

Omaha Beach, I started reflecting upon the price that was paid that day for our freedom and our liberty. I brought back a little bit of the sand from the beach, as my dad was in World War II and served in that theater. And as I sat at home right around Memorial Day, I was looking at that jar of sand, and I started thinking: What if these sands could speak? What would they say? What would they tell us in this august body here? What would they tell the people of our Nation if that sand could speak?

You see, that sand absorbed the blood of American patriots who had the courage to step off of those Higgins boats into the line of fire, and I wondered why would they do that, knowing that more than likely they would never return back home. You see, that sand absorbed the blood of these patriots.

The sand also may be able to tell us of the last words that were spoken by some of those patriots as they drew their last breath after giving their lives, their very lives, for our freedom. Would they tell the name of the father or mother as they cried out their last cry of hope?

□ 1415

Would they tell the name of a sweetheart which they will never embrace or a brother or a sister or a child that they will never see?

As I started thinking about it, I started realizing that sand held the DNA of these soldiers—not just DNA of the soldiers, but the DNA of our entire Nation.

I believe today, Mr. Speaker, that, if that sand could tell us anything today in this body, it is to remember what they died for.

I believe, if that sand could speak today, that sand would tell us these words: this is why we died, because we hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal and they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that amongst these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that to ensure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.

As we are nearing that celebration—we celebrate 239 years of the birth of this Nation—I call upon the Members of this body to once again reflect on why we are here, and that is to preserve freedom.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for this opportunity to speak.

I yield back the balance of my time.

#### ISIS CRISIS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. NEWHOUSE). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. RUSSELL) for 30 minutes.

Mr. RUSSELL. Mr. Speaker, in the last couple of weeks, America has asked what is our strategy to defeat

ISIS and what is the President's plan to prevent the spread of barbarism in Syria and Iraq?

For all of our advancement in self-governance, the rule of law, and a betterment of people's lives, the world stands in shock at beheadings, immolations, crucifixions, sexual enslavement, and human suffering as a way of governance could exist on earth today.

As the world has watched in horror, it has also looked to America. Where America leads, nations stand shoulder to shoulder; where America is absent, tyranny takes its chances and rears its ugly head—but who would have thought barbarity would emerge?

Since last year, the President has been unable to articulate his strategy to aid our ally in Iraq to combat ISIS. As a combat veteran of Iraq that has had to watch my American and Iraqi friends die, that has had to handle the flesh and blood of battle, that has had to do terrible things to destroy enemies, that has had to watch the good people of Iraq suffer in absence of effective government, this is deeply personal.

It is personal because I have lived among the Sunni Arab. I have celebrated his victories, his wedding, his birthdays, and his accomplishments. I have mourned as close Iraqi friends have died to acts of terror and mourned when Iraq's educated, intelligent, and free people have been expunged.

The President's refusal to negotiate a status of forces agreement and decision to abandon Iraq in 2012 is largely responsible and aided ISIS' path to destruction in that country.

We soldiers and servicemembers who have sacrificed so much in Iraq weep. We defeated Saddam's army, toppled the Ba'athist government, captured and brought a world tyrant to justice, fought an insurgency, and stood shoulder to shoulder with disenfranchised Sunnis and Kurds to restore control to Iraq's Government. We turned the country around with a military pause.

The President used that pause for abandonment and political expediency; where we sacrificed, he quit. I speak for so many of the Iraq veterans when I say: Mr. President, you have hurt us deeply. You have torn a hole within us. We are at a loss to see the state of Iraq today.

Now, as we ask what can be done, we see a strategy offered by this administration. I heard it yesterday in the House Armed Services Committee when Secretary of Defense Carter and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs Dempsey attempted to articulate it. I left more confused than when I entered.

The President is offering a plan without vision or conviction. Indeed, Secretary Carter could not even name it, calling it the so-called nine-line strategy. So-called? Do we not even have enough conviction to call the strategy some name? Is it our strategy or not? Are we so unsure of it that we do not even know what to call it? Then we were informed of the "lily pad strat-

egy." I suppose that is the one that makes us look like a bunch of toads.

The nine lines, if we decide to actually call it that, this strategy, when taken together, is mostly passive and defensive. In my 21 years of military infantry service, I have never seen enemies defeated by defense.

While passive measures are important, they are only complementary. The President is looking for nations in the Middle East to lead. Middle Eastern countries are looking to the United States for leadership. We cannot approach this problem like pushing a strand of wet spaghetti. Grab it by the front, and it will go where you want it to go.

If Iraq and Syria were a crime-ridden neighborhood, this nine-line strategy would be like relying on neighborhood watches to physically fight criminals and restore leadership of the town. The mayor and police would then tell them, Well, if you clean up your neighborhood, then we will come and provide the protection that you require—if only life worked that way.

The military can provide pauses, but we cannot provide an Iraqi collapse when the President pulls out all the protection necessary to sustain a nascent government. If the United States is not committed with a diplomatic, economic, and informational solution, all the heroics exerted by our men and women in uniform to provide a window will be squandered once again if we abandon our gains.

Secretary Carter and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs Dempsey spoke of trying to find people willing to fight in Iraq. There are plenty of them. The problem is they are Sunni Arabs and Kurds. They do not wish to live under ISIS; yet we will not organize them into a Sunni-Arab and Sunni-Kurd federation that would actually stand a chance of success and would be a deadly blow to the objectives of ISIS.

They want to govern themselves because Baghdad cannot include them. They do not wish to live under ISIS' barbarity, and we should embrace them.

In the interim, what can be done that is not passive? How about some of this? Cripple Raqqa. This town, it is clear, is the center of ISIS power. The President's Cabinet says: We are worried about collateral damage and civilian casualties.

News flash, the most humane thing we can do to end the suffering of hundreds of thousands of people is cripple what ISIS draws its strength from; destroy their infrastructure, hammer the electricity capacity of that city, destroy the bridges on their roads of ingress and egress, take away the oil refining installations that they possess and use to fund themselves with millions of dollars of illegal cash.

We have the ability to rebuild those later, but ISIS would be diminished deeply by their loss. The most humane thing we can do to protect civilians is defeat the barbarians, causing their

suffering. That is true humanity. If the United States leads, others will stand shoulder to shoulder. Mr. President, we need you to lead.

We hear talk about countermeasures. Well, here is something every American can help with. News stations, stop putting ISIS recruiting videos as B-roll on your newscasts. Replace it with crosshairs and explosions of their defeat, or show the world their acts of barbarity, instead, for the B-roll. Stop using their images and their propaganda for furthering American newscasts. Americans, write your local news stations and tell them to stop it.

Iran, here is the cold reality and its impact on ISIS and Middle East unrest. Lifting sanctions on Iran will introduce tens of billions of dollars into these war-torn nations and will destabilize the entire region. Mr. President, do not lift the sanctions on Iran. They must show good action before we show good will.

Finally, we must go back to the drawing board on this so-called strategy of halfheartedness. Using American warriors should mean backing them with the full weight and might of this Republic.

Mr. President, do you not realize that our enemies hear you loud and clear when you say you will not sign the Defense Authorization? Secretary Carter, do you not realize that we are still negotiating it between both Houses of Congress? Why do you say you support a veto when we are still in the process of its negotiation? By such actions, one thing is certainly clear: nothing is too good for the troops, and nothing is what they will get.

Instead, lead, achieve, get an ISIS strategy worthy of this mighty Republic, sign the Defense Authorization, and let's get back to our constitutional requirement to provide for our Nation's defense.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to address their remarks to the Chair and not to a perceived viewing audience.

#### WEEK IN REVIEW

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) for 30 minutes.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, we had an interesting vote today on the trade agreement, and I know my friends at Club for Growth have scored that.

They wanted people to vote "yes" because they believed, as some have said, it is about free trade; but it is a bit ironic for those who follow politics because, on the one hand, Republicans were being told this will allow us to force the President to keep us apprised, to give us notice of what is going on so that we can reign anything in that is not helpful to the country.

I didn't have that impression of the bill, not when reading the TPA, not

going to the classified setting. I mean, I did that; I read the TPP, most of it.

Having been a lawyer and a judge, prosecutor, done defense, a chief justice, I have litigated a lot of loopholes. There are a lot of loopholes in that TPP. There were loopholes in the TPA.

□ 1430

One of my Democratic friends was telling me, Mr. Speaker, that he was being told that the whole reason the President came up here is that, by passing this trade agreement, it is going to allow the President to get his agenda done in the next 18 months without Congress being able to stop him.

Some of my Democratic friends prefer that Congress have more say than that, and some were not happy with the proposal at all. They also were smart enough to know there are a lot of American jobs that will be lost because of that bill. I am not an isolationist. I believe in free trade, but I don't believe in free rein for a President. I am afraid that is what it will do, and that is why I had to vote "no" once again.

But it passed, and now, we will see if what some of my Democratic friends were told is accurate in that the bill will allow the President to achieve his agenda without Republicans being able to stop him. It appears that way to me, in reading the bills, that he has got enough loopholes he can take advantage of.

Plus, even without loopholes, there is a requirement of notification. He was required to notify us before he released anybody from Guantanamo. He didn't do it. He went ahead and released five of the worst murderers in return for a guy who is, we are told, about to be charged with desertion.

The President doesn't seem to be bogged down by having to follow the law, but I am impressed with my friends who think—but, yes—if we pass one more law that makes him give us notice, after 6½ years of his not keeping us apprised as the law requires, this time, we think he really, really will.

I am impressed with that kind of optimism, even though the old expression here in Washington is, no matter how cynical you get, it is never enough to catch up. Sometimes, I think there is merit to that.

In any event, Mr. Speaker, there is an issue even far more important than trade that is about to hit this country. It could create a constitutional crisis of proportions that some of the Justices on the Supreme Court can't imagine. Mr. Speaker, I blew up the law. This is the law. It is not an ethical requirement.

I mean, having been a prosecutor, a defense—heck, I was even court-appointed to appeal a capital murder conviction. I don't know how many here on the floor have appealed a capital murder conviction. I begged the judge not to appoint me, but he did anyway, and when I got into the thousands of

pages of records, I found out he had not gotten a fair trial.

I fought for him in the highest court in Texas and got the death penalty reversed. Some clients felt like I was a pretty good lawyer. I was told before I went on the bench that I got the only jury verdict against what was then the largest oil company in the world. I don't know if it was or is. That is what I was told.

I know something about practicing law, and I know something about being a judge. I know that, with any case in which the public would suspect that I could not be impartial, I would have to recuse myself. Sometimes, judges will just recuse themselves so they don't have to make a tough call—I never did that—but there are times when you have such a strong opinion about a matter that you have no business sitting on that case.

Now, ethical requirements would insist that a judge conduct his performance as a judge in such a way that it comports with the requirements of the canons of ethics. However, this isn't an ethical violation that would get you a letter from some bar president or from somebody saying: We think you violated the canons of ethics.

This isn't it. This is United States law. This is the law of the land. This is part A. Part B goes into some different possibilities when a judge might have to recuse him or herself, but it is volume 28 of the United States Code, section 455, and section A doesn't have any subparts to it like B does. B is, like I say, other examples where the judge might have to recuse himself, but A is unequivocal.

"Any justice, judge, or magistrate judge of the United States shall"—that is a "shall"—"disqualify himself"—generic, male or female—"in any proceeding in which his impartiality might reasonably be questioned."

This is not some model code of ethics. This is the United States law. No one in the country, including on the United States Supreme Court, is supposed to be above the law. As we have talked about, we have two Justices who have performed same-sex marriages.

In fact, the article by Greg Richter, May 18 of 2015, is quoting from Maureen Dowd in her article in which Maureen Dowd writes regarding Justice Ginsburg: "With a sly look and special emphasis on the word 'Constitution,' Justice Ginsburg said that she was pronouncing the two men married by the powers vested in her by the Constitution of the United States."

Now, there is no question that Justice Ginsburg is biased, prejudiced. She has her own opinion about this matter. She has had her opinion about this. That was clear in the first same-sex marriage she performed. For her not to disqualify herself is a violation of the law of the United States; yet we are told that Justice Ginsburg is not going to recuse herself, that she wants to be part of a majority opinion.