

easier management, improved identity resolution and faster, more efficient processes.

In the wake of the attempted downing of a passenger aircraft in December 2009, Director Leiter reallocated significant resources to develop the Pursuit Group, which is a team of highly skilled analysts that sifts through considerable amounts of data to identify desperate pieces of loose intelligence and to find linkages that identify terrorists, their networks and their plans before they can be executed. His leadership in the areas of radicalization, extremist messaging and in countering violent extremism is particularly noteworthy as well as his focus on cooperation and engagement with outside communities. This has laid a solid foundation for the continued success of these initiatives.

Director Leiter leaves the Federal Government for some well-deserved time with his family and friends, and I wish him well. However, it is my sincere hope that he continues to use his expertise in counterterrorism to keep America and its citizens safe.

ENERGY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) for 5 minutes.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, this past week, we were in our districts to visit with our constituents, to learn from them and to celebrate America's Independence Day. Much of my time was focused on the issue of energy and the need for energy independence because constituents are concerned with the high costs of energy and how these costs are impacting their businesses and lives.

Republicans believe in an all-of-the-above approach for energy independence. Republicans believe that energy diversity leads to energy security, and there were plenty of examples in the district for me to visit.

In Boone, students from Appalachian State University's Solar Homestead Team showed me the home they are preparing for the 2011 Solar Decathlon competition to be held on The Mall here in Washington, D.C., in September. The Solar Homestead team is advancing renewable energy systems through research on phase change, material energy storage, the integration of solar photovoltaic panels, and concentrating solar thermal systems for domestic hot water. While much money has been invested in this project by both the public and the private sectors, the hope is that the research will result in the ability to utilize alternative, renewable energy sources that will be able to provide low-cost energy homes for those in need.

Clyde and Pat Colwell have developed Carolina Heritage Vineyard in Elkin, North Carolina, an energy-efficient small business which is benefiting from a taxpayer-funded solar system. The

Colwells are very educated people who are retired from their first careers. Clyde served in the U.S. Marine Corps, earned his Ph.D., and served as a teacher, principal and superintendent. Pat earned her MBA and retired from IBM. However, while their graduate degrees were helpful in general, both of them returned to Surry Community College to earn associate degrees in viticulture so they could pursue developing their organic wine business. They work full time in the vineyards and on the winemaking process, and bring many skills to the area and to others in the business.

The Gilbert Hemric family farm in Hamptonville, North Carolina, where Gilbert Hemric and his family work hard on their poultry, cattle and tobacco farm, is a microcosm of the problems that this administration has created. Mr. Hemric made it very clear to me that the high cost of energy and regulatory burdens are having a negative impact on his business. The Hemrics are paying more and more for feed and for fuel to run their equipment. Because fuel costs have almost doubled since President Obama came to office, the Hemrics have not replaced two of the 10 workers they had last year. They can't afford to replace them.

At Holland Transfer in Statesville, CEO Jeff Harvey told me that the skyrocketing price of fuel and regulatory burdens are counterproductive to job creation and the growth of his business. The Harvey Family practices Christian values throughout its business, and has established nonprofits that feed the needy. When possible, they hire homeless people, which enables the homeless to leave shelters, but all this great work for the community depends on his business performing at a level that will allow him to continue contributing to the community.

As I visited with constituents during the Independence Day work period, one thing was clear: that we need another independence movement—*independence from Middle Eastern oil.*

Unfortunately, rather than pursuing energy independence, the Obama administration keeps fostering an energy dependence policy at the cost of American jobs, higher prices at the pump and at the cost of endangering our national security by making us more dependent on unstable Middle Eastern governments.

House Republicans have responded by introducing and passing four bills to increase our domestic energy production and to create American jobs, but the Senate has taken no action. Liberal Democrats are obstructing the opportunity for jobs for Americans, lower energy costs and a new era of independence.

It is time we declare independence from Middle Eastern oil and start using our own resources for the benefit of all Americans.

AMERICA'S FISCAL CRISIS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. FORBES) for 5 minutes.

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, our country truly is facing a financial crisis. I guess the good news is that even Congress is beginning to ask a question that is part of that financial crisis, which is simply this:

How long can we continue to spend almost twice as much money as we bring in?

The unfortunate part is that we've waited so long to ask that question. I wish we'd asked it before we embarked upon the series of bailouts and stimulus bills that we have embarked upon over the last several years. I am happy that I'm one of only 17 Members of Congress who voted against each and every one of those, but I'm unhappy where it has brought us, which is the fear that we had: that this runaway spending would bring us to a point where we had to begin cutting the national defense capabilities of our country.

Today, we will vote on the Defense appropriations bill, H.R. 2219, which will reduce the President's budget for national defense by \$8.9 billion. That's only a downpayment of the cuts that are going to come. The next cuts, we are told, could be \$400 billion to \$700 billion from our national defense. Before we do that, there are two crucial questions we need to ask.

The first one is: What is the risk assessment that the United States faces today?

Now, that should be answered by our Quadrennial Defense Review, but if you look at a bipartisan independent assessment of that Quadrennial Defense Review, you'll find out that we are a train wreck that is on its way to happening because that defense assessment has truly become no more than a reaffirmation of what we are already doing.

The second thing that we should be asking before we decide what we can cut is how much we are currently spending and what the risk will be if we make those cuts. Unfortunately, the Department of Defense hasn't provided us with the audited financial statements the law requires so that we know where we're spending those dollars and so that we know the true risk of making those cuts.

Yet, Mr. Speaker, let me just tell you that there is a way you can find out. Our commanders in the field provide us with the Quarterly Readiness Report to Congress, which is a classified document. Now, I know as chairman of the Readiness Subcommittee for the Armed Services Committee that I'm in the minority, and am probably going to vote against this bill today.

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But, Mr. Speaker, I am also in the minority of the individuals who have read this classified report. And the one thing that I would encourage our Members to do before they cast their vote