

photos. A lot of these were conducted through new media. It underscores the brutality of the Belarusian leadership and the dictator, Lukashenko. I would hope that the international community, especially the European Union and the United States, would place the Belarusian Government on record that they should not hope to be able to join in the opportunities afforded to free and democratic countries when they treat their citizens who are only asking for the right to have their voice heard and the right to choose the representatives of the people.

END HUNGER NOW

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, as we near the end of 2010 and the 111th Congress, I want to take a few minutes to talk about an issue that is critically important to the health and the well-being of our country. It's also an issue that I care deeply about and it's an issue that's rarely discussed. And that issue, Madam Speaker, is hunger. I've said it over and over again, but it bears repeating. Hunger is a political condition. We know how to end hunger in America. We have the resources to do it. What we need is the political will to make it happen.

We've made some important progress over the last few years. We enacted historic improvements in the food stamp program, now called SNAP. WIC, the program that ensures that pregnant mothers and their newborns and infant children have access to nutritious food, has been fully funded. Food banks received the assistance they need to fill their shelves as they worked to put food in the hands of hungry families. We passed the Hunger-Free Communities Act, a law that provides localized grants to combat hunger around the country. The farm bill included historic improvements to antihunger programs—most importantly, indexing SNAP to inflation. The Recovery Act did even more by increasing emergency funds to SNAP beneficiaries, allowing them to buy more food at a time when their incomes were falling because of the economy. Finally, on December 13, President Obama signed the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act into law. This will improve the quality of food served at schools to our Nation's children.

Madam Speaker, I have been honored to serve as the cochair of the House Hunger Caucus, and I want to thank my colleagues on that caucus, Democrat and Republican, for their commitment to this critical issue. I especially want to thank JO ANN EMERSON for her incredible work. But we have much more to do.

The USDA recently released their annual food insecurity, or hunger, statistics. The simple and unfortunate fact is this: Because of the economy, hunger is getting worse in America, not better.

In 2009, the number of hungry Americans increased by 1 million over the previous year. According to the latest data, over 50 million Americans, including 17.2 million children, went hungry at some point in 2009. Madam Speaker, these are the highest numbers ever collected by USDA. And if that weren't bad enough, future SNAP funds—money provided under the Recovery Act—have been raided for other critical programs.

Madam Speaker, I love this institution and I am honored to serve as a Member of Congress, but it is a peculiar place. None of my colleagues, Democrats or Republicans, will tell you that they are pro-hunger. You'll never see a Member of Congress take a bottle out of the mouth of a hungry baby or swipe a can of beans that has been donated to a local food bank, but that's precisely what we will be doing if we choose to balance the budget on the backs of the poor and the hungry in this country.

I want to tackle our deficit as badly as anyone else. And in order to dig ourselves out of this fiscal hole, then all of us will need to sacrifice—not just the poor and not just the middle class. It is simply unacceptable to provide billions in tax relief for millionaires and billionaires while at the same time cutting programs that literally put food in the mouths of hungry people.

Ending hunger is not just the right thing to do—it's also in the best interest of our Nation's future. It's a national security issue. It's an education issue. It's a jobs issue. It's a health care issue. It's a productivity issue. It's a fiscal health issue.

We have a lot of work to do, Madam Speaker. The President said he's committed to ending childhood hunger by 2015, but we're not doing enough to reach that goal. Budgets will be tight for the foreseeable future, and it's going to be difficult to fund these vital programs. I've repeatedly called on the White House to convene a conference on hunger and nutrition. Let's develop a comprehensive plan to tackle this terrible problem.

But, Madam Speaker, this issue is not going away. We must not ignore the needs of the hungry in America. We must continue to work with antihunger groups, nutrition groups, religious groups, and the administration and others to finally end hunger in America.

We can do this. We can end hunger in America if we have the political will to do it. I urge my colleagues in the 112th Congress to join in this effort.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. RANGEL addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gen-

tleman from Illinois (Mr. JACKSON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. JACKSON of Illinois addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. KAPTUR addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DEFAZIO addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. WOOLSEY addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

START TREATY

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

Mr. GOHMERT. Well, down the hall we have the Senate as they have been taking up the START Treaty to help limit our defense of ourselves with a country that is not the country we're most concerned about. We seem to keep ignoring the fact that Iran continues to move forward developing nuclear weapons, and once they have them, then that is the game changer. Of course, we know that even in this hemisphere that there's the potential for rockets that could reach the United States. It's nothing to fear if we act appropriately and don't stick our head in the sand, as the START Treaty apparently attempts to do.

For example, we've got people in the Senate that do not understand that the President has the power to negotiate treaties. The Senate's role is in advising and consenting, but they don't have the power to amend the treaty. That has to be done between the other country and our President. So they can make suggestions, but that language is not binding unless the other country agrees to it.

So all this frivolous stuff, all this discussion, it is meaningless unless Russia were to adopt it. And when you look at the preamble to this START Treaty, despite what the President says and despite what people in the Senate are saying about it not affecting missile defense, the preamble says: Recognizing the existence of the interrelationship between strategic offensive arms and strategic defensive arms,