

Panetta Institute

Theme: Believe in America.

- Thank you to Secretary and Mrs. Panetta, Kristi and I are honored to be here with you tonight. Thank you Leon for your courage. Thank you for believing in something bigger than party, something bigger than even this President. And thank you for your service during an incredibly difficult time in our nation's history. You could have made a lot more money and had a lot less hassle by not coming back into government. But that's not who you are and America is better for your service.
- You know I was skeptical when Leon was named CIA Director. A former White House Chief of Staff and GASP a former Member of Congress to run the CIA??
- But the first time I met Leon I knew he'd be great. He cared deeply about the mission. He cared deeply about the people who were willing to put everything on the line. And most importantly, he dropped about six f bombs in our first meeting. I knew we had the right guy for the job!
- And it's a real honor to be up here with such a fine journalist as Barbara Starr, who always works to get the story right and inform the public on the critical issues happening around the world.
- To Senator Wyden, while we may not always agree on every issue, Ron is somebody who cares about getting something done. That's why I serve, that's why he serves and I have an incredible amount of respect for the work Ron does. You're absolutely making the right choice in having Senator Ron Wyden up here today. Now I would say sorry about Tuesday Ron, but I'm really not. Kidding of course, just kidding.
- You know from our founding, America has always been a unique nation. Never before was a country formed on the basis of the rule of law and the rights of the individual. Never before was a nation founded on the concept of self rule by the citizenry.
- Say what you want about any conflict we have been engaged with in the past hundred years, we seek no new territory. We seek no treasure. We do not seek to enslave a people.
- After World War I, the United States chipped in to try to help secure the peace. After World War II, the United States led the effort to rebuild war-torn Europe. We occupied no nation, we took no new land. We asked nothing in return.
- 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 people's lives – all in a foreign land. We sought no territory. We sought no resources.
- Now though, I worry that the lessons of engagement overseas are being lost after difficult challenges from Iraq and Afghanistan weigh on the mind. A strange confluence occurs where the views of those who naively believe murderous dictators will behave differently if we behave differently merges with those who are frustrated with events overseas. This group simply believes if we mind our own business, the world's problems will not follow us home, and others will have to sort it out for themselves.
- Unfortunately for humanity, history has shown that to be simply not true. That is not what happens in an interconnected world in the year 2014, or when you are the world's lone superpower. But you see, the folks in this room, we understand that this is the greatest nation in the history of the world, and our very way of life is worth defending. It's worth fighting for. And it's worth unabashedly protecting our interests, just as most every other nation has done throughout human history.
- Serving as Chairman of the House Intelligence Committee has been one of the greatest honors of my life. It has allowed me to travel all around world representing my fellow Americans and the United States government. 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 agree with him completely. We cannot ignore the world outside our borders. We must stay engaged. It is in our interests and in the interest of humanity. We are exceptional, and as the world's lone superpower, the United States of America has a responsibility to lead. This is certainly a challenge, but one to which we must rise if we are to secure our interests and promote the peaceful, legitimate interests of people around the world.
- Thank you for having me here today. And Secretary Panetta, I can't tell you how grateful I am for the honor and more importantly, to be able to call you a friend.