SEPTEMBER 10, 2012.

Hon. JOHN A. BOEHNER,
Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: This is to notify you formally, pursuant to Rule VIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives that I have been served with a subpoena for documents issued by the Fairfax County Circuit Court in connection with civil litigation currently pending before that court.

After consultation with the Office of General Counsel, I have determined that compliance with the subpoena is inconsistent with the privileges and precedents of the House.

Sincerely,

DANIEL F. SCANDLING,
Chief of Staff.

□ 1900

COMMUNICATION FROM THE HONORABLE FRANK R. WOLF, MEMBER OF CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Honorable FRANK R. WOLF, Member of Congress:

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, September 10, 2012.

Hon. JOHN A. BOEHNER,
Speaker of the House, U.S. House of Representatives, Washington DC.

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Best wishes.

Sincerely,

FRANK R. WOLF,
Member of Congress.

CONGRATULATING RICHMOND, TEXAS, ON ITS 175TH ANNIVERSARY

(Mr. OLSON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the city of Richmond, Texas, for its 175th anniversary. There would not be a State of Texas without Richmond.

In 1822, members of Stephen F. Austin's Old Three Hundred built a fort on a bend in the Brazos River. Stephen F. Austin is known as the ''Father of Texas.'' He built his colony around that fort where Richmond sits today.

In the wake of Texas independence, Richmond was incorporated by the Republic of Texas as Fort Bend County's seat of government in 1837. Richmond's current iconic mayor, Hilmar Moore, is the longest-serving mayor in American history, serving the people of Richmond since 1949.

Historically a center of commerce, the heart of an early livestock industry and a powerhouse of natural resources, the city continues to be something its people are darn proud of. It's an honor to share that pride with the people of Richmond, Texas. Congratulations on our 175th anniversary.

REMEMBERING 9/11

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MARINO). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, 11 years ago today, the worst attack in American history on American soil occurred; more loss of life than Pearl Harbor. It was a day that those of us who are alive and old enough to know what was happening will never forget. It was a day of commitment as well that we would do whatever was necessary to protect our country, that we would do whatever was necessary to prevent future such attacks from occurring.

I recall there in east Texas where I live, I was a judge at the time. The day after, September 12, 2001, was an extraordinary day as well. It was a day that I also will not forget. I had never seen communities come together as we did across America on September 12, 2001, not in my lifetime. In World War II, from history, I've read accounts about some in America that felt like war with Germany was a bad idea, that we ought to be nice to them. There were even people that were divided in America back then. But the overall resolve was to protect democracy, make democracy safe—''Make the World Safe for Democracy'' was the slogan.

But we were so united on September 12, 2001. There in Tyler, Texas—and I know it happened all over east Texas the same way—people came together. It didn't matter what race anyone was. It didn't matter where they came from, their national origin—man, woman, religious preference didn't matter, we came together as one people. There were no hyphenated Americans that day—no Anglo-Americans, African-Americans, Asian-Americans. We were Americans. We stood united, and we wept together and we prayed together and we held hands and sang together.

Here in Washington, D.C., once again today we sang ''God Bless America'' without regard to party, without regard to House, Senate. I think there was less mention of the word God today. I'm grateful for Speaker PELOSI, who at the end of her remarks asked for God to bless and comfort those who lost loved ones on 9/11 and asked that God would still bless America. I'm grateful she did that. Other leaders did not.

Andy McCarthy—Andrew McCarthy—was the prosecutor of those who were involved in the 1993 World Trade Center bombing. He is a man that understands the Constitution. He understands the law. He is a fantastic prosecutor, a brilliant mind, and a great writer. And I won't read the entire article, but it's an article worth noting from Andrew C. McCarthy, entitled ''Remembering 9/11 . . . At Least for a Day.'' He says:

> It is difficult to say what's harder to believe: that it has been 11 years since the 9/11 atrocities, or that national security has become an irrelevant issue in the most consequential Presidential election in decades.
>
> The first observation reminds us that today is a day of remembrance: of the loss of nearly 3,000 of our fellow citizens; of the bravery of those who willingly gave their lives to save others; and of the heroism of the men and women who put on the line all that they have. That includes the love and well-being of their families, on whom the burden of American national security has been imposed while the rest of us go on with our lives—too often, without giving them a first thought, never mind a second.
>
> No matter which political party has been in power since 9/11, there has been a great deal of bloviating about the ''rule of law.'' It is as if we had evolved beyond anything so crude and benighted as armed force and national interest—especially national defense. Let's remember today that we have the luxury of living under something resembling the rule of law only because dedicated Americans sacrifice themselves to confront evil—in this case, the adherents of an evil ideology, Islamic supremacism, that is closer to the law of the jungle.

And for those who do not understand—I'm saying this parenthetically, it's not in the article—Islamic supremacism is not talking about all of those who worship and follow Islam and Islamic teachings. We have friends around the world who do not want to live under totalitarian, radical Islamic supremacism, such as the Taliban, such as al Qaeda. They don't want to live under that, and they're Muslims. They want to live their lives. They want to worship in their own religion without totalitarians telling them how they must.

□ 1910

Unfortunately, as in Afghanistan, those Muslim friends, and Pakistan, for that matter, Iran and Iraq as well, there are Muslims who have admired the United States until we abandoned them.

Going back to Andrew McCarthy's article:

> The rule of law has precious little to do with why we have gotten through 11 years without a reprise of 9/11. A better explanation is that terrorists who have been captured or killed cannot commit more terrorism.

I'll insert, parenthetically, there are terrorists who were captured, some confined at Guantanamo Bay, some confined at other facilities, who have been released and who have been found again on the battlefield killing Americans. They were captured, prevented from enacting further terrorism, and then released under some false notion that that would win friends and influence people, only to have other Americans killed by these same thugs.

Back to Andrew McCarthy's article. He says:

> On the matter of evil, it is good to remember that it exists. Evil is not a misunderstanding, a cultural gulf, or a natural reaction to political policies adopted in pursuit of American interests or Israeli self-defense. That brings us to the second observation: the

fact that national security concerns are absent from the 2012 campaign, even with tens of thousands of Americans at arms in distant hellholes, even with tens of millions of Americans enduring the increasingly overbearing government that has been the cost of heightened vigilance in an era where barbarism is met with political correctness.

The United States defeated the ideological threats of the 20th century because we were unafraid to see evil for what it was—to diagnose it and understand it. Today, we ignore it, rationalize it, and assume we are somehow to blame for it. For the bipartisan ruling class, 9/11 is about ''violent extremism''—as if irrational, wanton killers, seized by a ''psychological disorder,'' committed mass murder for no better reason than to visit on the world's most famous office buildings the most shocking case of ''workplace violence'' in history.

The ''violent extremism'' narrative is nonsensical. It defies reality as well as history. But it is a convenient fiction. It miniaturizes the enemy. With the killing of bin Laden, the President can now portray the enemy as defeated—even as al Qaeda resurges, even as Iraq has become an Iranian-influenced shari'a state that works against the United States and Israel.

He says parenthetically:

(Remember when ''victory'' was defined as a ''stable'' ''democracy'' that is a ''reliable ally''?); and even as Afghan Islamists turn their weapons on their American trainers, and the administration pleads with the Taliban to negotiate (remember when ''victory'' was defined as a ''stable'' ''democracy'' that ''prevents the Taliban from returning and giving safe haven to al Qaeda again''?). The ''violent extremism'' canard allows the administration to declare victory even as we are being humiliated.

That's an excerpt from Andrew McCarthy's article regarding today.

Mr. Speaker, it is tragic that around the world the United States has had allies who trusted us, who put their security in our hands, even to the extent of losing political power, losing political office, like some of the Polish leaders who trusted America to help them with a missile defense. It wasn't as much a defense against Russia; it was concern for potential missiles in the Middle East that this Nation has not done enough to stop. But those who staked their political careers on the trustworthiness of the United States came up empty in Poland.

Mubarak had agreements with this administration, met with this administration. Qadhafi had agreements with this administration, met with them, talked. We had Senators from both sides of the aisle, although one of our Republican Senators says he didn't send that message. It wasn't his tweet, he says now, that he was meeting with Qadhafi and that he was an interesting man.

But, regardless, we know that there were people from both sides of the aisle that went and met with Qadhafi because Qadhafi, after President Bush gave the order to invade Iraq, Qadhafi believed he was next if he didn't do something and end his nuclear proliferation, so he did. He became an ally, even though he was a murderer with blood on his hands. He reached agreements. He promised he would not attack Americans again. And, once again, someone who trusted agreement with the United States came up short.

Some of our allies in other parts of the world and other countries have to be wondering if they're next.

I visited with leaders in other countries who say the Chinese are constantly coming around saying, Have you figured out yet that you can't really trust the United States to keep their agreements? Hey, you can trust us. Well, whenever you come around, including in Israel, there are Chinese constantly there saying, When you figure out you can't trust the United States, we're ready to be your friend, your ally.

There should be no better ally in the world than the United States. But we have different administrations, and different administrations are better about keeping their words with allies than others.

The Northern Alliance in Afghanistan fought with us and for us to defeat the Taliban by early 2002. Over the years, they have buried family and friends who have been our cofighters against radical Islamists in Afghanistan. We abandoned them. This administration did not want to talk to them.

And I was told by some of the Northern Alliance leaders earlier this year that one of the leaders of the Taliban that this administration released for humanitarian purposes ended up announcing he's back leading the Taliban as one of their leaders. And he announced on Afghan national television that under shari'a law, if anyone in Afghanistan had not been supportive of the Taliban in the past, they need to come in and ask forgiveness and get the Taliban's protection, because, as the leader said, told people who watched the national television channel in Afghanistan, that everybody in the world knows the United States has lost in Afghanistan.

□ 1920

So all they have to do is wait until 2014 when this President has promised the United States will be out, and they'll be back in charge. Certainly, President Karzai has enough fear of them that he is giving them an awful lot of freedom and control in the area. Regardless of what anyone may say or prove about President Karzai, he's not stupid. He knows we won't be there to keep him protected. So it looks as if he may be trying to placate the Taliban. Why wouldn't he? The United States sure is.

I hear friends here on the floor talk about the lessons of Vietnam. The lessons of Vietnam are not that it was an unwinnable war. That's very clear. This came from one of the leaders at Hanoi Hilton as he told SAM JOHNSON as the Americans left the Hanoi Hilton, including JOHN MCCAIN. SAM says one of the most ruthless leaders was laughing, saying, You stupid Americans. We had just carpet-bombed them for 2 weeks after they'd walked out of the Paris peace talks. He said, You stupid Americans. Don't you know, if you had just bombed us for one more week, we would have had to have surrendered unconditionally?

To those who were sent to fight in Vietnam, this Nation owes an apology for leaving them over there to fight without an order to win and come home. That should be the lesson of Vietnam.

I was shocked to hear from the parents of one of the SEAL Team Six members who was killed on the Chinook—Billy and Karen Vaughn were the first ones to mention it. I'm embarrassed I didn't know—that two-thirds of the Americans killed in Afghanistan have been killed under President Obama as the Commander in Chief. I found that hard to believe, so we got the numbers directly from the Department of Defense. I've got a poster here. President Bush ordered Americans to war—or to go fight in Afghanistan. We found out that's where the terrorists were trained, where the plot was supposedly hatched to kill thousands of American innocent victims.

So we have a list from the Department of Defense, from their own Statistical Information Analysis Division. If you look at the number of American deaths—of our fantastic men and women in Afghanistan—from October of 2001 through the end of December of 2008, there were 625 American casualties, Americans killed—valiant, brave men and women of our armed services killed in Afghanistan—every one of them a treasure.

But when we get down to the just over 3½ years since, in the war that Candidate Obama called the ''good war''—a term I don't know of anybody who has ever been in the military would use about a war, but he called it the ''good war.'' Well, in President Obama's good war, though he has been Commander in Chief less than half the time of President Bush, it isn't two-thirds. Seventy percent of the American military men and women who have been killed in Afghanistan have been killed under the command of Commander in Chief Obama. It gets worse when you look at the total wounded in action. During the 7 years and 3 months that President Bush was President, or was Commander in Chief over the war in Afghanistan, 2,638 precious American men and women were wounded.

When you visit our incredible men and women who have been wounded—who have lost arms, legs, who are severely disabled—you end up walking away being the one who is uplifted with the incredible, incredible American spirit—with the spirit of our American men and women. They are such a blessing but not to the extent, you would think, that anyone in America would want to leave our military men and women in Afghanistan without a clear purpose, without rules of engagement that let them defend themselves. We'll be talking more about that in the days to come.

In the just over 3½ years that the Afghan war has been under the command of Commander in Chief Obama—as compared to the 2,638 precious American men and women who were wounded—during half the time, approximately, this President has been in command, over 14,817, or 84 percent, of the men and women have been wounded in Afghanistan.

Now, we have fantastic leaders in Afghanistan—some of our Nation's best—but when you get out into the field and you talk to the men and women, sometimes you get a little different story. There is a poll that came out last week indicating a massive lack of morale among our military men and women in Afghanistan. How could there not be? They've been told they're going to have to stay in Afghanistan. We're going to be there for 2 more years or so. They don't have a clear mission. It's basically to train people who may kill you during or after the training. You're not allowed under the rules of engagement to properly defend yourself. Then our men and women in our Armed Forces are supposed to hope and pray that they're not one of the last ones killed on the way out.

I would have thought people would have understood the lesson of Vietnam, not that there are wars such as Vietnam or Afghanistan that are not winnable. Vietnam was winnable. Afghanistan initially was won. We took our eye off the ball. President Obama did inherit a terrible situation in Afghanistan, and then he has more than doubled down on the men and women who have been sacrificed—giving their lives, their arms, their legs in service to this country. We should not allow those precious men and women's lives to go without proper consideration.

So many in our military have stepped up and said, I will go. I will defend America.

I called after 9/11. I was told I was too old. I said, I've got friends that I was in the Army with years ago. They're still in.

They said, Yes, that's because they're still in.

□ 1930

If you had stayed in, you could still be in, but you're too old to go back now.

Though I was too old to go back into the Army that I had served 4 years of my life in, I found another place of service, and I have to speak on behalf of our men and women in our military. I have to beg, Mr. Speaker, that our leaders in Washington, and in particular the leader, the Commander in Chief, either give our military a proper mission or get them out of Afghanistan. Give them proper rules of engagement or get them out now. Don't make them sit around for 2 years wondering if they're going to be the next one that leaves in a casket. Let them win and come home or bring them home now. They can win. They're that good.

With Pakistan, I kept talking to people that say most of the supplies are coming from Pakistan to supply the Taliban. Then cut off the supplies. We have the ability to do that; we just haven't had the will. Develop the will and cut off the supplies to the Taliban—cut them off—or bring our people home now. Don't let one more American lose an arm, a leg, both arms, both legs, or come home as another death. Give them the orders to defeat the Taliban. Come hell or high water, do it. Do it now and then come home or bring them home now. We owe them that much.

Is it any wonder the suicide rate is so high?

How are we treating our allies on this, the 11th anniversary of 9/11? From the Israel media, Haaretz, comes this report today. I'll read it verbatim.

The White House declined Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's request on Tuesday to meet U.S. President Barack Obama during a U.N. conference in New York at the end of the month.

Parenthetically, I will insert that this is the same President who has told the Taliban, Look, we'll buy you offices in Qatar; we'll let the rest of your murdering thugs out of confinement if you'll just sit down and talk to us. Apparently, the President's schedule just doesn't allow a meeting with what has been a phenomenal ally, a believer in the value of life and liberty in Israel.

The article goes on:

An official in Jerusalem said the Prime Minister's office sent the White House a message stating that although Netanyahu will spend only 2½ days on U.S. soil, he is interested in meeting with Obama and is willing to travel to the U.S. Capitol specifically for that purpose. The official added that the White House rejected the request and said at this time Obama's schedule does not allow for a meeting.

The White House's response marks a new low in relations between Netanyahu and Obama, underscored by the fact that this is the first time Netanyahu will visit the U.S. as Prime Minister without meeting the President.

Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak reportedly tried smoothing things over, but Bibi—or Prime Minister Netanyahu—is having none of it.

''The world tells Israel, 'Wait. There's still time.' And I say, 'Wait for what? Wait until when?' Those in the international community who refuse to put red lines before Iran don't have a moral right to place a red light before Israel,'' Netanyahu told reporters on Tuesday.

''Now, if Iran knows that there is no red line, if Iran knows there is no deadline, what will it do? Exactly what it's doing. It's continuing, without any interference, towards obtaining nuclear weapons capability and from there, nuclear bombs,'' he said.

Relations between the U.S. and Israel have been strained during the entire Obama term. Obama's call for Israel to retreat to its 1967 borders was widely seen as a slap to our ally. Obama's support for ousting the late Hosni Mubarak from the Egyptian Presidency paved the way for what now looks like an Islamist takeover in Cairo, endangering the longstanding peace treaty between Israel and Egypt.

President Obama has also not visited Israel during his Presidency. Republican Presidential nominee Mitt Romney visited Israel in July 2012.

More news today. This is from Mohammed Abu Zaid with the AP, dated September 11, 2012:

Egyptian demonstrators climbed the walls of the U.S. Embassy in Cairo today and pulled down the American flag to protest a film that they say is insulting to the Prophet Mohammad.

This was updated 2:07 p.m. eastern time.

CNN reports that U.S. security guards fired a volley of warning shots as the crowd gathered outside the Embassy walls.

CNN adds that the Embassy has been expecting a demonstration and cleared all diplomatic personnel earlier from the facility.

The Associated Press reports that Embassy officials say there was no staff inside at the time.

Reuters reports that protesters tried to raise a black flag carrying the slogan: ''There is no God but Allah and Mohammad is his messenger.''

The news agency says about 2,000 protesters have gathered outside the Embassy and about 20 have scaled the walls.

The AP says the protesters were largely ultraconservative Islamists.

Iran's FARS news agency says the protest is aimed at a movie being produced by a group of ''extremist'' members of the Egyptian Coptic Church in the United States.

Parenthetically, I will mention that we've seen in recent days that this new government in Egypt that the United States has to bear partial responsibility for being in place has now seen the return of crucifixions in Egypt, the barbaric manner of killing people by making them suffer as much as possible before they breathe their last, just as Jesus, himself, did in laying down his life for others.

Also, it is remarkable that you have people who say, as they did with the insulting cartoon depicting Mohammad or someone appearing to be situated that way, as a violent person, and in response there were riots and people were killed, which kind of seems to make it not a cartoon but a prophecy.

□ 1940

Back to the article:

CNN says the film in question is a Dutch production.

The AP says clips of the film are available on YouTube, show the prophet having sex, and question his role as the messenger of God's words.

This would clearly be insulting, having sexual relations, it questions his role as a messenger of God's words—of course that would be insulting. It's ridiculous to have anything that resembles that, just as it is absolutely ridiculous and despicable to demean Christianity, to call it a hate group when it's bounded by Jesus, who showed the ultimate love for all humanity. It's despicable when someone burns a flag, but it's not illegal, it's not illegal to burn a Bible. It's despicable, but it's not illegal.

Yet, personally, I anticipate, if history shows what the radicals will do, they will follow the example. Unfortunately, there will be more rioting. Somebody will tragically be killed by these cutthroats. Then some will say, see, we need to change the law in America where you can burn Bibles,

you can burn the flag, you can desecrate any religion—just not Islam.

Then the goal, as found in the archives after a search warrant, showed one of the 10-year goals to be subjecting our Constitution to sharia law. And that will be a box that can be checked off.

Back to the article:

After the protest, the U.S. Embassy issued this statement on its Web site:

The embassy of the United States in Cairo condemns the continuing efforts by misguided individuals to hurt the religious feelings of Muslims, as we condemn efforts to offend believers of all religions.

How about the Christians in Egypt that are being barbarically killed for their religious beliefs? Wouldn't it be nice if this administration would condemn those activities and do what it takes to stop them?

Today, the 11th anniversary of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the United States, Americans are honoring our patriots and those who serve our Nation as the fitting response to the enemies of democracy. Respect for religious beliefs is a cornerstone of American democracy. We firmly reject the actions by those who abuse the universal right of free speech to hurt the religious beliefs of others.

The Grand Mufti of Egypt, Sheikh Ali Gomaa, strongly condemned the movie.

''Freedom of speech does not warrant desecrating sanctities,'' Gomaa said in a statement Sunday.

And he's right.

But those freedoms exist in America. The old adage that was attributed to Voltaire for most of the history since, including during the revolution—I disagree with what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it—used to mean something in this country.

Now, it's been subjected to ideological terms that would have it say more, something on the order of, I disagree with what you say, so I want you imprisoned, I want you to lose your business, I want you to have no friends, I want to take all your money, I want to destroy your life.

What a turn over the last 200-plus years from our Constitution's establishment and writing in 1787. Of course, it took longer than that to be ratified.

Eleven years after 9/11, what has gone wrong? You know, not only were there mistakes in Vietnam under both Democratic and Republican Presidents, our embassy was attacked in Tehran in 1979. Those of us at Fort Benning, I didn't know of anybody that was dying to go, but I knew an awful lot of people willing to go and die in defense of our country.

Under everybody's definition of international law, when you attack an embassy, you have attacked, you have committed an act of war against that country. If the host country cannot protect the embassy, then that country who owns that embassy, that uses that embassy, has every right to bring the full military power to bear to defend it.

I still carry the horrible realization, I believe, if we had defended our embassy in 1979, thousands and thousands and thousands of precious Americans would not have had to give their lives since.

Our embassy has been attacked in Egypt. If the government that the Secretary of State has promised $2.5 billion—I don't know, some of it may have already gone over there—if they're not going to be able to defend our embassy, then we need to take action to defend it.

I also think it's time to revisit the Carter-era idea that we should never take out government leaders. I think it's time to have this debate again.

Which is more immoral: to go to war with a country where at the time you go to war most of the people of that country like you and respect you, and yet are going to die, many of them; or to take a position, look, it's your country, you're free to establish whatever government you want. But if you put in place a government that declares war on the United States, that says we are the annihilation of the United States, their way, their people, then we will take that government out and we won't rebuild it. You'll be free to pick whatever kind of government you want.

It's time to have the debate. Wouldn't that have been better in Afghanistan rather than forcing a centralized government on a tribal region that has since become so corrupt that the money that we have spent, spent by the billions in Afghanistan, given to Afghanistan, has made its way to other places besides the intended objects.

Talking to some of our soldiers over there who have trained farmers. They said the billions that have been spent and sent to Afghanistan to create farming projects had not, any of it, made it to the region where they were training the farmers. It was wasted effort. So they would travel around over there wondering, will they be the next IED death, or will they be the next IED dismemberment?

The thing is, a good foreign policy says the enemy of our enemy is our friend. A good foreign policy says we will not try to buy off the bullies in the world to make them like us.

As I've said for years, you don't have to pay people to hate you; they'll do it for free. Save that money. Use it to rebuild relations with former allies that have been let down. But don't keep giving money to people who hate us. We don't need to be nation building. We need to let nations live in peace under their own discretion. But if they declare war or set as a goal our annihilation, shouldn't we at least talk about taking out the government rather than going to war with the people?

□ 1950

I think it's time to have the debate again. There's too much death and loss of life in Afghanistan. It's hard to believe 70 percent of American lives lost in Afghanistan of our military have occurred under Commander Obama. Eighty-four percent of all the wounded have been wounded under the command of Commander Obama. It's time to talk about these things whether the Presidential candidates want to talk about them or not. We owe that to the people we have put in harm's way.

As this is the anniversary of 9/11, it's another opportunity for me to recall the memory of Ross McGinnis. I hadn't gotten an email from Tom asking me not to forget. He knows I will never forget his son. But I went to his funeral at Arlington National Cemetery. I had become friends since then with the McGinnises. I have been to all the funerals of those who have died while in service in harm's way from my district. I have been to too many of those such funerals.

But this wasn't a person from my district in east Texas. It was a guy from Knox, Pennsylvania, a young man who graduated from high school and gotten into trouble at the end. Ross's mom doesn't want me to forget that. He was given a second chance. They let him graduate. He joined the Army, and Ross found his niche. I haven't seen any pictures anybody had of me during officer basic training at Fort Riley, Kansas, in 1974; but I don't think I was smiling, if somebody has them. It was a difficult time. It was hot, humid. But there are pictures of Ross going through basic with other soldiers, and he's got a big old smile. He had a beautiful smile. And the guys with him are not so smiling. There are pictures of him after he got to Iraq, and the heat was obviously wearing down his friends, fellow servicemembers. But he has a big old grin. His platoon sergeant told me that he was such a piece of enthusiasm in their midst. He was uplifting to the other soldiers.

Ross was a gunner on a Humvee, and as it was going through a town, whether shot or thrown, a grenade goes into the bed of the Humvee where there were four of our soldiers, including Ross's platoon sergeant from Long View, Texas, Cedric Thomas; a soldier from Tyler, my hometown, Sean Lawson; and two other soldiers. And they said that Ross yelled, Grenade, and he looked back, but Ross was the only one in a position to jump out and save himself. But when he looked back and he saw each of the four cringing in their corners, he obviously knew those four soldiers were going to die. So instead of jumping out and saving his own life and four soldiers being lost, he didn't jump out. He jumped in. He covered the grenade. Took the full blow himself. Gave his life. And four of our soldiers are alive today because of what Ross did.

Just as on the statue downstairs right below me, below where I stand, the statue of Father Damien, the Catholic priest from Hawaii, on the side of it is John 15:13, the words: Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.

Ross had a lot of love.

The accounts after 9/11 after those planes flew into buildings here at the

Pentagon, there in New York, those incredible heroes on the fourth flight that went down in a field in Pennsylvania, those heroes went running in, willing to lay down their lives to save others, as Ross did.

There at Arlington National Cemetery the Army chaplain did a wonderful job. Taps was played. It always gets me. It got everybody there. A 21-gun salute is an emotional thing at a funeral. And as everyone stood to turn to go, Sergeant Thomas came up, knelt down before the remains of Ross, put his hand on the remains of Ross McGinnis, bowed his head in prayer. He was followed by two others that Ross had saved. The fourth was still in Iraq. They put their hands on Ross's remains, bowed at the knee, bowed in prayer. And it was obvious what they were doing.

Whether it's on Memorial Day, Veterans Day, the 9/11 anniversary, there cannot be too many occasions when we as a Nation stop and do what those three soldiers did: thank those who have laid down their lives for the rest of us, for our liberties; thank those who have sacrificed life or limb or suffered terrible disability for us and our lives and our liberty. And then, to thank God for people who are still willing to lay down their lives for us.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS IN THE 112TH CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentleman from New York (Mr. TONKO) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. TONKO. This evening we'll spend some time here in Special Order on the House floor to address a great bit of unfinished business that rests before the House. And we have just returned from what is a 5-week recess where Members of this House were back in their districts and addressing the events of this session. It has been labeled by many as a do-nothing Congress. This evening we're going to talk about that do-nothing agenda.

We have attempted in every which way to encourage the Congress, the House, to address legislation that speaks to job creation and economic recovery, continuing to build upon the achievements of the 111th Congress, and we're now serving in the 112th.

□ 2000

But for me, it's my second term in the House. The very first term for me, the 111th Congress, was deemed by several polls out there to be one of the most productive in decades where there were many things taken up by this House that responded to the needs of America, middle class Americans, Americans of all stripes, who required initiatives from this House.

We were in the midst of a very dark period, a recession that gripped this economy that put 8.2 million people at risk by their losing a job through no fault of their own. We were losing as many as 800,000 jobs a month.

So the devastation of that impact on the American economy, bringing America's economy to its knees, needed a response from government.

The President acknowledged an agenda that would move us not only into a response against the recession but putting us at the cutting edge of a modern economy. Investing in research, investing in science and technology, investing in an ideas economy, investing in an innovation economy—that's the sort of priming of the pump, if you will. That's essential for us to respond in substantive terms for us to utilize government as a tool that is productive and enabling and empowering the middle class, empowering our small business community, empowering our entrepreneurs.

That was the hope-for. And it happened in the 111th Congress.

But something drastically happened with the change in leadership in the 112th Congress. We now have been ranked in single-digit percentage approval. Below 10 percent is the approval rating for this Congress, some of the lowest points achieved, or earned, by this Congress in its history as a House.

That is a very telling statement. How do we go from the most productive in decades to most unfavorable in the history of the House?

We have a reactionary response from those who want to destroy the essence of government. They do not weave any sort of government program activity into the fabric of response to a very difficult period in our economic history. It is one that is unpopular and unproductive. It is one that is being rejected by people out there.

When I go back to my district, I hear it from Republicans, Democrats, Independents alike: Why can't something get done? There's a paralysis here. And it's because there's a rejection. There is a sense of partisanship rather than partnership. There is an outright attempt to deny anything coming to the House as a request to get productive and progressive policy done.

So there are things that languish. There is this crush of big tasks that rest before the House, work to produce a jobs bill, work to produce a response to the ag crisis, the reauthorization of our ag bill, work to invest in the middle class.

It's been this House, when controlled by the Democrats, that spoke to the opportunities, the ladders of success, if you will. The Democratic conference in this House was all about, has always been about, in my tenure here, about producing ladders of success. You know, we believe in that American principle that you work hard, act with responsibility, play by the rules, and expect to taste success.

Well, we haven't seen that sort of cooperative spirit from the new Republican majority in the House.

You know, we believe, as Democrats, that you produce those ladders of opportunity. You allow people to climb toward their American Dream. We enable people to utilize their gifts, their talents, their passions, their skills to empower themselves, their families, the small businesses. And so we stand for this wonderful three-legged stool that speaks to the empowerment of small business, forever the pulse of American enterprise, that looks to create jobs that are then tethered very strongly with small business citizenship into the local community grain.

Then we talk about investing in entrepreneurs, those dreamers, the movers, the shakers, the builders of society that have forever been the American spirit, the pioneer spirit.

I represent a district in upstate New York that is the donor area to the Erie Canal. And that canal produced not only a port out of a little town called New York City but gave birth to a necklace of communities that became the epicenters of invention and innovation.

The empowerment of the entrepreneur—another strong underlying principle of the agenda of Democrats in the House.

Finally, a thriving middle class—making certain that we utilize the policies that can be created in this House that will empower with tax fairness, empower with investment in the worker, in education, higher education, apprenticeship programs to empower the middle class and small businesses.

We have measures that we have asked to be brought to the floor. There is a denial of any sort of single jobs bill before the House. We have requested over and over again to invest in that agenda the empowerment of America through small business, entrepreneurs, a thriving middle class. It's been rejected.

Tonight I'm joined by a colleague from the State of Connecticut, JOSEPH COURTNEY. JOE COURTNEY is a strong believer in this government process. He's a strong believer that when we can prime the pump and when we can utilize government to make a difference, when we can create programs that speak to the honest-to-goodness agenda for all strata of America, but utilizing that middle class strata—small business, farming as a small business—making certain we utilize every strength, every sector of our economy and not just relying on a service sector, especially the financial services that we did that brought us into a crisis situation—we can incorporate all of the sectors of the economy.

One of those prime sectors? Agriculture.

Representative COURTNEY, it is great to have you joining us this evening in this colloquy.

The agriculture industry from coast to coast is a heavy-duty important industry. You sit on the Ag Committee. As a representative from Connecticut,