

Thank you so much to Rose and Ron and the entire Chamber of Commerce of Huntsville/Madison County for that kind introduction and warm welcome for a Yankee like myself!

Thank you so much for all you do for this wonderful community here in Huntsville. My brother Jim who most of you know served his last tour in the United States Army here at Redstone. Jim just loved it here and he and Reba can't thank you all enough for making them feel at home.

And for the rest of us Rogers family members, thank you for taking Jim in and keeping him so far away from us. We all love Jim, but having him in the U.S. so much after all those years deployed overseas has been a bit taxing on all of us.

There's actually some more Rogers family history in these here parts. My mom was born in Birmingham and met and married my dad here.

Once the Rogers finally got out of town the average IQ went through the roof I think. Well now with Jim and family moving to town, I guess it's gone down a tick. Sorry about that.

In all seriousness, this greater community is something special. In addition to spending time down here with Jim, I have had the great privilege to get to work with Congresswoman Terri Sewell since her appointment to the Intelligence Committee at the beginning of this year. What a tremendous asset she is to the Alabama delegation. She is such a quick learner and a forceful personality; I've decided it's just easier to be for whatever Terri is for than to actually fight her on it.

And Congressman Mo Brooks who represents Huntsville in Washington is a great advocate for this community with his service on the Armed Services, Science and Foreign Affairs Committee, he is really able to advocate for every issue that matters to this community back in Washington and he does it. He is also a familiar face in the Intelligence Community where he regularly comes down to learn the about the counter terrorism programs our country is employing to help keep America safe. Mo is the kind of smart, thoughtful, effective leader this community deserves.

And I even heard my nemesis; the other Mike Rogers spoke down here yesterday. Mike and I compromise the powerful, yet stagnant Mike Rogers caucus in Washington. He's a good friend and another great Member from Alabama.

You know I thought today I would talk about the current struggle America finds herself in today and your important role in that.

Your work here and your brain power helped position America as the sole superpower in the world. And why is that important? Why is that good for the world?

Your work here has helped protect America, our allies and our interests all around the world for three generations now. During the Cold War, missile defense led to the fall of the Soviet Union. And today missile defense you developed here protects our allies and our interests from Iranian, North Korean, Syrian missiles and others.

With Iran continuing down a dangerous path of developing a nuclear weapon, your efforts here become even more significant. In fact, we have more Patriot missiles deployed in the world today than ever in history.

Whether its space launch or GPS or imagery, the work in space you have helped pioneer down here has unleashed life-changing innovations in literally every aspect of life.

Why would we want to apologize for this? Why would we want to take a step back and let others take the lead in unleashing the innovation that helps mankind?

We see lots of people now in both parties wanting America to take a step back from our leadership role in the world. We see a lot of those same people now attacking America's counterterrorism programs that have been used so effectively to keep our country safe.

I think they forget that we have tried withdrawing from the world a couple of times in our history and it didn't work out so well.

After World War I, the isolationist movement took hold in American politics which of course contributed to Hitler's rise in Nazi Germany and our eventual involvement later in World War II, which at that point required an all-out American mobilization to save the free world from fascism.

After the Cold War, we withdrew from the world and ignored terrorist attacks in Africa, the USS Cole and the first World Trade Center in New York. That kind of naivety and wishful thinking helped lead to the loss of life of more than 3,000 innocents on 9/11.

I was in Washington that day looking out my office window at smoke billowing out from the Pentagon. I went out on the steps of the Capitol where we agreed, Republicans and Democrats, never again. Never again could we allow that to happen. So within the confines of the Constitution we all swore to uphold, we should aggressively pursue terrorists wherever they hide, while protecting the civil liberties of innocent Americans.

That's why people like Terri Sewell, Mo Brooks, Mike Rogers and I are such vociferous defenders are America's lawful counter-terrorism programs that are saving real lives from real terrorists today. This stuff is not a game, this is real.

To me, and I think to a lot of people in this room, America as the leader of the free world has worked out pretty well for us. We have the largest economy and the biggest middle class on the face of the earth, the best and the brightest from around the world seek to come to our shores and we have saved people from massacre when others wouldn't.

Who do we want in that leadership role if not for the United States of America?

The Russians? The Chinese? Do we think they are going to be a fair arbiter of right and wrong? Do we think they are going to protect individual rights and rights of minorities? Are they going to protect the kinds of things that those attacking America's counterterrorism programs today say they care about?

Thank you so much for having me. Thanks for what you do, thanks for your part in keeping America safe. I think we all can agree that America is still the greatest nation on the face of the earth and she is still worth fighting for.

God bless.