

the size and three times the population of prewar Iraq and has far more capacity to do harm to us and our allies.

Trump has no plan and no strategy in the Middle East. Ending one general's life is not an endgame. Like the invasion of Iraq, already the biggest winner from Trump's misguided non-policy is the country that he opposes the most, Iran, whose allies now in Iraq have asked all of our troops to leave and who have called them occupiers; Iran, whose presence has caused the removal of all civilian employees and foreign service officers of the United States from Iraq.

Now, with the assassination, Trump has united those who were once opposing the regime in Iran. In Iran, there are incredible protests, and in Iraq there are protests against Iranian influence. So after abandoning our Kurdish allies and surrendering that part of the Middle East to our adversaries, Trump has now managed to unite the many people who were favorable to the United States and who were questioning the very malicious presence of Iran.

I believe that Congress must act and this House must act to assert its constitutional authority to rein in this out-of-control President. Last July, we attempted to do just that. I voted with a strong majority in this House to adopt the Khanna amendment to basically say that we would deny all funds for his attacking Iran without his coming first to this Congress to justify it; and I supported a second amendment that was adopted by our colleague, Representative LEE, which made it clear that there is no authorization for use of military force that exists on the books today that justifies any offensive action against Iran.

This House should use the full strength of our authority to restrict President Trump from rushing into another war that will be so costly to us in blood and treasure. It is a war that American families do not want.

As one very concerned father movingly wrote to me this week: "[If] my son is to be deployed to protect and serve our country, please do your best to be sure it is for the right reasons. He is proud to [serve] and will do his duty to the best of his ability without question. His Mother and I could not be prouder. Please don't let it be about some ill-conceived political distraction from an egomaniacal madman."

Let us come together to build a better path forward. Let us give peace a chance.

SUPPORT DISASTER ASSISTANCE IN PUERTO RICO

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Puerto Rico (Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN) for 5 minutes.

Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN of Puerto Rico. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the people of Puerto Rico. They are still struggling from the aftermath

of Hurricane Maria in 2017 and now are dealing with incessant seismic activity on the island since December 28 of last year.

Puerto Ricans still need ongoing assistance from Federal disaster programs, like those offered by FEMA and the Department of Housing and Urban Development. Today, I would like to emphasize HUD's work, particularly through its Community Development Block Grant program and the disaster relief program for Puerto Rico.

Puerto Rico has an allotment of over \$20 billion under CDBG-DR programs that will be spent on unmet needs and mitigation expenses to ensure local infrastructure is restored and in a better position to withstand future disasters. This clearly puts us in a positive position to restore our housing stock, economic activity, and damaged infrastructure.

However, of the \$20 billion, only \$1.5 billion is currently available to be drawn down by the grantee, the Puerto Rico Department of Housing. Although this is a large amount, delays and other challenges have impeded the availability of these additional funds.

To make matters worse, Puerto Rico has been experiencing a sequence of tremors since December 28, including a 6.4 magnitude earthquake yesterday during the early morning and a replica of 6.0 in the morning as well. The earthquake and subsequent aftershocks have caused significant housing and infrastructure damages in the south part of our island, including the towns of Guanica, Guayanilla, Penuelas, and Ponce, among others.

My constituents are afraid and uncertain of when these occurrences will cease, and the reason for that is approximately more than 400 people are still in shelters. One death has been reported. Additionally, there was an immediate power outage that impacted the entire island. As we speak, 75 percent of the island is without power and without electricity.

I commend President Trump for signing the Federal emergency declaration last night. It is clear that the people of Puerto Rico will need Federal assistance to fully assess damages, recover, and prepare for other future events.

According to the U.S. Geological Survey, aftershocks and an increase in overall seismic activity are expected throughout the next week, including a chance of another large earthquake that could cause additional damage. I am confident that we will show the strength and resiliency once more in the face of another disaster, but we cannot do it alone.

That is the reason, when you see schools that were impacted on the island, crushing one of the schools in Guanica—thank God there were no kids present at that time. Because the Governor resumed order, the classes were suspended, and we saved a lot of lives in that school.

But we can't do it alone. That is the reason we need to secure proper dis-

bursement of funds requiring planning and preparation, and we must ensure local agencies in Puerto Rico, like the Department of Housing, are equipped to manage and oversee the funds. Therefore, I understand bolstering capabilities, and I understand the changes and challenges. We need improvement, but I do not understand the repeated delays, the lack of information, and the violation of congressionally mandated deadlines for the CDBG-DR funds.

Mr. Speaker, whatever changes or improvements need to be made must be made within the bounds, guidelines, and deadlines set forth by Congress to the Federal agencies. Puerto Rico is currently waiting for an agreement for an additional allotment of \$8 billion for unmet needs, which already has an approved action plan and now needs a signed agreement for that money, including \$2 billion for restoring our depleted power grid. These are urgent needs at this time.

CONGRESS SHALL HAVE POWER TO DECLARE WAR

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

Mr. HIMES. Mr. Speaker, for the last 2 months, the House has been riven by the process of impeachment. It has been emotional, divisive, and challenging. If you noticed, many of the statements about impeachment started with some version of this: Impeachment is the most serious thing that Congress will do, other than declare war.

Well, here we are. In the next day, in the next month, and in the next year, this body may be called upon to make decisions that will alter history and possibly send young men and women to their deaths or not. I say "or not" because, once again, I see Congress at risk of failing to stand up for the clear mandate placed on us by the Constitution, to which each and every one of us took an oath.

There is no argument about our duty here. The language of the Constitution is plain: Congress shall have power to declare war, not Congress shall have power to declare war unless the President wants to retaliate against someone; not Congress shall have power to declare war unless a Syrian airbase needs destruction; not Congress shall have power to declare war unless our forces are attacked in the Tonkin Gulf.

Congress shall have power to declare war. Period, full stop.

Mr. Speaker, in the long run, this has nothing to do with our confidence in a particular President. It has everything to do with whether we take the obligations that Mr. Madison and Mr. Hamilton asked us to take seriously. In their wisdom, the Founders understood that every American—every American—should have a voice in the decision to go to war because it will be those Americans who offer up their

sons and their daughters; because it will be those Americans and their children who will sacrifice not just themselves but the roads, the bridges, the schools, and the scholarships that will get consumed in the costs of war; and because our Founders understood that the true power of our awesome war machine was not in the technology. It lay in the sober assent and careful enthusiasm of millions of Americans, not in the decision of one person in an Oval Office.

So, here we are. Yes, the questions are many and complicated. Was the strike on General Soleimani legal? Was it ethical? Was it smart? These are not easy questions, and I suspect the answers will come only over time and after careful study. But right now, in this there is a question that hangs the lives of our people and potentially trillions of dollars: What comes next?

For those of us who were chanting, cheerleading, and whipping themselves into a belligerent frenzy, reflect on our experience over the last 20 years in places like Afghanistan, Iraq, and Libya. Comments by the Secretary of Defense notwithstanding, that we are not looking to start a war, but we are prepared to end one, the experience of the last 20 years is that we are not prepared to end any war. Some estimates suggest that we have spent \$6 trillion on Middle Eastern wars, and more importantly, we have laid down the lives of thousands of our men and women.

While we may have taken some satisfaction from the removal of people like Saddam Hussein and Muammar Qadhafi, at what cost? One of our most accomplished Middle Eastern diplomats, Philip Gordon, answers that question best. Philip Gordon wrote this years ago: "In Iraq, the U.S. intervened and occupied, and the result was a costly disaster. In Libya, the U.S. intervened and did not occupy, and the result was a costly disaster. In Syria, the U.S. neither intervened nor occupied, and the result is a costly disaster."

Mr. Speaker, I close my plea for care, thoughtfulness, and careful consideration by reminding my colleagues of a friend who died almost exactly a year ago, Walter B. Jones, Jr., from North Carolina. Some of us in this Chamber remember his journey.

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In 2003, he was an ardent supporter of the Iraq war; and over time and, in particular, when he attended the funeral for a young sergeant in his district, he came to regret his decision. This was the guy who led the charge to rename French fries "freedom fries," and he came to be haunted by what he had done and by what we had done.

I didn't know Walter well, but we celebrated his life when he died. Let's be like Walter. Let's learn the cost of war—but let's not attend funerals to do it—and give this decision the careful consideration it deserves.

TEPID ECONOMIC RESULTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) for 5 minutes.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, as we begin the new year and the new decade, economic results feel tepid for working communities across our country.

The President touts and newspapers parrot his misguided belief that America is experiencing the greatest economy for everyone.

No, not for everyone.

Sure, many indicators prioritized by Wall Street and Washington support and reflect this statement, but speak with millions and millions of lower and middle-class workers, Americans across our country—especially in the heartland, in the Midwest—and you will find they feel quite differently. They are falling deeper into debt.

Despite President Trump's exaggeration, a soaring stock market is not indicative of a strong economy for all. Most Americans do not have a significant stake in the stock market. They work paycheck to paycheck. They have to pay higher prices for everything.

According to fact-checkers at PolitiFact, Americans of modest incomes are significantly less invested in the stock market than wealthier Americans.

No surprise there.

Other groups, including minorities and those without a college education, also lag in stock ownership, meaning that the stock market rally President Trump and the Republican Party so loudly brag about misses—bypasses—the large majority of Americans.

While unemployment numbers are relatively low, tens of millions of Americans continue to live and work below the poverty line. If you take look at their paycheck, many of them have to get food support through the government because they can't make ends meet—working people who are poor, millions of them.

Millions more are unemployed and working multiple jobs just to make ends meet for themselves and their families. Others have given up on finding work altogether, especially in towns and cities, where good work has simply disappeared and not been replaced. These families simply exist.

Since NAFTA's passage in the early 1990s, communities across America—especially in our industrial heartland—have endured the outsourcing of living-wage, middle-class jobs to Mexico and other penny-wage environments where workers are exploited to produce goods for pennies on the dollar.

Because of disastrous trade policies such as NAFTA and lack of enforcement by governments like Mexico, our young people have grown up in the shadows of shuttered factories they have never seen in operation. For too many, the pain of NAFTA's and other trade agreements' broken promises remain raw and real.

So, while job creation numbers may be up in one place, one must wonder:

What sort of jobs are being created and how many are good jobs? The answer is: not nearly enough.

Many of the lost living-wage manufacturing jobs weren't only outsourced to Mexico; others shifted to China.

What has the President's unpredictable posturing with China has given our heartland? Desperate farmers and even more pain for manufacturing workers.

The 18-month-long trade war with China has undermined business investment. It pushed the manufacturing industry into a recession and cost an additional \$42 billion for American consumers who have paid more for needed goods, according to a new Federal Reserve Bank study.

This year brings small relief for the 7 million lucky Americans who live in cities and States that will see wage increases; but this is no thanks to the President or the Senate Republicans who still refuse to move the Raise the Wage Act the House passed last year for the millions of workers who live at the lowest level of paid wages in our country.

Millions of American workers remain left behind by the \$7.25 minimum wage, or \$15,080 for a full year's work, because the Federal minimum wage remains stagnant. American workers haven't had the benefit of a Federal minimum wage increase in over a decade, yet the prices of everything have gone up—right?—medicine, housing, food, cars, local taxes.

There isn't a single congressional district in our Nation where a full-time minimum wage worker can afford a two-bedroom apartment. How about that?

Factor in the rising cost of healthcare and education, and more American families continue to live at the breaking point and are going deeper into debt. This President continues to push for the repeal of the Affordable Care Act, despite no plan to replace it.

Here is another example of President Trump and Senate Majority Leader MITCH MCCONNELL's failure to act to support workers: Our House passed the Butch Lewis Act—with bipartisan support, it passed this Chamber—to address the worsening multiemployer pension crisis.

Currently, there are about 1,400 multiemployer plans covering nearly 10 million people across our country who are retired—60,000 in Ohio alone. These plans are certain to run out of money to support those retirees. It is estimated that 1.3 million retirees and workers are set to lose these benefits.

Mr. Speaker, the Senate should pass the bill that we passed here for these retirees; and we all, as a country, should work to improve the economic outlook for millions and millions of working Americans who, frankly, are left out of this economy.