Attempted Terrorist Attack on Detroit Flight Shows Continuing Threat

The attempted terrorist attack above the skies of Detroit on Christmas Day demonstrated the continuing threat of al Qaeda-affiliated terrorists and the unacceptable pattern of our intelligence agencies to fail to share information in a timely manner. The terrorist, Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab of Nigeria, had reportedly received training at a terrorist training camp in Yemen. His father had notified U.S. intelligence authorities about his son's move toward radical jihadism, and he was placed on a list of suspected terrorists. However, he was not placed on our nation's Do Not Fly list, an action that would have barred him from boarding the flight to the United States. While collecting and accurately analyzing intelligence is an imperfect process, it is appalling that our intelligence and homeland security agencies did not prevent a known suspected terrorist from coming into our nation.

The near tragedy reminded all of us that there are terrorists across the world that are plotting every day to attack the United States again. Our nation's efforts since 9/11 have undoubtedly made us safer and thwarted additional attacks on our homeland, but we cannot grow tired or relaxed in the fight against this continuing threat. I am very concerned by the current Administration's approach of treating al-Qaeda jihadists as criminals rather than terrorists, and strongly oppose its plan to transfer remaining terrorists held in Cuba to countries like Yemen and to the United States. Indeed, news accounts indicate Abdulmutallab was in custody for a mere fifty minutes before being read his Miranda rights, after which he stopped answering questions. Our primary focus should have been on gathering intelligence to avert another attack, not on preparing for a criminal trial. These suspected jihadists are dangerous and determined to attack the American people, and they should be held in the custody of the U.S. military outside of our nation's borders.
Share your thoughts

Spending an Albatross Around Neck of American Economy

I wanted to share a speech I gave on the House Floor recently in strong opposition to House Democrats' decision to increase the national debt limit and spend the money on a second

stimulus bill. You can view my speech here .

"Mr. Speaker, President Obama and Congressional Democrats have maxed out the national credit card with reckless spending and they're back for more. The American people are tired of overspending and tired of policies that have done nothing to lift us out of this economic downturn. Democrats rammed through a so-called 'stimulus' that left us asking 'Where are the jobs?' Now Congressional Democrats are asking for more money that they will turn around later this afternoon and spend on another stimulus bill that spends even more on failed policies. It's time for Congress to say 'no' to endless debt that is an albatross around the neck of our nation's economy and future generations." Share your thoughts

Democrats Financial Reform Package Creates Permanent Bailout

I wanted to let you know that in December the House passed H.R. 4173, the Wall Street Reform and Consumer ProtectionAct, a bill I strongly opposed. The bill, a compilation of eight different bills intended to reform financial regulations in response to the financial crisis, would create a permanent bailout fund and expand government involvement in private financial markets. I agree there are appropriate steps Congress should take to reform our financial regulatory structure to help prevent another financial crisis like we experienced in 2008. The effects on our economy are still resonating today. Unfortunately, the bill proposed by House Democrats and passed does not fix the problems in the financial system. Companies that pursued risky investments and business practices will have no incentive to stop their behavior. Instead of ending the bailout mentality that allows large financial firms to reap huge profits on the backs of taxpayers, this legislation reinforces it. It will create a permanent bailout authority, which will allow the government to takeover and prop up any firm it deems 'systemically' important to the economy. This is a far cry from placing accountability back on Wall Street. I believe there is a better solution. I have cosponsored an alternative reform plan that ends the era of taxpayer funded bailouts, ends the ability of the government to pick winners and losers, protects consumers from predatory or fraudulent activity, and restores market discipline. The American people want accountability and responsibility - not a permanent bailout fund that will continue business as usual and sow the seeds for the next financial crisis.
Share your thoughts

Expansion of *Clean Water Act* Would Undermine Private Property Protections

Recently, I joined several of my colleagues in both the House and Senate in sending a letter to Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi requesting that they not take up proposed legislation that would expand the *Clean Water Act* by replacing the phrase "navigable waters" with simply "waters of the United States." This damaging legislation would drastically expand the federal government's ability to regulate private property by giving the Corps of Engineers and Environmental Protection Agency virtually unlimited authority over any standing water or hydrologic connection in the country.

I am deeply concerned by this Congress' ever-increasing push towards bigger government and increased regulation. This effort to expand the *Clean Water Act* in such a dramatic and unprecedented fashion represents one of the most significant intrusions on private property rights in history by possibly making the Corps and the EPA America's central land-use authorities. Not only does it fly in the face of the Constitutional protections of private property and Constitutional limitations on the reach and authority of the federal government, it would slow our economy during these very difficult times by killing jobs and further delaying critical infrastructure projects. I urge Congressional Democrats to consider the serious negative effects of pursuing this bill and instead look for positive solutions to our nation's water issues.
Share your thoughts

Court Martial of Navy SEALs Raises Deep Concerns

As you may have heard, three Navy SEALs are facing a court martial for their alleged mistreatment of a top terrorist who they helped capture in Iraq this past September. The terrorist, Ahmed Hashim Abed, is suspected of masterminding the brutal murders of four American contractors in Iraq in 2004. He was one of the most wanted jihadists in the country and his capture was a good thing for Iraq's safety and security.

The precise nature of what occurred has not been made public, but I am very concerned about the treatment of these service members. I believe that the three SEALs should be presumed innocent of wrongdoing and fully vindicated unless clear evidence is presented that they violated military rules in their treatment of him. Further, I'm concerned that this case could set a precedent that would undermine our efforts to prosecute the War on Terror. If we adopt a policy that causes our service members to fear that they will face severe punishments anytime a terrorist suspect alleges misconduct, I believe it will discourage our military personnel from aggressively engaging our enemies and sufficiently protecting themselves against potential attacks. While the men and women of our military must uphold our nation's high standards for the decent and humane treatment of individuals in U.S. custody, we should not force them to fight the war against radical jihadists with self-defeating caution and the fear of being penalized for simply doing their jobs.

Share your thoughts

House Passes Legislation Aimed at Undermining Iran's Pursuit of Nuclear Weapons

With my strong support, the House of Representatives passed H.R. 2194 , the Iran Refined Petroleum Sanctions Act of 2009. This important legislation would direct the President to impose sanctions on all foreign firms that supply refined gasoline to Iran or help that country expand or construct oil refineries. Iran imports as much as forty percent of its domestic gasoline needs. The measure, therefore, is designed to pressure Iran to comply with the demands of the international community to abandon its pursuit of nuclear technology for hostile purposes or face serious economic consequences caused by a diminishing ability to import or produce gasoline. It is, however, important to note that strong, multilateral sanctions from the United Nations would be more effective in pressuring Iran to abandon its current course by crippling their energy sector. Because China and Russia have thus far refused to impose such sanctions, I believe we must keep all options on the table in handling this clear and growing threat to U.S. security interests.

Share your thoughts

Northern California News and Events

Health Care and Economy Discussed at Shasta County Event

I had the pleasure of attending the Anderson Rotary 40th Annual Crab Feed on Jan. 9 at the Shasta District Fairgrounds. We discussed the ongoing health care debate and the state of the economy. The food was great, and it was fun to see lots of familiar faces. The themed tables ranged from patriotic to outrageously humorous. Share your thoughts

Talking with a constituent during the annual Anderson Rotary crab feed on Saturday night

Agriculture Issues Discussed at Tehama County Event

I also had the opportunity to attend the Tehama County Cattlemen's Association Annual Winter Dinner, held at the Tehama County Fairgrounds. The event was sold out, the beef was fantastic, the music was great and the atmosphere was friendly. I had a great time visiting old friends and making new ones. It was particularly good to hear from the members about their thoughts on agriculture policy. Share your thoughts

Chatting with a cowboy at Tehama Cattlemen event