U.S.-INDIA DEFENSE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. HOLDING) for 5 minutes.

Mr. HOLDING. Mr. Speaker, the United States is fortunate to have allies and partners across the world that we work with every day to combat terrorism and our other security challenges.

One of these relationships that I work closely on is the strategic partnership between the United States and India. Together, the U.S. and India face a set of common security challenges, and there can be no question that closer defense and security cooperation between our two democracies will greatly benefit all of our people.

Over the last few years, Mr. Speaker, we have seen substantial growth in this partnership, most recently formalized last year with the 10-year renewal of the defense framework. This partnership is also highlighted by forums such as the U.S.-India Defense Technology and Trade Initiative. I firmly believe that Congress should be supporting and offering more opportunities for the U.S.-India defense partnership to succeed.

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That is why today I will be introducing the U.S.-India Defense Technology and Partnership Act. This legislation will cement the progress that has already been made and will lay the foundation for future cooperation and growth.

Additionally, this legislation will elevate India's status by shortening the time required for the notification of sale or export of defense articles from the United States to India.

It will also bring our defense establishment closer together by encouraging more joint contingency planning and will require the U.S. Government to review and assess India's ability to execute military operations of mutual interest.

Just as important as efforts like the legislation I am introducing today, I believe, is Congress' closer examination and oversight of other actions that impact the U.S.-India partnership.

One that certainly comes to mind, Mr. Speaker, is the delicate and, at times, seemingly confused policy with Pakistan. Pakistan has proven time and time again that it is an unreliable partner.

While Pakistan has taken some, but very limited, action to disrupt terror elements that operate within their borders, their demonstrated unwillingness to fulfill and execute counterterrorism efforts should leave no question as to their true intentions.

So why, Mr. Speaker, last month, did the administration notice a sale of eight F–16s to Pakistan? What, I ask, is the benefit of the sale to our national security and the security of the region and our partners?

This is one question, Mr. Speaker. But the request to use taxpayer dollars to finance the sale of these F–16s to Pakistan is entirely another question. What has Pakistan actually done to deserve these fighter jets, let alone financing from the United States taxpayers? Certainly not enough, in my view, as I firmly oppose the sale from start to finish.

Every year since 2011, the administration has been required to utilize a waiver to continue providing security assistance to Pakistan. Why, you might ask, does the administration need to continually use a waiver? Well, it is because Pakistan has failed to be an honest and real partner in the efforts to combat terrorism that is exported from its borders.

On this front, Mr. Speaker, I have joined with Congressman BERA to seek a restriction on the availability of security assistance to Pakistan next fiscal year. We are not seeking to completely prohibit the use of the Presidential waiver—although, I might add, this is a debate worth having here in the House. We are simply asking that 30 percent of the funds should not be subject to a waiver. This is a commonsense step that will, hopefully, after years of trying, get the Pakistani Government to cooperate and meet the requirements set in law.

Mr. Speaker, India should know that they have a strong and committed partner in the U.S. Congress, and I believe that steps such as passing the appropriations fence I just outlined and passing the U.S.-India Defense Technology and Partnership Act would send a strong message and certainly enhance our strategic partnership with India.

Mr. Speaker, we have a tremendous opportunity in front of us right now to further build an enduring defense and security partnership with India that will endure for years to come and, indeed, benefit both of our great democracies.

LACK OF LIBERTY AND FREEDOM IN CUBA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, in 2014, President Obama said he wanted to go to Cuba if, and I quote, ''I, with confidence, can say that we are seeing some progress in liberty and freedom. If we are going backwards,'' President Obama said, ''then there is not much reason for me to be there. I am not interested in just validating the status quo.''

Well, look at this poster, Mr. Speaker. These are human rights dissidents who were rounded up and beaten. If Obama's Cuba policy is not going backwards, I don't know what is, because the oppressive Cuban apparatus of repression only seems to be emboldened.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday in Havana, Raul Castro was asked by a reporter if he would release political prisoners in Cuba. Castro looked uncomfortable. Why? Because in Cuba, there is no free press. Reporters are not allowed to ask real questions to regime leaders.

Castro said, well, there are no political prisoners in Cuba at all, and if there were, he would free them by nightfall.

That's a good one. Well, there are 11 million people imprisoned by Castro's communist regime—the entire island.

But here is a list, Mr. Speaker, of over 50 political prisoners, and this is a list comprised by the Cuban Democratic Directorate. Some of these individuals have been in jail for over 20 years. Others are constantly detained, released, and rearrested.

Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to enter this list into the RECORD.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Florida?

There was no objection.

PRELIMINARY LIST OF POLITICAL PRISONERS, CUBAN DEMOCRATIC DIRECTORATE, MARCH 21ST, 2016

1. Yasiel Espino Aceval/Condemned 4 years/Ariza Prison
2. Alexander Palacio Reyes/Cerámica Roja Prison
3. Alexis Serrano Avila/Condemned 3 years prison
4. Andrés Fidel Alfonso Rodríguez/Melena Sur prison
5. Ernesto Borges Pérez/Combinado del Este prison
6. Carlos Amaury Calderin Roca/Valle Grande prison
7. Maria del Carmen Cala Aguilera/Pendiente/Provincial Women's Prison Holguín Province
8. Enrique Bartolomé Cambria Diaz/Kilo 8 prison
9. Misael Canet Velázquez/Kilo 8 prison
10. Santiago Cisneros Castellanos/Pendiente/Aguadores prison
11. Leonardo Cobas Pérez/Moscú prison
12. Felipe Martin Companione/Cerámica Roja prison/Condemned to 8 years in prison
13. Orlando Contreras Aguiar/Aguacate prison
14. Yeri Curbelo Aguilera/Condemned 3 years prison/Guantanamo Prison
15. Pedro de la Caridad Alvarez Pedroso
16. Jordys Manuel Dosil/Condemned 3 years prison
17. Carlos Manuel Figueroa Álvarez/Combinado del Este Prison/Condemned to 6 years prison
18. David Fernández Cardoso/Bungo Ocho Prison
19. José Daniel Gonzalez Fumero/Nieves Morejón Prison
20. Ricardo González Sendiña/condemned 6 years/Combinado del Este
21. Ariel González Sendiña/condemned 6 years/Combinado del Este
22. Eglis Heredia Rodríguez/Boniato Prison
23. Mario Alberto Hernández Leiva/Melena del Sur prison/Condemned to 3 years prison
24. Geovanys Izaguirre Hernández/Aguadores Prison
25. Rolando Erismelio Jaco García/Cerámica Roja Prison
26. Javier Jouz Varona/Social Dangerousness prison/Condemned to 3 years prison
27. Isain López Luna/Valle Grande Prison
28. Noel López Gonzalez/Condemned 12 years prison
29. Michael Mediaceja Ramos/Condemned 6 months/Guanajay prison
30. Osmaní Mendosa Ferrior/Las Mangas prison

31. Mario Morera Jardines/Condemned to 3 years prison/Guamajal prison
32. Ernesto Ortega Sarduy/Valle Grande prison
33. Alexander Palacio Reyes/Cerámica Roja prison
34. Ricardo Pelier Frómeta/Condemned to 3 years jail/Combinado de Guantanamo prison
35. Fernando Isael Peña Tamayo/Condemned to 5 years/El Típico prison
36. Silverio Portal Contreras/Campamento Ochimán prison
37. Humberto Eladio Real Suarez
38. René Rouco Machin/Melena del Sur prison
39. Laudelino Rodriguez Mendoza/Granjita prison, Santiago de Cuba
40. Leoncio Rodriguez Poncio/Condemned to 42 years and has served 28 years in prison/Guantanamo Prison
41. Alfredo Luis Limonte Rodriguez/Condemned 4 years/Ariza Prison
42. Elieski Roque Chongo/Condemned 5 years/Ariza Prison
43. Alexander Alan Rodríguez/Sentence Pending/Valle Grande Prison
44. Reinier Rodriguez Mendoza/Condemned to 2 years of prison/San José Prison
45. Mario Ronaide Figueroa Reyes/Condemned to 3 years prison/Prision 1580
46. Yoelkis Rozábal Flores/Condemned to 4 years/Combinado de Guantánamo prison
47. Daniel Santovenia Fernandez
48. Emilio Serrano Rodríguez/Valle Grande Prison
49. Armando Sosa Fortuny/Camaguey Prison
50. Liusban John Ultra/Condenado a 7 años/Jailed in the Province of Las Tunas/La Granjita Prison
51. Armado Verdecía Díaz/Condemned to 5 years of prison/Malverde Prison

Sources: Directorio Democrático Cubano; Andry Frometa Cuenca, former political prisoner; Yordan Marrero, Partido Democráta Cristiano de Camagüey; Librado Linares Garcia, General Secretary of the Movimiento Cubano Reflexión; Unión Patriótica de Cuba (UNPACU).

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. During his time in Cuba, President Obama failed to announce any substantive changes on policies, such as the fugitive policy.

Is there any news on returning New Jersey cop killer Joanne Chesimard or any of the other fugitives of U.S. justice, such as Charles Hill, William Guillermo Morales, or Victor Manuel Gerena? No news.

On confiscated property, there was no positive announcement about the Castro regime paying back Americans who had their properties confiscated.

There was no announcement by Castro about improving human rights on the island. Castro denied that human rights violations occur in Cuba. Again, look at this poster.

As predicted, Castro also demanded the return of the naval station at Guantanamo Bay. This Congress has been very clear that it strongly opposes relinquishing GTMO or transferring detainees to the United States.

Now, President Obama incorrectly keeps calling the Communist strongman Castro ''President Castro''—wrong. He is not President of Cuba. There have never been elections. There are no political parties, except the Communist Party, in Cuba. There are no free and fair elections. He is not President. Stop calling a dictator President.

The President, our President Obama, proclaimed that this trip to Cuba would be fun. That is his word. It has not been fun for all of the Cubans who have been beaten leading up to the President's visit. It hasn't been fun for all the Cubans who have been prevented from leaving their homes until the President departs Cuba because they are human rights activists.

Now let me show you this other poster, Mr. Speaker. This is a poster of President Reagan with Gorbachev in 1987. And what happened there? President Reagan said: ''Mr. Gorbachev, open this gate. Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall.''

In Havana, 2016, President Obama says: Thank you, President Castro, for your spirit of openness.

Spirit of openness? And again, President what? He is not a President. What openness, when press is prohibited in Cuba? What openness, when the Cuban people are jailed for dissenting views? What openness, when the economy is controlled by one entity, the communist regime?

America, under the Obama administration, has forsaken those who suffer under Castro's oppression. That is a sad fact. And this will be President Obama's legacy, Mr. Speaker, the President who abdicated America's role as a defender of international human rights, all for a narcissistic play at building a legacy as the President who restored America's relations with dictators and tyrants who will do anything to undermine our country and harm our interests and our citizens.

And that is all there is about Cuba.

SMALL PUBLIC HOUSING AGENCY OPPORTUNITY ACT OF 2016

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. PALAZZO) for 5 minutes.

Mr. PALAZZO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce bipartisan legislation that addresses the administrative burdens facing small and rural housing authorities across this country.

The Small Public Housing Agency Opportunity Act of 2016, H.R. 4816, being introduced by myself, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. BISHOP), and the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. ASHFORD), is the House companion to Senators TESTER and FISCHER's S. 2292. If enacted, this bill would simplify inspection and compliance requirements and eliminate excessive paperwork for public housing authorities that support fewer than 550 households.

Small PHAs represent 80 percent of all agencies but administer only 20 percent of the units and receive only 10 percent of the public housing and Housing Choice Voucher funds. Under current law, these small public housing agencies are required to follow the same reporting and inspection rules as large, urban housing authorities, even though they have far fewer resources.

Speaking from experience with my work as a CFO and deputy executive director of a small housing authority prior to serving in Congress, there is a big difference between housing needs in small town Mississippi, Georgia, or Nebraska, and those in cities like New York City. This legislation removes that one-size-fits-all approach and gives small housing authorities the flexibility to operate more effectively and efficiently.

Simply put, small housing authorities are being crushed by the regulatory burdens of the Federal Government. It doesn't take a CPA to see the cost significantly outweighs the benefits of HUD mandates and regulations.

Specifically, this bill limits HUD's inspections of housing and voucher units to once every 3 years, unless the small PHA is classified as ''troubled'' by HUD. It eliminates certain paperwork, including the submission of plans or reports not required of owners and operators of Section 8 private properties, and it also eliminates unnecessary yearly environmental reviews for agencies that are not undergoing new construction.

As we all know, recent Federal budgets have reduced support for public housing, and cuts have disproportionately impacted small and rural housing agencies. Deep prorations in the operating funds have forced housing authorities to reduce staff and cut services and maintenance.

Any revenue source is crucial; that is why this bill also takes a balanced, commonsense look at the inspections, requirements, paperwork, and regulations that our directors are doing year round.

Five decades ago, President Johnson announced a war on poverty, and it was believed during that time that one of the first bills to be introduced in the 89th Congress would be an updated version of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1964. President Johnson, in his State of the Union that year, proclaimed a desire for ''a decent home for every American family.''

This goal is today, as it was in 1964, a very real one that must be addressed. That is why I applaud Speaker RYAN for creating the Task Force on Poverty, Opportunity, and Upward Mobility, to strengthen America's safety net to help those in need.

I also commend Representative LUETKEMEYER and the committee for the successful drafting and passage of the Housing Opportunity Through Modernization Act of 2016.

We have a model out there for public housing, and we can debate the pluses and minuses in terms of government efficiency; but at the end of the day, we cannot forget what the main focus here is: affordable housing for America's lowest income families.

This bill's exemptions and reforms will not have an adverse impact on the quality of living for these families. On the contrary, by removing just a fraction of the burden placed on the backs of our housing directors, we benefit the lives of the residents. With some directors and employees allotting over 30