADLER of New York addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

TARP AND THE WALL STREET BANKERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentle-

woman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. KAPTUR. Madam Speaker, this week President Obama held yet another White House meeting to jawbone Wall Street bankers.

Just a few months ago, in September, he traveled to New York to speak with them. Most of them didn't even have the courtesy to show up at Federal Hall. Then last week his Treasury Secretary called again on Wall Street's big banks to work out mortgage loans for the over 6 million Americans who have fallen into foreclosure since 2007. Wall Street didn't do it. They're just laughing all the way to the bank. They'll pocket over \$140 billion in bonuses this year for themselves.

Yesterday, the President vowed to recover every last dime of taxpayer money that was bestowed on these giants, which now control 40 percent of deposits in our country. Five banks, 40 percent of the deposits. But you know it's important to ask the President which taxpayer money is he talking about. Just the TARP money? That would be about half a trillion dollars. But that figure does not include the hundreds and hundreds of billions of dollars doled out by the Federal Reserve, which is not a Federal agency, right to the big banks.

What about all the damage those giants continue to do to our mortgage markets and property values despite what they've been given? How do we get all that money back? The big banks aren't doing mortgage workouts of any significance despite the President, despite his Secretary of the Treasury, despite those bills that Congress passed. Surely you've noticed the big banks tiptoeing through those mortgage tulips all over the country quite adeptly.

What about all the smaller banks they've driven out of business? Do those investors get the same deal as Wall Street?

What about the community bond ratings that have dropped across our country? How do we get that money back for our communities?

What about all the Americans who have lost pensions and 401(k) plans? How do they get their money back?

What about all the unemployment? What about the cost of that and food stamps and health care for those who have been hit hard by the economy Wall Street brought us? How do they get their money back?

The President is looking through too narrow a keyhole. What the White House advisers fail to admit is that their approach isn't working. The TARP should never have been passed by Congress. It protected the wrongdoers, and now the Treasury Secretary just extended it for another year.

TARP turns the banking system into a political chessboard by putting the Department of the Treasury into the driver's seat picking winners and losers, rather than using the independent financial regulatory agencies, as has always been done throughout our coun-

try. If you've got the wrong regulators, replace them, but be independent about it.

So the entire credit system of our country remains frozen up as TARP and Wall Street have sucked dry the confidence of prudent banks in our credit system. Meanwhile, the value of your home is dropping. Inflation is rearing its ugly head, today announced a 1.8 percent inflation increase, double what it was anticipated and the biggest increase in a year. And why wouldn't it rise, as the fundamentals are all out of whack?

□ 1815

When TARP passed, the Bush administration said it would save America from depression, but then the Dow fell over 2,000 points from October 1 to March 9 of this year. Our Nation fell into a depression anyway, and now 27 million Americans are either out of work or are working part-time jobs when they want full-time jobs. The trouble is, when you don't fix something right in the first place, the problem only worsens. Here is what should have happened instead of TARP.

In order to not bankrupt our country, the SEC should have reimposed regulations on short-sellers, and it should have suspended mark-to-market accounting using fair value. The FDIC should have declared a financial emergency and proclaimed all depositors and creditors of banks protected if those banks failed, and it should have used its emergency power to restore capital in banks. That wasn't done in time. Even now, we need to separate prudent banking from speculation, and we need to restore and to strengthen normal banking regulation, and not depend on the overly politicized Treasury Department to pick winners and losers.

Yes, we have to increase capital reserve and liquidity requirements to eliminate pro-cyclical rules, and we have to strengthen the SEC and increase congressional oversight with the Financial Accounting Standards Board while strengthening the FDIC.

I have some other bills, including recouping the over \$140 billion in bonuses that Wall Street will take this year. I have another bill to authorize the Department of Justice, the FBI, and the SEC to be fully funded, with investigators to uncover and prosecute the white collar criminals responsible for this fraud. I have another bill to reform the Federal Reserve system and to give each region in the country an equal voice so that the New York Fed doesn't overwhelm the rest of the country.

Madam Speaker, America needs more than rhetorical flourishes from this administration or from the last to restore sanity to our financial markets. It is time to take the political manipulation out of banking regulation in our country.