

seated there. All of the Constitutional Convention delegates are there as they craft this document. And what they decided was, we were going to have to have an executive to execute the laws. You can't execute the laws by committee. It was going to be too complicated, you need an executive to execute the laws. But an all-powerful executive is what those constitutional delegates had been fleeing in England. That is what the revolution was all about, so they were suspicious of an all-powerful executive, so they created the Congress first, article I, and said the power of the purse, the power of the purse, spending of the money, will reside here. Because if you cut off the money to that executive who has run amok, he won't be able to run amok any longer. That was the theory. That was the plan.

And yet this body is creating institutions—and by “this body,” I mean before you and I arrived here, Mr. Speaker, not on our watch—but just 4 short years ago, this body began to create government agencies and institutions that were beyond the reach of our oversight, beyond our ability to defund and beyond our ability to control.

It may be the best agency on the planet, but it shouldn't be beyond the control of the people.

Mr. Speaker, I will end where I began. Are we Republicans and Democrats first, or are we Americans first? Are we northerners and southerners, are we Independents and Green Party? Are we MoveOn and Tea Party? Who are we first? And the answer for me has always been I am a citizen first. I am an American first. This great country that I have inherited—I didn't build it, I didn't sign my name to the Declaration of Independence pledging my life and my fortune to success, no. Can you imagine? Can you imagine what it took in a time of great uncertainty when the die had not been cast for freedom to stand up and say, My name is ROB WOODALL and I pledge my life and my fortune that freedom will come to this land?

No, Mr. Speaker, that is what I have inherited. That is what you have inherited. That is what every single child born on these sacred shores inherits, what every immigrant who travels from far and takes that oath, what they inherit, and it is our responsibility to preserve it.

When we concern ourselves with the end and believe the end justifies the means, we will trample this Constitution at every occasion—at every occasion. And you need to look no further than the Supreme Court decision last week, Mr. Speaker, where unanimously these men and women entrusted with upholding this Constitution said friction between the branches is an inevitable consequence of our constitutional structure. I dare say an intentional consequence of our constitutional structure.

I know there is a lot of pressure on folks, Mr. Speaker, from their con-

stituents back home to get something done, but implicit in that is to get something done the right way—to get something done the right way.

There are serious men and women on both sides of this Chamber, Mr. Speaker; there are serious men and women on both sides of this Capitol; there are serious men and women working in the administration who all love this country and want it to be better tomorrow than it was yesterday. We cannot allow our zeal for results to trample the document that has enabled the results that we have had so far.

And so I challenge my colleagues, Mr. Speaker, whether you are the most conservative Republican or the most liberal Democrat, or anywhere in between, I challenge each and every one of us to decide that if we have a bad process, we are going to end up with a bad product. But that our Constitution, no matter how cumbersome, our Constitution, no matter how deliberate, our Constitution provides that framework where, whether we win or lose on a particular policy, our principles of freedom and opportunity will forever be preserved.

I want to get good policy out of this Chamber, too. I want to get policy out of this town. I want to make a difference in the lives of people back home, but not at the expense of the birthright that I have inherited, which is this great country and the experiment in self-government. I believe we are worthy of that birthright. I believe we can rise to that occasion, but it is not going to happen by accident, and it is not going to happen just inside the four walls of this building. It has got to happen in the hearts and the minds of every single family in this country, who are the true leaders of this Nation, and I hope those will be their instructions to us each and every day.

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

□ 1230

PLIGHT OF CHRISTIANS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

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

Mr. BENTIVOLIO. Madam Speaker, there is a lot of uncertainty and instability in the Middle East. Violence and chaos are persistent themes, and political uprisings, revolutions, insurgencies, and waning democracies have controlled the dialogue on the Middle East for the last couple of years. But, if you dig a little deeper, you will find another story just under the surface, a story that we don't hear quite enough about: the plight of Christians as a religious minority in the Middle East.

Just the other day, I had a meeting with a few of my constituents who are

Coptic Christians, and we discussed many of the issues facing the Coptics in Egypt. Coptics are the native Christians of Egypt, who have been a part of the Egyptian community since the 5th century A.D. They are still one of the largest Christian minorities in the Middle East.

Coptics in Egypt face growing threats of persecution, violence, and restrictions on religious practice. They have been targeted for kidnappings. In 2013, St. Mark's Cathedral was attacked during a funeral ceremony for Coptics and a Muslim who were killed in prior violence.

After President Morsi was removed from office in July 2013, a wave of violence against Christians ensued. Hundreds of churches, homes, and businesses were attacked. Violence against Coptic Christians in Egypt is nothing new, and I fear that it will persist unless something is done to resolve the issue.

Madam Speaker, in Iraq, Chaldean Christians are facing a dire situation as well. I just read a report that two nuns are believed to have been kidnapped while they were visiting an orphanage for girls. They are believed to have been kidnapped by ISIS.

Chaldeans are fleeing Iraq at an alarming rate, as many of them have sought refuge in my home district in Michigan. They are concerned about what is happening in Iraq, as many of them still have family there. Churches and homes are being looted and destroyed, and this leaves no other option for much of the community than to flee. If the situation in Iraq doesn't reverse, it is likely that the majority of Iraq's remaining Christian community will have to seek refuge elsewhere.

Madam Speaker, Assyrians are also continuing to face troubling times in the Middle East. Since the beginning of the war in Iraq in 2003, Assyrian Christian communities have been targets for attacks. Churches and monasteries have been targeted for bombings.

Assyrians have long been persecuted for their Christian beliefs, and they suffered greatly during the Assyrian genocide of the early 1900s when nearly 300,000 Assyrians were killed. Like many other Christian populations in the Middle East, they have fled and sought refuge elsewhere.

Madam Speaker, in Iran, the harsh persecution of Christians continues. According to a UN report, Iran has continually imprisoned Christians, citing “national security” as the justification.

Pastor Saeed Abedini is currently the most visible example of Christian persecution in Iran. Although there have been numerous calls for his release from Congress and from the President, he is still sitting in prison. He was sentenced to prison by a judge who has been known for religious freedom violations. His trial was decried by human rights groups as unfair and unflawed.

Ethnic Christians, such as Armenians, are often under surveillance or

are forced to report their activities to the Iranian Government. Protestant Christians are also viewed unfavorably by the Iranian regime. Furthermore, converts from Islam face particularly harsh consequences, as they can be charged with blasphemy or even face charges from revolutionary courts for political crimes.

These countries are all listed by the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom as tier 1 countries of particular concern, meaning they are the worst perpetrators of religious freedom. However, the Secretary of State has not officially recognized either Egypt or Iraq as a country of particular concern, likely due to the United States' security interests in both of those countries, as a designation would carry the likelihood of sanctions.

Madam Speaker, many of my constituents and I are gravely concerned about the plight of Christians as religious minorities in these countries and the role the U.S. plays in aiding them.

Madam Speaker, "If you want a friend, be a friend." This notion applies directly to the situation at hand. Religious freedom and human rights concerns have long been at the back of the line in U.S. foreign policy decisions, and it may be time to rethink our approach. We have continually supported regimes that are unfriendly to their people, religious and ethnic groups, and even the United States.

Madam Speaker, if we are going to support foreign governments with equipment and funding, we must more thoroughly consider the long-term impact of the freedoms of their people and the corresponding impact on relations with the United States.

Countries that continually abuse religious groups, such as Christians, are never going to see eye to eye with the United States because they lack the fundamental belief in the freedom of religion, which is the founding principle of this country.

If we want friends in the Middle East, we have to encourage respect for religious freedom and diversity, not just build strong governments and militaries. If we do this, strong relationships with these countries will be an inevitable outcome, and they will be more stable as a result.

Madam Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today.

I yield back the balance of my time.

STATES' RIGHTS

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

Mr. GOHMERT. Madam Speaker, the World English Dictionary defines "invasion." Among the definitions is: invading with Armed Forces; but it is: any encroachment or intrusion; the onset or advent of something harmful, as in a disease; pathologically, the

spread of cancer from its point of origin into surrounding tissues.

Under Random House Dictionary, the definitions include: the entrance or advent of anything troublesome or harmful, as disease; entrance, as if to take possession or overrun—and it gives the example, the annual invasion of the resort by tourists—and also, infringement by intrusion.

It comes from Middle English from the 1400s. That is where we get our word "invasion" in the English language.

It is important because, in the Constitution, under article I, section 8, it says that Congress has the authority to call for the military during times of invasion. That is the Congress has that power. That is why it is in article I.

Then, as I mentioned yesterday, you have article I, section 10, which the third clause—there are three little clauses or sections there. They are not a numbered section, but the third sentence says:

No State shall, without the consent of Congress, lay any duty of tonnage, keep troops, or ships of war in time of peace, enter into any agreement or compact with another State, or with a foreign power, or engage in war, unless actually invaded, or in such imminent danger as will not admit of delay.

We know that the invasion into France by the Allied Forces consisted of about 150,000 troops, about 150,000 people, was the biggest invasion in history.

Since then, we come up to the year 2014, and The New York Times reported that just in recent months we have had 240,000 adults and 52,000 children—now it is being reported that it is closer to 60,000 children. Initially, as I understand, the article said since April, just 2 months, we have had nearly 300,000 people invade the United States through Texas. Then it is now being reported that there are 300,000 people making their way up from Central America to the United States.

Now, the administration and some of my friends on the other side of the aisle say, well, they are coming because of this massive violence that they have been facing. Well, there is more violence there than there is in much of the United States. Perhaps it is comparable to Chicago. So, if they are wanting to come to a country where there is less violence, maybe they don't want to come to a country that includes Chicago. Perhaps if Chicago maybe had more gun control laws, maybe it wouldn't be so violent. That is my first thought. Then I realize, wait a minute, Chicago has more gun control laws than about anywhere else in the country, yet massive murders.

So, obviously, if people are coming to America from Central America, they don't want to be sent to Chicago. They don't want to be sent to a place where there is more violence than where they have been living. But we are told that is why they are coming.

Well, actually, when I was on the border a couple of weeks ago, and I will

be there this evening, the people that I saw interviewed, the people that were there that I talked to with the help of an interpreter, they said nothing about violence they were coming from. They had gotten word that this President, this administration, was going to allow them to stay and not send them back.

That is why those who had parents who had been illegally in the country—like one little girl, her mother had been here since she was 1 year old. But now that they have gotten word in Central America that if you come illegally into the United States, the Department of Homeland Security is not providing security to the United States. No, they are providing security involved in human trafficking, becoming complicit in the criminal and illegal activity going on.

They actually have given up their role there on the border of homeland security and now they are involved in destroying our security. They are transporting, along with Health and Human Services—forget the word "health." Do you really want people in charge of your health that right now, as I speak here on the floor of the House of Representatives, involved in transporting people all over our country with disease like tuberculosis, H1N1, which can be fatal, who knows how many kinds of flu that people may not have been inoculated for, scabies, lice, all kinds of disease that the Department, formerly called "Health and Human Services," is now engaged in spreading bad health and disease around the country. Thank you so much Health and Human Services.

So we are in a time when the administration in charge is engaged in more lawlessness than any time in my lifetime. They are engaged in actually violating the hippocratic oath if the national leaders were doctors and took that oath.

□ 1245

It says, First do no harm. Yet harm is being done by this administration as they are spreading people around the country that are coming here in massive, invasive ways.

And our heart goes out to them. When I see these children down on the border in the middle of the night, what kind of parent sends their child, or even sends word back home, Hey, I've got a good job. I've been working here illegally for a number of years. And even though I haven't done anything for my child over the last several years, now that the U.S. is giving benefits like feeding, providing health care, giving lawyers to people that come in—especially children—bring them on up.

We may bring in lots of people.

There is story today from The Washington Times, "Obama Seeks Brisk Passage of Border Children Funding Bill." Of course, he wants to do that, because it would subsidize lawyers for illegal immigrants.

People are fond of referring to the Constitution and saying, Well, we have