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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
April 19, 2016.

I hereby appoint the Honorable ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

PAUL D. RYAN,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 5, 2016, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 1 hour and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

HOMELAND SECURITY

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

Mr. QUIGLEY. Madam Speaker, in today's world, the threats we face are constantly changing. Our ability to keep America safe relies on our capacity to adapt quickly to these new and evolving threats.

In the years following 9/11, the U.S. made significant changes to our intelligence and law enforcement capabilities that have stopped over 60 terror plots against the U.S. and saved countless American lives.

But 9/11 was 15 years ago. The threats we face today are vastly different than the threats we faced then. It is time we reprioritize resources to confront this new reality.

The recent terror attacks in Brussels and Paris confirm that one of our largest security vulnerabilities is soft targets, relatively unprotected venues where large groups of people gather. Soft targets include places we all frequent, like airports, transit systems, stadiums, restaurants, and shopping malls. They are easy to attack and difficult to protect.

The recent attacks also showed that threats are becoming harder to detect. The ability to collect intelligence on terrorist intentions and terror plots is more challenging because of new encryption technology and the reliance on lone-wolf attacks.

Because specific and credible threats are increasingly more difficult to uncover, we need to redouble our efforts and reprioritize our funding to reduce our vulnerabilities. Yet, alarmingly, current funding for the Federal programs designed to keep America safe fails to meet the new and growing threats we face.

The primary responsibility of the Federal Government under the Constitution is to ''provide for the common defense,'' but, in recent years, Congress has made significant cuts to the Homeland Security programs that were designed to protect things like soft targets. Since the majority took over the House in 2010, Homeland Security grants to help States and localities protect against and respond to terror attacks have been cut in half.

Urban Areas Security Initiative grants, which large cities like my hometown of Chicago use to invest in the training and equipment necessary to respond to their unique security threats, have been cut by over $200 million. Transit security funding, used by the Chicago Transit Authority to invest in camera systems that protect against terror attacks and have lowered crime by 50 percent, has been reduced by over 60 percent. And Buffer Zone Protection grants, which once helped cities defend critical infrastructure like stadiums, are no longer funded.

To the detriment of our security, many of my House colleagues have championed the harmful, across-the-board spending cuts of sequestration that restrict our intelligence and law enforcement capabilities and, in 2014, forced a hiring freeze at the FBI. They champion these cuts even as the Secretary of Defense calls sequestration the ''biggest strategic danger'' to our national security, and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs argues it poses a greater threat to national security than Russia, China, North Korea, Iran, and ISIS.

Last year, the House majority took the budget irresponsibility even further by threatening to shut down the Department of Homeland Security over a partisan fight over immigration. All the while, Congress continues to prioritize billions in funding to respond to threats posed by a cold war that ended decades ago.

For example, we are spending $350 billion over the next decade on our outdated nuclear weapons policy. By simply eliminating our strategically obsolete stockpile of ICBMs, we could free up $2.6 billion a year, money that could be spent on intelligence, cybersecurity, and homeland security.

While the goal of our intelligence and law enforcement communities to deter, detect, and prevent terror attacks remains the same, how we accomplish and fund that goal must continue to evolve to meet the new challenges we face.

Protecting against new and evolving threats will not necessarily require additional spending, but it will require smarter spending. When it comes to national security, we must continue to

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