Mr. JOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my strongest support for the invitation to have Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu address this body and to express my personal support for the Speaker's invitation.

Congress is a coequal branch. The Constitution acknowledges that. It establishes that. To suggest, as some have, that this body does not have a role in the geopolitical and diplomatic strategy of this Nation is flatly wrong.

This body, this Congress, funds our diplomatic activities. We, this body, this Congress, funds our military activities. And this body authorizes the use of military force, as acknowledged by the President just today with his delivery of a request for an authorization to use military force.

This body, this Congress, authorizes sanctions. And this body has expressed strong support in recent years for additional sanctions on Iran. We have a disagreement with the President, very respectfully, on this issue. But to suggest that this body, this Congress, this coequal branch, established by article I of the Constitution, should simply lay down its responsibility because the President of the United States suggested during the State of the Union that he will veto any additional sanctions we pass would be a dereliction of the duty of this body, of this Congress.

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That is why we have expressed our interest and we have said to the President that we do want to hear from our greatest ally in the Middle East to express our position of how to secure the region. It is appropriate. We are a coequal branch.

At a time when the President continues negotiations with Iran over the objections of so many in this body, at a time when the administration has had to acknowledge—forced to acknowledge a secret letter to Iran, it is appropriate for this body to stand up, and it is appropriate for this body to suggest that we stand with Israel perhaps in a way that the President does not.

This body, this House, this Member, we welcome the Prime Minister here in March. We look forward to hearing his vision, the vision of our greatest ally in the region, on securing peace in the Middle East, providing for the stability of the Middle East, securing democracy, and to say with the people of Israel that we stand with you in providing for your security.

## CONTINUED REMITTANCES TO SOMALIA

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

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Speaker, my question to all my colleagues today as I stand before this body is: If we could prevent a humanitarian disaster, would we? Should we?

Right now, Somalia may be on the brink of a preventable humanitarian disaster. My district happens to be home to one of the largest Somali American communities in the world, and it is certainly the largest in the Western Hemisphere.

My constituents have come to me and have explained in very detailed and moving ways that it is time for us to figure out this problem that we have in the United States with helping people remit money that they have earned to their loved ones in the Horn of Africa.

Somali Americans in my district are proud of the progress Somalia has made, as I am and many people around the world are. This is a nation that, for over two decades, had civil war but now has a President, a legislature, and is planning for elections in 2016.

This country is fighting off al Shabaab, a terrorist organization in league with al Qaeda, and this nation has successfully fought off famine and want of many kinds. Now, they are on another kind of problem, and this problem has to do with remittances and the ability of Somali Americans to send money to their loved ones.

It is important to understand that the progress they have made is fragile. We, in the United States, don't need to worry about sending money there right now, although we should, and we have, and we are. We need to just get out of the way to allow Somali Americans to send money to their own loved ones, and our financial system is inhibiting that.

Every year, Somali Americans send about $215 million to Somalia, a figure comparable to the entire U.S. aid package, which is approximately about $200 million a year. Individual Somali Americans send more money than the whole Government of the United States sends there, and that vital pipeline is lifesaving money that is shut off now as we speak.

The bank that provided 60 percent of the remittances or funds sent to Somalia closed accounts of businesses that transfer money from the U.S. to Somalia, and this is catastrophic.

Now, Somali Americans cannot send money to their loved ones, and Somalis can no longer receive money that they depend on for food, for school fees, for medical bills. Many of the financial institutions in the United States have chosen to avoid serving money services businesses that send money to vulnerable nations like Somalia, due to concern that the money could find its way into bank accounts of unsavory money launderers.

The goal of the U.S. financial regulator is good. We want to keep money from the money launderers and the terrorists; but do we arrive at a point where our regulation is so tight that even the legitimate money that we want to flow is being cut off?

I am calling on our government to get together—Treasury, the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, State Department—and have a real conversation, how we can stop the bad money but also let the good money flow.

As I said, Somalia depends upon this money. It is a very fragile state. It is emerging from being a failed state. If they cut the remittances off, we will see catastrophic results.

One of those catastrophic results will be an opening to groups like al Shabaab, a terrorist group that argues that the United States and the West generally don't want to help Somalia.

We need to stop them from using that recruiting message by figuring out how we can achieve our goals of stopping bad money from flowing and allowing good money to flow. For years, I have been asking for agencies to work with me to prevent this foreseeable tragedy. We need to be creative about finding a solution.

The Federal Reserve Bank of New York could use its wire service to process transfers to east Africa; that is a possibility. We could follow the example of the United Kingdom and set up a safe corridors program for banks to safely transfer money while managing risk. We could provide proactive training and assistance for banks that want to serve east African communities. There is no shortage of ideas.

I urge our government to sit down at a table and figure out a way to stop the money launderers and the bad money from flowing, but to certainly allow legitimate remittances to flow. We could prevent a catastrophe if we do.

## END THE DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY IMPASSE NOW

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

Mr. TAKAI. Aloha, Mr. Speaker.

On February 27, the Department of Homeland Security will run out of money—17 more days. If this is not resolved, at best case, approximately 200,000 workers will stay on the job without pay or be furloughed or, at worst, not work.

Mr. Speaker, I was elected to Congress and came here promising my constituents no more government shutdowns, no more Federal furloughs, and no more sequestration; yet here we are, on the verge of letting funding for Homeland Security run out and partially shutting down government. This impasse needs to end, and it needs to end now.

I say the bottom line—to paraphrase DHS Secretary Johnson's point—is security for our Nation is not free. Our homeland security cannot be hijacked by political games. We must get past this political stalemate and work out a clean bill for funding Homeland Security.

If we don't, significant portions of the Department of Homeland Security could be crippled, and hundreds of thousands of critical Federal personnel—our constituents—could be affected.

Let's remember that we are talking about some of the most critical security personnel who are working to keep