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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. HOLDING).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
July 8, 2015.

I hereby appoint the Honorable GEORGE HOLDING to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

JOHN A. BOEHNER,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 6, 2015, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 1 hour and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

DOES THE U.S. HAVE A PLAN TO DEFEAT ISIS?

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the President "avoids the battle, complains, and misses opportunities." Those were the words of Leon Panetta, President Obama's former Secretary of Defense and CIA Director, in 2011.

At the time, Panetta, along with military commanders and the Joint Chiefs of Staff, recommended that the United States leave 24,000 troops in Iraq to prevent that country from fall-

ing apart and becoming chaotic. According to Panetta, the administration was "so eager to rid itself of Iraq that it was willing to withdraw rather than lock in arrangements that would preserve American influence and our interests."

So the President ignored the advice of his own Secretary of Defense and top commanders and pulled troops out of Iraq in 2011. The timing, just before the 2012 Presidential election, to me, appeared to be based on the politics of political convenience, not our own national interests.

In any event, what is taking place today in 2015? Enter the Islamic State, ISIS. ISIS took advantage of the power vacuum left by America's absence. So today ISIS is stronger than ever, spreading its reign of terror throughout the region.

ISIS practices religious genocide against people that don't agree with it. They have redefined the term "barbarian" to an all new low. They rape, pillage, loot, behead, and burn those in this ISIS war against the world's people.

ISIS not only controls a massive amount of territory in the Middle East, it also controls the minds of thousands of foreign fighters, many from the United States. It is a sophisticated criminal enterprise that uses any and all ways to recruit, fundraise, and spread terror. It even uses American social media companies to promote its cause. Through American companies like Twitter, ISIS is instantly and freely spreading its cancer of Islamic extremism to teenagers, recruiting them to join the jihad and then launch attacks on the streets of America.

Since the President announced his campaign against ISIS, we have seen embarrassing results. Even the President admitted that the United States did not have a complete strategy.

The ISIS terror has been going on for over a year and we don't have a plan to

defeat them? This doesn't make a whole lot of sense.

The United States must answer this question: Is ISIS a national security threat to us? If the answer is yes, then we must defeat them; and Congress needs to weigh in on this and make this decision.

If we decide that ISIS is a national security threat, then, of course, we need strategy, a complete strategy. The administration's plan so far is to train mercenaries to fight ISIS. However, just this week, Secretary of Defense Carter admitted that the United States has trained, get this, 60 so-called moderate Syrian rebels to fight ISIS—just 60.

The \$500 million program that was supposed to fund 3,000 fighters before the end of 2015 has trained 60. So if I do my math correctly, Mr. Speaker, we are spending about \$8 million per fighter right now. That is abysmal. That is no way to fight and win a war against terror.

Also, there are more Americans fighting with ISIS rebels than we have trained fighters to fight against ISIS. Meanwhile in Iraq, just 8,800 fighters have been trained to fight ISIS compared to the goal of 24,000.

This administration's strategy to defeat ISIS seems to be in chaos. Even the Kurds want to do their own fighting, and they have asked us for military support. Our allies want to send direct aid to the Kurds, but the administration won't let them do that. They have to send it through Baghdad for some reason.

It is time for the administration to stop being indecisively weak and do the obvious. It needs to lead in this war against ISIS, and it needs to listen to the commanders.

The United States needs to act and have a plan to defeat this determined, well-financed enemy. It is a terrorist enterprise that is at war with us.

And that is just the way it is.

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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