

Security Council, and we will work together to defeat this enemy as we have together defeated Nazism, communism, and now, as well, this new threat.

We will have the finest intelligence assets that our nations have placed on the ground in countries around the world.

We have used our intelligence assets here at home to keep out and prevent those who would harm our people from coming inside our borders. We always worry. We keep trying to make the security even better. But we have come a long way since 9/11.

Each American can play an important role by reporting suspect behavior they observe, and you can help our law enforcement officials ferret out dangerous elements that could prey upon our own people.

On the home front, every citizen can help by paying attention to what you see and, if suspicious, report it to your local law enforcement officials and, in an emergency, to 911.

Also important is strengthening the bonds of community, at home, at work, at school. Build bridges in your own community, including religious confessions. Let's build bridges across religious confessions in this country. Let no denomination feel isolated or abandoned at this tense time.

We stand with the people of France. We feel their loss. We stand with you as partners in liberty and forever keep in our hearts the enduring call: Liberty, equality, and fraternity—liberte, egalite, fraternite.

Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania. I thank the gentlewoman from Ohio.

Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from New York mentioned a minute ago about our constitutional obligation and the moral imperatives that we have to defend our homeland and our national defense, and I couldn't agree with him more.

In that spirit, I want to start to conclude my comments by saying something I think most agree with, and that is we need to enhance our intelligence and our vetting process of those who come to our country, including potential Syrian refugees, to reflect the seriousness of threats posed by ISIS.

I want to go into a little bit of information that is easy to come by if you have paid attention to this issue, as I have, and the reality of the situation on the ground in Syria.

As a result of over 4 years of Syrian civil war, we are seeing the worst humanitarian crisis since World War II, and we can and we will, as America, continue to be a leader in the provision of aid and relief. But we can't afford to put the cart before the horse when it comes to admission policies here.

This year alone over half a million Syrian people are seeking refuge in Europe, and our European allies are looking to us for assistance. However, it is gravely concerning, I think, when your FBI Director, in this case, James Comey, said earlier this year that our government is unable to conduct thor-

ough background checks on the 10,000 Syrian refugees that the administration will allow in the United States. His quote: We have no record of them, and you can only query what you have collected.

Mr. Speaker, the concerns and objections that I am raising aren't just mine. They are the multitude of phone calls and e-mails that my office has received today and I suspect all Members have received today.

It is not isolationist. It is not anti-humanitarian. It is common sense, and it is in the name of making sure that we are protecting our people and securing our homeland from threats.

It is not unreasonable to conduct due diligence on who is coming into our country, and we can't move forward with a policy of admit first and ask later. We have to close the gaps in our screening process of refugees entering into our country.

The Homeland Security Committee chairman, Mr. MCCAUL, recently introduced legislation H.R. 3573, the Refugee Resettlement Oversight and Security Act. It would make substantial improvements to our refugee program and enhance congressional oversight of the administration's refugee proposals.

Many don't know that Congress right now does not have much, if any, say over our refugee admission policy. This bill is intended to change that. It would require, amongst other things, GAO to review the security gaps in the current screening process.

The President, as I mentioned, has proposed resettling at least 10,000 Syrian refugees currently residing outside the Syria conflict zone in refugee camps to the U.S. this fiscal year.

I quote from correspondence I had the opportunity to review today that Chairman MCCAUL wrote to the President: "We remain concerned that these resettlements are taking place without appropriate regard for the safety of the American people."

□ 2145

Nothing is more fundamental. Nothing gets at the core of what our Constitution is intended to protect as that statement.

In his correspondence, Mr. Speaker, he cites to a couple pieces of testimony that he received this past summer from various officials. Leaders from the FBI, the National Counterterrorism Center, and the Department of Homeland Security have all said to our Homeland Security Committee that they lack the on-the-ground intelligence necessary to thoroughly vet Syrian refugees who seek to resettle here.

National Counterterrorism Center Director Nicholas Rasmussen testified on October 21 that you have to rely on a vet. When you are vetting an applicant's information, his opinion is this: "It isn't what we'd like it to be."

FBI Director Comey explained during that same hearing: "If someone has not made a ripple in the pond in Syria in a way that would get their identity or

their interests reflected in our database, we can query our database until the cows come home, but nothing will show up because we have no record of that person. You can only query what you have collected."

I mentioned a piece of that statement a little earlier. That is the full statement. And it gets to the point that, as we are concerned about our security and we are trusting the administration to properly vet those who seek to come here, we have to rely on intelligence, and our intelligence leaders are offering something less than full confidence that their intelligence on those Syrian refugees is something that we need to look a lot further at. That is what I think we need to do.

Finally, Department of Homeland Security Secretary Johnson said: "It is true that we are not going to know a whole lot about the Syrians that come forth in this process."

Now, I know tomorrow at 5:30, I believe, we will have a confidential briefing from the FBI Director and our Director on Homeland Security.

Mr. Speaker, my point here this evening was just to raise some issues that, frankly, were on the front of my mind and many others in my district and many other Members of Congress even before the tragedy that happened in Paris on Friday. What happened on Friday only reinforces in me and many others that ISIS isn't contained, and, in fact, a strategy of containment is actually a dangerous one; and further, as we are looking at the Syrian readmission policy, it cannot be allowed to remain as it presently is. Be it through legislation or be it through this administration's providing us more detail and allowing Congress and the American people to get a better understanding of what is and isn't happening I think would go a long way towards making us feel a lot safer. In fact, if reforms need to be made, if the program needs to be halted at the present time, then that is what should be done.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleagues for participating in the Special Order this evening.

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

#### LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. DEFAZIO (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today through November 19 on account of medical leave, recovering from eye surgery.

Mrs. LAWRENCE (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today on account of official business in district.

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today through November 19 on account of medical reason.

#### SENATE BILLS REFERRED

Bills of the Senate of the following titles were taken from the Speaker's