

IEDs to kill and maim our troops and allies. Examples of civil unrest throughout Iraq, northeastern Saudi Arabia, and even Bosnia have also been tied to the Quds force which conducts overseas operations for Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps.

And we must not ignore Syria's partnership with Iran either. Syria is a client of Iran and together with Hezbollah—an Iranian-controlled entity—in neighboring Lebanon, Lebanese Christians and moderate Muslims fear raising their voices against the Syrian hegemony over Lebanon, reversing the gains made in the Cedar Revolution that resulted in the end of the Syrian occupation of Lebanon.

Unfortunately, Iran's tentacles extend across continents and into our Western Hemisphere as well. Iran has entered into a strategic alliance with Venezuela, opening the path for Hugo Chavez to further his anti-U.S. activities in South America. And even more concerning, Venezuela is helping Iran circumvent the Security Council's economic sanctions and is also suspected of providing Tehran with uranium.

Finally, as smaller Arab states in the gulf witness the rise in Iranian power, a power which will be confirmed once it reaches the nuclear threshold, they too will follow this path and attempt to forge an alliance with this new regional superpower.

For this reason, Mr. Speaker, it is crucial that Congress move swiftly with the administration towards curtailing Iran's nuclear ambitions. Decades of inaction have allowed Iran's influence to sweep across the globe. We cannot allow Iran to move further as its influence creeps through our own hemisphere.

Back in the 1930s as the power of Nazi Germany grew, people like Winston Churchill sounded the alarm. But all too often that alarm was ignored.

The alarm is being sounded here in this Chamber and is being sounded across the world. We must act to stop the insidious influence of Iran around the world, and we must do it on every front. The time to act is now. And the way to act is, as I urge my colleagues, that we move swiftly to complete the passage of the Iran Refined Petroleum Sanctions Act and the Iran Human Rights Violation Sanctions Act which we must bring to conference committee and send to the President for signature.

NUCLEAR POSTURE REVIEW

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. AKIN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. AKIN. We're about to start on a journey on an interesting topic of discussion and one that has hit the papers and one that could very much affect the shaping of how the world develops and the safety of the world. And that is

the new discussion on the Nuclear Posture Review. That's a report that the Federal Government has just released along with the new START Treaty which the President has been working on negotiating with the Russians.

And these are talking about the future of our country, the future of our world, particularly as it relates to nuclear weapons or weapons of mass destruction. And the initial kind of read on what's going on sounds pretty good. We want to try to reduce the amount of proliferation of nuclear materials to make the world a safer place. We want to talk about a day when there won't be any nuclear weapons in the world. We want to try to, in general, reduce the amount of threat and risk to our own Nation and other nations.

And it all sounds pretty good when you first look at it, until you start to take a look at the troubling assumptions that have been built into these two documents. First of all, they call the Nuclear Posture Review the NPR and the START Treaty, of course, is going back to the 1991 historic treaty.

And so I'm joined here on the floor by some good friends of mine, some people who are good thinkers. But I think I will mention some of the topics that I would like to see us be talking about here in the next number of minutes. And I think we need to take a look at assumptions.

Many times people have good intentions, but the assumptions that are built in are not so good. There was once a guy who was a pharmacist and he had good intentions; but, unfortunately, he prescribed too much of a particular chemical and killed his patient. He had good intentions, but the result was the death of the patient. That could easily happen to many Americans with the false assumptions that are built into the START negotiations and this Nuclear Posture Review.

The first thing I would like to take a look at is going to be the world without nukes and is that a reasonable assumption; is that something that we should be working toward and exactly how are we going to produce this world where there are no longer nuclear weapons.

The next assumption is whether or not it's reasonable to trust Russia when you negotiate arms treaties.

The third question would be the overall whether or not we're going to be advancing missile defense and whether or not we're going to develop a missile defense. Is that connected to the idea of the START Treaty?

The fourth point would be does it make sense to say we're not going to develop any future nuclear weapons or devices.

And, lastly, to define when we might or might not use a nuclear weapon.

These are all kinds of assumptions built into these documents. I think they need to be discussed and discussed very carefully by those of us who are dealing with our nuclear posture.

I'm going to start off by recognizing my good friend, ROB BISHOP from Utah.

Congressman TURNER also is joining us, MIKE TURNER from Ohio. And I know that they have their own perspectives on this and are very well qualified in certain areas here, and I also have some charts we could go to.

But I would like to take a look at some of those assumptions because the devil is often in the details.

I would yield time to my good friend, Congressman TURNER from Ohio.

What part of Ohio are you from?

Mr. TURNER. Dayton, Ohio.

Mr. AKIN. A good industrial area, too. Good for you.

Thank you, MIKE. Please.

Mr. TURNER. I appreciate your leadership. We serve in the Armed Services Committee together so these are issues that we take up frequently.

We held a hearing today on the Nuclear Posture Review and on the START Treaty, and there are a number of things as you outlined that I think people should be very concerned about.

One, of course, is what they're referring to as the negative assurances where in the Nuclear Posture Review they've included a statement where the President has taken off the table the prospects of using nuclear weapons in defense of this Nation in circumstances where we are attacked by a nation that is in compliance with the nonproliferation treaty, and even if that attack is with either chemical or biological weapons.

Before we always had the posture of we'll do whatever it takes, whatever is necessary to defend this Nation. And the President himself last May said—he clearly stated, I don't take options off the table when it comes to U.S. security. Period. Unfortunately, this administration's Nuclear Posture Review does just that. It delivers a muddled message to both our allies and our adversaries that only seeks to weaken the strength of our deterrent.

It's really unclear as to why the administration has done this if you look at the issue of threat. Certainly the threat has not been reduced to the United States. So to take a posture where you're going to restrict what we would use in order to defend ourselves is not based upon some change that has occurred in the threats that the United States is facing.

They have said that they are pursuing this policy of restricting our use of our own defensive weapons in order to encourage others not to seek nuclear weapons. But there is no historical basis for that. The United States has continued to reduce the overall number of nuclear weapons, as has Russia. As we've seen, Iran is seeking to be a nuclear power; North Korea is becoming a nuclear power. Without any historical basis for an assumption that others would not seek nuclear weapons if the United States agrees to not use theirs, this administration has proceeded down this path.

Mr. AKIN. Could I interrupt for a second?

I think what you brought up is an interesting point. First of all, the President said all of the options are on the

table. And here we go again seeing him say one thing and doing the exact opposite.

It reminds me of a question. I'm a pretty old geezer. I've been around here for a while. I remember the Ronald Reagan days. And I remember it was kind of the height of the Cold War and people would ask him, Now, President Reagan, what would happen if this and this and this. And he would kind of look at people with his big old grin and he would say, You know, I've told you before, I don't answer "what if" questioning. Now, he said that in a nice way, but his point was why do we want to answer what if and then lock ourselves into some particular means of responding when it isn't really appropriate when the actual day arrives.

Mr. TURNER. That is what this policy is. It's a what-if.

Mr. AKIN. It's answering a whole lot of what-if questions. Why do we have to do that?

Mr. TURNER. The administration is saying the what-if is if this country is attacked by someone who is in compliance with the NPT, even if we're attacked with biological or chemical weapons, they would not use everything that we have in our arsenal that might be necessary in order to protect ourselves.

Mr. AKIN. So just stop for a minute. Let's do a what-if, because that's apparently what this treaty is trying to define, these what-ifs.

So some country has maybe signed agreements that they're not going to develop biological weapons. They do that on the sly, hit our cities with biological weapons and people are dying with some strange kind of virus or something running around, and we're losing a whole lot of population—and of course I think we have a pledge that we're not developing biological weapons so we can't respond with biological weapons somewhere. So what are we supposed to do then? We've already guaranteed them that we're not going to use nuclear weapons.

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Mr. TURNER. Well, here is, I think, the most important thing. You invoked Ronald Reagan and you were saying how you shouldn't answer hypotheticals. I think here is what the blanket statement should be.

The blanket statement should be, when it comes to defending the United States against a devastating attack, our message should be clear and simple. If our Nation is attacked, we will use all means necessary to defend ourselves, period. There shouldn't be an issue of whether they signed, whether they agreed that they wouldn't develop nuclear weapons and so we are not going to use nuclear weapons.

I mean, first off, nobody is for using nuclear weapons. I mean, there is no advocacy group that says we need to be using nuclear weapons or no one, certainly—from a human value statement, the President's statement of a world

without nuclear weapons is something that everyone would want to achieve.

Mr. AKIN. Sure.

Mr. TURNER. It's the reality, though, of the issue of defending our Nation. And here this President has said, I won't take anything off the table. I will always do what's necessary to defend the United States. Period.

That was last May. And then now, with the administration's nuclear posture review, he is saying, but I am going to, in advance, tell you that if you are in compliance with the NPT, if you attack this Nation, if you attack the United States, even if you attack the United States with chemical or biological weapons, I am going to take off the table the nuclear weapons that are in my arsenal, even if it's necessary to protect the United States.

Now, they go on to say, the administration says, well, we have overwhelming conventional forces and so that will make a bit of a difference. We don't really need our nuclear weapons. But they say they are doing this to try to encourage others to not develop nuclear weapons. Again, there is no historical basis for it. As we have reduced our stockpiles and Russia has reduced their stockpiles, other nations have continued to seek nuclear weapons.

But the other issue is, what is the true message then to those other nations? Well, we have overwhelming conventional force. They don't have overwhelming conventional force. Certainly, developing nuclear weapons is an equalizer that they can look to.

I think it's disingenuous to say that we are not going to use our nuclear weapons, but we might change our mind, but at the same time we want you not to use them. But it's in that framework of the hypothetical of saying that this, this country, if it's attacked, won't defend itself to the full extent when it might be necessary.

Mr. AKIN. Okay, so it seems to me we have got a couple of different issues here that you brought up. The first question is, does it even make sense for us to do the "what if" question? If somebody does this, this, and this, well, we are not going to do that. What is that bias, you know, and is that really helpful? And particularly when these things tend to be nuanced the way they are phrased, it adds a lot of haze and uncertainty. But certainly answering that "what if" question probably doesn't make us a more secure country.

But let's go to what I think is your second point.

Mr. TURNER. Let me go back to that for a second. You said the administration is actually calling this an assurance policy, that they are providing assurances. But usually I think and the American people think of the word "assurance" being something you give your friends and allies. And, in this instance, this is an assurance that the administration is giving to a nation that would be an attacker to our Nation, someone who is attacking us.

That's not the circumstance of what I would think of assurance.

Mr. AKIN. Assurance to our enemies.

But the second thing was the idea that somehow we are going to move toward this world without nukes, and the way we are going to do it is to reduce not only our number of nuclear weapons but reduce our development or deployment of nuclear weapons. I mean, it sounds so good on the surface, but let's just take this apart a little bit.

Let's just say, you have got America now. We have a bunch of nuclear weapons, and we just say, hey, this is such a great idea. We are just going to get rid of all our nukes, and we are not going to develop any. Or we are going to get rid of a certain percentage of them, and we are not going to develop any new ones, which is what this treaty is supposed to do.

My question is, how is this going to reduce the number of nuclear weapons in the world?

First of all, think about there are 35 or more nations that depend on us to create this nuclear umbrella of protection. So they are not developing their own nukes because they know that the U.S. is going to protect them. So what are they going to do logically if that umbrella of protection of the U.S. having this overwhelming nuclear force, if we take that down, if you are one of those 35 nations, what are you going to be thinking?

Mr. TURNER. It's a very good point. Because those nations that depend upon us, who have not developed nuclear weapons, who believe that they are part of our nuclear umbrella, that they believe that we extend, in cooperative understanding, our deterrents for their benefit. If that deterrence is removed, then, of course, there is the prospect that these additional nations will feel the need to develop their own weapons.

Mr. AKIN. So we are reducing weapons, but these other nations are going to want to increase, so that doesn't really compute with the logic of this thing.

Now let's go to the next class of nations, third-world nations, maybe some of them that are more likely to be our opponents, adversaries, or troublemakers. Now we tell them we are going to reduce our number of nukes and our development of new things. What is their logical response to that? Well, let's see, they say, well, we could never whip them in conventional forces, so we have got to find some other way.

Mr. TURNER. Exactly.

Mr. AKIN. So what are they going to do?

Mr. TURNER. I think it's also a false accomplishment. When the administration promotes this statement of a world without nuclear weapons, again, it's a human-value statement that I think everyone would wish to be true. But in translating it then to a to-do list or a policy from the United States, going from a human-value statement to an actual to-do list and policy without a change that has occurred in the

world dynamics, that's where we get dangerous for the United States.

Here is the false accomplishment. This President will talk about his accomplishment of limiting the role and the number of U.S. nuclear weapons. I think what people are interested in is this President limiting the nuclear weapons risk that we are facing as a Nation.

Mr. AKIN. But shouldn't the focus be on U.S. security? Shouldn't that be the question? And are we going the wrong way?

Mr. TURNER. We will have to see what comes out of the conference that the President has held. He was identifying the increase, that threat that we have for nuclear terrorism and nuclear proliferation issues. And certainly those are the correct issues for him to be raising at this point, and we certainly wish him great success in accomplishing some visible reduction in the threat to the United States, besides just the visible reduction in the role and the number of U.S. deterrents.

Mr. AKIN. So the bottom line should be about U.S. security. I mean, that's what we should be focused on. Yet how does it get us more security if we reduce our nuclear capabilities and other nations than become encouraged to increase theirs?

Mr. TURNER. Absolutely.

Mr. AKIN. So there is a fundamental disconnect in the logic here somewhere. Understand that it's all for glorious and super ends and supposed to be a good deal and all, but how does it specifically help us and how does it increase U.S. security? That is not clear at all.

The idea of us reducing capabilities seems to be completely counterproductive. Because it's going to encourage either third-world adversaries to take advantage of our vulnerability that we created voluntarily on ourselves, self-inflicted wounds, or the people who are our friends are going to develop additional nuclear capabilities to protect themselves. So I don't see how this thing works.

Mr. TURNER. Congressman, you had also mentioned the the point of START and the issue of missile defense. I think one issue that people are concerned about that relates directly to this issue is any limitation on the United States' ability to defend itself in deploying what is a provable, workable technology in missile defense. The START treaty has in its preamble or recognition between the United States and Russia the correlation between defensive and strategic weapons.

The Russians have stepped forward and said that this language, they believe, was essential in order to get their approval for START, because they want the United States' missile defense system to be counted against the issue of our nuclear deterrent—their nuclear deterrent.

They haven't gone as far as to say that they might withdraw from START, depending on the extent to

which we deploy a missile defense system. Well, what's really concerning is that the administration, at this same time that they are agreeing to and pursuing the START, which has been signed, with language that ties missile defense to our nuclear deterrent, the administration is pursuing for Europe a missile defense system.

Now, it's unclear whether the President's own plan for a missile defense system already violates the Russians' concern under START. We may be in a situation where the President is pursuing a policy that will already cause the relationship with Russia start to be a terminal relationship. In the hearing today, I asked Secretary Tauscher, where are we with the Russians on this issue?

The administration already knows what they want to do with missile defense. It is certainly something knowable by the Russians at this point. The Russians are saying they will withdraw if the missile defense is pursued. My concern is that the administration will get down the road, where they will have supported START, received ratification of START, be pursuing a missile defense system that Russia objects to and that it might weaken this administration's resolve for deploying that system.

Mr. AKIN. The history of missile defense goes back quite a ways. It goes back to Ronald Reagan, who proposed the whole idea of missile defense; and people, liberals, tried to make fun of it. They said it was Star Wars, and it will never work, and it will destabilize relations between nuclear armed countries like us and the Soviet Union.

Ronald Reagan said, no, I don't think so. He said, we have a responsibility to defend our citizens, and we need to build a missile defense.

Of course, we, all the way through from the time of Reagan to when I came here in 2001, we had really not done it. President Bush went to the Russians, went to the Europeans and said, sorry, guys, I am going to let you know, here is your 6-months' notice. We are going to start developing missile defense.

And, of course, the Democrats had been opposed to it, but they were in the minority, and we passed it when we were on the Armed Services Committee to do missile defense. And it wasn't missile defense against China or Russia, but it was missile defense against these rogue nations like Iran and North Korea. So we built it. In spite of the fact people said you couldn't do it, we did it. Test after test, we did it, and we made it work, and we built missile defense. Then they made a treaty with Poland and the Czech Republic, saying we are going to deploy missile defense not just in Alaska but in Poland and the Czech Republic.

Thank you very much, Congressman TURNER from Ohio. I really appreciate your leadership on the whole area of national security. You have done a great job.

I am joined also by my good friend, ROB BISHOP from Utah.

But let's just get on this missile defense a little bit. So we built it, and we built a number of missile defense silos in Alaska. It was called a ground-based system, and it shoots a missile that's tremendously large, about 20-some tons of missile. It goes very high, very fast, and it has the capability of stopping intercontinental ballistic missiles.

Many of the trajectory of those go past Alaska where these missiles can do a good job of stopping the enemy. Now these same missiles were going to be put into Poland, into the Czech Republic. One was a radar site. One was an actual missile site. And the Obama administration decided to cut the ground out from behind our allies. They had made significant political—took a lot of heat from their own citizenry, got permission, got the support of their citizens to build these systems to protect Western Europe, particularly from Iranian ballistic missiles.

And the administration decides on very little notice, literally on the day where the Polish were observing the time that the Russians had come into Poland, and just cut the ground out from under them and said we are not going to do that. What are they going to replace them with? Oh, they said, we are going to use a ballistic defense system based on our ballistic missile destroyers.

The only trouble is, it was based on a missile that hasn't been developed yet, that doesn't work yet, and it's a 2-ton as opposed to a 20-ton missile, and it's a missile that we don't have. So now we are supposed to have these destroyers floating around the Mediterranean providing missile defense for Europe, and these destroyers don't even have the right kind of missile on them to stop a ballistic or intercontinental ballistic missile. The bigger the missile, the bigger the anti-missile that you have to have to fight it.

So the whole point of this was here you have North Korea. They fire these different missiles. The current range of the larger North Korean missiles is 3- to 6,000 miles. That puts Alaska in the sights and other potential targets from North Korea.

Likewise, we have Iran potentially launching, and you can see these different distances, depending on how much power the Iranian missile has, how many stages and how far it can go, starts to move into targeting Western Europe. This is what we were protecting against with the missile sites in the Czech Republic and Poland, which this administration has cancelled.

They have also cancelled a number of other aspects of missile defense which we will get into, one that was tremendously successfully tested just in the last few months. It's this aircraft here with this funny-looking nose, looks like a cyclops, and this is a very powerful, actually, three lasers in one. That was tested successfully to knock down

missiles; and, of course, to shoot a laser at a missile isn't that expensive.

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You can get a lot of shots out of a laser and it goes very fast. It is a very effective way to stop missiles on the launchpad. So that's another thing that this administration decided that they were not going to fund. These treaties are talking about continuing that trend to reduce our investment in missile defense, and that is very troubling indeed.

My good friend Congressman BISHOP from Utah knows quite a bit about the specific missiles that do this, and I would like to call on your expertise to help us with this subject, please.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Well, I appreciate my good friend from Missouri bringing this issue up to us again, especially now that we're talking about missiles.

One of the things President Reagan once said is: Was the United States ever involved in a war because we were too strong? The answer is no. But what we're also talking about here is sometimes—as I was an old school teacher—when we're young and naive, we tend to overlook details, and those details could be devastating. For example, Napoleon lost the Battle of Waterloo not because he was outmaneuvered at Waterloo. He was not. He lost it because they overlooked a detail. They didn't bring a bag of nails. At that time, when you overtook the enemy artillery, you would dismantle it by driving a nail through the firing mechanism so it would be useless.

When Napoleon overran the British artillery, they didn't bring any nails with them. Consequently, the British recaptured that artillery and it wreaked havoc on Napoleon's forces. And every book of what would have happened always has a chapter of what would have happened if they had actually brought the nails.

Mr. AKIN. A bag of nails. Now, I appreciate having a history professor here. It's just a little detail, but it was an important and sort of a tide-turning detail that was not considered.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Now, let me turn that analogy slightly into the situation we are in right now, because I think this administration is missing a lot of bags of nails that are out there. One in particular deals with our missile program in the future if, indeed, the direction we're going is not the right direction and we want to change that.

You and I were here with several other Members last year a long time talking about our missile defense system, because last year we cut the potential of a mobile missile defense system, KEI. We stopped the ground-based missile defense system that we had, and we were complaining that that was probably an inopportune time.

One of the nails that we are now missing is what happens if we don't look at the unintended consequences of

our actions. I'm going to say how this thing kind of turns together, and sometimes I think this administration is not realizing how everything in government relates.

Last year, when we stopped the ground-based missiles and stopped the KEI, among other things that we did, we put the industrial base in disarray. Now I'm coming back to the old industrial base argument because I'm using it again and again. This year, NASA, space exploration, which you think has nothing to do with defense, but space exploration is trying to take this product, the Ares rocket, which was labeled our best innovation of last year, and they want to cancel the production.

Now, that ties together as a bag of nails simply because the people who work in the companies that produce this rocket also produce the missiles. So the rockets that are built to send a guy to the moon are built by the same kinds of people who build the rockets to stop a North Korean or Iranian or some other rogue missile from coming into this country. And if we devastate the industrial base, we don't have the capacity to change our projection and fix this problem if, indeed, it takes place, and we increase the cost to the defense of this country significantly because of it. Let me give you one example.

Just the oxidizer that starts the propulsion concept in our motors, that, because of the cuts last year to our missile system, has gone from \$5 to \$12 a pound. It's a fixed cost to produce this stuff, and we use it by the ton. And when you cut down the amount you use, the company then has to make a profit, so they charge more per unit. So we've gone from \$5 to \$12.

If, indeed, you stop the Ares 1 program in our space program, who uses this stuff significantly, that cost will either double or triple or be even more. So it means to produce the same motors we need to just maintain where we are, we are going to spend hundreds of millions of dollars—maybe running into the billions of dollars—without having done anything to improve our status. We will spend more money. We will not have a better product, and if we want to turn around and change that, we don't have the industrial base yet. If we fire all those people who are making these kinds of rockets, we don't have anywhere to turn for our own defense system.

The Department of Defense has recognized that. The Navy has said that they are fearful that the increased cost for them could be 10 to 20 percent. They don't know where the increase can stand if, indeed, we go along and cancel our space program.

Mr. AKIN. So let me just recap what you're saying.

If you don't have the industrial base to produce the kinds of missiles that we need for missile defense, the way that that can work is, one, you're not going to have the rocket scientists. In other words, a rocket scientist is a

rocket scientist. You've got to have some of them around if you want to make rockets. Those people are being employed currently for this particular solid rocket that is noted more for space exploration than it is for defense, but it's the same technology.

So, first of all, your industrial base is eroded by the fact that you can't keep those engineers around and they don't have anything to work on, so they go do something else. The second thing is, because you don't have the production facilities, now the cost of materials goes up.

And it goes beyond that, doesn't it? You don't just build one of these things in thin air. You've got to have a building to build it in. You've got to have the machines that are used to package the fuel and the design of how the pressure is contained, and how you control burn rate and the direction—all kinds of things that go into building a rocket; right?

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Yes. And our ICBMs, for example, need to stay there until the year 2030. That's their planned life. But what happens if you do one of those solid rocket motors and you pull it out to do the inspection and there is a problem with it? Where are the experts to go in and find out what went wrong, and how do you solve that problem in the future? Where are the niche suppliers who are no longer in the market? This is one of those things.

So I'm talking about nails for the future of our missile defense system that are being lost because we simply didn't think ahead—or this administration didn't think ahead.

DOD sent us a report last year that said if you slowed down Constellation, it would have a significant negative impact. Secretary for Acquisitions in the Department of Defense said that this industrial base is not our birthright. If we lose this industrial base, we may never get it back. And all of them are saying—General Keller said the same thing, that he is not comfortable with the direction we're going because the cost overruns that will come to the defense system simply means, obviously, NASA and Department of Defense did not talk one with another.

The Augustine Commission report that was supposedly giving a report on what we would do with our space in the future said, This is a problem. The industrial base situation is a significant problem if, indeed, you stop the Constellation program. You need to work that ahead. NASA did not do it. They either chose to ignore it or they didn't study the report very closely. Those are the nails we have.

So you have those pictures up there of what we are going to do with North Korean potential missiles that were in striking distance of the United States; Iranian missiles that could come within striking distance in the future but are definitely within striking distance of Europe now. And what is even more terrifying is if one of those countries—

and I don't think it would be beyond the realm of possibility—were to give their devices to some rogue player, not necessarily another nation, but some rogue player, and obviously have them aimed at the United States, and we, because we decided not to think through situations and think ahead of what we're doing, for either naivete, being new, or simply ideological reasons, we have lost the nails to make sure that we continue to defend this particular country.

Mr. AKIN. Well, the thing that strikes me about this whole situation is, first of all, if you want to deal with the nuclear proliferation thing, that's one thing, but to connect it to missile defense seems to be the height of stupidity, just really an irrational decision. And to walk away from the fundamental principle that the job of the Federal Government more than anything else should be the defense of this country, the security of the citizens who pay for that defense, and to give that idea up for the old concept of mutually assured destruction, just makes no sense whatsoever.

We were on the right track to develop missile defense. The people that said we couldn't do it were all proven wrong. We are doing it. We not only hit a missile with a missile, we hit a spot on a missile with a missile, metal-on-metal collisions. And not only have we been able to do that and shown that we have the technology to do that, but now what we're talking about doing is even going beyond that to the airborne laser system, which just this last year, firing its last shots before it was going to be shelved, it was called by the Democrats a big science experiment—I suppose that's a pejorative term saying we don't think much of it—and yet this aircraft flying off the west coast engaged two targets.

One was a liquid rocket motor missile. It was launched from some considerable miles away, in excess of 100 miles, I believe, and this airplane locked onto the missile with its—it has two small lasers. The first is just to find where the missile is, and it's putting that first laser on the missile. The second laser checks the optics of the atmosphere. The third laser, which is tremendously powerful, fires a beam, and it just destroyed that liquid fuel missile in air. Then it turns around and does the same thing to a solid rocket missile, and yet this is another thing that the administration is scrapping.

And the question is, if we're interested in U.S. national security, why in the world do we want to bow down to the Russians? Ronald Reagan was there at Reykjavik, and there was a great big idea that they were going to have this big treaty. Reagan walked away from it. He said to the Soviets, he said, Look, I'm not going to agree to that because I'm going to protect my people with missile defense. And here we are going back in history, and now we're going to stop this missile defense. And what you're talking about, Congress-

man, is a part of one of the supplier base that has to be there to do missile defense. Why are we going to dismantle that? It just doesn't make sense.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. I agree totally with the gentleman from Missouri, who is such a leader on the Armed Services Committee. Part of the problem, nuclear soft power notwithstanding, we are talking about the overall defense of this country, and in area after area we tend to be weakening our position.

I agree with the gentleman that we should not have scaled back in our laser technology. I agree definitely that last year we made a mistake when we cut the kinetic energy intercourse program, those mobile rockets aimed to stop missiles coming at us. I agree that we made a mistake when we limited the number of ground-based missiles that we had, ready to go. The silos ready to be filled, we just simply stopped it, artificially, arbitrarily, and that puts us in a weaker situation.

I am also concerned that when you add to what they're talking about doing about on the Constellation program for NASA, it's not just about the manned space flights. It's also the impact that has on the industrial base that prohibits us from ever changing course in any of these other particular areas. It is all part and parcel with what I think is perhaps a very cavalier approach to the defense of this country that time after time after time overlooks the details and how those details interact and puts us at a more vulnerable situation.

Once again, no one will ever attack us because we are too strong. They could attack us because we have failed to bring a bag of nails into battle with us.

Mr. AKIN. Well, I really appreciate your perspective, gentleman, and particularly the little historic lesson of the bag of nails.

It seems to me sometimes our leadership is getting so grandiose and it's saying what we're going to do is provide a world without nuclear weapons. You know, it seems to me that what they probably should do is invest in a time machine and go back in history if they want a world without nuclear weapons, because we can get rid of all of our nukes.

We can open the kimono and let people beat us up, and that's not going to change the fact that there are going to be nations out there that are going to proliferate. Now, that doesn't mean we need to encourage them. We need to try and stop them. But we're not going to stop them by being weak and selling our own national security down the river, and that is what's going on here.

In an effort to apparently be a grandiose peacemaker, we're thinking you're going to create peace out of weakness. We have found that that is not a good formula, and particularly, to betray the security of the American people without looking at the details, as you're saying, really does not make sense.

□ 1830

Now, there is another aspect—and you know something about history. I recall all of these treaties we made with the former Soviet Union, and when the Soviet Union collapsed, we got information about what happened on those treaties. What we found out was that the Soviet Union was cheating like mad on every single one of those treaties. They said, We're not going to build any biological weapons. Yet they've got a biological weapons laboratory going in Russia.

We were over here, and I was a brand new guy in the U.S. Congress just a few years ago, and we were interviewing one of the top scientists who worked in the biological weapons laboratory, one which the Soviet Union had said, We're not going to do that. We find out 15, 20 years later that the Soviet Union has got these ballistic missiles loaded with the smallpox virus that they're going to shoot at us, and we haven't got the foggiest idea that they cheated like mad, have a biological weapons laboratory, and are going to pepper us with smallpox, which we have a limited amount of vaccine to protect against.

So here we are again, learning so much from history that we're going to make another deal with the Russians and assume they're not going to cheat on it. I guess my question is: How do we know that they're not going to cheat? What are we getting out of this deal?

Do you remember some of the history of those treaties, gentleman?

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. I don't have the expertise right here to go through some of the details. Obviously, you're ahead of me on those particular ones; but it still goes back to the basic approach that, even if the Russians are legitimate in these treaties and even if they live up to them, we live in a world where it is not just necessarily the Russians for whom we have to be prepared and that, even if we make a treaty with the Russians, the North Koreans and the Iranians are not necessarily going to be cowed by us.

Mr. AKIN. They're not playing by the same rules anyway.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. They could easily transport some of their stuff to nations closer to us, which makes it even more deadly for us.

So what we have to do is make sure that, when we look at what we are doing vis-a-vis the Russians, we have to put it in the context of: Are we able to defend ourselves against all sorts of rogue players who are out there, not just the Russians or the Chinese? That's why the decisions we made this year, based on the decisions we made last year, I think, put us in a weaker position to say, yes, we could defend ourselves against the rogue nations as well.

Mr. AKIN. You know, I thought it was on the front page of the paper today, the idea that scud missiles had been given, I think it was, from Iran to Hezbollah or something like that.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. From Syria to Hezbollah.

Mr. AKIN. From Syria to Hezbollah, scud missiles.

So there was a weapons transfer to a group that is a pretty known terrorist group. They're not all part of this deal. So even if you could trust Russia, which I don't and which we have no historic reason to trust, what happens to the other nations when you make these deals, especially when you're not going to develop more missile defense?

There is another thing we're not supposed to develop either—and I really appreciate my good friend from Utah for joining us, Congressman BISHOP. You have provided really good detail, particularly on that industrial base aspect. Thanks for the “bag of nails” explanation.

You know, with regard to details, I do remember there was something about the German tank corps being unstoppable except for there was some problem. They didn't have the right type of spare fuel tank or something, and it was a big problem because they hadn't gotten the right kind of gas can to go along with their tanks. It was some small detail.

I yield.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. As we move forward with this proposed treaty, but also as we look to the overall military budget, which, I think, is what you're talking about as well and especially our missile defense, let us make sure that we have not left some detail uncovered. I hope that, in the future, they're not writing those “what would have been” books about the United States because we simply failed to be prepared and because we failed to look at the details of our situation.

So I appreciate the gentleman for bringing this issue to the floor. It is a significant issue, and it's one that this Nation should take seriously—looking at how we're dealing in the future not just with our nuclear posture but also with our missile defense posture. Indeed, if we're going to have to spend almost billions of dollars to maintain, that's money that comes out of the combat veteran and the combat ground forces that we have. That also is unacceptable.

So I appreciate being allowed to participate with you for a short period of time.

Mr. AKIN. Well, I very much appreciate your perspective and the clarity with which you make your points.

The Congress is a richer place because of Congressman BISHOP and his service to us.

We are joined by another good friend who is probably one of the foremost authorities on missile defense, my good friend from Arizona, TRENT FRANKS.

Before we jump into that, I thought I might just give a couple of points to recap and to focus our discussion here this evening. We are talking about two different things that have been going on in the news.

The first is the question of the Nuclear Posture Review, or the NPR,

which is an overall document released by the U.S. Government, talking about what we're doing with nuclear kinds of things. It contains a whole series of false assumptions, in my opinion. While it sounds good on the surface, the question is: How does it really work? Also, there is the New START Treaty, which the President has been negotiating with the Russians, and that is along the same lines as the Nuclear Posture Review. My concerns are pretty much listed in five points.

The first point is that somehow we are supposed to create a world without nukes, and the way we're going to do that is to reduce America's stockpile of nuclear weapons, not develop anything new, and cut back on missile defense. So we're going to reduce our own national defenses, and somehow that is supposed to help make other people do the same thing. My question is: Does it really do that?

The nations that depend on us will say, Oh, we can't count on them for a nuclear umbrella.

They're liable to increase.

Then the Third World country that may decide it wants to cause us a lot of trouble or to blackmail us says, Hey, the way we can do that is the U.S. is disengaged. We need to jump in and really develop our nukes.

So how do we get to this “wonderful world” without nukes?

The second point is: How much do you trust Russia? Even if you do, how about all of the other countries?

The third point is: Why do we connect missile defense to the nuclear posture? Missile defense is simply a way of making our Nation more secure. Why would we freeze that?

The fourth point is: Why would we want to limit further nuclear development? We'll get on to that in a minute with my good friend from Arizona.

Then the last question is: Why are we going to do what Ronald Reagan said you should never do, which is to discuss what-ifs? I think if we're attacked by a foreign nation and it does us harm, it doesn't need to know exactly what we're going to do. Everything should be on the table if you endanger U.S. citizens. Yet this treaty is going to say, Well, if you do this, we won't do this, this and this.

Why do we want to try and spell that out?

So those are five concerns that I want to make sure that we discuss today, and I want to recognize my good friend from Arizona, Congressman FRANKS.

Mr. FRANKS of Arizona. Well, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

You know, I've been trying to follow some of the conversation here, and I think that everything you've said has a profound significance, and I appreciate it.

I know this is a general discussion about missile defense, about our nuclear posture and about the concerns that we have related to Iran. The recent summit that was here in Wash-

ington essentially, or ostensibly, was about trying to keep nuclear weapons out of the hands of terrorists. Yet the reality is that this ominous intersection of jihadist terrorism and nuclear proliferation has been inexorably and relentlessly rolling toward America and the free world for decades, and it is now a menace that is almost upon us. I believe that it represents the gravest short-term threat to peace and security of the entire human family in the world today; and I believe that the Islamic Republic of Iran, due to the jihadist ideology of its leaders, represents a particularly significant danger to America and her allies.

President Ahmadinejad was speaking to the whole world when he said that, You, for your part, if you would like to have good relations with the Iranian nation in the future, recognize the Iranian nation's greatness, and bow down before the greatness of the Iranian nation and surrender. If you don't accept to do this, the Iranian nation will later force you to surrender and bow down.

Now, that makes me a little nervous given the fact that Iran has recently begun to enrich uranium really beyond 20 percent now, which is four times the necessary enrichment percentage for peaceful purposes, and it puts them at about 90 percent of the way there for being able to have fissile material for nuclear weapons.

So I just have to say it's a difficult thing, especially difficult for me in some ways, because I stood at that podium there 5 years ago, and I called upon the country to refer Iran to the Security Council. The guess is, at that time, they had probably less than 164 centrifuges, and now they have 8,000. Of course, as my good friend from Missouri knows, 3,000 is the commonly accepted figure for a nuclear enrichment program that can be used as a platform for a full-scale industrial program capable of churning out dozens of nuclear warheads per year.

I guess I'll yield back here, but I would say this: what we are really facing with Iran is a jihadist nation with leaders who threaten the whole world, who threaten the peace of Israel, who threaten to wipe them out. It is now developing an industrial base to make dozens of nuclear warheads in the future.

I know people say, Well, that's over a year away or 2 years away or 3 years away. Well, let's pretend for a moment that that's correct. I'm not sure that having something that will change the world that dramatically and then all of humanity that significantly which is only 2 or 3 years away is cause for celebration. It's especially concerning when you consider the fact that, throughout history, especially in the case of, say, like North Korea, our timetables have always been wrong. We've always thought, well, it was going to take them a lot longer than it did. Anyway, at this point, I would just suggest to you that, I think, this is a profoundly significant issue.

I yield back to my friend, the gentleman from Missouri.

Mr. AKIN. Well, I thank you, gentleman.

I'd like to just pick up on a couple of the themes that you've mentioned. You've used this phrase frequently. I don't know if you coined it, but I think of it as something that you authored. I guess you could almost think of it in terms of planets and astronomy, which is, when you get a juxtaposition of two things, the first thing you're talking about is the development of nuclear weapons, and the second thing is that it's in the hands of a terrorist state.

We already have nuclear weapons. We have terrorist states, but we haven't seen the eclipse of when those two things come together. You're talking about that as being a very destabilizing situation in the world, a situation that threatens the lives of at least thousands, perhaps many millions, of people; and it is a nation that has a history of essentially blackmail. So when you put that kind of combination together that you're talking about, we're talking about a very significant international kind of crisis that we have to be prepared for.

Now, they also have to be able to deliver that weapons system. That's another thing that you're really an expert on, which is that ballistic missile defense is also coming in. There are people who say you can just put this stuff in a suitcase and smuggle it into town. So who cares about ballistic missiles or ballistic missile defense? Yet, as you know, these nuclear weapons have to be delivered in some way, and there are different ways to deliver them.

One of them, of course, is to put them way up in the atmosphere, and they go off and take out all of your communications. Another one, of course, is to bring them over a city where they go off and they kill many more people than if they were sitting on the ground. So there are combinations of those things, and those are all things that you have studied and have taken a look at, and all of them are bad medicine.

What concerns me particularly is the reckless course of this administration as it's making these grandiose kinds of "we're going to make the world a safer place" ideas by disarming and by saying, "We're not going to be developing missile defense and by saying, 'We're not going to develop any new use of nuclear things.'"

One thing we've not yet talked about on the floor—and you can jump in on this if you'd like—is that we've got North Korea and Iran, both of which are pretty good at digging tunnels. They take their capacities and put them way underground. You can drop conventional bombs on them, and nothing happens because they're down in the Earth that far. The only way to stop that is probably with some new type of device called a nuclear Earth penetrator where you put a nuclear de-

vice, a small one, on a bomb that goes way down in the Earth, and it explodes. Now, anything radioactive stays down in the Earth, but it creates enough concussion that it basically shakes those tunnels and collapses those infrastructures.

That is an example of where we might want to develop a new nuclear device because of a problem that we have, and yet we wouldn't be able to do that with this negotiation. So are you concerned about that? Have you given that some thought?

Mr. FRANKS of Arizona. Well, certainly, I am, and I thank the gentleman for yielding.

The RNEP, or robust nuclear Earth penetrator, which you mentioned, was something that many of us advocated for in the past because we wanted to make sure that we could hold assets like Natanz or the facility at Qum in Iran. We wanted to be able to be sure that we could hold that at risk so that they didn't think that they could build nuclear weapons without any danger to them. This is a particularly significant situation, so I couldn't agree with you more.

Of course, you mentioned missile defense. You're talking about the delivery mechanisms as far as where the bomb goes off. That's a very, very important point; but there is another one, which is the timing. That's being able to deliver something realtime, in other words, on demand. See, that's what gives them a strategic capability, which is if they can say, "Okay, your city—New York, or whatever it might be—is 30 minutes from our ICBM capability, and it's always aimed at us."

□ 1845

See, if we have nuclear missile defense capability, then it is no longer as much of a strategic threat and it devalues that program pretty profoundly. And when a country like Iran, that is facing great dangers from the outside world anyway if they become nuclear armed like Israel or others, then perhaps that becomes a part of their calculus, and perhaps it keeps them from moving forward with their nuclear power program in the first place.

Unfortunately, this administration, and you know, I just got to tell you, this administration cancelled our efforts in Europe to be able to have the capability to interdict missiles coming from Iran, whether it was going to be to protect our forward deployed troops, or to be able to protect Europe, and certainly if they gain the ICBM capability, to protect the United States. And it is astonishing to me that we did that, because we have no system that can really be built in time to go into their calculus in the meantime.

So while some of the greatest security threats in a generation are coming up on our generation, the Obama administration seems to be busy insulting our friends and emboldening our enemies. And all the while taxing and borrowing and spending our economy

into a place of such vulnerability that our capacity to respond to these threats in the future will be demonstrably diminished. And when it comes to the growing incontrovertible danger of a nuclear-armed Iran, I would just tell my good friend that this Obama administration has been asleep at the wheel.

Mr. AKIN. That is really, really a frightening prospect. The thing that I find interesting about this, what we are doing is we are reducing our defense spending. Here is a chart of the budget that would reduce our national defense spending. These are numbers that were released by the Obama administration. This is the 45-year average at 5.3 percent. And what you can see is it is being reduced here.

Now, the thing that is amazing, this wouldn't be so troubling to me if it weren't for the fact if you took a look at what rate we are spending money. Bush's worst spending year was 2008 under the Pelosi Congress here. 2008. And that was about \$450 billion he spent that we didn't have, which put us, that is about 3.2 percent of gross domestic product. This last year, 2009, instead of being \$450 billion, it was \$1.4 trillion in spending that we didn't have. That was more than a three times increase over Bush's worst spending. And that goes up to 9.9 percent of GDP, which is the highest level since World War II.

So we are spending money that we don't have at an incredible rate. Take a look at what is happening to defense here. This is a wrongheaded set of priorities and very troubling. I have my good friend from Texas, Congressman GOHMERT, who is joining us. I know that you have taken a look at a number of these different issues and questions. Please jump in and point out your own perspective.

Mr. GOHMERT. Well, we do have the danger of Iran about to go nuclear at the same time, as you all have pointed out, that our President cancelled what took so long and took such great effort by so many, including our friends in Poland, to establish this missile defense that was going to be built. That got cancelled. That was going to help protect us. That was going to help protect our allies.

I just want to read here some of the comments that have been made. President Barack Obama said on November 7, 2008, "Let me repeat what I stated during the course of the campaign. Iran's development of a nuclear weapon, I believe, is unacceptable." He said on October 20, 2009, that the bond between the United States and Israel is much more than a strategic alliance.

And then you look at what Ahmadinejad has said. He said in 2005, quote, "God willing, with the force of God behind it, we shall soon experience a world without the United States and Zionism." He also said that Israel was to be wiped off the map. He said, "Like it or not, Israel is heading toward annihilation." He also said, "Today, the

time for the fall of the satanic power of the United States has come, and the countdown to annihilation of the emperor of power and wealth has started." It has started. And we are disarming unilaterally while Iran—we are talking about maybe some sanctions, like maybe that will work as well as it did against Iraq? It didn't work because people cheated.

Russia and China have said, hey, we're making a lot of money selling to these folks right now. We're not sure we're getting on board with this. And all the while those centrifuges are just a spinnin'. They are spinnin' while we're all here talking. And we're coming closer to the day when Ahmadinejad will be able to try to keep his promise, all while we are disarming. It makes no sense. We took an oath to provide for the common defense. It is high time we did that.

Mr. AKIN. I thank the gentleman for joining us. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I look forward to seeing you next Wednesday.

RESIGNATION AS MEMBER OF COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET, AND COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. TEAGUE) laid before the House the following resignation as a member of the Committee on Agriculture, Committee on the Budget, and Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, March 25, 2010.

Hon. NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker of the House,
The Capitol, Washington, DC.

DEAR MADAM SPEAKER: Due to my recent appointment to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, I hereby announce my resignation from the Committee on Agriculture; Committee on the Budget; and the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

Sincerely,

ROBERT E. LATTA,
Member of Congress.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the resignation is accepted. There was no objection.

COMMEMORATING THE POLISH NATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Ms. KAPTUR. I thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank my colleagues who are joining us this evening, including Congressman JOE DONNELLY of Indiana, as we begin this special order commemorating the Polish Nation during its days of deepest mourning and the magnificent people of that country.

As we speak here tonight in this hour, in my home district of Toledo, Ohio, the Polish community has gath-

ered for a memorial mass that began at St. Adalbert's Catholic Church at 6:30 p.m. They and we here tonight are united in solidarity with our Polish brothers and sisters halfway around the world.

The Americans gathered tonight here in Congress, and in my home community, and the 9 million Americans of Polish descent across our Nation, in places as far flung as Chicago, Detroit, New York, Toledo, Las Vegas, in places like Pittsburgh and Philadelphia, and indeed in Colorado and Texas, from coast to coast Americans are united in our mourning and in the encouragement that we wish to share with the people of Poland in these dark hours.

Today the House passed unanimously House Resolution 1246, originally introduced by Congresswoman KATHY DAHLKEMPER of Erie, Pennsylvania, another community with thousands of Polish Americans. And for that passage, the ambassador from Poland, Ambassador Robert Kupiecki, sat in the gallery as each vote ticked off. And it passed overwhelmingly, with over 400 votes. That was an exceptionally emotional moment for me, as we as a Nation mourn the death and terrible loss of life that the Nation of Poland is bearing.

The resolution expresses its deepest sympathies to the people of Poland and the families of those who perished for their profound loss. The resolution expressed strong and continued solidarity with the people of Poland and all persons of Polish descent, and expressed unwavering support for the Polish Government as it works to overcome the loss of many of its key officials. And we know that Poland will prevail.

It is important to place on the record also that the plane that crashed in the Katyn Forest, an area that embraces the collective tragedy of Poland's precious leaders. In the most morbid of ironies, the doomed plane was flying to Russia to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the Katyn massacre, when more than 22,000 Polish officers, intellectuals, leaders from all walks of life were summarily murdered at the hands of Joseph Stalin and the Soviet Army in and around Katyn Forest during World War II. Their bodies were buried and the truth hidden for seven decades. That is the truth of their slaughter. That history still must be made whole.

And I know that on May 5, in a strange twist of fate, at the Library of Congress, with the help of the Kosciuszko Foundation, there had been planned a special all-day seminar, which will continue, on the Katyn massacre. I think that it will be even more well attended than was originally anticipated. We thank the Library of Congress, its director, James Billington, and the Kosciuszko Foundation from New York for their presence and their leadership in this effort.

Before I turn to my colleagues who are on the floor tonight, let me just read a brief poem called "Buttons" by Zbigniew Herbert. What it talks about

is the original Katyn massacre and how little is known about it in the outside world, and what a responsibility we have to document what happened there. The poem is brief, but it reads as follows:

They come from depths upon the surface

The only tribute on their graves.

They are attesting God will count

Extend his mercy upon them.

But how to raise from the dead

If they're a clammy piece of earth.

A bird flew over, a cloud is passing

A leaf is dropping, a mallow grows

Heavens above are filled with silence

The Katyn Forest smokes with fog.

Only the buttons did not yield

Powerful voice of silenced choirs,

Only the buttons did not yield

Buttons from coats and uniforms.

I would like to yield to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. DONNELLY) who was proudly here today to cast his vote for the resolution for such time as he may need.

Mr. DONNELLY of Indiana. I want to thank my good friend from Ohio.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in remembrance of the 96 people who died so tragically in the plane crash near Smolensk, Russia, on Saturday, to stand here in solidarity with the Polish people during their time of immense loss. This is a time of sorrow for both our nations. And I extend my deepest sympathy to the Polish people.

The plane crash near Smolensk took the lives of many of Poland's leaders traveling to memorialize the 70th anniversary of the Katyn Forest massacre, as my good friend from Ohio had mentioned, where during World War II the Soviets executed approximately 22,000 Polish servicemembers, public servants, and citizens. Sadly, that site now claims the blood of more great Poles.

Killed on Saturday were President Lech Kaczynski, the First Lady, the governor of Poland's central bank, 12 members of parliament, four generals, many other key leaders, and great Polish citizens such as Anna Walentynowicz, the labor activist whose firing at the Gdansk shipyard helped spark the Solidarity strike.

President Kaczynski was a great leader of Poland and a close, important friend of the United States. The son of Polish freedom fighters, Lech Kaczynski was an active leader within the Solidarity movement for democratic reforms in Poland, which eventually led to free elections on June 4, 1989.

Elected President in 2005, President Kaczynski was a tireless advocate for stronger ties with the west and expanding NATO membership in Eastern Europe. He strengthened the cooperation between Poland and the United States, and his loss will be felt both in Poland and here in America.

Mr. Speaker, during the time of loss for the Polish people, I believe it is especially important that the United States work closely with the people of Poland on issues of mutual importance