

According to the Constitution, the President does not need to come to Congress for permission on an agreement, but I think we have a responsibility to the American taxpayer and our men and women in uniform to discuss an agreement that will keep more taxpayer dollars and more troops in Afghanistan in the coming years.

Just a couple of weeks ago the Marine Corps announced that the marines at Camp Lejeune in North Carolina's Third District, which I represent, are getting ready to deploy to Afghanistan. When does it end, Mr. Speaker? When does it end?

I would like to quote Grant Filbeck from Erie, Pennsylvania, who wrote a letter to the Marine Corps Times last week about Afghanistan:

I believe in the mission 100 percent, but we have given the Afghans the tools to succeed, and it's up to them to use them. We have been in the country for more than 13 years. That is ridiculous. We have spent so much money funding these guys. If the Afghans want to fight for their country, then they will, or the Taliban will take over without much of a fight.

These two men whose letters I referenced are marines who have been to Afghanistan.

Mr. Speaker, this is a poster from a book titled, "How U.S. Taxpayers Bankroll the Taliban." It was written several years ago by Douglas Wissing. It is a great expose on how the taxpayers' money ends up in the hands of the Taliban, to kill Americans and to blow up the buildings that we built for them with taxpayer money.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, we owe it to the American people, our military, and our Constitution to debate war. As James Madison wrote: "The power to declare war, including the power of judging the causes of war, is fully and exclusively vested in the legislature." I agree with James Madison and urge the Congress to meet its constitutional duty to debate war and not let any President have an AUMF to send our young men and women overseas to die and see the taxpayers' money wasted.

May God continue to bless our troops, and may God continue to bless America.

A SQUANDERED OPPORTUNITY

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

Mr. McCLINTOCK. Mr. Speaker, I rise to express my deep disappointment in the address by the President last night in this Chamber.

Twenty years ago, President Clinton was in a similar position. He realized his policies weren't working; they had just been overwhelmingly rejected by voters and he faced the first Republican Congress in 40 years. So in his State of the Union Message 20 years ago, President Clinton changed course, proclaiming: "The era of Big Government is over." And he made good on

that proclamation. He reached across the aisle to the Republican Congress, and together they achieved some amazing things for the American people.

Together, they reduced Federal spending by a remarkable 4 percent of GDP. They reformed entitlement spending—in Bill Clinton's words, "ending welfare as we know it." They approved what amounted to the biggest capital gains tax cut in American history. They produced the only four balanced budgets that we have seen in 50 years.

And the economy blossomed. We enjoyed one of the longest periods of economic expansion in our Nation's history.

It wasn't a bipartisan lovefest. They clashed bitterly on matters great and small. Yet their accomplishments produced prosperity for our Nation and ensured President Clinton's popularity that endures to this day.

President Obama thus has a working, proven model to salvage the last 2 years of his failed Presidency, and instead, he is squandering it. The President says he wants to sock it to the wealthy by placing new and heavy taxes on investment. But the simple truth of the matter is, when you tax something, you get less of it. When you tax investment, you get less investment at precisely that time when our economy desperately needs greater investment for more and better-paying jobs.

A smaller percentage of our people are working today than at any time in more than 30 years. Until last year, median family income had fallen throughout this administration. The American people don't want more government handouts. They need more jobs and better jobs, and that means more investment, not less. They need a job market that isn't flooded with millions of illegal immigrants undercutting their wages and opportunities. Indeed, it was recently estimated that the number of illegal immigrants working in direct defiance of Federal law is as much as the net increase in jobs throughout this administration. Most Americans are not getting ahead.

We now suffer the highest corporate tax rate in the industrialized world, and American businesses are fleeing from it.

Who would have thought that socialist Sweden would today be considered a tax haven compared to the United States? Our people need those American jobs back in America.

Yet the President seeks to raise taxes still further at a time when the Federal Government is already extracting record tax revenues from our people. The percentage of our economy now consumed by Federal taxes is well above the 40-year average. Our economic problems are not the fault of taxpayers for not paying enough taxes.

The President says he wants to help the middle class, but the proposals he set before us last night would drag the middle class still further down the

dark road of debt and doubt and despair that we have been on. If higher taxes and more burdensome regulations were the path to prosperity, we should be enjoying a new economic golden age today. If higher government spending and soak-the-rich policies were the antidote to income inequality, we should today be enjoying an egalitarian paradise.

The reality is these policies have never worked. They have suppressed what should have been a robust economic recovery. They have increased the economic inequalities in our society. They have buried our children under a mountain of debt that will stalk them for the rest of their lives.

The answer to income inequality and economic stagnation is genuine economic growth that requires reducing the burdens that government has placed on our economy. It worked when Bill Clinton did it, when Ronald Reagan did it, and when John F. Kennedy did it. In fact, Kennedy was right: a rising tide lifts all boats. Yet Barack Obama clings obstinately to the opposite policies. It shouldn't surprise us that he is getting the opposite results.

□ 1030

He had a fleeting opportunity last night to bend to the will of the voters, reverse these policies, and redeem his place in history. Instead, Whittier's words seem appropriate this morning:

Of all sad words of tongue or pen, this saddest are these: "It might have been."

HONORING WILLIAM M. ALLEN

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

Mr. JOLLY. Mr. Speaker, this past December, the community of Pinellas County, Florida—indeed, the Nation—lost an American hero, William M. Allen.

Bill Allen was 83 years old and had served in the United States Army from 1949 to 1953 as a sergeant, Charlie Company, 19th Infantry Regiment, 24th Infantry Division.

Mr. Allen was a prisoner of war from January 1, 1951, until August 1953, held captive during the Korean war after being overcome by Chinese troops. Mr. Allen was just 19 years old at the time.

To those who knew Mr. Allen, he was one of those remarkable people that left a lasting impression on you after just a single encounter. He was a patriot. He would share his stories not for his own attention, but to impart on each of us the story of sacrifice that our men and women in uniform make so that the United States—all Americans—might live in peace, protected by those who serve.

Mr. Allen's story was most human. In his own words, he wrote this about his enlistment in the Army and subsequent deployment:

Then there are people like myself, the little guy who went to Korea as a young kid, still wet behind the ears, fresh out of high