

power of fair wages and honest toil. Together, workers can seize the dream that will slip out of any one person's grasp. Together, workers have the power to ford any river, cross any valley, and come down from the mountain where we have been for too long.

#### AMERICAN EXCEPTIONALISM IN THE FACE OF WAR

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BENTIVOLIO) for 30 minutes.

Mr. BENTIVOLIO. Mr. Speaker, I stand here today as a former soldier. Like many of my colleagues in this room who served, I took an oath to honor and defend the Constitution of the United States against enemies both domestic and abroad. American soldiers do not swear to defend the President; they don't swear to defend Congress or political parties. They swear to defend the Constitution because this document is the bulwark that protects our freedom.

American soldiers swear to protect this document because our Founding Fathers understood that elected officials, from the President to us here in the House of Representatives, are fallible human beings. They swear to protect this document because they know that the principles it defends are true and its wisdom will last long after we're dead, just as it lasted long before we were born.

The Constitution of the United States of America is the key difference between us and other countries. It is what makes our Nation exceptional. Forged on the anvil of liberty, it has protected our Nation as we have grown from a fledgling Republic into a world superpower. The soldier that we ask to fight on our behalf knows that. We must honor our military by looking to the wisdom of the Constitution whenever we discuss sending our troops to war.

The Constitution itself makes clear that we should go to war "for the common defense." This statement, "for the common defense," was so important that it was used twice by our Founding Fathers: once in the preamble, then again in laying out the duties of Congress.

We live in a fallen world. Bad things happen to innocent people every day across the globe. Drug cartels beheading people in central America, Christians being burned alive in Nigeria, human trafficking in Asia—all of these things are heart-wrenching but none of them involve our common defense.

When I see what is happening in Syria and read the intelligence given to us, I do not see how this terrible civil war involves our common defense. I understand the horrors of the Assad regime and it sickens me. It hurts to see the pictures of dead children brutally gassed by a hateful dictator. Yet the actions our President wishes us to take would do little to prevent such a

man from continuing to murder his people, nor would help those our soldiers were sworn to protect—our constituents.

In his farewell address, George Washington said:

We may choose peace or war, as our interest guided by justice shall counsel.

There is nothing just, or in our interest, in lobbing a few bombs into a country and walking away.

The Secretary of State and the President have both stated that we need to go to war because Assad broke a treaty that the entire world supports. The U.N., they say, cannot act. Mr. Speaker, I am asking the same question my constituents are asking: Why do we spend billions of dollars supporting an international organization for peace that cannot enforce a treaty supported by the entire world? If the U.N. is so hamstrung that it cannot rally the world to stop Assad and we have to unilaterally attack Syria, what exactly is the point of having a U.N.?

The Secretary of State also had the gall to tell both the Senate and the House Foreign Relations Committees that bombing Syria is "not a war in the classic sense." Let me tell you something, Mr. Speaker. If another nation attacked us the way our President wants to attack Syria, everyone in this room would call it war. Let me tell you something else, Mr. Speaker: war has consequences.

The Secretary of State told the House Foreign Relations Committee that the goal of bombing Syria was to "degrade" Assad's chemical weapons and cause a stalemate in the fighting. In other words, Assad will still have the capability of using chemical weapons and could very well use them again to break the stalemate we create. Does anyone really think that we will just stop with the first round of bombings? That's not how war works. Wars are a "yes" or "no" question. You cannot, as Secretary Kerry and the White House suggest, only kind of fight a war. If we break it, we're going to be forced to fix it.

Like I said, I'm an old soldier, and old soldiers need mission plans. When I look at this mission plan, I don't see anything that suggests we will simply be able to walk away after this bombing campaign.

America's role in the world is not to play parent to the rest of the nations, chastising bad actors and picking winners and losers in battles that don't directly threaten us. The point of our Nation is to show the world the wisdom of a free and representative government.

My fellow Members of Congress, we can show that wisdom here today with this vote. We can show the world that our Nation will not plunge itself into war because our President drew an artificial red line and feels embarrassed that a dictator crossed it.

Our military does not belong to the White House. It belongs to the people. I ask you, show the power and wisdom

of our Founding Fathers when they granted the representatives of the people with the decision to go to war.

I strongly urge everyone in this room to vote "no" on attacking Syria and involving ourselves in their civil war.

God bless America.

I yield back the balance of my time.

OMISSION FROM THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD OF FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 6, 2013, AT PAGE H5408

#### RESIGNATION FROM THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following resignation from the House of Representatives:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
August 8, 2013.

Hon. JOHN BOEHNER,  
Washington, DC.

SPEAKER BOEHNER: I cannot express what a tremendous honor it has been to serve the people of Louisiana's Fifth Congressional District, and from the bottom of my heart, I am eternally grateful and I thank them for the trust they have placed in me.

I write to you today to officially let you know that, effective September 27, 2013, I will be resigning as a Member of the United States Congress.

I am honored that Governor Jindal has given me the opportunity to serve as a member of his cabinet as his Secretary of Veterans Affairs. I am eager to get started and begin reaching out to our state's veterans in order to make sure they know that our state and nation are grateful for their service.

I look forward to continue serving the great state that I love and the men and women who have given us so much.

Sincerely,

RODNEY ALEXANDER.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
August 8, 2013.

Governor BOBBY JINDAL,  
State Capitol, 20th Floor, 900 North Third  
Street, Baton Rouge, LA.

GOVERNOR JINDAL, I cannot express what a tremendous honor it has been to serve the people of Louisiana's Fifth Congressional District, and from the bottom of my heart, I am eternally grateful and I thank them for the trust they have placed in me.

I write to you today to officially let you know that, effective September 27, 2013, I will be resigning as a Member of the United States Congress.

I am honored that you have given me the opportunity to serve as a member of your cabinet as your Secretary of Veterans Affairs. I am eager to get started and begin reaching out to our state's veterans in order to make sure they know that our state and nation are grateful for their service.

I look forward to continue serving this great state that I love and the men and women who have given us so much.

Sincerely,

RODNEY ALEXANDER.