

Its Ramadi assault mixed terrorism with conventional tactics. At least 30 huge truck bombs, some reportedly as large as the one used in the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing, obliterated the city's defenses, and ISIS forces poured through the breach. A similar attack could be in store for Baghdad. It is assumed that ISIS operatives are in the capital's Sunni enclaves, with more en route disguised as refugees.

The fall of Baghdad to ISIS would harm American strategic interests as the fall of Saigon did in 1975. The blow to U.S. credibility and the enhancement of ISIS's prestige, of its black flag rising over an evacuated U.S. Embassy, would be incalculable. To prevent this outcome, President Obama should consider taking the following actions.

Use strategic air power. America's unrivaled air forces can hit ISIS from anywhere: neighboring countries, the sea and the continental U.S. Yet the sorties flown so far have been minimal, and damage inflicted still less, even as ISIS held a parade in broad daylight in Rutba, Iraq, last week.

That is the kind of target our aviators dream of. Rules of engagement need to be loosened, U.S. air controllers sent to the front to call in strikes, and more combat aircraft put into the fight.

Launch ruthless special operations. Recent raids into Syria were daring and skillful. But a handful of missions do not resemble the operations led by U.S. Army Gens. Stanley McChrystal and Michael Flynn in 2006-07 that eventually broke the back of ISIS's predecessor, al Qaeda in Iraq, and drove it abroad.

At that campaign's height, commandos conducted multiple missions every night. They analyzed intelligence collected on one "objective" to find and fix targets they finished on successive raids. The rhythm, persistence and sheer number of those operations crushed the enemy. Emulate them now, starting near Baghdad.

Capture and interrogate ISIS leaders. Much of the intelligence exploited on those missions came from documents and electronics found in terrorist safe houses. But the best came from interrogations, some conducted on the battlefield as the smoke cleared.

Interrogators acted within the bounds of decency against evil men who deserved no quarter. Yet neither were military and CIA personnel constrained by the rules of evidence and criminal procedure, because their goal wasn't a courtroom conviction, but the location of the next high-value target. A robust program of capturing and roughly interrogating terrorists abroad should resume, first focused on the whereabouts of ISIS operatives in and around Baghdad.

There is also a role for police work. ISIS has devotees in all 50 U.S. states; hundreds of Americans traveled abroad to fight for them, and some number have returned. The FBI and state and local law enforcement should make aggressive use of antiterror statutes to question—and perhaps flip into informants—suspects who may be in contact with terror leaders with details of ISIS plans regarding Baghdad. Congress should reauthorize the National Security Agency's signals intelligence programs identifying such communications between Americans and known terrorists abroad.

Send ground combat forces. Despite U.S. efforts to restrain them, the Iraqi army is now unable or unwilling to stand and fight ISIS alone. Its commanders have shamefully thrown down their weapons, discarded their uniforms, and abandoned their men and posts when ISIS threatens. The Iraqi army needs a backbone transplant.

U.S. airborne units can arrive quickly to secure Baghdad's airport and the long and

vital road from the city to that airfield. More Marines can better defend the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad. Americans can stiffen Iraqi lines around the city, and provide artillery and engineer units needed in urban combat. U.S. cavalry units can launch what imperial Britain called "punitive expeditions" to destroy ISIS lairs further afield.

The arrival of thousands more American fighting men will improve the Iraqi army's performance. It was no accident that the Sunni Awakening and U.S. surge succeeded at the same time in 2006-07. As U.S. troops poured in, Sunni sheiks cast their lot with what Bing West memorialized as the "The Strongest Tribe" in his book of the same name.

There are natural advantages to defending Baghdad, which the Iraqis can exploit if steered by U.S. troops. To seize the capital, ISIS's lines of communication would expand, a logistical challenge that would leave them more vulnerable to counterattack. The Iraqi army's lines of communication would helpfully contract.

The Tigris River is a significant obstacle, and a defensible one. Urban combat favors prepared defenders. And Baghdad is a dense city, its population having swelled to more than seven million, crammed into a place the size of Baltimore or Boston.

Most important, the predominantly Shiite Iraqi army would be fighting to protect its brethren, unlike previous battles in mostly Sunni cities where they broke and ran.

This fight is winnable. But if the administration whistles past the graveyard and insists its policy is working even as ISIS nears Baghdad and our diplomats there, the White House may face a debacle that makes Benghazi seem minor in comparison.

KECHI OKWUCHI'S ST. THOMAS
UNIVERSITY GRADUATION

HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 2, 2015

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to applaud Kechi Okwuchi, for her recent graduation from St. Thomas University in Houston.

Over the past ten years, Kechi has had to overcome many hardships. On December 10, 2005 Kechi was the only survivor of a horrific plane crash at Port Harcourt International Airport in Nigeria where her plane made a crash landing nearly 70 meters off of the runway. The crash claimed the lives of all of the other passengers on board including 108 of Kechi's classmates and friends. After receiving medical treatment in South Africa, Kechi moved to Pearland to receive medical treatment at Shriners' Hospital for Children in Galveston. At her May 16th Commencement Ceremony, Kechi was selected to give a speech before crossing the stage and receiving her degree. She has met and conquered many obstacles on her way to receiving her diploma. Her positive outlook throughout it all is truly an inspiration.

On behalf of the Twenty-Second Congressional District of Texas, congratulations again to Kechi for graduating from St. Thomas University.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. XAVIER BECERRA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 2, 2015

Mr. BECERRA. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained and missed roll call votes 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259, and 260. If present, I would have voted "no" on roll call 253, "yea" on roll call 254, "yea" on roll call 255, "yea" on roll call 256, "yea" on roll call 257, "no" on roll call 258, and "no" on roll call 260.

SABLATURA MIDDLE SCHOOL
STUDENT COUNCIL

HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 2, 2015

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Sablatura Middle School Student Council on receiving the National Association of Elementary School Principals' Student Council Excellence Award for the 2014-2015 school year.

This prestigious award recognizes the outstanding efforts and hard work of students striving towards leadership, citizenship, community service, and campus spirit. This is the fourth year that the Association has awarded Sablatura's student council excellence. We appreciate the dedication that the faculty sponsors make to developing young leaders in Pearland, Texas and look forward to seeing what these students achieve in the future.

On behalf of the Twenty-Second Congressional District of Texas, congratulations again to the Sablatura Middle School Student Council for this remarkable achievement.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LUIS V. GUTIÉRREZ

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 2, 2015

Mr. GUTIÉRREZ. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably absent in the House chamber for votes on Monday, June 1, 2015.

Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on roll call vote 264, "yea" on roll call vote 265, and "yea" on roll call vote 266.

Finally, I would have voted "nay" on roll call vote 267 in opposition to H.R. 1335, the Strengthening Fishing Communities and Increasing Flexibility in Fisheries Management Act.

JAELYNN WALLS GIRL SCOUTS OF
THE USA GOLD AWARD

HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 2, 2015

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Jaelynn Walls, for earning the Girl Scouts of the USA Gold Award, the most prestigious Girl Scout honor.

Jaelynn is a tenth-grader at Carnegie Vanguard High School. She earned the award for her diligent work and dedication to spread her "No Texts, No Wrecks" campaign. Jaelynn recruited more than 15 volunteers to accompany her to driving schools in her community to stress the importance of not texting and driving. She also collected more than 400 pledges from young drivers who promised to not text and drive. Jaelynn has been a member of the San Jacinto Council for 13 years and previously earned the Girl Scout Bronze and Silver Awards. What an accomplished young woman.

On behalf of the Twenty-Second Congressional District of Texas, congratulations again to Jaelynn Walls for receiving the Girl Scouts of the USA Gold Award.

IN HONOR OF BRYAN KECK,
SCRIPPS NATIONAL SPELLING
BEE PARTICIPANT FROM DU-
BUQUE, IOWA

HON. ROD BLUM

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 2, 2015

Mr. BLUM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate a constituent from my district, Bryan Keck from Dubuque, Iowa, on his participation in the Scripps National Spelling Bee.

Bryan, a seventh grader at Eleanor Roosevelt Middle School in Dubuque, Iowa, won the Telegraph Herald Media Regional Spelling Bee last March to earn a spot in the national bee. Last week, he and his family traveled to National Harbor, Maryland where 285 spellers from across the United States competed during Bee Week 2015 at the Gaylord National Resort and Convention Center.

In the preliminary round, Bryan correctly spelled "omnivorous"—an adjective meaning "of an animal or person feeding on food of both plant and animal origin." He also correctly spelled "rhipiphorid"—a noun that classifies certain types of beetles.

In his free time, Bryan enjoys, giving back to his community through the Boy Scouts, going bowling, playing Minecraft, and reading crime novels. He hopes to one day become a federal prosecutor.

I would like to extend my sincerest congratulations, c-o-n-g-r-a-t-u-l-a-t-i-o-n-s, congratulations to Bryan on his participation in the Scripps National Spelling Bee and wish him well in all his future endeavors.

RECOGNIZING MATTHEW MURRAY

HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 2, 2015

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Matthew Murray for winning Top Male Individual at the 16th Annual Texas State High School Triathlon Championships.

Matthew, a junior at Dawson High School in Pearland, was among almost 250 competitors from around Texas. Each competitor was required to compete in a 500 meter lake swim, 14 mile bike and 3 mile run. Matthew's win speaks to his dedication to the sport and im-

mense athletic ability. This was his second year in a row to win Top Male Individual. He has made his family, coaches and community proud. We wish him the best of luck in his future endeavors.

On behalf of the Twenty-Second Congressional District of Texas, congratulations again to Matthew for his back-to-back wins of Top Male Individual at this year's Triathlon Championships.

HONORING WHEELING PUBLIC
WORKS DIRECTOR ANTHONY
STAVROS

HON. ROBERT J. DOLD

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 2, 2015

Mr. DOLD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the career and contributions of Wheeling Public Works Director Anthony Stavros. Mr. Stavros is retiring next month and leaves behind a reputation of strong dedication and commitment to the people of Wheeling, Illinois.

Throughout his career, Mr. Stavros served the Village of Wheeling in various roles and capacities in the Public Works Department. As Director, he oversaw multiple divisions managing parks, infrastructure, and flood and snow operations, all of which are vital to the well-being and safety of the community. A number of his successful projects were recognized by the American Public Works Association including his work on the Cornell Avenue Dam Rehabilitation.

Mr. Stavros leaves a lasting legacy through his integrity, leadership, and commitment to the improvement and maintenance of the Wheeling community. Mr. Speaker, it is my honor to express my gratitude to Mr. Anthony Stavros for his forty-five years of exemplary service.

CLEMENTS HIGH SCHOOL MIXED
RELAY TEAM

HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 2, 2015

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Christy Lee, Yaobin Chen, Mia Craven for earning the Top Mixed Relay Award during the 16th Annual Texas State High School Triathlon Championships.

These Clements High School athletes were among almost 250 competitors from Texas competing in this race. Each relay team was required to compete in a 500 meter lake swim, 14 mile bike ride and 3 mile run. This win speaks to the team's dedication to the sport and immense athletic ability. We wish the team luck throughout their academic and athletic careers.

On behalf of the Twenty-Second Congressional District of Texas, congratulations again to Christy, Yaobin, and Mia for winning the Top Mixed Relay award in this year's Triathlon Championships.

97TH ANNIVERSARY OF
AZERBAIJANI REPUBLIC DAY

HON. HENRY CUELLAR

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 2, 2015

Mr. CUELLAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Azerbaijanis around the world, in celebration of Republic Day on May 28. Republic Day commemorates Azerbaijan's declaration of its independence from the Russian Empire in 1918, becoming the first Muslim democratic secular republic in the region. Although only lasting two years, the Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan achieved considerable success in state-building and creating educational foundations for future generations. The Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan granted suffrage to women shortly after its creation, ahead of most Western democracies.

Despite all of its successes, the Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan was not in a position to weather the occupational forces of the then newly formed Soviet Russia. Consequently, Azerbaijan temporarily lost its independence in 1920 and later was brought into the U.S.S.R. In 1990, Azerbaijan regained its independence from the U.S.S.R., ending 70 years of Soviet rule. On August 30, 1991, Azerbaijan's Parliament adopted the Declaration on the Restoration of Independence of the Republic of Azerbaijan, and on October 18, 1991, the independence was approved by the adoption of a Constitutional Act.

Since its independence, the Republic of Azerbaijan has been an ally and is among the first nations who offered unconditional support to the United States in the global War on Terrorism, providing its airspace and the use of its airports for Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. Today, Azerbaijan continues to be a strategic partner with the U.S.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in thanking the people of Azerbaijan for their valuable partnership and congratulate Azerbaijanis around the world on the 97th anniversary of Republic Day.

CLEMENTS HIGH SCHOOL ALL-
MALE TRIATHLON RELAY TEAM

HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 2, 2015

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Aaron Pan, Brian Yuen, and Abraham Mckarkin, for earning Top All-Male Relay during the 16th Annual Texas State High School Triathlon Championships.

The Clements High School sophomores were among almost 250 competitors from around Texas competing in this race. Each relay team was required to compete in a 500 meter lake swim, 14 mile bike ride and 3 mile run. Their win recognizes extreme athletic ability as well as a strong dedication to the sport. We wish each of these young men luck throughout their academic and athletic careers.

On behalf of the Twenty-Second Congressional District of Texas, congratulations again to Aaron, Brian, and Abraham for earning the Top All-Male Relay team at this year's Triathlon Championships.