to change. We don't have to lift the embargo against Cuba to restore family relations among Cubans and their relatives who live in America. We have a real opportunity to make progress promoting democracy in Cuba, and we ought to take it.

We need to revise the U.S. travel policy to Cuba to recognize that the American people are the best ambassadors we could ever deploy. Every visit by an American citizen to a loved one in Cuba will do more to promote freedom and democracy than all the leaflets and all the broadcasts and all the saber rattling that we have tried unsuccessfully in the last half century. We don't need to tear down a wall, we do need to tear up a policy and start over, and we should do it now.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. FOXX addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

THE MISSOURI MIRACLE

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

Mr. HULSHOF. Madam Speaker, they are calling it the Missouri miracle, but it didn't start out that way. In fact, it was a parent's worst nightmare. A 13-year-old gets off a school bus near his home in rural Missouri but never makes it home. The local sheriff's office works frantically to locate the missing boy but has few leads. That was the real life saga for Ben Ownby's family last week near Beaufort, Missouri, in my congressional district.

Last Monday, January 8, after a normal day at school William Ben Ownby rode the bus to school. He got off and disappeared. The wrenching news energized the local community. Volunteers turned out in droves to assist law enforcement and to search the nearby woods. Friends and neighbors began prayer chains and offered moral support to Ben's family. Police officers and sheriffs' deputies from surrounding counties lent their assistance.

Fortunately the single lead provided by 14-year-old Mitchell Hults was a good one. Mitchell had gotten off the school bus with Ben and described having seen a beat-up white Nissan pickup truck with a camper shell, even describing the trailer hitch to a T. Two police officers who had gone to a Kirkwood, Missouri, apartment complex to serve an unrelated warrant saw a truck matching the description, sought additional legal authority and, lo and behold, last Friday, January 12, when officers approached the apartment, not only did they find Ben Ownby unharmed, but a second youth, Shawn Hornbeck, a boy from Washington County, Missouri who had been missing since 2002.

More than 4 years ago, October 6, 2002, when he was 11, Shawn Hornbeck disappeared while riding his bike. In a similar fashion, the community and law enforcement worked hard on that case to no avail. Yet Craig and Pam Akers, Shawn's parents, never gave up. Their ability to persevere 4½ years is a testament to their strength and faith.

During that time, the Akers family established the Shawn Hornbeck Foundation, whose mission it is to help families and law enforcement search for missing children. Craig Akers' commitment to finding Shawn and helping families has come at great personal expense and took a physical and emotional toll, and yet he remains devoted to helping others deal with cases of missing children.

What a miracle that both youths were rescued.

I would be remiss if I did not recognize the hard work of area law enforcement, especially singling out Franklin County Sheriff Gary Toelke and the Franklin County Sheriff's Department. Gary is a friend of mine. This happens to be the second time in 4 months that Sheriff Toelke has reported a happy ending in a missing child case.

You may remember last September, his department recovered an 8-day-old baby girl when a woman attacked the baby's mother. That case became a national news story, as has this one. The outcome of both of these cases is a testament to that department's professionalism and commitment to the community.

I also applaud the great detective work of young Mitchell Hults by remembering the details of that suspicious white pickup truck right down to the dents, rust spots and trailer hitch. Mitchell not only saved the life of his friend Ben, but also rescued Shawn from 4½ years of captivity. All are true heroes, and their diligence saved the lives of two young boys and brought solace to the Akers and Ownby families.

On behalf of all Americans and parents nationwide, this House appreciates their good work. To the Akers and Ownby families, I am sure my colleagues will join me in expressing your shared beliefs that your prayers have been answered. Truly, a Missouri miracle.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. NORTON addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

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

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

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

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

□ 1930

PREVENTING IRAN FROM OBTAINING NUCLEAR WEAPONS

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

Mr. SHERMAN. Madam Speaker, preventing Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons ought to be the number one foreign policy objective of the United States. A nuclear Iran would spark region-wide nuclear proliferation. In fact, (Saudi Arabia and its allies have already announced that they are beginning a nuclear program to respond to what Iran is doing). Further, if the Iranian Government were close to being overthrown, and some of us look forward to that day, it could smuggle a nuclear weapon into the United States—either in an effort to reassert popularity with its own people, or with the idea that they would rather go out with a bang.

Now, we cannot stop Iran's nuclear program just by meeting with Iranian emissaries. Secretary Rice has offered to meet with representatives of the Iranian Government anywhere, at any time, to discuss any agenda—so long as during the talks Iran suspends uranium enrichment, just as Iran suspended uranium enrichment when they were talking with European leaders. The refusal of Iran to suspend uranium enrichment, even for a few days in order to speak with Secretary Rice, speaks loudly about their willingness and desire to speak with us.

Likewise, we cannot stop Iran's nuclear program by making unilateral concessions to Iran. We did that in the year 2000. We opened our markets to everything Iran would want to export to us, except oil—things like carpets and dried fruit. In fact, we opened our markets to everything we didn't need, and they couldn't sell anywhere else. The result in public was nasty comments from the Iranian foreign minister. In private what they did was redouble their efforts to obtain nuclear weapons, and provide assistance to the 9/11 hijackers, according to the 9/11 Commission, though they apparently didn't know the exact mission of those they were assisting.

But we can block Iran's nuclear program only if we can pass extreme Security Council sanctions. The mere adoption of strong sanctions at the United

Nations would be of enormous political impact on the people of Iran. A ban on selling Iran refined petroleum products would dislocate its economy and bring enormous popular pressure on the Government of Iran, because although Iran exports petroleum, it doesn't have the refining capacity—and therefore is dependent on imports for almost half of its gasoline.

So how do we get these very extreme U.N. Security Council sanctions? Only with a dramatic change in Russia's policy.

Now, our current approach to securing that critical Russian support has been very ineffective, and we have achieved only token sanctions that Tehran can laugh off.

The only way to get the kind of Russian support we need is by offering real changes on our policy toward issues in Russia's own geographic region—issues Russia cares a lot about, issues not of great significance to most of us in the United States. Our efforts to convince Russia to change its Iran policy only because, well, they ought to do it, have been remarkably unsuccessful. We need to address Russia's concerns to change their policy toward Iran's nuclear weapons.

In particular, we may need to offer to make modest changes in our policies towards such issues as the Russian-speaking peoples of Moldova, Latvia and Estonia, the route of Caspian Sea oil pipelines, and Chechnya and Abkhazia.

Now, the State Department bureaucracy is prejudiced towards this approach for three reasons: First, a bureaucracy has bureaus, and they have got an Abkhazia bureau that doesn't want its interests sacrificed for some more important national security priority. Second, there are those in the administration with such an almost faith-based excessive estimate of our national power. They think we can achieve all of our national objectives and that we don't have to sacrifice or delay any of them. Finally, many of America's foreign policy experts grew up in the Soviet era. They spent their time strategizing how to encircle and weaken Russia. And, Madam Speaker, old habits die hard.

Nothing is more important to America's national security than an all-out diplomatic effort to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons.

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

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

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

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

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

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

RECOUNTING REASONS FOR VOTING IN FAVOR OF 2002 RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING USE OF MILITARY FORCE IN IRAQ

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of today, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATERS) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Ms. WATERS. Madam Speaker, shortly after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the President began talking about going to war with Iraq. In the fall of 2002, with the midterm elections heating up, the President increasingly talked about the threat Iraq poses to the United States and its allies. On October 10, 2002, the House voted on H.J. Res. 114, the Authorization For Use of Military Force Against Iraq resolution. It passed the House by a vote of 296–133: 215 Republicans voted for the resolution, 6 voted against it. 81 Democrats voted for it, and 126 voted against it.

Madam Speaker, in light of what many of our Members know today, they perhaps would not have voted for that resolution. As a matter of fact, day in and day out as I talk with my colleagues, they recount all of that which was told to us by the President of the United States and others on the opposite side of the aisle, for the most part, about why it was so important to go to war with Iraq.

They told us there were weapons of mass destruction. They told us that the troop levels that they were sending were necessary. They told us about the cost of the war. They told us that oil revenues would be paying for the reconstruction. They told us we would be greeted as liberators. They told us we would be able to contain sectarian violence.

Well, Madam Speaker, I have colleagues that are here this evening who will recount perhaps some of what they were being told and the way they trusted the Commander in Chief, they trusted our President. They were concerned about the safety and the security of our Nation.

So we have with us tonight some of the brightest, most hardworking, most respected Members of the Congress of the United States. They are going to remind us of what we were being told and how they came to their decision and what they are thinking now.

Leading that discussion will be my dear friend from Missouri, that is my hometown, my birthplace, who I have gotten to know very well. He is the Chair of one of the most important committees of this House, the Armed Services Committee, a highly respected gentleman, Representative IKE SKELTON.

I yield to the gentleman from Missouri.

Mr. SKELTON. Madam Speaker, I thank my friend originally from Missouri for yielding this time.

Last year, I had the opportunity to visit the Joint Forces Staff College in Norfolk, Virginia. After a ceremony there, I went into the library, and in the glassed-off section for old and rare books I found a book printed in 1926 about the 1915 British misadventure at Gallipoli, entitled ''The Perils of Amateur Strategy.'' I have often thought regarding the situation in Iraq that we face today that this administration is not giving food for thought to some author to write a book entitled ''The Perils of Amateur Strategy II.''

The issue before us this evening is what would we have done, had we known what we know today. Had that been the case, we probably would never have had a resolution before us, much less voted in favor of it.

We have a wonderful military, the finest we have ever had and the finest in modern history. The young men and young women are dedicated, they are professional and they are volunteers, whether they be active duty, whether they be National Guard or Reserve. Gosh, I am proud of them. I have been with them aboard ship; I have been with them in their training. I have been with them in Iraq and Afghanistan and had the privilege of spending Christmas Day with them in Baghdad. But I wonder where all of this ends.

They moved the goalposts on us. The first goal was to make sure that weapons of mass destruction were not there, then to establish a democracy, and now to bring stability to Iraq. And those goalposts keep moving.

I am truly concerned about where we have been and much more concerned about where we go in Iraq. Whatever happens there, and I feel that there is no positive outcome for this, the star of this show will be the young men and young women who wear the uniform of the United States. History will treat them well and our gratitude should go toward them.

There are some mistakes that are made that are irretrievable. There have been such mistakes that we have made in Iraq. The first, of course, was going in with the intelligence that at least was available, not having a plan in use, despite the fact that there was a plan available. Lieutenant General Jay Gardner asked for the people to help draw it up and was finally given one person from the State Department. But the plan was not allowed to be used.

Looting was allowed, and then we dismissed those who belonged to the Baathist Party, who made the trains run and the local government run. Some thousands of school teachers were put out of jobs. Then the army was dismissed, rather than giving them a paycheck and a shovel and the opportunity to help bring security and stability to that torn country.