

WASHINGTON, DC – Congressman Steny H. Hoyer (MD) delivered remarks this morning on Dem

“Experience shows that the values of free societies can break down the strongest walls of oppression

“As Chairman of the Helsinki Commission, I watched first-hand as free speech, free association, and fr

“I have never forgotten the lesson: America’s military is a powerful weapon, but it is not the only one w

“The challenge is great—but no greater than other challenges that our Nation has faced and overcome

“Today I want to discuss how we can build on that tradition and continue to keep our Nation and its pe

“First, Democrats have aggressively stepped up the fight against terrorists. We’ve strengthened Ameri

“The attempted Christmas Day bombing, and the attempted bombing of Times Square, reminded us a

“President Obama also demonstrated that he learned the lessons of the Bush Administration’s conduc

“But protecting ourselves against terrorism does not just mean force of arms. That’s why Democrats, c

“President Obama is also strongly committed to nuclear nonproliferation—because the more nuclear v

“Finally, economic pressure is part of the wise use of strength. We all understand the danger posed b

“In all, this is a record of keeping America safe, and it’s one we can be proud of. It is the record of Dem

“That could and should be the spirit of this new struggle. But, months after 9/11, some chose to politica

“And we see the effects in the recurring partisan effort to paint many of President Obama’s moves as s

“Second, though force is, at times, clearly necessary, we learned from the Cold War that force alone d

“International development reflects our moral values and serves our economic interests. Poor and uns

“Third, the Cold War taught us that democracy, human rights, and economic freedom are the most powerful tools for promoting peace and prosperity in the world.

“Today we meet that objective when we understand that world’s democratic movements, in nations from Africa to Asia, are the best hope for a more peaceful and prosperous world.

“And most importantly, we promote democracy when we live our democratic values here at home. Tomorrow, we will continue to work to ensure that our democratic values are the foundation of our foreign policy.

“In sum, when we abandon our heritage, whether for expedience, or fear, or partisan advantage, we risk the stability and prosperity of our nation and the world.

“Fourth and finally, every one of these policies comes with a cost; every choice rules out other choices. We must be clear about the trade-offs we are making.

“That’s why the work of the president’s bipartisan fiscal commission is so important to our future—and why we must ensure that it is truly bipartisan.

“With our publicly-held debt reaching \$9 trillion, defense spending can no longer be exempt from the hard choices we must make.

“Last week, I spoke on the danger of debt to our prosperity and security. And I made clear that eliminating the debt is a top priority for me and for the American people.

“After years of grinding war, we still have the strongest military on earth—and thousands of men and women in uniform who are doing the job that we have entrusted to them.

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