

we understand from history: nobody is going to ever conquer Afghanistan. So, therefore, I hope the President will stay to his word and start bringing our troops home.

We are spending \$8 billion a month in Afghanistan, and yet throughout America, including my district, the Third Congressional District of North Carolina, we can't even fix the roads. We can't even fix the schools because we are spending money we don't have that we are borrowing from the Japanese, the Chinese, UAE and other countries.

It is time that this Congress speaks up and listens: 63 percent of the American people say it is time to get out of Afghanistan. So I hope that the President will speak tomorrow night about Afghanistan. I hope he will say that he intends to start bringing our troops home this year.

Mr. Speaker, I have here photographs of marines from the Camp Lejeune area, which is in my district. They are young, anywhere from 19 to 38 years of age, who have given their life for this country. And yet many times I wonder here in Congress why don't we bring up this issue of bringing our troops home from Afghanistan.

So, Mr. Speaker, tonight I want to thank you for giving me this chance to speak. I want to thank those who are on the floor, I hope you join us, RON PAUL and myself and JIMMY DUNCAN on our side, who have been saying that it is time to bring our troops home. Let's join together in a bipartisan way and start talking about bringing our troops home.

Mr. Speaker, before closing, as I do each and every night, as I think about the pain that I have seen at Walter Reed and Bethesda, I think about the families who are burying their loved ones now who have died in Afghanistan, that it is time to say to God, God please continue to bless our men and women in uniform and their families. God, in Your loving arms, hold the families who have given a child, dying for freedom in Afghanistan and Iraq.

□ 1920

God, please continue to bless the House and Senate that we will do what is right in Your eyes for Your people.

God, give wisdom, strength, and courage to President Obama that he will do what is right in Your eyes for Your people.

And three times I will say, God, please, God, please, God, please continue to bless America.

SMART SECURITY: INCREASE DEVELOPMENT AID

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, it's not often that you'll hear me, LYNN WOOLSEY, say this, but I have recently found myself on the same page of a very im-

portant issue, at least in principle, with the leaders of the tea party movement and other top lawmakers on the other side of the aisle.

They've said that the military budget must be on the table in any discussion about reducing Federal spending. I agree. I agree completely. The Progressive Caucus has for several years offered specific cuts that would in no way impact our ability to provide for the national defense but that would actually cut the Pentagon spending. Here is the problem, Mr. Speaker:

When it came time for the rubber to meet the road, well, guess what happened. The Republican Study Group released their list of cuts last week, and lo and behold, not a single dime of actual Pentagon cuts was in there.

What was included were irresponsible cuts to public housing, high-speed rail and economic development, among other things, to say nothing of what would happen to funding for national parks, Pell Grants and NIH, if they followed through with their plans to cut non-defense discretionary spending to what they recommend—to 2006 levels. But perhaps the most reckless of all was the proposal to zero out funding for USAID, the United States Agency for International Development.

It just goes to show the narrowness of their perspective when it comes to national security. When they think about protecting America, they think only of weapons and warfare. In fact, that's the approach our policymakers have taken for the last decade in Iraq and Afghanistan, and it has cost us nearly 6,000 American lives, plus more than \$1 trillion of the people's money, while doing next to nothing to defeat the terrorist threat.

What we need instead is a SMART Security policy, with humanitarian aid like the kind distributed by USAID as a centerpiece. Instead of a military surge, we need a civilian surge. Whenever there is poverty and deprivation around the world, we need to be there with assistance that promotes stability and keeps terrorism from taking root in the first place. I'm talking about everything from debt relief to democracy promotion, to human rights, to sustainable development, to education, especially including education for women and girls.

Mr. Speaker, development aid gives the taxpayer plenty of bang for the buck, and it actually costs pennies on the dollar. It represents a microscopic portion of the Federal budget. Yet development aid has great influence when it comes to creating the conditions for global stability and global peace.

If we are serious about national security in the 21st century, if we are serious about projecting moral authority and honoring American values, then we must dramatically increase humanitarian aid, and we must not cut it. If we are serious about deficit reduction, it is time to address the real waste and excess—the Pentagon—which has enjoyed a blank check for far too long.

So I applaud the majority if they are truly prepared to cut military spending; but so far, I hear more talking points than serious proposals. I have to remind you, Mr. Speaker, that it is all talk until it is not, and if the majority party wants to do something that would advance our security goals while dramatically reining in Federal spending, then they should join me in a call to immediately bring our troops home from Afghanistan.

THE RUNAWAY FEDERAL RESERVE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. PAUL) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, in the last several weeks, there have been several articles published by officials from the Federal Reserve system. This is a little bit unusual because they are critical of anybody who criticizes them and are critical of me in particular. In these articles, they are trying to discredit anybody who disagrees with their policies, and they are very defensive of this.

They have argued the case that they should have total secrecy. In this total secrecy, I claim they have tremendous power to do the things that they want to do, and it has only been recently that the American people and this Congress have awakened to this. Although we did not get a full audit of the Fed last year, we did get a partial audit of the emergency funding, but still the Fed's argument is they have to have total independency while the American people believe there should be transparency.

The Fed's argument is that they literally are the saviors of the economy, that they came in as an emergency when the markets were crashing, and that they were able to rescue the entire world economy by their injection of hundreds of billions, if not trillions, of dollars.

The fallacy of all this is that they may have rescued some banks and that they may have rescued some big businesses, but they didn't rescue the American people. The consequence of all this has been high unemployment, people losing their houses, and people who can't pay their mortgages.

So, in their claim that they prevented a deep depression, they prevented a depression for some very wealthy, well-connected people on Wall Street, who were making a lot of money anyway in the bubble period of time. Now the people who are suffering the most are the average people, who have had to suffer the consequence of the Federal Reserve policies. This is a policy that punishes the innocent people and that actually rewards the guilty people and the people who were the beneficiaries.

You know, the very people who are claiming that they have solved all of our problems are the very ones who created the problems, and they never

once predicted the trouble that was coming. There were numerous economists from around the country, especially the free-market Austrian economists, who predicted and explained the housing bubble—that it was coming and that there would be a collapse; but the people at the Federal Reserve, who now are claiming they solved all our problems, never once said that we could be in trouble.

When asked, they said, No, there's no housing bubble. Where do you get all this?

So now we are supposed to believe everything they tell us. They created it. They didn't tell us there was trouble coming, and now they've solved all of the problems, and we are not supposed to question this. If we do, then we're going to be on the receiving end of severe criticism.

The conclusion of many of these articles has been that they want to deflect the concentration on the Federal Reserve. They will say that, yes, there still are problems, but they're all on the Congress, that it has nothing to do with them. They save us from ourselves, and they take care of us. They create good times and take care of us when we are in bad times.

The whole thing is they claim that our deficits are a problem—and I agree with them on that. The deficits are a problem. But, if you think about it, why do the deficits get run up? We as Members of Congress—this whole Congress for decades on decades—have run up deficits to pay for welfare programs and warfare. Endless spending. We tax the people until we can't tax anymore. We borrow, and there is a limit on borrowing or your interest will rates go up.

Guess who monetizes the debt and enables the Congress to continue this spending. It's the Federal Reserve. They are the ones who literally facilitate the deficit financing.

So, for them to turn around and say it's all the blame of the Congress, they are absolutely being disingenuous. It is the Federal Reserve and a monetary system that encourages runaway deficits, runaway spending, runaway militarism, and runaway welfarism.

□ 1930

The Fed, over the years, has had two mandates: to have price stability and full employment. Well, think about the price stability. Did they have price stability with the NASDAQ stocks back in the year 2000 that collapsed when that bubble developed? Have they had steady prices, price stability with medical care costs or housing costs or education costs? No, absolutely none. Today, bond prices are sky high. We have a bond bubble going on right now, and it's the result of Federal Reserve policy, but they don't want you to think and talk about that.

And the full employment mandate, I mean, just think of it; the government, our government, Labor and Statistics admits there is 9.5 percent unemploy-

ment. And then they say, well, if you count more people who are partially unemployed, it's 17 percent. But if you have a free market approach and count everybody who's unemployed, our unemployment rate is 23 percent. That's why the American people are feeling lousy about what's going on, even though Wall Street once again is making money. The banks are making money, they're repaying their bills, but it's all because of a collusion between the Federal Reserve System, the banks, and the large corporations while the people are still unemployed.

Congress has a proper responsibility, and it is oversight. It was never meant for the Federal Reserve to have free rein and not have any oversight whatsoever. And we have to realize this whole issue of central banking is not a new issue; it was here from the very beginning. Hamilton and Jefferson argued about it; Jefferson and Jackson and many others were absolutely opposed to central banking. So it's not a new issue, but there is no authority in the Constitution that grants this right to have a central bank and to create money out of thin air just to accommodate the politicians.

We have a right and an obligation and a responsibility for oversight of the Federal Reserve, and our responsibility is to look at bad policy. The Federal Reserve is responsible for the inflation in the business cycle, the unemployment. It is up to us to do something about it and look into it, first to look into it and understand it because then it will be realized that we need to have more oversight.

Right now there is tremendous support; in the last Congress we had 320 Members of this House who supported an audit of the Fed. So we're making progress here. It annoys the Federal Reserve. For the first time in their history, they've hired a PR agency and lobbyists to lobby for their position. So they know they are under the gun as far as people are waking up and realizing that the Federal Reserve has been responsible for so much havoc that we've had in this country. I think it is our responsibility to continue to look at the Fed and find out how they have caused so much trouble.

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LIPINSKI) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, as a proud graduate of St. Symphorosa Grammar School and St. Ignatius College Prep, and as a strong supporter of Catholic education, I am again introducing a resolution to honor Catholic Schools Week and highlight the contributions to our Nation made by America's Catholic schools. Unfortunately, changes in House rules would like to prohibit this resolution from being brought to the floor, so I'm going to speak about it tonight.

Since 1974, the National Catholic Education Association and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops have provided exemplary leadership in conceptualizing and organizing Catholic Schools Week. This year, it is celebrated from January 30 through February 5. The theme this year is "Catholic Schools—A Plus for America," which celebrates the fact that Catholic schools are an added value, a plus for our Nation.

By always emphasizing the necessity of a well-rounded educational experience and instilling the values of giving back to the community and helping others, America's Catholic schools produce graduates that have the skills and strength of character needed by our businesses, governments, and communities. Nearly 95 percent of Catholic schools have a service program, and in 2009 their students contributed about half a million hours of service to their communities and parishes. My own desire to serve was fostered by dedicated teachers throughout my formative years at Catholic schools.

Today, over 2.1 million elementary and secondary students are enrolled in over 7,000 Catholic schools. Catholic school students, on average, surpass other students in math, science and reading in the three grade levels tested by the NAEP test. The graduation rate for Catholic high school students is 99 percent, with 97 percent going on to college or technical school. As we continually hear disturbing reports about our national test scores, these statistics are truly remarkable and should be commended.

Catholic schools are also known for embracing students from all walks of life and are highly effective in providing educational opportunities for minority students and disadvantaged youth. Almost 15 percent of students at Catholic schools are not Catholic. Over the past 30 years, the percentage of minority students enrolled in Catholic schools has more than doubled. Despite exceptional results, the success of Catholic schools does not depend on selectivity, as they accept nine out of every 10 students who apply.

Now in addition to producing well-educated students, Catholic schools save American taxpayers billions of dollars every year by lowering the number of students in already overburdened public schools. In fact, it is estimated that taxpayers in the Chicago area alone save over \$1 billion because of Catholic schools and approximately \$20 billion nationwide. The importance of these savings is undeniable to American taxpayers, especially now, while many State and local governments are struggling with budget gaps.

I was born and raised and lived in the Chicago archdiocese, which still has one of the most successful school systems in the country. More than 93,000 students attend 258 schools. In my district alone, there are seven Catholic high schools and about 50 grammar schools, including one of the best in my