

that “the presence of foreign troops is the most important element driving the resurgence of the Taliban.” That’s why I have joined with 56 of my colleagues in the House on both sides of the aisle to send a letter to President Obama urging him to reject calls to increase the number of combat troops in Afghanistan. But I’m not urging the President to walk away from Afghanistan; far from it.

America needs to stay involved, but we need a winning strategy, and that means understanding the plight of the Afghan people and what they need so that they can reject the Taliban and violent extremism. They desperately need food, education, economic development, agricultural enrichment, better infrastructure, protection from disease, and a government that they can trust.

Afghanistan is easy pickings for violent extremists because it’s virtually the poorest nation on Earth, and without assistance from the outside world, the Afghan people have little hope for a better future. The United Nations issues its annual Human Development Index on Monday, and it ranks the countries of the world on criteria such as life expectancy, literacy, school enrollment, and gross domestic product. Out of 182 countries, Afghanistan ranks 181, next to last.

That’s why, Madam Speaker, the United States must break from the military-only approach that hasn’t worked for the past 8 years and change our mission to emphasize development, reconstruction, humanitarian aid, and civil affairs. NGOs and military forces can be directed to support these efforts. That would improve the lives of the Afghan people, and it would achieve the crucial goal of removing the impression that America is an occupying country.

We must also step up our diplomatic efforts. We’ve got to do a better job of engaging all the Nations in the region that have an interest in stabilizing Afghanistan. President Obama himself has recognized that military power alone is not the answer to our problems. In his inaugural address, he said that—and I quote him—“Our power alone cannot protect us, nor does it entitle us to do as we please . . . Our power grows through its prudent use (and) our security emanates from the justness of our cause, the force of our example, and the tempering qualities of humility and restraint.”

President Obama is right to believe that America does best when we demonstrate our commitment to peace, to democracy, to human rights and progress.

Madam Speaker, I urge the President to remember his words and use them to guide his decisions about Afghanistan in the coming days. If he does, he will take important steps toward defeating violent extremism and making America and the world safer.

HONDURAS’ UPCOMING ELECTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I rise tonight to express my strong support for the upcoming November elections in Honduras and to underscore my ongoing concern with the current U.S. policy toward this Central American nation and its people.

I have just returned from Honduras, where I had the opportunity to see with my own eyes what is happening on the ground there. Let me tell you, Madam Speaker, it’s very quiet on the streets of Tegucigalpa. Despite the efforts of the pro-Zelaya camp to create the impression that chaos is reigning in Honduras, there are no tires burning in the streets, there are no massive protests urging Manuel Zelaya’s return, no collapse of democratic order or institutions.

I met with officials of the constitutional, democratic Government of Honduras. I met with Honduran civil society. I met with their religious leaders. I met with the Honduran press. I even had the opportunity to meet with some of our fellow Americans who are living in Honduras now. And through it all, there was a very consistent and a very clear message. That is: The Honduran people are committed to the defense and the protection of their democracy, of their constitution, of the rule of law.

The people of Honduras do not want Manuel Zelaya back in office. The Honduran people do not want outside actors infringing upon and determining their democracy and their rule of law. For the Honduran people, the November 29 elections are the solution, they are the way forward, and I couldn’t agree with them more.

I introduced House Resolution 749. What does it do? It calls on Secretary Clinton to support the efforts of the appropriate authorities in Honduras to ensure that the November elections are free, are fair, are now transparent.

It calls on President Obama to recognize these elections as an important step in the consolidation of democracy and the rule of law in Honduras. No matter how one views the events of June 28, it is critical that the implementation and the recognition of the validity of the November 29 Honduran elections remains separate and independent from the current political fray.

The date of the elections, the presidential candidates, and the presidential term were determined long before Zelaya’s removal, and nothing has changed since then. Again, the Honduran electoral process is continuing in accordance with the Honduran Constitution.

The U.S. has historically recognized free, fair, and transparent elections as a fundamental component of a democracy. So why now is the U.S. so quick to admonish what appears to be the only viable way forward for a peaceful

resolution in Honduras? How could the U.S. help to open the door to the Cuban tyranny to rejoin the Organization of American States but yet push for Honduras’ expulsion because the Honduran people defended their constitution and their democracy? How could the U.S. directly engage with Ahmadinejad, let him into the United States to address the General Assembly at the United Nations yet revoke the visas of the constitutionally democratic constituted representatives of the Honduran Government? These are all questions that I have been asking officials in this administration and have been asked time and time again.

Madam Speaker, I’m concerned that if we in the U.S. continue along this misguided path and continue to impose this misguided Zelaya-centric policy, that the goodwill and the respect and the admiration that the U.S. currently enjoys in Honduras will now start to dissipate. We can’t afford for that to happen. The United States has always been the beacon of democracy. How can we take this undemocratic way forward for Honduras?

I’m deeply concerned about the impact that this action will have on our U.S. security interests as well, Madam Speaker. After all of my meetings and briefings and during my visit in Honduras, I’m more concerned and more convinced than ever that the current U.S. approach is severely undermining our immediate security interests in Honduras—in fact, in Central America as a whole—and it will significantly impact and have detrimental long-term ramifications for the stability and the security of our hemisphere.

But there is still time to reconsider. There is still time to correct our wrongs and find a way forward, and that can begin with the U.S. Government publicly announcing that it will respect the sovereignty of the free Honduran people and respect what it says in the Honduran Constitution, that the U.S. will support the will of the Honduran people and recognize free, fair, transparent elections in Honduras this November. The future and the will of the Honduran people are far too important to let Manuel Zelaya or his puppets run the show any longer.

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

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

BATTLING BREAST CANCER THROUGH HEALTH CARE REFORM

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

Mr. LANGEVIN. Madam Speaker, I would like to offer my sincere thanks