taken time from our schedules to come to the floor tonight to sound the alarm. The saber rattling is going on by this administration. The remarks that we're hearing day in and day out are more accusatory toward Iran. We are made to believe that we are somehow being placed at a great threat by Iran.

And so we know where this is going. We know what this means, and we're saying, we must not rule out diplomacy. We must believe that we can settle differences by way of diplomacy.

We know that we've still got work to do on Iraq. We've still got to make many Members of this House feel comfortable with the idea that they can confront their President, that they can still be very, very patriotic as they stand up against war and bringing our soldiers home. We know that the work has to be done, but we've got to add to that work the fact that we can stop an airstrike on Iran and we can stop the notion that somehow we must send more soldiers in.

AN AMERICAN PERSPECTIVE ON THE WAR IN IRAQ

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ELLISON). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. GILCHREST) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. GILCHREST. I thank the Speaker for the time. And Mr. Speaker, what I would like to talk about today, and it's actually a pretty good follow-up to the previous special order by Ms. WATERS, who is a classmate of mine, going back to, I was going to say 1891, but going back to 1991, MAXINE and I came in as freshman and we've been here now for the past 17 years. And the previous discussion about the Iraq war, the relationship with Iran, I think, leads fairly well into the special order that I am prepared to give tonight.

Mr. Speaker, what I would like to do is to give a presentation on the war in Iraq, the Middle East, an American perspective on the Cold War that engulfed the world for many decades, an American perspective on the Cold War and how it impacted the Middle East, the present crisis in the Middle East and Iraq, from an American perspective, and an American perspective on the way forward.

When I say an American perspective, tonight, Mr. Speaker, I'm trying to relate an idea that the United States, for the past 50 years, has seen itself not as a lone super power in the world, but as a Nation, as Walt Whitman described, the race of races, the United States, the melting pot.

The United States has engaged itself in the fiber of the international community, and has not seen itself as a lone ranger in the international arena of conflict, of economy, of culture, of exchanges. The United States has seen itself as an integrated part of the international community in much of its history. And so, tonight, when I talk about the U.S. view of the war in Iraq, it is to illustrate the complexity of that conflict, the complexity of the intrigue and violence that we are now seeing, the complexity of the way forward, but, in fact, there is a way forward.

So I want to give a brief history covering about the last 60 years. And what I would like to share with the American people, Mr. Speaker, among many, many periodicals, many books, many resources, I'd like to share ideas tonight from seven books.

The first one is Violent Politics by William Polk, who served in the Kennedy and Johnson Administration. Violent politics is not what we see here on the House floor. Violent politics is when diplomacy fails and war begins, war usually that engulfs communities or regions, not in what we saw in World War II, but in insurgencies, where there are no munitions factories to bomb, there are no supply lines to bomb, there are no massive armies to bomb or thousands of tanks to take out, but violent politics as it envelops regions in insurgencies.

And is there an effective counter insurgency to that particular break down in diplomacy?

We're seeing an insurgency in the Middle East, in the Middle East, in Iraq, in Afghanistan, and certainly in other places. In Violent Politics, William Polk gives an idea of how an insurgency actually works, and how you can deal with an insurgency like we're experiencing now in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The other book is Fiasco by Thomas Ricks. How did we get involved in Iraq? What were the mistakes, the very clear, obvious mistakes over the planning in the first few years?

The next one is by Steven Kinzer, All the Shah's Men; America's relationship with a large country that is seeking to have influence for self-defense purposes, mainly, the country of Iran.

The next one is Trita Parsi who wrote Treacherous Alliance. What is the arrangement or what has been the arrangement or the alliance and sometimes the verbal conflict between Israel and Iran?

The next is Tony Zinni, who was Commander of CENTCOM for a number of years, spent much of his military Marine career in the Middle East. He wrote a book about the Battle for Peace. Tony Zinni, like President Eisenhower, knows you need a strong military, strong intelligence, and consensus in dialogue and diplomacy. That plays a vital role in actions that the United States is involved in.

An interesting book called Human Options by Norman Cousins. What kind of decisions do we make? Why do we make them? And do we know all the options that are before us?

The last book is a little bit older. It's about the Vietnam war, called Why Vietnam? How did we get involved in that conflict? It's written by a man called Archimedes Patty, who was among the first Americans to meet Ho Chi Minh in 1945; sent there by this government as the head of the OSS or the Office of Strategic Services, which was the forerunner of the CIA, to find out how we can find people in Indochina, to see, to gather intelligence about the Japanese troop movements in that region of the world since we couldn't get any intelligence from the French or the Chinese or anybody else.

And Archimedes Patty discovered this man, the head of the Viet Minh, known as Ho Chi Minh that was willing to help and in fact did help the United States gather intelligence on Japanese troop movements in Indochina; helped many, many, many Americans, downed pilots and so on, and allied himself with the United States in 1945, hoping to get help from the United States, not from Russia, not from China, to gain his independence from French colonial rule. A fabulous book that shows the intricacies of how diplomacy works sometimes, and how the bureaucracy doesn't always work too well when communicating those kinds of pieces of information.

Seven books, Violent Politics, Fiasco, All the Shah's Men, Treacherous Alliance, Battle for Peace, Human Options, Why Vietnam. Sounds like a tall order.

But, Mr. Speaker, I can imagine the American public, who have some dissatisfaction, some apprehension, some anger, some wanting a ray of hope about the conflict in Iraq and Afghanistan, I can see the American public, over the next many months, turning the television off every single night for 1 or 2 hours, every night, and dedicating themselves to help the solution, the American solution, the American solution of how to solve this difficult problem in the Middle East, by becoming informed, by finding out information, by becoming more knowledgeable about these issues, not waiting for the government that people sometimes assume is competent, but being a part of the process.

Now, I mentioned the book Human Options by Norman Cousins. And I want to give you two quotes out of that book to frame this discussion tonight. The first one is, ''Knowledge is the solvent for danger.'' You want to solve a problem? You need a couple of things. You need initiative, of course. You're going to turn the TV off and read these books. You need initiative. And then as you read this material, some of it is pretty intricate, exquisite detail, complicated. But you need some ingenuity and intellect to figure it out. And you have that.

But what this assignment will give to you is knowledge. It'll give you information. It'll give you a depth of information so that, you, as an individual, can become more competent to share this with your fellow Americans and maybe even write your congressman.

The other one in Human Options, the quote, is ''History is a vast early warning system.'' We know more about

Vietnam, or we should today, than we did 40 years ago, 50 years ago when we became embroiled in that tragic conflict.

And we say we should have had, you know, it's okay to say it now, and hindsight is better than foresight. We've had 40 years of experience to know what was good and what was bad about that conflict. But I will tell you that when the United States became involved in that violent conflict, we already had all the information we need to know. We needed to understand the history of our relationship with Indochina, with China, and their relationship, Vietnam, with the rest of the world. But we didn't bother to understand or listen carefully enough to what Archimedes Patty was saying when he spoke to Ho Chi Minh. We didn't know the history of Vietnam in 1945 in 1965, and we should have.

□ 2245

History is a vast early warning system. We owe it to the soldiers in Iraq, we owe it to the soldiers in Afghanistan, we owe it to eighth graders and ninth graders in high school today who will graduate in just a few years and should not have to be involved in a conflict that, if we put our intellect together with enough knowledge, this can be solved.

So I would suggest to the American people, Mr. Speaker, that every single night, if you're a patriotic American, you want to solve this problem. You want to commit yourself to bringing the troops home in a responsible fashion, find some source of information, read it objectively.

You know, Rudyard Kipling, the writer and poet from Great Britain, traveled the world, spent much time in India, had a son who died in World War I in northern France in a violent struggle. And to express his sorrow, Rudyard Kipling said, why did young men die because old men lied?

I want to paraphrase that today. Old men should talk before they send young men to die. We should talk. We should be knowledgeable. We should spend the time to understand the nature of history, the nature of conflict.

Let's take a short walk back in history to the Cold War and some of its successes and failures.

President Eisenhower and the leader of the Soviet Union, Premier Khrushchev, Nikita Khrushchev, bitter enemies, faced off with thousands of nuclear weapons all armed, ready to go at a moment's notice. We know that Khrushchev told the United States and the Western powers many, many times that he was going to bury us. One time in the United Nations, we remember this, Nikita Khrushchev took his shoes off, pounded the podium, looked right at the western diplomats—ours was Henry Cabot Lodge at the time—pointed his finger and said, we will bury you.

What was Eisenhower's response during the time that he was President of the United States to these kinds of threats from the Soviet Union, from Nikita Khrushchev? Open dialogue. He invited President Khrushchev to come and tour American cities, ride on American trains, go to our suburbs, visit our farms, visit our schools. President Eisenhower's response was dialogue.

What happened in 1962 when it was discovered by our spy planes that Cuba, Fidel Castro, had deployable nuclear weapons in Cuba 90 miles off the coast of Florida? What was Kennedy's response? Call the Kremlin. Have a dialogue. Negotiate with the Soviet Union. Talk to Nikita Khrushchev. What happened? The weapons were removed; we avoided war.

China, Communist China, said that they would not mind if half the population of China was wiped off the face of the earth as long as they destroyed the United States. Violent rhetoric pointed at the United States. What was President Nixon's response to Mao Zedong? Nixon went to China. Nixon opened the dialogue that continues today.

Is China today a model democracy? No. Does China have human rights violations? Yes. Are they well-known? Do we know that they continue to violate freedom of speech, freedom of press, freedom of religion? Do they continue to violate human rights? The answer is yes. What is our response to China? It's our biggest trading partner. We constantly have a dialogue. The Olympics will be held there. Do we condemn the Chinese for human rights violations? How do we deal with it? Do we get ourselves in violent politics? No. The answer is dialogue.

Those were our successes. They continue to be a struggle. They continue to be a challenge, but we continue to pursue them through dialogue.

What happened in Vietnam? Ho Chi Minh. A tiny old man with slight whiskers who, in 1945, wanted to ally himself with the United States to gain sovereignty from under the French colonial rule. What happened in the 1950s? Senator McCarthy talked about communism. John Foster Douglas wanted to contain Communism. We somehow didn't listen to the people in the State Department or the CIA. We somehow didn't follow that path to dialogue with Khrushchev or dialogue that got ourselves out of the Cuban missile crisis or dialogue with Mao Zedong.

So what happened because there wasn't a dialogue? 58,000 Americans died. Hundreds of thousands were wounded. Post-traumatic stress syndrome still affects thousands of Vietnam veterans. Well more than a million Vietnamese died because we didn't have the dialogue.

It's time, Mr. Speaker, for the American public to really understand the complexities of international politics. The dialogue, communications, consensus can be a strong and powerful tool to enhance America's interest. America does not become stronger by putting more people in cemeteries as a result of these violent conflicts.

Let's take a look at the Middle East, the area that we're now dealing with, during the Cold War.

Then, as now, it was a complex place. There was intrigue there, and there was a great deal of violence. Let's look at some of the incidents that the United States has been involved in or was involved in.

In 1953, actually in 1950, Muhammed Mossadeq was a duly elected Prime Minister of Iran running a secular country moving toward democracy. But because of some misunderstandings, believe it or not, between what the British Petroleum Company, called the Anglo Persian Petroleum Company, which is now today BP, British Petroleum, they had some strong disagreements with Muhammed Mossadeq. The United States, under John Foster Dulles, was thinking, although they were wrong, that Muhommad Mossadeq had a strong relationship with the Soviet Union and he might turn to communism.

In 1953, we were at the very early stages of the Cold War, and a lot of things were going on. But as a result of some misunderstanding, the United States planned a coup inside its embassy in Tehran, and it turned out to be a very violent, very bloody coup in which their duly elected prime minister was removed from office, put under house arrest for the rest of his life. And we put in the Shah. The United States put in the Shah. In 1953, we broke down a relationship that we had had with Iran for many, many years.

The United States was looked upon as being the beacon of hope around the world by many people, including Iranians, hoping the United States would help them gain some equality with the British extracting oil from Iran. In 1953, we started a violent coup in Iran.

What happened in 1979? Most of us would remember. In 1979, there was a revolution in Iran. The United States embassy in Tehran was taken over by the Revolutionary Guard, and all relationships with the United States were broken. But it's interesting that the American embassy was taken over in Tehran, the same embassy that planned the coup in 1953. That was a mistake. We lit a slow fuse in 1953 that blew up in 1979.

What about the Soviet Union in the Middle East during the Cold War? It's like a roller coaster ride. Sometimes they were allied with certain Arab nations; sometimes they were not allied with certain nations. Most Arab nations always distrusted the Soviet Union because they were a country of atheists, and Arab nations were a country under Islam.

How about Israel during the Cold War? It's interesting, and you ought to read the book ''Treacherous Alliance'' by Trita Parsi, to understand the nature of the relationship between Israel and Iran between 1948 and 1991. Israel

and Iran had many enemies in common. They were both enemies of the Soviet Union. They were both enemies of many Arab states, especially Iraq under Saddam Hussein. And as a result of that, because they had the same enemies—and Iran is a Persian country, does not speak Arabic, speaks Farsi, it is an Islamic State, but Israel and Iran had many similar enemies. And so they had secret arrangements: Oil for technology. That went on to 1991.

Russia invaded Afghanistan from 1980 and the war went on to just about 1989. They call it Russia's Vietnam. Iran and Iraq went to war in 1980 to 1988. There were more people killed in the Iran-Iraq War than all of the Americans killed in World War I, World War II, Korea, and Vietnam. More people killed between 1980 and 1988 between two neighboring states. The blood, the bitterness, the fear, remains to this day.

1979, Egypt decided that they were going to recognize Israel, and Egypt became more of an American ally than a Soviet ally. Jordan followed not far behind.

What I'm trying to present to you is that the Middle East, in most of recent history, has been a place of intrigue, a place of complexity, and a place of violence. What do we see now today in the Middle East?

We know that in the three great religions faith is very important. It's a part of everyone's life. The three great religions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. And in many places in the Middle East, the Jews, the Christians, and the Muslims live together. There is even intermarriage. The children go to school, and when they learn about their faith, they just move to different classrooms. When they learn about math, they move back to the math classroom together or the history classroom together. And this is throughout much of the Middle East.

So there is a strong religious component. Faith is important in their life. But in many communities, the three great religions live side by side, and for the most part, harmoniously.

Oil is a vital component of their economic viability. We know that and the world knows that. The oil exports from the Middle East are extremely vital for their economy, and that's why we have not seen the Gulf of Hormuz, where most of that oil comes out of, we have not seen that, we have not seen any of those countries in the Middle East try to shut that route out.

Today, as in the past, but especially today, the geopolitical balance of power is fractured. What does that mean? That means, which direction is the Middle East going to go?

Mr. Speaker, who is going to have more influence in the Middle East? Will it be Saudi Arabia? Will it be Iran? Will it be Israel? Will it be Russia? Will it be China? Will it be Europe? Will it be the United States? Nobody knows exactly right now. But what we do know is the Middle East has been a focus of America's attention since 9/11, an absolute focus of America's attention mainly because we were attacked, thousands of Americans were killed. We invaded Afghanistan to get rid of the source of the attack, al Qaeda and the Taliban, and then we subsequently invaded Iraq in which we eliminated a brutal dictator, Saddam Hussein. We eliminated a potential for weapons of mass destruction.

We are beginning and we have developed a working Iraqi Government. Iraq has been the focus of America's attention, but how much information do we know about this region, about Iraq?

□ 2300

But again, I would recommend reading especially some of these books to bring us up to date on some of that information.

The Shiites, the Sunnis and the Kurds, the main factions in Iraq, the Shiites and the Sunnis are Muslim, the Kurds are Muslim. What is the difference between the Shiites and the Kurds and the Muslims? Much of it has to do with historic understanding about who would be inheriting Muhammad's role in the Muslim faith. But the average Muslim, I will tell you, whether they're a Sunni, a Shia or a Kurd, the average Muslim wants to live their life in peace, wants human rights for themselves and their family. They want to raise their family.

There is no bitter quarrel among the average Muslim about who's a Sunni or a Shia, who is supposed to inherit the role of Muhammad. The average Muslim wants to live their life in peace. They want human rights. They want justice. They want the rule of law. They want freedom of religion, freedom of thought, freedom of expression. Where the trouble comes with the Islamic faith is with al Qaeda, with the Taliban. Sometimes I would even say with the teachings of Wahhabi, where they confine themselves to a certain monstrous certainty.

Iran, by the way, as do most other Arab countries, oppose the teachings of al Qaeda. They oppose the teachings of Taliban. One of our problems in the Middle East is to find allies, is to have a dialogue with other countries. And I will tell you, when the Taliban took over Afghanistan, just think about this, when the Taliban took over Afghanistan, every country in the world pulled their embassy out except Iran. Iran left its embassy in Kabul. And what did the Taliban soldiers do? They went to the Iranian Embassy in Kabul, pulled out the 11 Iranians, and they shot them, the only embassy left in Kabul. What did the Taliban do? They shot the Iranians. Who helped them? Al Qaeda. Is Iran a friend of these Islamic extremists? No. Is Iran a friend of the Taliban and al Qaeda? No. Is Iran open to discussion about these issues to bring stability? The answer is yes.

There are many differences between these Arab countries, whether it's Saudi Arabia, Iran, Syria, Qatar, Amman, Iraq, Afghanistan, Lebanon, you name it. They all have some differences in the way they look at religion and the way they look at their leadership. They're either democracies or they're monarchies or they're dictatorships, but what they have in common is they want stability in that region.

The present crisis, the war in Iraq, the war in Iraq is not World War II. It is not like World War II. There are no munitions factories to bomb anywhere in Iraq like there were in Germany and Japan. There are no standing armies. There are no supply lines. We are fighting an insurgency, a very multi-complex insurgency.

Where are we now? Why is there a sense of urgency to find a resolution, an end to this conflict? We say there's 34,000 casualties. What does that mean, 34,000 American casualties? That means there's more than 4,000 young American soldiers dead. Thirty thousand wounded. What does that mean? That means 30,000 Americans have come back that have been brutally blown up and have lost limbs, been burned severely. Their physical lives are, for the most part, ultimately and absolutely changed. They will never be the same. With courage, they can pick up the pieces of their life and move on with strong families.

There are tens of thousands who have post traumatic problems. I will say that everyone that enters a war zone, 100 percent comes back with post-traumatic stress. Now, what does that mean? That means that the violence that they see, the violence and destruction of explosions, of human bodies being torn to pieces, that image that they see and experience never leaves their memory. They will always remember that. That image never goes away. It just happens that your soldier can deal with it effectively and become a productive citizen and take that image in their mind and figure out how to conduct themselves in a normal fashion so they can lead a good life, they can raise a family, they can have a relationship, they can deal with it. Some cannot. Some are psychologically scarred for a long time to come.

The war so far is costing a little over $600 billion. That's where we are as far as the Treasury is concerned. The American people want a conclusion to the conflict. How are we going to end the war in Iraq?

There is global dissent about our policy at present. There is a struggling Iraqi Government. Are they ready to take over completely with their politics, with their military, with their infrastructure, with their economy? Not quite yet, they aren't. Some of our Arab allies, including Saudi Arabia, our strongest ally in the Middle East, have stated publicly that America's war in Iraq is illegal. That is where we are at this point.

Can we leave Iraq, like some of our generals have suggested; drive them to

Basra, put them on boats and airplanes and bring them home? Many people are suggesting that. But I would remind the American people, Mr. Speaker, of something that General McCaffrey said. We left Mogadishu abruptly, and it was chaos. If we abruptly leave Iraq, that chaos will be multiplied by a thousand times.

When the French began to pull out of Vietnam, they left some military there. And the famous battle of Dien Bien Phu has been retold many times. If we leave Iraq under the present conditions and leave some American troops there, how many should we leave? We don't want another Dien Bien Phu for American soldiers in Iraq.

General Petraeus said there is no military solution in the war in Iraq. Is there a political solution? What is the road ahead?

There is a great deal of talk about elections in October. We really have to work toward that goal. What about a hydrocarbon law? Is there a strong local police force? Is there a strong Iraqi national army? Is there a stable government? How do we achieve these goals, and many more? We don't achieve them with military power alone. That simply is not going to work.

Let's take a look at the way forward. What do we do? Very complicated situation. History, to a certain extent, can be a guiding post to avoid certain obstacles that we don't anticipate, but let's take a look.

Iraq. The United States and the United States military is the skeletal structure upon which the entire Iraqi society rests right now. We are the structure that that government depends upon. If we pulled out, to a large extent, at least for a time, hard to predict, there would be chaos. So we are the skeletal structure upon which the entire Iraqi society rests.

If we just focus on Iraq, though, we understand there is no long-term military solution to its insurgency, there is no basic long-term political solution if we just focus in on Iraq. The United States needs to understand the region and how we impact the region and how we can be interconnected with many of the problems that are there. And that will also begin to help resolve the Iraqi question.

Many of the insurgents in Iraq still are al Qaeda and the Taliban. Many of the recruiting tools to bring more people into that violent extremist movement is the Palestinian-Israel question. So if the United States, and we've already begun that, we've seen the Bush Administration in Annapolis, we've seen some discussions in a number of levels trying to resolve and reconcile the differences between the different factions in Palestine and the different factions in Israel. If the United States becomes an objective arbitrator with the Palestinian-Israel question, we will reduce significantly the number of people that are recruited into the violent Islamic community known as al Qaeda.

Our discussions with Saudi Arabia, that we're not going to abandon the region, Saudi Arabia still has some fear that Iraq could be an Iranian satellite. And Saudi Arabia fears too much Iranian influence in the region. So our discussions with Saudi Arabia are pretty important.

Our discussions with Iraq, obviously, can be very interesting, especially with the Iranians, because the Iraqis have diplomatic relations with the Iranians, and vice versa; Maliki has gone to Tehran, Ahmadinejad has gone to Baghdad. So the Iraqis can see us as being a little closer to their relationship as far as the Iranians are concerned.

Now, the Iranians, obviously, we talked a little bit about the Iran-Iraq war that lasted from 1980 to 1988 and how many hundreds of thousands of Iranians were killed. The Iranians fear the kind of government that could do that again in Iraq.

The differences between the Ba'athist party, the Sunnis, the old Saddam Hussein regime is could that possibly come back? So our relationship, our open dialogue with the Iranians is pretty important.

No one in the Middle East wants too much Russian influence. They remember the old Soviet Union, they remember Afghanistan. They simply don't know if Russia has found its soul yet, so many in the Middle East fear too much Russian influence. Many in the Middle East fear too much Chinese influence because they know China is looking for resources, especially oil.

So the U.S. involved in the Middle East in all these areas, including Syria, including, I will say, Hamas and Hezbollah, it is America's power that gives us the ability to negotiable, to dialogue, to communicate, to find some way to talk to our allies, our friends, and also our enemies in the Middle East. This is not Chamberlain giving away Czechoslovakia. This is the United States, the most powerful country in the world militarily, economically, and with our diplomats, discussing the issues in the Middle East with our friends, our allies, and our enemies, not giving up anything, certainly not giving up territory, not giving in to threats, not giving in to proliferation of nuclear weapons or weapons of mass destruction. This is the United States, with its power, negotiating its way to find a solution with our strength.

Eisenhower said in the 1950s, and it's true today, the United States' ability to be a super power, to be strong, is a three-legged stool, a strong military, a strong intelligence system, and consensus and dialogue. That's in our arsenal as well, diplomacy, trade, education, technology, social exchanges, science exchanges, cultural exchanges. That's the beacon, that's our strength.

So let's take a look at some ways to resolve this problem. We have the military. People know we're strong. We have the best intelligence in the world. We talked about a military surge about a year ago. Let's take a look at a diplomatic surge, with present and former diplomats in the United States covering the gauntlet in the Middle East to talk about these kinds of reconciliation measures.

International support structure from the international community, that has worked so well for many decades, and integrated security alliance. We have it, we've had it for some time with NATO. We've had it with SEATO, the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization. We've had it with Latin America, the Organization of American States. The Soviet Union had it. They know how these integrated security alliances work. We are fully aware of the Warsaw Pact, that gave those countries participating a certain amount of strength.

An integrated economic system can help immensely. And I'm not saying that you will have a NATO-type alliance among Middle Eastern countries, but you can begin to discuss an integrated security alliance.

□ 2315

Continue the current military drawdown of American troops that is now ongoing strategically and in a responsible manner. Continue to work toward a reconciliation among the different factions in the Shia community, the Sunni community, and the Kurds. And we have seen recently in Basra between Iraq, the United States, and the country of Iran, the resolution to that violent conflict in Basra among the different Shia factions. Reconciliation among those factions can work.

And let's take a quick look historically at how these alliances can work. In 1941 the United States signed the Atlantic Charter with a number of European countries. And in part how did that Atlantic Charter work? What were some of the provisions? It said that all peoples have a right to self-determination. Trade barriers were to be lowered. There was to be global economic cooperation and advancement of social welfare, freedom from want and fear, disarmament of aggressor nations. Why did we sign the Atlantic Charter actually in September of 1941? Because we knew the war wasn't going to last forever and we knew that we needed some agreement about sovereignty and human rights that we could work toward. Those would be our goals.

That, I have to say as an aside, it was signed in 1941. In 1942, with Ho Chi Minh living under Japanese rule with the blessings of the French in Indochina, Ho Chi Minh said, ''I hope that means that that Atlantic Charter also includes Asians.'' And, unfortunately, he went on to say a few years later, since the Atlantic Charter talked about sovereignty, he said, ''I guess the Atlantic Charter did not include Asians.''

A couple of decades after the Atlantic Charter was written and signed,

there was something called the Helsinki Accords. The Helsinki Declaration was signed in December, 1975, by many European countries, including the Soviet Union, including Eastern Europe. And, by the way, the Atlantic Charter was what led into the United Nations to help secure sovereignty for countries, human rights, freedom of expression, freedom of thought, and so on. In 1975, and I want to bring this out for another particular reason and how it can apply today in the Middle East, in 1975 a number of countries signed the Helsinki Declaration, and what did that say in part? It said ''sovereign equality, respect for the rights inherent in sovereignty.'' It said, ''refraining from the threat of use of force.'' This helped trigger dialogue between the differences of nations that had conflict. ''Peaceful settlements of disputes.'' We didn't go to war with the Soviet Union. We didn't go to war with East Germany. We didn't go to war with a number of other conflicts around the world. ''Nonintervention in internal affairs. Respect for human rights, including the freedom of thought. Equal rights and self-determination of peoples. Fulfillment in good faith of obligations under international law.''

Now, Brezhnev actually liked this. Premier Brezhnev of the Soviet Union, Prime Minister Brezhnev, liked that because he thought that all the land that the Soviet Union then occupied, he would be able to occupy that territory forever. But what, in fact, did the Helsinki Accords actually do to people around the world, Eastern Europe, and Soviet Republics like the Ukraine? What did it do? It gave them official permission to say what they felt, to say what they thought, and the world would listen, and the world did listen. People living in the Ukraine today, the former Soviet Union, will tell you that the Helsinki Accords was that trigger, that slow fuse that led to their self-determination, their sovereignty, their independence. The Atlantic Charter, the Helsinki Accords.

What the United States can do in the Middle East is to remember those words, bring about a Middle East summit in which there can be Middle East accords, to bring about sovereignty, to bring about human rights, to bring about the respect for international law, to bring about respect for human thought. It can do for the Middle East what it did for former Soviet Republics that are now independent, now free. And the Ukraine is trying to get into the European Union. The Ukraine is trying to get into NATO, as is Kosovo, as is Macedonia, former Soviet Republics. View of the Helsinki Accords is what led to their ability to become sovereign and free nations and develop democracy. What can happen in the Middle East under these circumstances is the same thing. Eisenhower talked to Khrushchev. Kennedy avoided war in Cuba. Nixon talked to Mao Tse-tung. Knowledge is the solvent for danger. History is the vast early warning system.

What is our policy now based on in the Middle East? Do we have a definite direction? Are we sure about our power, our power to influence, our power of trade, our power of human dignity? What is our policy now in the Middle East?

Sam Rayburn, former Speaker, former Member of the House, the building right across the road is named after him, the Rayburn Office Building, where I work. What did Sam Rayburn say years ago that is actually applicable today? ''Any mule can kick a barn door down, but it takes a carpenter to build one.'' It takes a carpenter to build a barn.

We need more carpenters. We need more people who understand the nature of conflict. We need more people that have a sense of urgency.

The soldiers in Iraq that are driving in convoys that actually in the next few minutes might run over a land mine, those soldiers need to know, those soldiers in Iraq who are stunningly competent about what they do, need to know that we, the policymakers, are also stunningly competent in how we developed a policy that they have to take out.

But I will tell the American people, Mr. Speaker, just don't wait for the government to be competent. You're hoping they are competent. You're hoping they know what they are doing. Turn your television off 2 hours every night and start trying to understand the nature and the culture and the history and the intrigue and the complexity of the violence in the Middle East so you're better able to understand it.

Rudyard Kipling lost his son in France a long time ago, and to soothe his pain, he said, ''Why did young men die because old men lied?'' Today old people should talk before they send young people to die.

As we look back on the landscape of human tragedy, what and who in every instance was the enemy? What caused the violence? What caused the pain? What caused the despair? What caused the suffering? I will tell you we have three enemies in the landscape of human tragedy: ignorance, arrogance, and dogma. When you put those three things together, it leads to this monstrous certainty, this oversimplification of what the issues actually are, this monstrous certainty that comes out of al Qaeda that I'm right and you're wrong, this monstrous certainty that comes out of the Taliban, I'm right and you're wrong. A suicide bomber should do his job, that's what God wants. We know that's not right. We know that's wrong.

What's the antidote over history to ignorance, arrogance, and dogma? Knowledge to replace ignorance, humility to replace arrogance, and tolerance to replace dogma. We, as the policymakers, need to be knowledgeable and informed so we are competent to create a policy that will lead us out of this conflict, that will take us through the violence and understand the nature of this conflict so a resolution can come to the fore.

Mr. Speaker, I want to wish the American people well in their assignment to read these books that will bring knowledge to the fore: ''Violent Politics'' by William Polk, ''Fiasco'' by Thomas Ricks, ''All the Shah's Men'' by Steve Kinser, ''Treacherous Alliance'' by Trita Parsi, ''The Battle For Peace'' by Tony Zinni, ''Why Vietnam?'' by Archimedes Patti, and ''Human Options'' by Norman Cousins.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. PALLONE (at the request of Mr. HOYER) for today.

Mr. CULBERSON (at the request of Mr. BOEHNER) for today and the balance of the week on account of official business.

Mr. LOBIONDO (at the request of Mr. BOEHNER) for April 14 and up until 6 p.m. today on account of visiting servicemen and women in Afghanistan.

Mr. MACK (at the request of Mr. BOEHNER) for April 14 and the balance of the week on account of an illness.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. MCNULTY) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Ms. GIFFORDS, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. KAPTUR, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. WOOLSEY, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. DEFAZIO, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. LOEBSACK, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. POE) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. POE, for 5 minutes, April 22.

Mr. JONES of North Carolina, for 5 minutes, April 22.

Mr. SALI, for 5 minutes, April 16.

Mr. WELLER of Illinois, for 5 minutes, today and April 16.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. GILCHREST. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 25 minutes p.m.), the House adjourned until tomorrow, Wednesday, April 16, 2008, at 10 a.m.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 8 of rule XII, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows: