

Mr. Speaker, thank you for the recognition today.

You know, this building is a special place.

The British tried to burn it down in 1814. The 9/11 terrorist hijackers tried to fly a plane into it.

This floor has hosted Presidents from FDR to Reagan; it has hosted foreign heads of state from Winston Churchill to Nelson Mandela.

This body has passed legislation on big things like war and peace, civil rights and human freedom.

Abraham Lincoln, John Adams and John Kennedy all served here.

What an honor it is to have had the privilege of serving in this body, casting votes and giving voice to the people of Michigan's Eighth Congressional District for 14 years as their elected Representative.

I learned about service from my family. My mom ran the local Chamber of Commerce for 25 years. I thought everyone worked 100 hours a week for modest, or sometimes no, paycheck. My dad was a high school principal and football coach, and a Korean War Veteran.

My parents always did what was right for the right reason. I have always strived to live up to their example.

After my family, I learned another powerful lesson that called me to serve. As a young FBI agent in the City of Chicago, I was working an organized crime case. Mobsters were running houses of prostitution on the South side. I met a young girl working the case who became a great informant. She was 18 years old, from a small town - her whole life in front of her. Mobsters

convinced her to work on their movie sets. They got her addicted to drugs and to pay her debts to them, they turned her to prostitution.

Eventually, things got really bad for her so I knew I had to get her out, even though it cost me a good informant. I picked her up. By this point she had track marks all over her body and looked like she hadn't slept in a week. That young girl, desperate, looked up at me in the rear view mirror and said: "I never gave up because I always knew someone would come looking for me."

From my parents and my personal experience, I learned that public service can be an honorable thing that can make a difference in people's lives. It has always been my motivation. Not titles, fancy offices or shiny cars, but solutions and progress and making our community, our nation a little better off than how we found it.

For me it wasn't the easiest of paths. After proudly volunteering to serve in the Army and the FBI, I got the crazy notion to run against an incumbent Republican state Senator.

With some hard work and some fresh energy we won that race and every race we've ever run. I couldn't have done it without the support of my friends and family. One family friend signed on early after a lot of convincing. She later became my first Chief of Staff in the Michigan Senate and is here on the floor today – Anne Belser. Thank you Anne.

Then we got the crazy notion to run for Congress, deciding to run against then-Congresswoman Debbie Stabenow. Fortunately for me, Stabenow decided to run for Senate so the tossup seat became one of the closest races in the country, one we ultimately prevailed by a mere 111 votes in the Democrat year of 2000.

We did it by talking about solutions and people. We didn't run a single negative television ad and never have.

Once in Congress, we worked to secure funding for FRIB at Michigan State University and build the Latson Road interchange in Livingston County – things that will have a huge impact in those communities. We turned the House Intelligence Committee into a formidable oversight and policy leader on national security issues. From fighting the government takeover of health care to passing cyber security legislation and protecting cancer patients – together we have made a difference.

We helped thousands of constituents back home get Social Security payments they were owed, or help with the IRS. We worked to get constituents passports and had the privilege of giving thousands of tours here in the nations Capitol. And we helped Michigan veterans finally get medals they earned. It has been a privilege to do all these things on behalf of the people I represent.

On HPSCI, I was fortunate to be joined by such a great partner in Dutch Ruppersberger. Together we achieved what, I think, could be a model for other committees and for Congress writ large. We successfully passed four annual authorization acts – an achievement in of itself, as this was not done the previous six years – while still having fruitful, honest, and open dialogues. Together we managed to take the partisanship out of national security issues.

This was not an easy thing to do – we both had to resist the desires of many within our respective parties to be more partisan and more aggressive; avoid the petty politics and short term political gains for longer term consensus, agreement, and legislative success. Together we recognized that scoring cheap political points comes at the expense of effective oversight.

Did we agree on everything? Hardly. We would often have spirited debates about how to respond to various challenges, but Dutch and I never made it personal and we never sacrificed our principles.

With Dutch, the Committee was able to influence policy outcomes, provide real oversight, and make the Committee an effective body that both provided for our intelligence needs and held our intelligence professionals accountable.

Every Chief of Staff, Legislative Director, Staff Director and other staff members, fellows and interns helped us accomplish all of this. Literally, we just could not have accomplished what we did were it not for these dedicated public servants. Each of you could have made more in the private sector but you worked longer hours for less to try to be a part of something bigger than yourselves. That inspired and helped drive me every single day.

Many of these folks are here today: Chris Cox, Matt Strawn, Andy Keiser, Andrew Hawkins, Allan Fillip, Heather Strawn, Mike Ward, Diane Rinaldo, Kyle Kizzier, Michael Allen and Darren Dick.

And I couldn't have done it without my campaign teams from Terri Reid, Val Tillstrom, RJ Johnson, John Nevin, Katherine Van Tiem, Joe Rachinsky, and Mike Gula.

A simple thank you doesn't do justice to my level of appreciation to you and for being here with me today. I can't tell you all how proud I am to have had you on my team and how honored Kristi and I are to call you friends.

Thank you to Speaker John Boehner for your support and confidence in me and more importantly, in the mission of the intelligence community to keep the American people safe. I hope that the next leaders of the HPSCI will build upon the progress we have made.

And I know Mike Bishop will work hard for the conservative solutions to the problems facing the families back home in our district. I'm proud to pass the mantle to him and I thank him and his family for their willingness to step up to serve.

The issues confronting us, of course, are so much bigger than one Member of Congress.

While the politics of Washington, D.C. may seem petty, the smallest of our politics will never suffocate the greatest of our goals. I continue to believe that our leaders should not let the perfect be the enemy of the good when considering what is best for our country. As Thomas Jefferson said, "the ground of liberty is to be gained by inches." I hope the United States House of Representatives can appeal to our better angels – not take the easy, cheap road rarely based on facts for a quick headline, an unfair personal attack or an extra snarky Tweet.

But my primary concern for the future lies overseas, and our response to it.

Recently, we have seen what al Qa'ida-linked terrorists can achieve absent U.S. leadership and action. They have now taken an area the size of Indiana between parts of Northeastern Syria and Northern and Western Iraq. They are firing heavy artillery and driving tanks and Humvees and we have no effective plan to defeat them.

In Afghanistan – we are planning to withdraw prematurely as we did in Iraq, potentially undoing the gains made at great expense. In 2001, the life expectancy in Afghanistan was 43. Today it is 64. In 2001, 9% of the population had access to health care in Afghanistan. Today 60% do.

We are getting ready to walk away from the women of Afghanistan who have proudly come out of their homes to be part of society. In 2001 there were

basically no girls in school in Afghanistan, today there are 9,000,000. In 2001, there were zero women in the labor force and zero women in government. Today the labor force is 37% women and ¼ of the Parliament is made up of women. It was against the law to teach girls how to read. Leaving them vulnerable again will be a stain on our national character.

In Syria, we confront the criminal Assad regime -- that uses fighter jets, Scud missiles, and chemical weapons -- with meaningless threats, unenforced red lines, and empty speeches from Washington, DC. The most powerful nation on earth has done little, as more than 200,000 people have been slaughtered. Assad-regime barrel bombs have been crudely configured with toxic chlorine gas. One hit a school, killing 25 children sitting at their desks.

This Disneyland for jihadists in Syria has brought the largest pool of al Qa'ida fighters since 9/11 to Syria and has bled into Iraq. That represents as direct a threat to the United States as you will find.

In Iran, I fear that in desperation for a deal Iran's misdeeds, violations, and regionally destabilizing role will be overlooked. Long a state sponsor of terrorism, the Iranian government has plenty of American and British blood on its hands in Iraq.

On its nuclear program, Iran has never negotiated in good faith. As these negotiations continue, Iran enriches uranium, pursues nuclear-related research, and gains access to previously frozen assets and an easing of sanctions. At the same time, the United States has received little in return but a promise to keep talking.

The few restrictions on its nuclear program to which Iran has agreed are reversible. While the White House longs for a deal, Iran strengthens its hand.

Russia's continued aggression in Ukraine is likely a harbinger of more to come as Vladimir Putin seeks to rebuild the Czarist Russian Empire. Following his successful invasion and occupation of 20% of the country of Georgia, the world did little and Putin noticed. He has expanded his ambitions to what he calls New Russia, a terrifying flashback for free people in Bulgaria, Romania, and Ukraine. He rattles sabers at the Baltic nations and had his pilots buzz Alaska while the new Ukrainian Prime Minister spoke here in this building to a joint session of Congress.

The West does not seek a new Cold War, but history tells us that in order to preserve our freedom and that of others, together we must stand up to tyrants who bully Europe and free peoples who are inconvenient to their ambitions.

China follows a very similar and equally irresponsible model; hardly a month goes by without another example of Beijing's steady efforts to change the status quo by taking another island or reef to benefit its economic and security interests.

These provocations must be seen in the larger context of China's increasingly aggressive posture in Asia. For the moment, Beijing seems to be getting away with this aggressive behavior, and the longer it continues unchallenged, the harder it will be to unwind.

Since 1989, official Chinese defense spending has increased by nearly 13% each year. We must be prepared for the potential threat that a rising China poses.

If you want to see what the absence of American leadership looks like, open a newspaper or turn on the news. In the wake of our campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan it is understandable that many would want to retreat behind our

borders, take a step back and let other countries deal with their problems, to avoid intervening or taking action, to sit and watch, rather than become involved in foreign affairs. The temptations of isolationism are real, dangerous, and unfortunately seductive for many.

What I have heard overseas from my foreign counterparts and foreign heads of intelligence committees time and time again was “Where is the United States?” On a recent trip to the Middle East, a very senior intelligence official from a strong American ally grabbed my arm and said: “Please, Congressman, do not let the American people give up on themselves. We need your leadership. If you do not help us, who will? The Chinese? The Russians?”

I’m entirely convinced that the absence of our leadership has only emboldened our adversaries and eroded the confidence of our allies in our resolve and commitments to their and our mutual security. I don’t think there is a more dangerous combination of outcomes than those two. Not only do our adversaries feel as though they can act with impunity, but our allies question our commitments to them and consequently they feel as though they need to act alone, pursue alternative relationships, or unwilling to cooperate with us in the future.

American leadership must be backed by American strength – we must invest smartly in our national defense, support our servicemen and women while in uniform and after they leave. And that requires real investment and tough choices.

During the 60th Anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge, I was in the little town of Bastogne, Belgium. I met with elderly women there who described the horrific events of America’s fight against Nazi Germany. Recalling the stories with tears in their eyes as if it happened last week, these women spoke

about how when they were little girls young American GI's arrived to liberate them from a brutal, oppressive Nazi Germany. They spoke of big, strong, tough 18 and 19 year olds from every corner of America who, after fighting the Germans by day, would console them and give them the socks off of their feet at night. They GI's shared with them their candy, food and anything else they had.

Our military does not seek to acquire new lands or steal. We have selflessly rescued people from annihilation; we have brought a helping hand to peoples ravaged by natural disaster or disease. We have stood for democracy, human freedom and human dignity when others wouldn't. And we have helped defeat the evils of fascism and communism in the 20th Century.

When 300 girls are kidnapped in Nigeria there is but one country that raises its hand to help. When a natural disaster strikes an adversary like Iran or North Korea – we ship food and supplies with no strings attached or no hidden agenda.

The United States of America gives far more foreign aid than other nation of earth, more than twice as much as the second highest which is the United Kingdom. Russia and China aren't even on the map. We give \$37 billion to more than 170 nations. We seek no territory or resources.

The United States of America has committed spend \$15 billion to combat HIV/AIDS in Africa. This is the largest health program in world history by one country to assist another and reports say it saved more than one million lives – all in a foreign land.

On intelligence, America's capabilities have come a long way from the days when Secretary of State Henry Stimson declared that "gentlemen don't read

each other's mail" – intelligence is as old as warfare and as diplomacy. Spying may even be the second oldest profession, yet it is so often misunderstood.

Too often the debate about intelligence centers on the perceived failures of intelligence – the missed cues or signals – or the perception of overreach, of intelligence programs going beyond their supposed remits or acting outside the legal authorities. These debates and the debates around our intelligence programs all too often miss a critical fact – properly obtained intelligence saves lives and prevents conflicts. The British cracking of the ENIGMA code at Bletchley Park arguably shortened the war by two years; in the Pacific Theater, intelligence forecast the timing and direction of the Battle of Midway, turning the tide of war.

More recently intelligence efforts disrupted the Millennium plot, the embassy plots in the Middle East and countless other potential attacks. Intelligence also enabled our special operations professionals to rescue hostages in Somalia and Afghanistan, and countless other activities that will never be disclosed. Sadly the stories of heroism and success will not all be told; such is the nature of intelligence. Intelligence informs policies and helps prevent miscalculation.

Our intelligence professionals take extraordinary risks in the defense of this nation and they cannot do their job effectively if they are worried that they may be prosecuted after the fact for actions they were authorized to do. Their work is important and it keeps us safe.

We ask them to track nuclear and missile threats. And we demand they get it all right – every time.

Cyberwar has upended the traditional calculus of conflict and the boundaries of the battlefield. Cyber weapons are instantaneous – delivered over fiber optic cables, via satellite, and Wi-Fi they are the fastest weapons in a country's arsenal. A few keystrokes in one capital can result in the collapse of the power grid in another country. There is no escalation; there is no posturing.

There has been a lot of talk over the years about the hypothetical dangers of a "cyber pearl harbor." I would argue, however, that the threat of a catastrophic and damaging cyber attack on U.S. critical infrastructure like our power or financial networks is actually becoming less hypothetical every day.

What would happen to our collective confidence if the New York Stock Exchange or NASDAQ was breached and stock prices were manipulated? How would holiday travelers respond to the penetration of an air traffic control system? How would suburban families handle the collapse of a power grid due to a transformer explosion? These incidents may be passed off as merely hypotheticals, restricted to the realm of spy novels, but these are real scenarios that our intelligence professionals have seen in action.

If there is one thing I am supremely confident in, it is the spirit, resiliency, and strength of the American character. We do face substantial challenges, new and old threats, and national soul searching. We must work to reenergize our country and our fellow citizens by reminding them why America is so exceptional and why she is so special in the world. Together we must resist the temptations of isolationism, address the challenges we face, and build a brighter future for our country and our children. From my district in the great state of Michigan to the remotest parts of Afghanistan – I've seen what America is capable of and how strong its people are.

For me, I have always believed in our founders' idea of a citizen legislature. I had a career before politics and I will have one after. The genius of our institutions is they are not dependent on the individual temporary occupants privileged to serve.

After 24 years of humble, public service – first in the Army, then the FBI, State Senate and now Congress, I look forward to my next chapter. As I close this chapter please know that I am not done in the effort to bring back American exceptionalism. You may have lost my vote in Congress but not my voice. I look forward to building on our successes and continuing to confront America's challenges together.

To my beautiful wife Kristi, my daughter Erin, my son Jonathan, my supporters, friends and staff, I say thank you. Thank you for making me a better Member. Most importantly, of course, thank you to the people of Michigan's Eighth Congressional District for this incredible opportunity. You were always the most important part of my service.

Knowing how far we have come in this great country, yet how far we have to go, I hope I did my small part to make America a little safer and a little better place.

In closing, a few years back I was overseas in a pretty tough, remote neighborhood meeting with some of America's finest Special Forces personnel. These folks were in such a hostile neighborhood that they couldn't wear their uniforms outside and had grown long beards to go native. Well it so happened that when I was there one of the enlisted men was up for a promotion and I was asked to read the promotion orders, which is a great honor. Well, these are big, tough, burly dudes so we all huddle into one of the tents.

To not raise suspicion of the locals we shaded the windows over and one of the guys grabbed one of those small American flags you might carry during a 4th of July parade and he holds it up behind the soldier I am promoting.

As I read the orders the guys started singing the Star Spangled Banner in a hushed whisper. We all joined in. I'm pretty sure we got a verse wrong. And I know we all were all out of key. But I have to tell you, it was the most beautiful thing I have ever heard.

America is still worth fighting for.

Thank you. God bless you.

I yield back.