

With that, Madam Speaker, I would yield back the balance of my time.

CONCERNS ABOUT LIBYA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentleman from New Mexico (Mr. PEARCE) is recognized for 30 minutes.

Mr. PEARCE. Madam Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to address the assembled body tonight.

As one of the few combat veterans in the U.S. Congress, I rise to express deep concerns about what we are doing in Libya at this moment.

Madam Speaker, we have committed the U.S. taxpayers and we've committed U.S. troops to engagements that have extended almost a decade. Having been involved in one of those long overseas engagements before in Vietnam, I know the strain that these actions place on our families and on our young soldiers, and I don't think that the administration has adequately thought out what we are doing and what we're asking the taxpayers of this country to do and the young people of this country to do, engaging in yet a third front with questionable ideas and questionable values at the heart of why we're engaging in the discussion.

□ 2120

I've been an ardent supporter of the war on terror. I believe that we're going to be committed to the war regardless if it is there in their back yard or in our back yard.

But I rise tonight to say that I'm adamantly opposed to extending our forces any further than what we've already extended them without asking our allies to provide their tax money and to put the lives of their young people on the line.

The entire world is benefiting from the sacrifices that this country is making to establish order and to establish some modicum of peace in regions that are not given naturally to such. And since the world benefits, then the world has a responsibility. So I think the President should be calling on our allies to fund the NATO mission and to provide the people, the personnel, and the weapons.

And, yet, as I look at a breakdown of the missions that have been flown and fought so far, I find a dominance of U.S. cost in lives, in hours, monetary resources and in morale.

As a veteran, I find it disturbing that we're in two wars and now intervening in a third with no end in sight. Our mission is unclear.

Having served in Vietnam at a time when our Nation was beginning to withdraw support for that war, and remembering being there in those countries when funding was made short and gasoline and fuel was taken from state-side missions in order to fly combat missions, I remember with dismay a Nation that was not fully supporting the combat troops.

I find these actions to be questionable on behalf of our Commander in Chief as it regards Libya. Despite his speech last night, President Obama simply raised more questions. He explained that America is different. I'm not certain of exactly how that rationale applies to putting young men and women in harm's way, but I don't think it is a deep enough explanation.

What is the time frame? The President has yet to clarify. Are we there to enforce a no-fly zone? Then let our friends and neighbors in the U.N., the United Nations, enforce the no-fly zone.

If we're there to enforce a no-fly zone, why then are we bombing ground troops? They don't affect the no-fly zone.

If the goal is to protect civilians, why did Secretary Clinton meet with the rebel leader in London? Why is Secretary Clinton calling for Mr. Qadhafi to step down if we're only enforcing the no-fly zone and protecting civilians?

This war is going to go back and forth, and already you see our leaders wondering if we can be out by the end of the year. And I wonder if we can be out by the end of the decade.

Now, make no mistake about it: if Libya had done something to harm us, to put our troops in danger, I would be 100 percent supportive, but I question extending us and our troops to one more war zone.

Why are we fighting a war that Secretary of Defense Robert Gates said bears no strategic interest to the U.S. and does not jeopardize our national security?

Why are we working on the side of the rebels?

Their own commander has stated that al Qaeda members who fought our troops in Iraq are now fighting Mr. Qadhafi. In Libya we're working with the same people we're trying to kill in Afghanistan.

Not only that, but it looks like we're arming those same troops. And I worry that our armaments supplied to troops in Libya will show up in the fight against Americans in Afghanistan and Iraq.

As a combat veteran, I find these concerns to be deeply disappointing in an administration who, for nearly 2 weeks, could not point to whether NATO, the U.S., France or the United Kingdom was in charge. This is poor management, a management I saw during the Vietnam war, with little sense of purpose and always a confusion about exactly why we were there and how long we would stay.

Humanitarian missions are admirable. However, sending troops into combat with no apparent overarching mission is dangerous. Everyone in this room remembers Somalia in 1993.

Why are we singling out Libya? There's a war going on in the Ivory Coast right now. Saudi troops have cracked down on protesters in Bahrain in recent weeks, with civilian deaths reported. Not a whisper of American intervention there.

According to the Genocide Intervention Network, since 2009 almost 1 million people have been displaced in ongoing fighting in the Democratic Republic of the Congo; 5.6 million civilians are estimated killed since 1996. Are we going to intervene there?

Saddam Hussein killed hundreds of thousands of his own people using mustard gas and other weapons. The President was totally opposed, as a Senator, to that war, despite the fact that it had congressional authorization. And, yet, here he is leading us into this new conflict.

The President needs to consider the fact that the mission is unclear, despite his speech last night. He needs to realize that America cannot intervene in wars where we face no threat to our national security and have no strategic interest. He should listen to his Secretary of Defense.

As we engage in this yet third conflict, we're going to continue to put budget pressure on a budget that is straining beyond belief. In this country, the greatest threat that we face right now is a mounting national debt that is almost \$15 trillion, almost the equivalent of our entire gross domestic product.

At the time when we're expending more resources and more dollars in a conflict that has to be yet determined as to its scope, purpose and length, we're straining our budget even further. And while we're conducting these outside forces to greater cost to our U.S. Government, we are conducting a war on the West in this country, in choking the West of jobs right now. So at a time when the cost to our government is increasing, we're choking down the tax resources by simply regulating and taxing jobs out of existence.

In the past 10 days, most of us were at home at work in our districts. I, like everyone else, made a lot of miles in the last 10 days. We drove almost 1,300 miles and did 20 and 30 and 40 events, meeting with people and listening to their concerns. And everywhere we heard the same concern: What are you doing about jobs?

And my sad report had to be that this government, instead of creating jobs, is, in fact, choking off jobs. This government is, in fact, making it impossible for employers to bring on new laborers to expand the workforce and create that sense of prosperity that this Nation has always had available to it.

And people would ask why. And they would also ask how, how's our government choking off jobs? They find it incredulous. They don't want to believe me when I say that in our speeches to begin with. How is our government choking off jobs?

So I use as an example the forest service. This Nation used to have a vibrant logging industry, a timber industry that employed hundreds of thousands. Just in New Mexico, a very small State, over 20,000 people made their living in the timber industry in New Mexico.

Today, no one makes their living in the timber industry in New Mexico. Over 20 mills have been idled. The woodcutters and the choppers no longer have work.

□ 2130

Our mountain communities that used to depend on logging now depend on tourism, which is a very distant second as it provides incomes for our families to live and pay their bills on.

Our government put an entire industry out of work in the 1970s with a regulation based around the spotted owl. The theory was that if we wanted to protect the owl, we had to limit all the activity in the forest; and so we simply killed the timber-cutting jobs in our national forests across the country, and nowhere did it hit harder than in New Mexico. Our government said you can no longer go into the forest and cut trees because we are going to reserve the entire amount of land for the spotted owl, and an industry was killed overnight.

Right now, in New Mexico, the oil and gas industry hires about the same number of people that the timber industry used to hire. About 23,000 people now work for oil and gas. We provide energy for much of the country. And yet those jobs now are at risk because the Fish and Wildlife Service just recently announced that they are going to list a lizard as an endangered species.

Now, keep in mind that this lizard is seen everywhere. But when people ask me what is so significant about this lizard, I tell them, well, you just can't count the lizards out there. You have to stop them, raise their arm, and count the number of scales between the elbow and shoulder underneath their arm. And the endangered lizard has one less scale or one more scale, I'm not sure which, than the other lizards. And people are saying: Wait. Your government would kill our jobs over one scale under a lizard's arm, his front leg? And they are simply aghast that, with 9.5 percent unemployment, that our government would be undertaking such punitive ways of interpreting the Endangered Species Act.

Now, my belief is that we can keep the spotted owl alive in our forests and cut timber, and my belief is it will make healthier forests. And so we have introduced a bill which simply says, yes, we want to keep the spotted owl alive in sanctuaries. We will keep 1,000 acres here, 1,000 acres over here. But in the million acres in between we are going to allow logging for the first time in a couple of decades. For the first time, the mountain communities that used to thrive on timber cutting have the opportunity for jobs.

But even more than that, as we cut trees, New Mexico is a very arid climate, and what used to happen is that fires would burn the trees down to where there were only about 50 per acre. So we were broad savannah lands with our natural forests and scattered

trees. You can visualize how many 50 per acre is. That would be widely spaced with grass in between. And when the rains would come, the water would soak in and recharge the aquifers, but also recharge the aquifers around our streams.

Since we have stopped cutting trees in our national forests, they now are crowded from 50 trees per acre to 2,500 trees per acre. And now the streams are running dry because the trees use up so much more water than the grasslands that were native to the region. Instead of percolating down, the water is now soaked up by the trees and transpired into the atmosphere, causing our communities to be running out of water, our rivers to be running dry, and irrigation that used to provide jobs to be gone, all in the name of the spotted owl.

Now, I believe that a reasonable society can protect the spotted owl and create jobs, and that's the purpose of my bill. But before we go and rescue an industry from the past, we have to fight the fight to keep American oil being produced here, because the listing of that lizard has the potential to shut down all of the oil and gas jobs in a three-county region and maybe even across the entire State. That is still unclear.

We have people beginning to show up in large numbers to demonstrate against a government that is becoming too insensitive, too concerned about the hypothetical and not concerned enough about people who are just struggling to make ends meet. We find citizens who are simply aghast that this government would be killing jobs at a time when our economy is struggling so bad. And at the very time that we are struggling to keep our industry alive from some nameless bureaucrat, we find our President going to South America to see what he can do to invigorate an oil industry there. My friends, this is a time for us to produce American jobs and American energy.

Now, I believe that we can produce energy and protect the species. I believe that we can produce energy and keep our environment clean. And I believe that we can produce American jobs while protecting species, the environment, workers. I believe that we can do it all, and I believe that Americans insist that we do it. They don't want to see the species go extinct, but neither do they want jobs to be shipped overseas in the name of some value they don't quite understand.

Now, the truth is that where we have stopped logging, the trees are too dense for the spotted owl now. The habitat, instead of getting better, has gotten worse. And right across the street in the Mescalero Indian reservation, where they can log at their own will and they have been logging, the spotted owl prefers that habitat because they need to sit on the branches, they jump off the trees, they get flying speed, and they are able to overtake the rodents or whatever it is they live off of.

And so the habitat we are trying to protect actually is simply not suitable now for the spotted owl and they are moving over next-door, and we have done this in the name of some science that has never been made clear to us and it is very similar to what is going on with the lizard. They are going to list some species that I suspect there is no DNA difference between the five-scaled lizard and the six-scaled lizard. I suspect that is a mutation rather than a DNA difference. I suspect that there is no science on it.

And so we joined with people in our district this week to begin to say publicly to the government: Enough is enough. You are making promises with our money that you can't keep. You are committing us to more wars. You are committing us to more social payments. You are committing the taxpayer to a higher burden. At the same time, you are causing dwindling taxation into the government coffers by killing our jobs, and people are saying it is enough.

We saw in the last election a turnout of incredible magnitude of people saying: The government is not listening, and we don't care about what the government is doing anymore. The frustration is deeper and deeper. And, frankly, I encourage that, because I believe that the only hope in turning back a government that is too strong, a government that does not care, a government that is willing to take jobs from its people, a government that is willing to commit our troops anywhere in the world in the name of whatever vague policy they have is a government that is out of control. This needs to return to be a government of the people, by the people, and for the people.

We have set up on our Web page places where you can go and make comment to the government. You can call our office here and make those comments, and we will relay those comments for you.

So understand that we are in a fight for the future of this Nation, in a fight for our economy, and the greatest enemy is the government itself. The government intervenes in ways that it has no constitutional authority. The government intervenes with increasing tax policies so that even our President said in his State of the Union message that we are too highly taxed in our corporations and we need to get that in control. Let our President get that in control. We will vote gladly for such tax decreases here on the floor of this House in order to ensure that jobs are created.

The greatest reason that our jobs are going overseas are two: taxation policy and regulation policy. Regulations like the spotted owl. Regulations like the listing of the lizard. Regulations like the choking down of our financial system by the regulators now who are going into banks and scaring them by threats of fines. We are choking our economy down in the name of safety and security and achieving neither.

The sad thing is that we could cure most of our economic ills if we simply grow the economy.

□ 2140

Actuarial tables tell us that if we had a 3.5 percent rate of growth, that our economic problems in the States and in this government begin to disappear. And you would ask, is 3.5 percent possible? Well, that is exactly the rate we have averaged for the last 75 years. But, today, because of our policies of overtaxation, overregulation, our unfriendliness to business in general, we find ourselves stuck at about a 1 to 1.5 percent rate of growth.

Thus, we are finding the pressure on Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid. We are finding the pressure of the \$15 trillion debt. We are finding the pressure of \$1.5 trillion deficits. In order to meet those pressures, our Federal Reserve is beginning to print more and more money, so we are seeing prices skyrocket.

So at a time when jobs are scarce and people worry for the future, we are seeing the price of gasoline go up, the price of vegetables going up, the price of gold, silver, iron, everything is going up; not because their value has increased since last year or last month, but because the value of your dollar is decreasing because we are printing so many.

And even then we still are having increased pressure. We find the Japanese are not going to be able to lend us money. They typically were large buyers of our Treasury Bills, meaning they were loaning the government money. Not for a long time. China is beginning to decrease its holdings of Treasury Bills. And we are hearing these vague messages that our bankers, Chinese, Japanese, our own citizens, think our economy is out of control, our debt and our deficits are out of control, so they are saying no more, we are not going to lend you any more. That then drives the Federal Reserve to make up the difference by printing money.

That is an avenue that some of the worst economies in the world have pursued. In Argentina last year, Argentina had a rate of inflation of 1,500 percent. That means if you began the year with \$1.5 million in the bank, at the end of that year you had about \$100,000. At the end of next year it is going to be under \$10,000. So in just 2 years, if you had a nest egg in retirement, it will become of no value.

That is the path that Argentina chose, and it is the path now that we are beginning to choose; endless deficits, endless debt, wars that bankrupt us with no reasonable explanation of why we are in those wars. It is that situation that the American taxpayer faces today. It is that situation that causes me to stand and say America has done enough, American soldiers have done enough, American taxpayers have done enough. Let our friends come to the table. Let our friends begin to shoulder their share of the burdens.

Meanwhile, let us begin to cut the spending here in Washington. We can cut many ways without cutting the actual outcomes to people. We have duplicate agencies. We have waste, we have fraud, we have abuse. Cut those, but, on the other hand, begin to grow our economy and create jobs in industries that used to be here, industries that would start up overnight.

These are not 10- and 20-year plans. These are ideas that can begin immediately. The people would begin to work in the forest immediately if we would let them. They would begin to drill wells again. Offshore we could get our deepwater platforms working once again. Those have been idled by a government that is too powerful and has shut down over 100,000 jobs offshore.

These are the reasons that we are having the economic difficulties that we do. And when we have difficulties, as the world's largest economy, the Germans said it best: When you sneeze, you—the U.S.—sneeze economically, you give the rest of the world the flu.

If we will begin to set about creating American jobs, producing American energy, American timber, American manufactured goods up and down the economic spectrum, then we can cure not only our economy, but we can cure the world's economy. And I believe that we are going to do that. I believe that because the American people are beginning to stand and insist on it. Their insistence is patient, their insistence is respectful, but it is insistent nonetheless, and it has no waver and no quiver to it.

It says fix the problems. Come to this city of Washington and vote not like Republicans, not like Democrats, but like Americans. And when we begin to do that in this body, I believe that the American people will come together and support us in rekindling that greatness that lies within this country, that American exceptionalism that people for generations have come here to find, leaving everything behind, leaving families, a culture behind, leaving their own language behind, and they have come here for generations to find those words "opportunity" and "hope" which have been so deeply ingrained into the fabric of this Nation. And that is what I believe that we should be engaged in at this moment in this body.

Madam Speaker, I would yield back the balance of my time.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

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

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN (at the request of Mr. CANTOR) for today and the balance of the week on account of surgery.

BILL AND JOINT RESOLUTION PRESENTED TO THE PRESIDENT

Karen L. Haas, Clerk of the House reports that on March 03, 2011 she pre-

sented to the President of the United States, for his approval, the following bill.

H.R. 662. To provide an extension of Federal-aid highway, highway safety, motor carrier safety, transit, and other programs funded out of the Highway Trust Fund pending enactment of a multiyear law reauthorizing such programs.

Karen L. Haas, Clerk of the House further reports that on March 17, 2011 she presented to the President of the United States, for his approval, the following joint resolution.

H.J. Res. 48. Making further continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2011, and for other purposes.

ADJOURNMENT

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

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 46 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Wednesday, March 30, 2011, at 10 a.m. for morning-hour debate.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

923. A letter from the transmitting the Department's "Major" final rule — Regulation to Implement the Equal Employment Provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act, as amended (RIN: 3046-AA85) received March 18, 2011, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

924. A communication from the President of the United States, transmitting a message on the United States' involvement in the international effort authorized by the United Nations Security Council; (H. Doc. No. 112-14); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs and ordered to be printed.

925. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting Transmittal of D.C. ACT 19-369, "Reinstated Government Employee Review Temporary Act of 2011"; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

926. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting Transmittal of D.C. ACT 19-34, "Balanced Budget Holiday Furlough Temporary Act of 2011"; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

927. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting Transmittal of D.C. ACT 19-35, "Processing Sales Tax Clarification Temporary Amendment Act of 2011"; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

928. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting Transmittal of D.C. ACT 19-36, "One City Service and Response Training Temporary Act of 2011"; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

929. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting Transmittal of D.C. ACT 19-37, "Howard Theatre Redevelopment Project Great Streets Initiative Tax Increment Financing Temporary Amendment Act of 2011"; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

930. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting