

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mr. OWENS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. OWENS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

#### REPUBLICANS PROVIDE SECURITY TO AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to be here tonight and to share this time with my colleagues, several of whom I believe will be joining me. We are going to be talking tonight about national security.

I want to start the evening with a very simple comment about a very simple item. I am wearing on my arm, or I have just taken off, a bracelet. These are very common these days to commemorate different things. It says AMAR. It represents AMAR Manufacturing Corporation.

Today, in my home district in Davie County, we had a celebration about a new manufacturing plant that is going to open up. And it occurred to me as we were doing that today, and as I looked at this, that the people of America are going on about their business on a day-to-day basis, oblivious of the fact that there are many things going on in our country and outside our country to help us be secure.

The American people are in many ways the most secure people in the world. We are used to going on about our business, having announcements of new businesses and just dealing on a day-to-day basis with taking our children to school, taking them to football practice, to baseball practice, doing all of those things that we are used to doing because we live in a very secure Nation.

It is the role of the Federal Government to keep our Nation secure. The number one responsibility of the Federal Government is the defense of this Nation, and a large part of the defense of this Nation again is tied up in the word security.

So we want to talk tonight a little bit about what has happened to threaten that security in the last 30 years or so and what we have done as a Republican Congress in order to bring back a sense of security to our Nation.

We will talk about horrific events that have happened in the past but also talk about the many achievements that have occurred especially in the last 5 years in terms of our bringing back a sense of security and our making sure that in the future the things that we are doing now can be built upon and can allow the people of this country to go about their daily routines and feel secure and not feel threatened in the things that they want to do.

The United States of America has never been an aggressor nation. We have always focused again on providing for the freedom that we have in this country and making sure that what the average American takes for granted every day will be there for him or her.

I want to recognize now my wonderful colleague, the gentlewoman from Tennessee, Congresswoman BLACKBURN, who is such an articulate spokesperson for so many of the issues that we discuss on the floor of the House. She is going to help talk about the issue of national security.

I think she is going to give a little perspective on where we have come from and where we are now in terms of dealing with this issue.

I would like to recognize again my colleague, the gentlewoman from Tennessee, Congresswoman BLACKBURN.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from North Carolina. I thank her for her commitment to keeping our Nation safe. As an educator and having spent many years in schools teaching, leading, directing those activities, she knows that it is an imperative that, in order for children to learn, they have to feel secure in their environment.

In order for parents to participate, they have to have that sense of certainty that there is control and security. And this is something that, yes, in our free Nation we are so blessed and so grateful to be able to just expect that.

When we get up in the morning, we expect that we are going to be able to put the children on the school bus, that we are going to be able to go to work, go to the grocery store and participate in those activities with a little bit of control over what happens in those environments and with some predictability and certainty as to what the expectations are going to be.

So indeed we are very blessed in that regard. It is an incredible gift that having a strong national defense, how wonderful it is, what a gift that that has allowed us as a people to enjoy.

As the gentlewoman said, sometimes in order to look forward and to assess, what we have to do is be certain that we have perspective, that we look at where we have been, where we have come from and where we are heading.

In a Nation where we have defense as one of our top priorities and where it is one of the top priorities of this Government, sometimes it is important to cast that perspective and to say this is why we have to say, back to basics, shift our focus, and begin to look at terrorist attacks not as civil disobedience but to view them as what they are, acts of war, and to respond to them as what they are, acts of war.

And as the gentlewoman mentioned, this is a problem that has been brewing and that we have had to deal with for decades. Terrorism and terrorists have been attacking our Nation not for a few months, and it did not start on September 11. It has been going on for decades.

I think that many of us remember November of 1979 when the Iranian radicals took control of the embassy in Tehran. That was a siege that lasted for 444 days, where they had the embassy and 53 hostages. We all remember how the end of that attack came about.

In 1983, we had 63 people that were killed in an embassy bombing in Lebanon. 1983, also, there was a suicide bomb attack on the U.S. compound in Lebanon, where 242 Americans were attacked and killed. All the while, attacks that were taking place on U.S. interests but not on U.S. soil.

In 1986, a Berlin discotheque was bombed, and we also had 79 servicemen that were bombed, injured in a bombing attack in West Germany.

In 1988, we remember December of 1988, Pan Am flight 103 that was blown up by the Libyan terrorists.

And then in February of 1993 the first World Trade Center bombing killed 6 people, injured over 1,000 people. That was February of 1993.

Going through the following years and leading up to September 11, 2001. In 1995, we had a military complex in Saudi Arabia that was bombed. The Khobar Towers in 1996. The attack in our embassies in 1998. The Cole bombing by al Qaeda in 2000; and then, of course, the al Qaeda-led plot that was enacted on September 11, 2001.

Now, Mr. Speaker, what we see from this is the pattern of terrorist activity for two full decades. What we also have seen since September 11 is that no longer do we respond to terrorist attacks as civil disobedience; we respond to it as an act of war, as what it is.

One of the things that we have to keep focused on right now, every single day, is that this war on terror is just that, it is a war. Yes, we have the battle in Afghanistan. Yes, the battle in Iraq. And, yes, there are terrorist cells that are scattered around the globe. But we started sending a different message on September 11. And we are very grateful for the work that the intelligence community, that our homeland security organizations, that our American military has done, that the coalition partners have done in working together to fight terrorism, to fight the spread of terrorism.

And the reason we do it, Mr. Speaker, the reason the leadership in this House remains so solidly focused on terrorism is exactly what my colleague was speaking of when she opened her remarks. The reason is so that the American people can go about their daily lives exercising the control, exercising the freedom, being certain that those children are going to school in safe and free environments, being certain that they are going into the workplace with safe and free environments.

That is the reason that the focus has shifted. That is the reason that it remains the top priority of the leadership of this House.

I also want to thank the leadership for the work that they have done on this issue and our colleagues who are

sponsoring legislation and bringing it to the floor, this week, last week, the last few weeks as we are preparing to finish up some of the work to increase, increase the funding and the focus on defending this Nation against terrorism.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from North Carolina for yielding. It is an honor to come and spend some time on the floor with her and to talk with the American people about some of the work that we are doing as we lead in the war against terrorism and against terrorists.

Ms. FOXX. Thank you, Congresswoman BLACKBURN, for your comments. As I said, you always present a very articulate and coherent message to the people of this country when you speak; and it is a real pleasure to work with you and to have you here in the Congress pointing out very commonsense kinds of things that we can be doing to make this country a better place.

I appreciate very much your setting the stage for what has happened over the last 20 or so years in terms of the terrorist threats that came to this country that were largely ignored because most people could not envision the horrific event that occurred on 9/11, 2001, or could not see how these different events were connected with each other.

□ 2200

I want to talk a little bit about what we have done since 9/11 in order to make sure that we do not suffer such an attack in the future, and let me point out some of these things.

In the first key stage of the 9/11 attack, al Qaeda conceived and planned the attacks from abroad, but here are some of the responses that we have made as a result of that. We have taken the key advantages al Qaeda enjoyed while plotting the 9/11 attack in Afghanistan away. We now have removed the Taliban from power, closed the al Qaeda training camps and taken away financial tools that were available to them. They can no longer move around in Afghanistan with impunity. Many of al Qaeda's most important leaders have been captured or killed, including Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, believed to be the mastermind behind the 9/11 attacks. So we have had a big impact on what has happened abroad.

The second key stage of the 9/11 attack, Khalid Sheikh Mohammed and bin Laden identified, trained and deployed operatives to the United States. We have addressed that since 9/11. We have addressed the gaps in America's defenses that were exploited by al Qaeda. We have upgraded technology, and we have added new layers of screening and security to the immigration and visa system. Today, visa applicants, like those who participated in the 9/11 hijackings, would have to appear for face-to-face interviews, be fingerprinted and screened against an extensive database of known or sus-

pected terrorists and be checked again to make sure that their fingerprints matched those on their visas. We have improved our terrorist watch list. We have established common criteria for posting terrorists on a consolidated terrorist watch list.

The NSA created the terrorist surveillance program at the President's direction, and we are going to be dealing more with that this week, as my colleague Congresswoman BLACKBURN has mentioned. Before 9/11, U.S. intelligence professionals found it difficult to monitor international communications such as those between the planners of the 9/11 attacks abroad and al Qaeda operatives operating secretly in the United States. This is not a program to spy on American citizens, as our colleagues have accused us and the President of doing. This is a program to stop the kind of collaboration that existed between those operatives working overseas and those here in the United States, and we are going to work on the terrorist surveillance program this week I believe and pass something that will allow the President and the people who are using this program to thwart these terrorists, to be able to thwart them.

The third key stage of the 9/11 plot, the rest of the 19 al Qaeda operatives came to the United States. So the FBI has now made protecting America from terrorist attacks its top priority. Before 9/11, that was not the top priority of the FBI, but now we have more counterterrorism agents and lists. We have the unified national security branch to coordinate terrorism investigations and intelligence operations, and we have expanded the number of joint terrorism task forces to help Federal, State, and local law enforcement officers work together; and with legislation we passed last week, we are going to strengthen that program where we work with local law enforcement officers, and that is going to be helping.

In addition, we have now torn down the legal and bureaucratic wall that kept law enforcement and intelligence from sharing information. All levels of government are sharing far more information than ever before and connecting the dots to stop terrorists before they strike. People kept saying why did we not connect the dots, why did we not connect the dots. That is because we had silos for our various bureaucracies and intelligence agencies, and they were not allowed to talk to each other; but we have torn those silos down now and people are communicating with each other.

We have passed the PATRIOT Act. This good law has increased the flow of information and helped break up terrorist cells in the United States, and Congress was right to renew it last year.

We have created the national counterterrorism center, the NCTC. Law enforcement intelligence personnel work side by side in the same headquarters.

We have created the position of Director of National Intelligence. The Director of National Intelligence operates the intelligence community as a single, unified enterprise.

We have set up the Terrorist Screening Center. The Terrorist Screening Center maintains the government's consolidated list of suspected terrorists and individuals with terrorist links and helps get this information into the hands of State and local law enforcement.

At every level, America's law enforcement officers now have a clear goal: to identify, locate and stop terrorists in our country before they can kill. That is very, very important.

The fourth and final stage of the 9/11 plot came on the morning of the attack. We have taken many steps to address the security gaps that the hijackers exploited that morning. We have created the Transportation Security Administration to make sure that every passenger and every bag is screened. We have increased the number of Federal air marshals, and we have trained and authorized thousands of pilots to carry firearms and hardened cockpit doors to prevent terrorists from gaining access to the controls.

In addition, we have merged 22 government agencies into a single Department of Homeland Security and tripled spending for security of airlines, ports, borders and other critical areas; and we are working constantly to stay several steps, not one step but several steps, ahead of the terrorists. We have gone on the offense across the world, and our country is definitely safer.

We have captured many of the most significant al Qaeda members and associates. We have kept the terrorists from achieving their key goal to overthrow governments across the broader Middle East and seize control.

Our allies in the war on terror include two nations that used to harbor or sponsor terror, but now help us fight it, the democratic nations of Afghanistan and Iraq.

As we fight the enemies of a free Iraq, we must also ensure that al Qaeda and its allies never get their hands on the tools of mass murder. So we are working very hard in the area of national security to make sure that a 9/11 attack can never occur again in this country.

Now, I want to say what some of the very important things are that have been accomplished under Republican stewardship, specifically what congressional Republicans have done.

We have strengthened the national defense. We have helped our troops succeed in Afghanistan and Iraq. We have increased benefits of our men and women in uniform. We have protected our troops with state-of-the-art body armor and equipment. We have streamlined bureaucratic red tape to ensure our servicemembers have all that is necessary to complete their missions. We have increased funding for necessary and state-of-the-art equipment.

We have modernized acquisition and procurement programs. We have enhanced the quality of life for service-members and their families, and we are steadily increasing the pay benefits for them.

We have made real progress in missile defense. We have conducted successful missile defense tests. We have ensured the missile defense program goes farther and faster than ever before. So we are making real progress in these areas.

We have seen major changes occurring in the Iraqi Government where they are taking control of their armed forces there and moving ahead to make the country safer and safer.

The Iraqis themselves have overwhelmingly rejected religious or the ethnic breakup of Iraq. They are solidly behind a centrally controlled government. Seventy-eight percent of the Iraqis disagree or strongly disagree with the idea of segregating the country by religious or ethnic sect. They want to keep their country whole and not break it up.

Eighty-nine percent of the Iraqis said the formation of a national government, including the country's main ethnic and religious communities, was extremely important to the future peace and stability of Iraq. They believe that the country is headed in the right direction, and we know that it is.

So what we are doing to strengthen Iraq and strengthen Afghanistan are both important in the war on terror. It is a global war on terror. So what we are doing is all over the world, not just in Iraq and Afghanistan.

We saw that with what we did in England where with the British, we and the Pakistani Government worked together to thwart another plot to take down our airlines filled with Americans. So we have worked on the national security from that perspective to never let another 9/11 happen and do the things that we should do to do that, and while we are doing that, we are strengthening Iraq and Afghanistan.

Now, what are we also doing on border security, because border security is national security? We have done a great deal in this House to make sure that we have border security in this country and that people understand that border security is national security.

Mr. Speaker, we have passed several bills and we have several bills yet to pass that are going to make our borders more secure. We have passed the REAL ID Act. We have passed a strong border security bill last December. We have the Effective Immigration Enforcement and Community Protection Act. The chairman of our Judiciary Committee, Chairman SENSENBRENNER, has been leading us in putting together the bills out of the Judiciary Committee to tighten up our border security.

We are ending catch-and-release. The administration has done this on their

own, but we are going to strengthen their hand in ending catch-and-release. We are no longer going to catch criminals and potential terrorists and release them again. We are going to keep them in prison or make sure that they get sent back home and they are not back in this country.

We are removing illegal immigrant gang members to make sure that we are enhancing what we are doing again from our border security. We have established penalties for border tunnels. The bill that we passed last week establishes criminal penalties of up to 20 years' imprisonment for persons who knowingly construct or finance the construction of an unauthorized tunnel across a U.S. international border.

We are prosecuting more smuggling offenses. We are tightening up of the laws on that, and we are making the offenses much more stringent.

We are removing criminal illegal immigrants, getting rid of people who have come into this country to commit crimes. So we are continuing to do things that will make our borders stronger and stronger, which will help our national security. Every time that we can enhance our border security, we are enhancing our national security.

We are also enhancing our homeland security through our homeland security legislation, and I want to talk a little bit about that, too.

We have funded first responders in homeland security. Through a variety of programs, over \$30 billion in Federal funding has been allocated for first responders since 2001. Total nondefense homeland security spending across all agencies has gone from \$11.8 billion in fiscal year 2001 to \$41.5 billion for fiscal year 2007.

I mentioned earlier that we passed the USA PATRIOT Act. We reauthorized it. The bill was passed in 2001, and it has now been reauthorized. A key tool in preventing another domestic attack, the PATRIOT Act has enabled the Federal Government to effectively deter and punish terrorist acts in the United States and around the world.

I mentioned earlier the REAL ID Act, which was the first bill to pass in this Congress.

□ 2215

I was a very proud original cosponsor of that bill and extremely proud to be a freshman and be allowed to be a cosponsor of that bill. My own State of North Carolina has been a haven for illegal aliens coming in and getting drivers' licenses and then being able to use those as IDs to get on airplanes. We know that the terrorists who brought down the Twin Towers had many, many illegal drivers licenses, and the REAL ID Act will cut down on that capability.

The Congress passed the Homeland Security Act of 2002, which established the Department of Homeland Security.

We again are doing more and more on border security. The SAFE Port Act, the Security and Accountability for

Every Port Act, or the SAFE Port Act, addresses port security defenses within and beyond U.S. ports, including enhancing security programs and others.

The Project Bioshield, which delivered \$5.6 billion to enhance research, procurement and use of biomedical countermeasures to respond to public health threats affecting our national security.

Emergency communications. We are working on making sure that different agencies can communicate with each other so folks will be able to help thwart any threatened terrorist attacks.

The Maritime Transportation Security Act, the MTSA. Congress passed the MTSA in 2002, requiring every regulated U.S. port facility to establish and implement a security plan that outlines procedures for controlling access to the facility, verifying credentials for port workers, inspecting cargo for tampering, designating security responsibilities, training and reporting security breaches.

So we have worked very hard on making sure that we are securing not just the borders, the northern and southern borders, but also all of our ports all over this country. It is the Republicans who are leading the way on bringing these issues up to the country, to the Congress, and making sure that they are passed.

So what do we face from the Democrats? The same things. Even though we bring up over and over and over again the fact that the number one responsibility of the Federal Government is the defense of this Nation, we know this from our Constitution, but we constantly have to remind the Democrats that that is the role of the Federal Government.

The Federal Government in past years has gotten involved with many worthwhile activities. Don't get me wrong. I know that many of the programs that are spending Federal dollars do good things. But those are not the jobs of the Federal Government. The Constitution is a brilliant document, and if we follow the Constitution in the way that it was written and we do what our forefathers outlined for us to do, we will be so much better off in this country.

One of those things that we should be doing is focusing on national security, focusing on the defense of this Nation from the Federal level, and leaving these other things to the States and the localities to deal with. But if you hear the Democrats talking, what they want to do is to continue to talk about no, no, no. They are not interested in enhancing our border security. They are not interested in enhancing national security, when you listen to what they talk about.

When you look at what they have voted against, they have voted against so many things that were designed to enhance our national security. I want to just mention a few of those things that they have voted against.

Over and over and over again they bring up negative things. You would think that they wanted to simply open up our borders and let anybody come in here that wanted to come in here and just ignore the fact that we had an attack on 9/11, that we had those other attacks that Congresswoman BLACKBURN mentioned to us.

You would think that the kinds of things that we have done are the worst things that could have ever been done in this Nation. The terrorist surveillance program, you would think, if you were not aware of what the Democrats are saying, that our government has turned on its own people instead of doing everything that we possibly can to protect the people.

As I said before, I was at AMAT Manufacturing today, sitting there thinking about how it is the role of the Federal Government to make sure that we are safe so we can do the things like that, the routine things that we do.

I want to talk some about how the Democrats have tried to thwart us at every step in trying to maintain security in this country, national security and border security.

I have been joined by one of my colleagues, one of my most articulate colleagues, one of our favorite freshmen, who can always tell the very best stories, but is always right on point on issues dealing with whatever legislation we are dealing with.

I want to recognize Congressman GOHMERT from the great Republic of Texas, who is here to talk a little bit about this issue and give some illustrations of his own of what we have done right and how the Democrats would have us be thwarted in what we have done.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from North Carolina, the gentlelady, Ms. FOXX. Thank you for yielding and thank you for the time you have taken tonight to talk about our national security issues. As always, you are most impressive. If someone didn't know before, they might know, Mr. Speaker, that the gentlelady from North Carolina is a teacher, is an educator, and then, of course, got forced to being president of a school. But, anyway, from someone who bore that great title of teacher, it is an honor.

Mr. Speaker, there are so many people in our country that want to blame America first. They think America is the cause for so much of the ills in the world, when the fact is that this is the Nation that has brought about freedom all over the world.

We have some people in the world say America is a bunch of imperialists, when the fact is no nation in the history of the world has helped so many countries obtain the right to rule themselves. If we were imperialists, France certainly wouldn't be speaking French anymore. Germany wouldn't be speaking German anymore. Countries around the world, including in the Middle East, would not be speaking their

native tongues. They would be speaking English. But that is because we are about freedom and allowing people to reach their God-given potentials.

I started something last week, and it continues this week, and that is, although there are those who seek to blame America first, and we have had people that have stood right here on this floor, a former Marine accusing Marines of being cold-blooded killers and the military covering things up without a trial, without a charge being made. It just seems with all the blame going around and being made that we need to recognize those who were willing to do what Jesus himself said, which was show the greatest love. As he said, greater love hath no man, no one, than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. Certainly he would know.

But the U.S. military has been faced with tremendous challenges since September 11, 2001. Fortunately, we are blessed to have an exceptional fighting force that is full of troops that are ready and eager to rise to the challenge.

As an example, and this is what I started last week, every day we are in session I want to recognize someone who has received one of our Nation's highest honors and what they have done. This is the America that the world should acknowledge. This is the America that this body should acknowledge, the true heroes who put others above self.

That is the example of Sergeant Leigh Ann Hester. She made history last year when she was the first female soldier to receive the Silver Star since World War II and became the first female ever to be cited for close combat.

The Silver Star, as many of you may know, is awarded for gallantry in action against an enemy of the United States while engaged in military operations involving conflict with an opposing foreign force.

On March 20, 2005, Sergeant Leigh Ann Hester was serving in the 617th Military Police Company. It is a National Guard unit out of Richmond, Kentucky. Her squad was shadowing a supply convoy south of Baghdad near Salman Pak when about 50 insurgents ambushed the convoy. Sergeant Hester's squad moved to the side of the road, flanking the insurgents and cutting off their escape route.

Sergeant Hester herself led her team through what is known as the "kill zone" and into a flanking position, where she assaulted a trench line with grenades and M203 grenade launcher rounds. Sergeant Hester and her squad leader, Staff Sergeant Timothy Nein, then cleared two trenches, at which time she killed three insurgents with her own M-4 rifle.

Her actions saved the lives of numerous convoy members. When the fight was over, 27 insurgents were dead, six were wounded and one was captured. Many, many Americans were saved in the process.

Sergeant Hester was only 23 years of age at the time of her action. She was born in 1982 in Bowling Green, Kentucky, later moved to Nashville, Tennessee, and she joined the National Guard in April of 2001.

These are the people that we need to honor and recognize, and cease playing the blame game. We would encourage all of our colleagues to begin looking for the good, because, as Abraham Lincoln said, if you look for the good in people, you truly will find it.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlelady from North Carolina for the great good she is doing.

Ms. FOXX. Thank you, Mr. GOHMERT, and thank you for reminding us of what we should be doing in terms of honoring these people. Sergeant Hester sounds like an absolutely fabulous woman, and we are so fortunate to have her serving in our military and being a great role model for all of us.

I was talking earlier when Congressman GOHMERT came in and I yielded time to him about the fact that in so many of these things that we have accomplished with the Republican leadership in this Congress, to make sure that we thwart terrorists who want to come here, who want to do the kinds of things that were done on 9/11/2001, in so many of those ways we have had to fight the Democrats at every step of the way. They have been opposed to almost every effort that we have made here. The PATRIOT Act, the border security bills, over and over and over again they have said no.

Their answer to fighting the war on terror is to withdraw from Iraq. Take our troops out. Put them somewhere else in the Middle East, but get out of Iraq. They talk out of both sides of their mouths. They say, on the one hand, the minority leader says, okay, all the damage that Osama bin Laden can do he did 5 years ago. She criticizes the President for not having enough forces in Afghanistan to catch Osama bin Laden; and then she says, well, it wouldn't matter if we caught him anyway. We would not be any safer if we caught him.

So, over and over and over again, we get mixed signals from the Democrats. That gives comfort and aid to our enemy. They see that happening, and they think, boy, if there is a chance that the Democrats could take control, then we wouldn't have to worry about being pursued. We wouldn't have to worry about what the Congress is going to try to do to us in conjunction with what the administration is doing. We can just sit back and wait for them, for the Democrats to get in control.

□ 2230

Nothing could be worse for our country than for them to be put in control and to withdraw our troops from Iraq where we are making tremendous progress on helping those people live in a free country. That is what they want.

I had the great opportunity to go to Iraq in July, just at the end of our session in July, and the Iraqi people said

to us: we are so grateful to you for bringing freedom to us. We are so grateful. Don't leave too soon. We are committed to a democracy; we are committed to maintaining freedom here in this country. Please don't go away before we can get our feet on the ground. This is the first chance we have had to have freedom in the history of this country, and we want it and we are going to have it.

And as you read about what is happening in the country and you see that while there are these militias out there, they are not attacking the government of the country, they are attacking each other. There are Sunnis going against Shias, Shias going against Sunnis, but none of them are attacking the Government of Iraq because they all have a vested interest in keeping that government going, and that is very, very important.

But you never read about that. It makes it look like these people are all attacking the government, but they are not doing it. President Maliki I think has done a wonderful job of forming a government that can gain the support of the three major groups in Iraq, and so we are seeing tremendous progress there. Even though we see the insurgents and even though we see the IEDs and even though there has been horrible loss of life, it is not directed at bringing down the government.

There is a fabulous article in the National Review dated today, as a matter of fact, about the importance of that, and I would commend it to people to read it about why the government is strengthening there in Iraq and how it is strengthening and why things are going well there instead of going badly as the popular press would have you believe. So we have to keep fighting, and we have to fight this war on terror and improve our national security on all the fronts that we have before us.

And I want to talk a little bit about a couple of episodes that happened last week that I think show the American people again how much we are at war and what a dangerous place this world still is. The President reminds us periodically about it, and again, as we go about our day-to-day activities, it is difficult to believe that we are at war even though the news media makes it sound as horrific as they possibly can because they want to undermine what we are doing to improve our national security, and they want to undermine the work of this Republican Congress and this Republican President. And I want to point out what happened last week with two people who came to this country to appear at the United Nations and talk at the United Nations and condemn this country for what we are doing.

We dealt with hearing President Chavez and the President of Iran, Ahmadinejad. They both made just absolutely outrageous speeches on the floor of the United Nations. And it is difficult to believe that these people could come into our country and say

the kinds of things that they did, but in many ways their speeches were gifts to us because they pointed out the danger that we face from these tyrannical leaders of other countries.

I want to mention first some comments from the President of Iran. He mentioned in his speech that justice was a victim of force and aggression. Well, it certainly is. It was certainly a victim of force and aggression when he participated in the overthrow of the American Embassy in Iran in 1979, and held American hostages for 444 days. He spoke of ridding the world of nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons; but he continually refuses to halt the production of enriched uranium in Iran. He wants to rid the world of aggression and strive for peace, even though he created a proxy war in Lebanon and continually funnels weapons to Hezbollah which continually attacks Israel and tries to bring on world war there.

I was astonished when he spoke of dignity for all human beings and is longing for peace. These words are surprising here from a man who has prayed for the demise of America and constantly calls for Israel to be wiped off the map.

His biography reads like a horror novel, directing multiple assassinations while he was in elite military units and working with Ansar al Hezbollah, the violent Islamic vigilante group. His main goal is the destruction of Western Civilization. That speech was a complete farce. He has shown his true agenda time after time, and one misleading speech at the United Nations is not going to fool America or the world.

While we witnessed the Iranian dictator lecture us on freedom, democracy, and justice, it is ironic that in his own country this tyrant denies his own people the basic rights of freedom of speech and freedom to assemble. His speech focused on freedom, justice, and dignity for human beings, but as the President he has done nothing to bring any of his so-called goals to his own people. Women are denied rights of inheritance, divorce, and child custody and use of their rights of self-expression and economic creativity. Basic rights are denied for the people of Iran, and that is why even with the soaring prices of oil, more than 40 percent of the Iranians live below the poverty line.

Today in Iran, dissent is brutally suppressed and terror is the regime's only instrument of domestic or foreign policy. While he may resent us for being powerful, he does not realize that the foundation of our power is rooted in the freedom of our great people to pursue happiness, to innovate, and to speak freely.

So while it was very painful for us to hear the President of Iran come here and lecture us and be such a hypocrite, I think it was instructive and reminded the American people of how close we are to having a world dominated by ty-

rants like him and tyrants like Hugo Chavez who would turn the world back, in Iran's case to the fifth century, where they would be in charge and where there would be no freedom like we know it. It would be a horrible world, and yet they want to do that. They hate Western Civilization and want to destroy Western Civilization at every possibility.

I want to take a moment now to recognize another one of my colleagues who is here from the great State of Texas who wants to I think join me and talk about the national security issue, and so I am going to yield to my colleague, Congressman BURGESS, who is going to speak briefly on the issue of the national security.

Mr. BURGESS. I was actually coming to do a memorial for one of our firefighters who we lost over the weekend, but I certainly want to echo the sentiments and the comments that you have made. I, like many of my colleagues, was outraged by Hugo Chavez in this country, and I think he was appropriately reprimanded and upbraided by a Member on the other side of the aisle, CHARLES RANGEL, in whose district the gentleman from Venezuela chose to make his rant public.

It is indeed unfortunate that people feel that they have the license to come to this country and criticize our government as our guests. It is I suppose just a fact of life when there are people who are as kindhearted and as generous as we are that from time to time we are going to be abused by those in the world who choose to behave that way.

The gentlewoman also mentioned the 9/11 Commission, and we hear from time to time about the 9/11 Commission and how many of the recommendations of the 9/11 Commission have not been met. But two of those recommendations I think are extremely important. The 9/11 Commission said that, number one, you have got to secure your borders. You have got to know who is in your country, when they come, when they leave, what they are doing here while they are there.

The 9/11 commission was very explicit in this instance, and I think it is critical that this Congress in the time that we have left this year make certain that we indeed get that legislation passed.

The other thing the 9/11 Commission brought up was that we ought to be encouraging democracies particularly in unstable parts of the world, such as the Middle East, and certainly the President has done just that. It is not always easy, it is not always straightforward, it is not always a job for which we are thanked, but it is the right thing to do. And if you take the long view and if you look out over the next 20 or 30 years' time, I think that history will judge this time and this Presidency as having been absolutely critical for reestablishing that degree of stability that we may achieve in the Middle East by establishing those democracies.

I thank the gentlewoman very much for yielding time.

Ms. FOXX. I thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BURGESS) for coming in and adding to the comments that have been made by my colleagues on this issue of national security and bringing up some points that had not been made before. You have done a very, very fine job of bringing in those issues about the 9/11 Commission report and showing how we are doing the things that the 9/11 Commission has said that we need to do. It is something that I had intended to mention in my remarks, but I am glad that you brought them up because you were very eloquent in what you said.

I want to say again that the Republican leadership here, the President, the Vice President, the Secretary of State, we are all focused on improving national security for this country. We want to make sure that the people of this Nation know that they are secure in their everyday lives, that they can go about their jobs, go about their leisure, and go about their business every day doing what they should be doing and forgetting in many ways what happened in 9/11 because they have a government, a national government that is focused on the defense of this Nation and national security.

And I want to encourage our Democratic colleagues to hear what I know their constituents must be saying to them, that they want to remain safe in this country and they want us to deal with those issues at this level. We know no other level of government can do that. And I feel confident that over the next week, as we continue to deal with the issues that we need to deal with before we take a recess to go home and work on our campaigns, that we will focus on the most important job of the Federal Government, and that is securing this country and focusing on the defense of this country and making sure that our citizens can go about their daily lives feeling safe as we did before 9/11 hit and as we will again.

And I want to say to our leadership, you have done a wonderful job in taking us closer and closer to a time when we will be able to once again feel free to do all those things that we did before 9/11, and make sure that that kind of act never occurs in this country, and yet we maintain our constitutional rights and privileges and at the same time go after terrorists where we should be going after them.

#### IN MEMORY OF FORT WORTH FIRE CHIEF CHARLES GAINES

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to speak out of order for 5 minutes to address the House.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DENT). Without objection, the gentleman from Texas is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to honor the life and the memory of Fort Worth Fire Chief Charles Gaines. Chief Gaines passed away this past Saturday evening rather suddenly of natural causes. Chief Gaines was 49 years of age.

Mr. Speaker, our paths crossed several times during Chief Gaines' 4-year tenure as fire chief and my 4 years in Congress. The commitment and dedication that the chief showed to his profession was evident from the moment we met. Under his leadership, Chief Gaines was accountable for the oversight of 745 firefighters that composed the Fort Worth Fire Department. As fire chief, he also oversaw the department's response to over 57,000 incidents annually in the city of Fort Worth.

Before serving as the fire chief of Fort Worth, Chief Gaines served in the United States Air Force as a fire protection specialist. He worked on crash and rescue teams at various Air Force bases until his promotion to Air Force assistant chief. After receiving an honorable discharge from the Air Force in 1980, he continued his career as a member of the Oklahoma City Fire Department in 1981.

During the 1995 bombing of the Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, he served as the fire department's operations safety officer. His service and leadership during this national tragedy ensured that the first responders and government workers were informed and received all medical attention.

Fire Chief Gaines was known throughout the department as a man of integrity. While negotiating with the firefighters' union early in his Fort Worth career, his calm, collective demeanor earned him the respect of the department and his co-workers. He was able to compromise with the union and resolve differences between the two sides.

He had a detail-oriented approach to problems, and this meant that problems within his department, those issues were addressed the first time around. Chief Gaines earned his Master's Degree in Business Administration from Oklahoma City University, and he incorporated efficient management techniques throughout the Fort Worth Fire Department. This management style allowed him to incorporate and encourage innovation and alternative thinking.

Chief Gaines was able to initiate solutions that would more effectively safeguard the citizens of Fort Worth, while saving tax dollars in the process. Chief Gaines was the first African American fire chief in the city of Fort Worth. The city has a 113-year history of that department. Chief Gaines brought a new wave of energy to the Fort Worth Fire Department. His policy of requiring a minimum of four firefighters to each fire truck helped Fort Worth become one of the top 10 safest cities in America.

His leadership, professionalism and dedication will not be soon forgotten in

the city of Fort Worth or Oklahoma City. His devotion to his career and his fellow officers was absolute, and his service to the Fort Worth community will be deeply missed.

Godspeed, Chief Gaines. We will see you at the top.

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#### 30-SOMETHING WORKING GROUP

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MEEK) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to come before the House once again. I want to thank the Democratic leader, NANCY PELOSI, and also the Democratic leadership, STENY HOYER, Mr. JAMES CLYBURN and Mr. JOHN LARSON, who is our Vice Chair.

I must say, there is so much to talk about tonight. Not only Members of Congress know there is serious business to discuss as it relates to the new revelations on what is happening in Iraq and the war in Iraq, but also I think it is a reflection on the lack of oversight here in this House.

I think the American people need to be very concerned about what has not happened here on this floor, in committee, in subcommittees, and as it relates to the leadership making sure that our men and women in harm's way not only have what they need in the field, need it in Afghanistan, where they are undermanned and under gun at this particular time, but due to the training of Coalition Forces many are able to protect themselves, but they need more.

In the war in Iraq, a number of unfortunate events are taking place on a daily basis. A number of Marines were lost over the weekend, and we are in our last week of session. I think that the lack of oversight and diplomacy at the same time has resulted in a new insurgence that has been created in Iraq.

I must say that Karen D. Young of the Washington Post on Sunday wrote about this. I think it is important to read it. It was on the front page. I think it is important that Members pay close attention to that and provide the kind of oversight that is needed.

I am glad to be joined by the 30-Something Working Group, Mr. Bill Delahunt, better known as Uncle Bill, Mr. Tim Ryan, who is still injured but on the floor because this is our last time before the election to be able to let the Members and the American people know what has not happened in this House. We are also joined by Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, who is my good friend and served in the district next to me in Florida.

I yield to Congressman DELAHUNT.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Thank you, Mr. MEEK, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, and Mr. RYAN.

I arrived some 10 minutes ago and had the opportunity to hear some of