Without objection, 5-minute voting will continue.

There was no objection. The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the resolution.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

RECORDED VOTE

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I demand a recorded vote.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The Speaker pro tempore. This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—aye 296, noes 181, not voting 15, as follows:

(Roll No. 190)

AYES—296

Adams  Fogle  McMorris
Adler  Garret  Rodgers
Aderholt  Geach  Roe
Alexander  Gibbs  Mica
Amash  Gibson  Miller (FL)
Auster  Gingrich (GA)  Miller (MI)
Bachmann  Gohmert  Miller, Gary
Bachus  Goodlatte  Mulvaney
Barletta  Gosar  Murphy (PA)
Barlett  Gowdy  Myrick
Bartlett  Grange  Neugebauer
Bass  Granger  Noem
Beshisheh  Graves (GA)  Nungesser
Berg  Griffith (AR)  Nunes
Biggs  Griffith (VA)  Nunnelee
Billings  Grubb  Ose
Bilirakis  Gingrich  Olson
Bishop (UT)  Guinta  Palazzo
Black  Hall  Paulsen
Blackburn  Hanner  Pearce
Boneema  Harner  Pence
Bono Mack  Harris  Petri
Bonata  Hart (OH)  Pitts
Brady (TX)  Hastings (WA)  Platts
Brooks  Hayworth  Poe (TX)
Buchanan  Heck  Pombo
Buchon  Hensarling  Price (GA)
Budish  Hoek  Price (OH)
Buxton  Hopper  Quayle
Calder  Horner  Rechard
Campbell  Horvath  Reed
Canseco  Hunter  Rheinhart
Canter  Hutto  Roe
Capito  Jenkins  Roy (NY)
Carter  Johnson (IL)  Roy (TN)
Caskey  Johnson (OH)  Rogers (AL)
Chabot  Johnson, Sam  Rogers (KY)
Chaffetz  Jones  Rogers (MI)
Coble  Kelly  Rolands
Collins (CO)  King (IA)  Roelofs
Conaway  King (NY)  Roskam
Crawford  Kingston  Ross (FL)
Crenshaw  Kline  Royce
Culberson  Lamborn  Runyan
Davis (KY)  Lane  Scalise
Denham  Landry  Schmidt
Deutz  Langford  Schweikert
DesJarlais  LaTourette  Scott (SC)
Dingell  Lewis (CA)  Scott (TN)
Duffy  Loblondo  Sessions
Duncan (SC)  Long  Sherrills
Duncan (TN)  Lucas  Shuler
Elgin  Loukens  Simpson
Emmer  Loux  Smith (NE)
Espanol  Loux  Smith (NJ)
Fincher  Mast  Smith, Mark (TX)
Fitzpatrick  Mannino  Smith, Scott (GA)
Fleischmann  Marchant  Stearns
Fleming  Manning  Stearns, Ron
Flores  McCarthy (CA)  Stastny
Forbes  Mc Caul  Sullivan
Fortenberry  McKinley  Terry
Fox  McCotter  Thompson (PA)
Frank (NJ)  McFadden  Thompson (TX)
Frelinghuysen  McKean  Toomey
Gallo  McKinley  Tipton

NOES—181

Ackerman  Alleva  Andrews
Baca  Balinett  Bass (CA)
Bass  Balinett  Bass (NY)
Berman  Bishop (GA)  Brouillette
Bishop (NY)  Bommarito  Boren
Bowser  Boyd (LA)  Brown (FL)
Brown (MD)  Butterfield  Capps
Capito  Carnahan  Carter
Carnahan  Caruso (IN)  Castor (FL)
Chandler  Chass  Cicilline
Clarke (CT)  Clay  Clyburn
Columbus (OH)  Clyburn  Connolly (VA)
Conyers  Cooper  Costa
Cotello  Courtney  Crenshaw
Crowley  Culver  Cummings
Davis (CA)  Davis (IL)  DeFazio
DeGette  Delahunt  Deutch
DeLay  Dennis  Doggett
Donnelly (IN)  Doyle  Doggett
Doolittle  Donnelly (NJ)  Donnelly (NY)
Drury  Downey  Edwards
Eliot  Ehlers  Edwards (MI)
Ellison  Elrod  Ehlers (TX)
Ellison  England  Elijah
Emanuel  Engel  Emmerich
Engstrom  Ensley  Espy
Etnyre  Evans  Evans
Frank (CA)  Frank (LA)  Frank (NY)

NOT VOTING—15

Clarke (NY)  Cohen  Cordray
Cohen  Jordan  Garamendi
Giffords  Giffords  Giulfieri
Gillibrand  Gillum  Gillum

1057

So the resolution was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

AFGHANISTAN WAR POWERS RESOLUTION

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to the order of the House of March 16, 2011, I call up the concurrent resolution (H.Res. 28) directing the President, pursuant to section 5(c) of the War Powers Resolution, to remove the United States Armed Forces from Afghanistan, and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WOMACK). Pursuant to the order of the House of Wednesday, March 16, 2011, the concurrent resolution is considered read.

The text of the concurrent resolution is as follows:

H. CON. RES. 28
Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring),

SECTION 1. REMOVAL OF UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES FROM AFGHANISTAN.

Pursuant to section 5(c) of the War Powers Resolution (50 U.S.C. 1544(c)), Congress directs the President to remove the United States Armed Forces from Afghanistan—

(1) by no later than the end of the period of 30 days beginning on the day on which this concurrent resolution is adopted; or

(2) if the President determines that it is not safe to remove the United States Armed Forces before the end of that period, by no later than December 31, 2011, or such earlier date as the President determines that the Armed Forces can safely be removed.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The concurrent resolution shall be debatable for 2 hours, with 1 hour controlled by the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. KUCINICH) or his designee and 1 hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent of Members of this Committee and the House to add to the concurrent resolution, for consideration by the House, the Concurrent Resolution for the Removal of Armed Forces from North Carolina (H.Res. 642).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The concurrent resolution shall be debatable for 2 hours, with 1 hour controlled by the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. KUCINICH) or his designee and 1 hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to this resolution, as it would undermine the efforts of our military and our international partners in Afghanistan and would gravely harm our Nation's security.

Insanity has been described as doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results. The hundreds of thousands of people who died on September 11 because we walked away once from Afghanistan, thinking that it didn't matter who controlled that country. We were wrong then. Let us not make the same mistake twice. Having completed our mission in Afghanistan is essential to keeping our homeland safe.

As Under Secretary of Defense Michele Flournoy stated in testimony to the Senate Armed Services Committee earlier this week, "The threat to the security of our friends and allies that emanates from the borderland of Afghanistan and Pakistan is not hypothetical.
There is simply no other place in the world that contains such a concentration of al Qaeda senior leaders and operational commanders. To allow this hostile organization to flourish in this region is to put the security of the United States and our friends and allies, and America’s reputation as a superpower, at risk.

To quit the area before we have rout-ed out the terrorists would not only hand al Qaeda a propaganda victory of immeasurable value, it would cede them a sanctuary from which they could launch fresh strikes at the west with virtual immunity. To withdraw from Afghanistan at this point, before we finish the job, is to pave the way for the next 9/11. Therefore, the question that we must consider is, Can we afford to abandon our mission in Afghanistan?

General David Petraeus, commander, International Security Assistance Force, ISAF, commander, U.S. Forces Afghanistan, stated, “I can understand the frustration. We have been at this for 10 years. We have spent an enormous amount of money. We have sustained very tough losses and difficult, life-changing wounds. But I think it is important to remember why we are there.”

There is no other vital national security interest, Mr. Speaker. It is about doing what is necessary to ensure that al Qaeda and other extremists cannot reestablish safe havens such as the ones they had in Afghanistan when the 9/11 attacks were planned against our Nation and its people. The enemy, indeed, is on the run. It is demoralized and divided. Let us not give up now.

Let us not betray the sacrifices of our men and women serving in harm’s way, and they ask for nothing in return, except our full support. Dedicated servants such as my stepson Douglas and daughter-in-law Lindsay, who served in Iraq—and Lindsay also served in Afghanistan. Dedicated servants such as Matt Zweig and Greg McCarthy of our IRS Committee majority staff, who just returned from serving a year in Kandahar and Kabul. And we thank them for their service. Let us follow the lead of our wounded warriors who, after long and arduous recoveries, volunteer to return to the battlefield to finish their mission. I urge our colleagues to oppose this dangerous resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. KUCINICH. I yield myself 2 minutes.

In the next 2 hours, we are going to demonstrate that the American people oppose this war by a margin of two to one. I will enter into the RECORD this Washington Post poll that was published on March 15 which says that nearly two-thirds of Americans say the war isn’t worth fighting.

In the next 2 hours, we are going to demonstrate that we are spending $100 billion a month on this war. There are those who are saying the war could last at least another 10 years. Are we willing to spend another $1 trillion on a war that doesn’t have any exit plan, for which there is no timeframe to get out, no endgame, where we haven’t defined our mission? The question is not whether we can afford to leave. The question is, can we afford to stay? And I submit we cannot afford to stay.

In the next 2 hours, we are going to demonstrate that the counterintelligence strategy of General Petraeus is an abysmal failure, and it needs to be called as such. So I want to conclude this part of my presentation with an article that appeared in The New York Times, which says, “What are we doing spending $110 billion this year supporting corrupt and unpopular regimes in Afghanistan and Pakistan that are almost identical to the governments we are applauding the Arab people for overthrowing?”

[From The Washington Post, Mar. 15, 2011]
POLL: NEARLY TWO-THIRDS OF AMERICANS SAY AFGHAN WAR ISN’T WORTH FIGHTING

(By Scott Wilson and Jon Cohen)

Nearly two-thirds of Americans now say the war in Afghanistan is no longer worth fighting, the highest proportion yet opposed to the conflict, according to a new Washington Post-ABC News poll.

The finding underscores a challenge for President Obama as he decides how quickly to pull U.S. forces from the country beginning this summer. After nearly a decade of conflict, public opposition to the battle breaks sharply along partisan lines, with only 19 percent of Democratic respondents and half of Republicans surveyed saying the war is worth continuing, according to the poll.

Nearly three-quarters of Americans say Obama should withdraw a “substantial number” of combat troops from Afghanistan this summer, the deadline he set to begin pulling out some forces. Only 39 percent of respondents, however, say they expect him to withdraw large numbers.

The Post-ABC News poll results come as Gen. David H. Petraeus, the U.S. commander in Afghanistan, prepares to testify before Congress on Tuesday about the course of the war. He is expected to explain questions about a conflict that is increasingly unpopular among a broad cross section of Americans.

Petraeus will tell Congress that “things are progressing very well,” Pentagon spokesman Geoff Morrell said Monday. But because of battlefield gains made by U.S. and coalition forces since last year, Morrell told MSNBC, “it’s going to be heavy and intensive in terms of fighting” once the winter cold passes.

The poll began asking only in 2007 whether the Afghan war is worth fighting, but support has almost certainly never been as low as it is in this survey.

The growing opposition presents Obama with a difficult political challenge ahead of his 2012 reelection effort, especially in his pursuit of independent voters.

Since Democrats took a beating in last year’s midterm elections, Obama has appealed to independents with a middle-of-the-road approach to George W. Bush-era tax cuts and budget negotiations with Republican leaders on Capitol Hill. He called a news conference last week to express concern about rising gasoline prices, an economic challenge pressing for many independent voters.

But his approach to the Afghan war has not won over the independents or liberal Democrats in the party, according to two national polls taken two years ago, and the most recent Post-ABC News poll reinforces the importance of Republicanism as the chief constituency supporting his strategy. The results suggest that the war will be an awkward issue for the president as he looks for ways to end it.

Nearly 1,000 U.S. troops have died since the fighting began in 2001.

During his 2008 campaign, Obama promised to bring American troops out of Iraq, which he opposed, and devote more resources to the flagging effort in Afghanistan, which he called an essential front in combating Islamist terrorism targeting the United States.

After a months-long strategy review in the fall of 2009, he announced the deployment of an additional 30,000 U.S. troops to Afghanistan—taking the total to more than 100,000—and a July 1 deadline for the start of their withdrawal.

The number of respondents to the Post-ABC News poll who say the war is not worth fighting has risen from 44 percent in late 2009 to 64 percent in the survey conducted last week.

Two-thirds of independents hold that position, according to the poll, and nearly 80 percent said Obama should withdraw a “substantial number” of troops from Afghanistan this summer. Barely more than a quarter of independents say the costs, and for the first time a majority feel “strongly” that it is not.

Obama, who met with Petraeus on Monday at the White House, has said he will determine the pace of the withdrawal by assessing conditions on the ground.

The same time, U.S. and NATO forces have come under sharp criticism from the Afghan government. Over the weekend, after a NATO bombing killed an Afghan President Hamid Karzai demanded that international troops “stop their operations in our land,” a more pointed call than previous requests he has made following such deadly NATO mistakes.

The telephone poll was conducted March 10 to 13 among a random national sample of 1,005 adults. Results from the full poll have a margin of sampling error of plus or minus 3.5 percentage points.

The survey also asked respondents to assess Obama’s performance in managing the political changes sweeping across the Middle East and North Africa. Overall, 45 percent of respondents approve of his handling of the situation, and 44 percent disapprove.

In Libya, where Moammar Gaddafi is batting a rebel force seeking to end his 41-year rule, Obama is under increasing pressure to implement a no-fly zone over the country to prevent the Libyan leader from taking back lost territory and to protect civilians from government reprisals.

Nearly six in 10 Americans say they would support U.S. participation in a no-fly zone over Libya, the poll found, despite recent warnings from Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates that doing so would be a “major operation.”

But the survey found that American support dips under 50 percent when it comes to unilateral U.S. action, as Democrats and independents peel away.

When told that such a mission would entail U.S. warplanes bombing Libyan antiaircraft positions and “continuous patrols,” about a quarter of those initially advocating U.S. participation turn into opponents.

After a meeting Monday with Danish Prime Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen, Obama said, “We will work hard to coordinate closely both through NATO as well as the United Nations and other inter-nation leaders to look at the option that’s available to us in bringing about a better outcome for the Libyan people.”

In general, Americans do not think that the changes in the Middle East and North Africa will prove beneficial to U.S. economic and security interests.
More than seven in 10 respondents said demonstrators are interested in building new governments, although not necessarily democratic ones. Almost half of those surveyed believed as well as undermining the United States’ ability to fight terrorist groups in the region.

[From the New York Times, March 6, 2011]
The $110 Billion Question
(By Thomas L. Friedman)

When one looks across the Arab world today at the stunning spontaneous democratic uprisings, it is impossible to not ask: What if the U.S. were spending $110 billion a year supporting corrupt and unpopular regimes in Afghanistan and Pakistan that are almost identical to the governments we’re applauding the Arab people for overthrowing?

Ever since 9/11, the West has hoped for a war of ideas within the Muslim world that would feature an internal challenge to the violent radical Islamic ideology of Osama bin Laden and Al Qaeda. That contest, though, never really materialized because the regimes we counted on to promote it found violent Muslim extremism a convenient foil, so they allowed it to persist. Moreover, any genuine capitalist re- gimes were hardly the ideal carriers for an alternative to bin Ladenism. To the contrary, it was their abusive behavior and vicious suppression of any kind of independent moderate centrist parties that fueled the extremism even more.

Now the people themselves have taken down the republics in Egypt and Tunisia, and they’re rattling the ones in Libya, Yemen, Bahrain, Oman and Iran. They are not doing it for us, or to answer bin Laden. They are doing it for themselves—for themselves—because they want their freedom and to control their own destinies. But in doing so they have created a hugely powerful, modernizing challenge to bin Ladenism, which is why Al Qaeda today is tongue-tied. It’s a beautiful thing to watch.

Al Qaeda’s answer to modern-day autocracy was its version of the seventh-century Caliphate. But the people—from Tunisia to Yemen—have come up with their own answer to violent extremism and the abusive regimes. It’s called up. It’s calling up. It’s calling up. And that brings me back to Afghanistan and Pakistan. That is the Afghan regime we will spend more than $110 billion in 2011 to support.

And tell me that Pakistan’s intelligence service, ISI, dominates Pakistani politics, isn’t the twin of Hosni Mubarak’s security service. Pakistan’s military leaders play the same game Mubarak did with us for years. For years, they are whispering in our ears: “Psst, without us, the radical Islamists will rule.”

That same kind of pillaging of assets—natural resources, development aid, the meager savings of a million Kabul Bank depositors and croaky contracts—has fueled a similar insurrection against the Afghan and Pakistan regimes we’ve been propping up in Kabul and Islamabad.

The truth is we can’t do much to consolidate the democracy movements in Egypt and Tunisia. They’ll have to make it work themselves. But we could do what we can, which is divest some of the $110 billion we’re laying there into the Afghan regime and the Pakistani Army and use it for debt relief, schools and scholarships to U.S. universities for young Egyptians and Tunisians who had the courage to take down the very kind of regimes we’re still holding up in Kabul and Islamabad.

I know we can’t just walk out of Afghanistan and Pakistan; there are good people, too, in both places. But our involvement in these two countries—150,000 troops to confront Al Qaeda—is totally out of proportion today with our interests and out of all sync with our values.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. SMITH), the ranking member of the Armed Services Committee.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to this resolution, and I do so as one who does firmly believe that we need to, as soon as we responsibly can, end our military engagement in Afghanistan. The cost is very real.

I represent Joint Base Lewis-McChord, which includes Fort Lewis Army Base, and we have lost many soldiers in Afghanistan. The families understand the cost. We need to wind down this war as quickly and as responsibly as we can. Unfortunately, this resolution does not give us the opportunity to do that. And we have clear national security interests in Afghanistan.

While I may agree with many of the statements about the troubles and challenges that we face in that region, the one thing that you will hear today that I cannot agree with is the idea that we have no national security interests in Afghanistan and Pakistan, or that we somehow do not have a clear mission. We have a clear mission. We do not want the Taliban and their al Qaeda allies back in charge of Afghanistan or any significant part of Afghanistan from which they could plot attacks against us, as they are still trying to do in the parts of Pakistan that they are in.

We need to get an Afghanistan Government that can stand up, and they are going to need our help to get there. Now there are many who have argued—and I am sure some on both sides of the aisle would be sympathetic with the notion that we need more commitment there—that a full-scale counterinsurgency effort, or 100,000 U.S. troops and 150,000 NATO and U.S. troops combined, is too much. Let’s go with a much lighter footprint. Many have advocated that. Focuses on counterterrorism, focuses on going after the terrorists, and allows the Afghans to take the lead on everything else. And there is a plausible argument for that. This resolution does not allow that.

The ranking member of this Chamber to understand this resolution requires complete withdrawal of all U.S. forces by the end of this year. And I can tell you, as the ranking member on the Armed Services Committee, that is not in the national security interest of this country.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. BERMAN. I yield the gentleman 1 additional minute.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. We may have a legitimate debate about what our presence should be, how we should change it, but the notion that we can simply walk away from this problem, as Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN pointed out, is simply not true. And it is a problem that, believe me, I, as much as anyone in this body, would love to be able to walk away from. It is an enormous challenge. And what Mr. Friedman has to say about the governments of Afghanistan and Pakistan is spot on. But the problem is, we can’t walk away from them and let them fall because of the national security implications that that has for our friends here at home, given what the Taliban and al Qaeda would plan. I am all in favor of a more reasonable plan for how we go forward in Afghanistan, but simply heading for the hills and leaving is not a responsible plan. It’s not even a plan for how to deal with the very difficult challenges that we face in that region, and I urge this body to oppose this resolution.

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH) for yielding me half of his time, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

That’s why this debate and this resolution is so important, not important for those of us in the House, but important for our military and the American people.

And Mr. KUCINICH did make reference to The Washington Post-ABC poll that was taken a couple of days ago that said 73 percent of the American people said it’s time, this year, to bring our troops home.

In conclusion, I would like to share a quote from the leader of Afghanistan, Mr. Karzai. He said that we have in Afghanistan all right now, he’s our man. And this was his quote 3 days ago: “I request that NATO and America should stop these operations on our soil,” Karzai said. “This war is not on our soil. If this war is against terror, then this war is not here. Terror is not here.”

The number of al Qaeda and their presence in Afghanistan is about 20 or 30. Most of them are in Pakistan. I would agree with that. But this debate is critical.

Before I reserve the balance of my time, I want to share very quickly a letter from a retired colonel who’s a marine that lives in my district: “I am writing this letter to express my concern over the current Afghanistan war. I am a retired marine officer with 31-years of active duty. I retired in 2004 due to service limitations, or I am sure I would have been on my third or fourth deployment by now to a war that has gone on too long.”

And I’ll go to the bottom of this: “It makes no sense if we’re there 4 years or 40. The results will be the same.”

And he closed his letter this way: “This war is costing the United States billions of dollars a month to wage, and we still continue to get more young Americans killed. The Afghan war has no end date for us.

“I try to make contact with all the current and newly elected men and women in Congress and ask them to end this war and bring our young men and women home. If any of my comments will assist in this effort, you are welcome to use them and my name.

Respectfully, Dennis G. Adams, Lieutenant Colonel, retired, United States Marine Corps.”

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. KUCINICH. I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY).

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise in absolute support of the resolution offered by the gentleman from Ohio.

The war in Afghanistan, almost 10 years old, has been an utter failure in every possible way. It hasn’t eliminated the terrorist threat. It hasn’t destroyed the Taliban. It hasn’t advanced national security objectives. It hasn’t promoted a vibrant democracy in Afghanistan. It hasn’t done any of the things needed to do in this resolution.

And General Petraeus’ testimony this week didn’t inspire much confidence either. He continues to offer the same vague reassurances about progress we’ve supposedly made, while being sure to say that challenges remain so he can continue justifying a substantial troop presence in Afghanistan. But I’m not reassured in the least. And much more importantly, the American people aren’t.

After 9½ years, after seeing 1,500 of their fellow citizens killed, after writing a check to the tune of $386 billion, they’ve had enough. They are angry, they are frustrated, as well they should be.

A new poll shows that nearly two-thirds of Americans, 64 percent, think the war isn’t worth fighting. This is one of the least popular things our government is doing, and yet it’s just about the only one Republicans don’t want to cut.

I think it’s about time the people’s House listened to the people on the issue of war and peace and life and death. We need to negotiate, and we need to bring our troops home.

I reserve the balance of my time.
Mr. Speaker, I want to send a clear message to the Afghan people and government, our coalition partners, our military men and women and that this Congress will stand firm in our commitment to free us from the problems that this Taliban created for us on 9/11. We will not have this sanctuary ever happen again.

I urge my colleagues to vote “no” on this resolution.

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in opposition to the resolution.

Mr. Speaker, this is the third debate we have had pursuant to a war powers resolution in the last year.

I completely agree with the gentleman from Ohio that as we are moving into the 10th year of this conflict, it is critical—not just nice, it is really critical for the House to have an open and honest debate on the merits of our ongoing military operations in Afghanistan, and that debate should be outside of the context of a defense spending bill.

But what I also do is take strong issue with the invocation of section 5(c) of the War Powers Act as the basis for this vote. And we are here to respect the law and the procedures, you have to remember that it is that section which authorizes a privileged resolution, like the one we have before us today, to require the withdrawal of U.S. Forces when they are engaged in hostilities and Congress has not authorized the use of military force.

There may be aspects of our operations around the world that people can claim under section 5(c) of the War Powers Act as the basis for this vote, but we are here to respect the law and the procedures, you have to remember that it is that section which authorizes a privileged resolution, like the one we have before us today, to require the withdrawal of U.S. Forces when they are engaged in hostilities and Congress has not authorized the use of military force.

There is nothing fiscally conservative about this war, and I think conclusions should be the people most horrified by this war.

Alfred Regnery, the publisher of the Conservative American Spectator magazine, wrote last October: “Afghanistan has little strategic value, and the war is one of choice rather than necessity.” And he added that it has been a “wasteful and frustrating decade.”

The worst thing about Iraq and Afghanistan is all the young people who have been killed. But it is also very sad, Mr. Speaker, that we have spent hundreds of billions of dollars—in fact, some estimates are $2 trillion or $3 trillion now in indirect costs—to carry on these two very unnecessary wars.

Our Constitution does not give us the authority to run another country, and that is basically what we have been doing. We have been doing more nation building and more civilian functions than anything else, and we have been turning the Department of Defense, at least in Iraq and Afghanistan, into the Department of Foreign Aid.

I had a conservative Republican elected official from my district in my office this past Monday. His son is in Afghanistan in the Army. And he said he asked his son recently what we were accomplishing there, and he said his son said, “Dad, we’re accomplishing nothing.”

We seem to be making the same mistakes in our policies toward Afghanistan that we made in Iraq. Even General Petraeus has said some time ago that we should never forget that Afghanistan has been known as the “graveyard of empires.”

George C. Wilson, a military columnist for the Congressional Daily, wrote a few months ago: “The American military’s mission to pacify the 40,000 tiny villages in Afghanistan will look like mission impossible, especially if our bombings keep killing Afghan civilians and infuriating the ones who survive.”

The Center for Defense Information said late last year we have now spent $2 trillion on war-related costs in Afghanistan, and $1.63 trillion so far on the war and war-related costs in Iraq. As I said a moment ago, these figures should astound fiscal conservatives.

Georgie Anne Geyer, a syndicated columnist, wrote a few years ago: “Critics of the war have said since the beginning of the conflict that Americans, still strangely complacent about our beginning of the conflict that Americans, still strangely complacent about our overseas wars being waged by minorities in their name, will inevitably face a point where they will see they have to have a government that provides services at home or one that seeks empire across the globe.”
I just finished, Mr. Speaker, a few weeks ago doing field hearings around the country in relation to the transportation and highway bill. These were done in Oklahoma, Arkansas, West Virginia, and west Tennessee—very conservative districts. And in each of those places, I said that it’s time that we stop spending hundreds of billions on these unnecessary foreign wars and stop rebuilding in Iraq and Afghanistan and start rebuilding the United States of America.

In each of those conservative districts, the people erupted into applause. Only 31 percent of the American people, according to the latest ABC/Newsweek poll that just came out, think this war is still worth it.

William F. Buckley, the conservative icon, wrote a few years ago that he supported the war in Iraq and then he became disillusioned by it, and he wrote these words: ‘‘A respect for the power of the United States is engendered by our success in engagements in which we take part.’’

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. JONES. I yield the gentleman an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee. William Buckley said: ‘‘A point is reached when tenacity conveys steadfastness of purpose but misapplication of pride.’’

President Karzai last year told ABC News he wanted us to stay there another 15 or 20 more years. That’s because he wants our money. This war is more about money and power. Every gigantic bureaucracy always wants more money, but this war has gone too far and too long, and I support this resolution.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on House Concurrent Resolution 28.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection?

There was no objection.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. With that, Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Florida.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you for your steadfast commitment to the men and women who gallantly serve our country on the battlefield.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the resolution. First, let me get one argument out of the way. I’ve heard before some of my colleagues who support the war in Afghanistan from Afghanistan describe this effort as a fiscal matter. I would respond to that argument by simply stating that it’s not a question of whether we can afford to fund a military presence in Afghanistan, it’s a matter of whether we can afford not to, particularly at this point.

I think my colleagues know that I’m very uncomfortable spending taxpayer money in a conflict long after the purpose of it is determined and I would match my fiscal conservative credentials with anybody in this body. But when it comes to national security and when it comes to the care and protection of our troops in harm’s way, we must not be, to use a phrase that you often hear on this floor, penny wise and pound foolish.

Further, a premature withdrawal of American troops from the Afghan theater would send a terrible message to both our friends and also to our adversaries. To our allies in the war on terrorism whom we would leave essentially twisting in the wind, to those 47 other nations that have joined the coalition in Afghanistan, we would essentially be saying, ‘‘Good luck, You’re on your own.’’ Not exactly what they had in mind when they joined us in this fight.

And, of course, to al Qaeda and to the Taliban, whom we would embolden by adopting this resolution, we would be providing, once again, the sanctuary which they enjoyed in Afghanistan before our Armed Forces reversed their momentum.

I don’t often find myself in agreement with President Obama’s policies, but I did agree with him when he said a little more than a year ago, ‘‘I am convinced that our security is at risk in Afghanistan and Pakistan. This is the epicenter of violent extremism practiced by al Qaeda. It is from here that we were attacked on 9/11, and it is here that new attacks are being plotted as I speak.’’ That was President Obama.

I also agree with General Petraeus who said last week that ‘‘our core objective in Afghanistan, needless to say, is to ensure that the country does not become a sanctuary once again for al Qaeda, the way it was prior to 9/11.’’

I know memories fade with time, but it’s been not quite 10 years since 3,000 lives were lost on American soil—in New York, in Pennsylvania, and just minutes from here down the street at the Pentagon. Let’s not forget what al Qaeda did then and let’s keep working to prevent it from happening again. Let’s not quit until the job is done.

Vote ‘‘no’’ on this resolution.

Mr. KUCINICH. I would like to insert into the RECORD a report from the United Nations that says that 2010 was the worst year for civilian casualties in Afghanistan with nearly 3,000 civilians killed.

AFGHANISTAN—ANNUAL REPORT ON PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS IN ARMED CONFLICT 2010

Kabul, Afghanistan, March 2011

Executive Summary

The human cost of the armed conflict in Afghanistan is unimaginable; the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission and UNAMA Human Rights recorded 2,777 civilian deaths in 2010, an increase of 15 percent compared to 2009. Over the past four years, 8,832 civilians have been killed in the conflict, with civilian deaths increasing each year. The worsening human toll of the conflict reinforces the urgent need for parties to the conflict to do more to protect Afghans, who, in 2010, were killed and wounded in the highest numbers in even greater numbers. UNAMA Human Rights and the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission urge the Anti-Terrorism and Other Pro-Government Forces to strengthen civilian protection and fully comply legal obligations to minimize civilian casualties.

CIVILIAN DEATHS

Of the total number of 2,777 civilians killed in 2010, 2,698 deaths (75 percent of total civilian deaths) were attributed to Anti-Government Elements, up 28 percent from 2009. Suicide attacks and improvised explosive devices (IEDs) caused the most civilian deaths, totaling 1,141 deaths (55 percent of civilian deaths attributed to Anti-Government Elements). The most alarming trend in 2010 was the huge number of civilians assassinated by Anti-Government Elements. Four hundred and sixty-two civilians were assassinated representing an increase of 105 percent per cent compared to 2009. Half of all civilian assassinations occurred in southern Afghanistan. Helmand province saw a 588 percent increase in the number of civilians assassinated by Anti-Government Elements and Kandahar province experienced a 218 percent increase compared to 2009. Afghan national security and international military forces (Pro-Government Forces) were linked to 440 deaths or 16 percent of total civilian deaths, a reduction of 26 percent from 2009. Anti-Government elements claimed the largest percentage of civilian deaths caused by Pro-Government Forces in 2010, causing 171 deaths (39 percent of the total number of civilian deaths attributed to Pro-Government Forces). Notably, there was a 52 percent decline in civilian deaths from air attacks compared to 2009. Nine percent of civilian deaths in 2010 could not be attributed to any party to the conflict.

I would like to put into the RECORD a report from the Afghanistan Rights Monitor relating to the number of civilians killed and wounded and displaced.

ARM ANNUAL REPORT

CIVILIAN CASUALTIES OF WAR

JANUARY—DECEMBER 2010

Kabul, Afghanistan, February 2011

Executive Summary

Over nine years after the internationally-celebrated demise of the repressive Taliban regime in Afghanistan, civilian Afghans increasingly suffer from the armed violence and rights violations committed by various protagonists. Internal and external conflict in ordinary Afghans were killed and injured in 2010 than a year before. And while US officials dubbed Afghanistan as their longest foreign war, Afghans suffered it for 32 years relentlessly.

Almost everything related to the war surged in 2010: the combined numbers of Afghan and foreign fatalities; security incidents mounted to over 100 per week; more fighters from all warring sides were killed; and the number of civilian people killed, wounded and displaced hit record levels.

Collecting information about every security incident and verifying the often conflicting reports about Afghan civilians were extremely difficult and risky. The war was as heatedly fought
through propaganda and misinformation as it was in the battlefields thus making indep-endent and impartial war reporting tricky and complex.

Despite all the challenges, we spared no ef-forts in gathering genuine information, facts and figures about the impacts of war on ci-vilian communities. Our resources were lim-ited and we lacked the luxury of obtaining political support from one or another side of the conflict because we stood by our profes-sional integrity. We, however, managed to use our knowledge and experience to delve into a wealth of local information available in the conflict-affected villages in order to seek more reliable facts about the war.

From 1 January to 31 December 2010, at least 2,421 civilians were killed and over 3,270 were injured in conflict-related se-curity incidents across Afghanistan. This means every day 7-8 noncombatants were killed and 8-9 were wounded in the war.

ARM does not claim that these numbers—although collected and verified to the best of our efforts—are comprehensive and perfect. Actual numbers of the civilian victims of war in 2010 could be higher than what we gathered and present in this report.

Unarmed civilians comprised 62 percent of the re-ported civilian deaths and 70 percent of the injuries were attributed to the Armed Oppo-sition Groups (AOGs) (Taliban, Hezb-e-Islami and the Haqanni Network); 39 percent of civilians (612 individuals) and 22 percent of injuries (655) were attributed to US/NATO forces; and 12 percent of deaths (278 individuals) and 7 percent of injuries (177 individuals) were caused by pro-gov-ernment Afghan troops and their allied local militia forces.

In addition to civilian casualties, hundreds of thousands of people were affected in vari-ous ways by the intensified armed violence in Afghanistan in 2010. Tens of thousands of people were forced out of their homes or de-privileged from education and livelihood opportuni-ties due to the con-tinuation of war in their home areas.

In November 2010, ARM was the first organ-ization to voice concerns about the destructi-on of dozens of houses, pomegranate trees and orchards in several districts in Kandahar Province by US-led forces as part of their counter-insurgency operations. In January 2011, an Afghan Government delega-tion reported the damage costs at over US$500 million. However, the US military forces have doled out less than $2 million.

Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) are widely considered as the most lethal tools of warfare in Afghanistan, with growth in the number of roadside bombs or IEDs.

There were several programs specifically targeted at problems that developed in the Afghan and Iraq wars: Coalition support to cover the logistical costs of allies, primarily Pakistan, conducting counter-terrorism operations in sup-port of U.S. efforts; Commanders EmergencyResponse Projects (CERP) and Joint Improvised Explosive Device (IEDs) Defeat Fund to pay the cost of training, equipping and ex- panding the size of the Afghan and Iraqi ar-my, police and border-guard forces; and the US Permanent Mission to the UN and NATO Security Forces Fund and the Iraq Security Forces Fund to pay the cost of training, equipping and ex- panding the size of the Afghan and Iraqi ar-my, police and border-guard forces.

I would like to put into the RECORD an article by Nobel prize-winning econ-omist Joseph Stiglitz and Linda Bilmes in the Washington Post that says there is no question the Iraq war added sub-stantially to the Federal debt.

The Three Trillion Dollar War—The Cost of the Iraq and Afghanistan Conflicts Have Grown to Staggering Proportions

(By Joseph Stiglitz and Linda Bilmes)

The Bush Administration was wrong about the costs of the war and it was wrong about the costs of the war. The president and his advisers expected a quick, inexpensive conflict. Instead, we have a war that is costing more than anyone imagined.

The cost of direct US military operations—not even including long-term costs such as taking care of wounded veterans—already exceeds the cost of the 12-year war in Viet-nam and is more than double the cost of the Korean War.

And, even in the best case scenario, these costs do not project to the true costs. At double the cost of the first Gulf War, almost three more than the cost of the Vietnam War, and twice that of the First World War. The only war in our history which cost more was the Second World War, when 16.3 million U.S. troops fought in a campaign lasting four years, at a total cost (in 2007 dollars, after adjusting for inflation) of about $5 trillion (that’s $5 million, or £2.5 million, million). With virtually the entire armed forces committed to fighting the Germans and Jap-nese, the per capita cost (US$ cost per dollar) was less than $1000 in 2007 dollars. By con-trast, the Iraq war is costing upward of $4000 per troop.

Most Americans have yet to feel these costs. The price in blood has been paid by our voluntary military and by hired contractors. The price in treasure has, in a sense, been financed entirely by borrowing. Taxes have not been raised to pay for it—in fact, taxes on the rich have actually fallen. Defi-cit spending gives the illusion that the laws of economics can be repealed. These are both mis-leaders. Taxes can have both guns and butter. But of course the laws are not repealed. The costs of the war are real even if they have been deferred, pos-sibly to another generation.

Background

American voters must choose: more bene-fits or more defence; $3 trillion budget leaves little for Bush to bank on; MoD forced to cut budget by £1.5bn; they’re running our tanks on empty.

On the eve of war, there were discussions of the likely costs. Larry Lindsey, President Bush’s former top economic advisor of the Na-tional Economic Council, suggested that they might reach $200 billion. But this esti-mate was dismissed as “baloney” by the Secretary of Defense. His deputy, Paul Wolfowitz, suggested that post-war reconstruction could pay for itself

H1926
CONGRESSIONAL RECORD—HOUSE
March 17, 2011

INTRODUCTION: WAR FUNDING TO DATE

Since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the U.S. has initiated several military operations: Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) covering primarily Afghani-stan and other small Global War on Terror (GWOT) operations ranging from the Philip-pines to Djibouti that began immediately after the 9/11 attacks and continues; Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) that began in the fall of 2002 with the buildup of troops for the March 2003 invasion of Iraq, continued with counter-insurgency operations in Iraq, and renamed Operation New Dawn as U.S. troops focus on an advisory and assistance role.

In the ninth year of operations since the 9/11 attacks through the GWOT operations ranging from the Phil-ippines to Djibouti that began immediately after the 9/11 attacks and continues; Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) that began in the fall of 2002 with the buildup of troops for the March 2003 invasion of Iraq, continued with counter-insurgency operations in Iraq, and renamed Operation New Dawn as U.S. troops focus on an advisory and assistance role.

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On the eve of war, there were discussions of the likely costs. Larry Lindsey, President Bush’s former top economic advisor of the Na-tional Economic Council, suggested that they might reach $200 billion. But this esti-mate was dismissed as “baloney” by the Secretary of Defense. His deputy, Paul Wolfowitz, suggested that post-war reconstruction could pay for itself
through increased oil revenues. Mitch Daniel's, the Office of Management and Budget director, and Secretary Rumsfeld estimated the costs in the range of $50 to $60 billion, a portion of which was believed would be financed by other countries. (Adjusting for inflation, in 2007 dollars, they were projecting costs of between $57 and $69 billion.) The tone of the administration was, as usual, as if the sums involved were minimal.

Even Lindsey, after noting that the war could not go on to say: "If the successful prosecution of the war would be good for the economy." In retrospect, Lindsey grossly underestimated both the costs of the war and the costs to the economy. Assuming that Congress approves the rest of the $200 billion war supplemental requested for fiscal year 2008, as this book goes to press we will have appropriated a total of over $845 billion for military operations, reconstruction, embassy costs, enhanced security at US bases, and foreign aid programmes in Iraq and Afghanistan.

As the fifth year of the war draws to a close, operating costs (spending on the war itself, what you might call "running expenses") are projected to exceed $12.5 billion a month for Iraq alone, up from $4.4 billion in 2003, and with Afghanistan the total will be double that. Sixteen billion dollars is equal to the annual budget of the United Nations, or of all but 13 of the US states. Even so, it does not include the $500 billion in long-term costs per year on Iraq and Afghanistan. Nor does it include other hidden expenditures, such as intelligence gathering, or funds mixed in with the budgets of other departments.

Because there are so many costs that the Administration does not count, the total cost of the war is other than the official number. For example, government officials frequently talk about the lives of our soldiers as priceless. But from a cost perspective, these "priceless" lives show up on the Pentagon ledger simply as $500,000—the amount paid out to survivors in death benefits and life insurance. After the war began, these were increased from $12,240 to $100,000 (death benefit) and from $250,000 to $600,000 (life insurance). Even these increased amounts are a fraction of what the survivors might have earned had these individuals lost their lives in a senseless automobile accident. In areas such as health and safety regulation, the US Government values a life of a particular peak of his or her earnings capacity in excess of $7 million—far greater than the amount that the military pays in death benefits. Using this figure, the cost of the nearly 4,000 American troops killed in Iraq adds up to some $28 billion.

The costs to society are obviously far larger than these numbers that show up on the government's budget. Another example of hidden costs is the underestimating of U.S. military casualties. The Defense Department's casualty estimates do not account for "non-combat" casualties, those that result from hostile (combat) action—as determined by the military. Yet if a soldier is injured or dies in a night-time vehicle accident, this is officially dubbed "non-combat related"—even though it may be too unsafe for soldiers to travel during daytime.

In fact, the Pentagon keeps two sets of books. The official report is in the official casualty database posted on the DOD Web site. The second, hard-to-find, set of data is available only on a different website and can be obtained under the Freedom of Information Act. This data shows that the total number of soldiers who have been wounded, injured, or suffered from disease is double the number wounded in combat. It also tells us that a preponderance of these noncombat injuries might have happened even if the soldiers were not in Iraq. Our new research shows that the majority of these injuries and illnesses can be tied directly to service in the war.

From the unhealthy brew of emergency funding, chronic understimates of the resources required to prosecute the war, we have attempted to identify how much we have been spending. To do this we have taken the official costs, likely to have to spend. The figure we arrive at is more than $3 trillion. Our calculations are based on conservative assumptions. They are conceptually simple, even if occasionally technically complicated. A $3 trillion figure for the total cost strikes us as judicious, and probably errs on the low side. Needless to say, this sum is not only for the United States. It does not reflect the enormous cost to the rest of the world, or to Iraq.

From the beginning, the United Kingdom has played a pivotal role—strategic, military, and political—in the Iraq conflict. Militarily, the UK contributed 46,000 troops, 10 per cent of the total. Unsurprisingly, then, the British experience in Iraq has paralleled that of America: rising casualties, increasing operating costs, and transparency over how much the money is going, overstretched military resources, and scandals over the squandering and inadequate medical care for some veterans.

Before the war, Gordon Brown set aside £1 billion for war spending. As of late 2007, the UK had spent an estimated £7 billion in direct operating expenses in Iraq and Afghanistan (76 per cent of it in Iraq). This includes money from a supplemental "special reserve", plus additional spending from the Ministry of Defence.

The special reserve comes on top of the UK's regular defence budget. The British system is particularly opaque: funds from the "special reserve" are "drawn down" by the Ministry of Defense when required, without specific approval by Parliament. As a result, British citizens have little clarity about how much is actually being spent.

In addition, the social costs in the UK are similar to those in the U.S.—families who lose jobs to care for wounded soldiers, and diminished quality of life for those thousands left with disabilities.

By the same token, there are macro-economic costs with which we do not have to be concerned in the UK—diminished trade (the Iraq war is not a war on terrorism), the cost of "immigration anxiety" on our economic growth (if we had not been spending the money on the war, it might have been spent on the UK's now-scarce housing stock). To make matters worse, the UK had spent an estimated £7 billion in direct operating expenses in Iraq and Afghanistan (76 per cent of it in Iraq). This includes money from a supplemental "special reserve", plus additional spending from the Ministry of Defence.

We have assumed that British forces in Iraq are reduced to 2,500 this year and remains at that level until 2010. We expect that British forces in Afghanistan will increase slightly, from 7,000 to 8,000 in 2008, and remain stable for three years. The House of Commons Defence Committee has recently found that despite the cut in troop levels, Iraq war costs will increase by 2 per cent this year and personnel costs will decrease by only 3 per cent. Meanwhile, the cost of military operations in Afghanistan is due to rise by 39 per cent. The estimates in our model may be significantly too low if these patterns continue.

Based on assumptions set out in our book, the budgetary cost to the UK of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan through 2010 will total £10 billion. In addition to the official costs, the total impact on the UK will exceed £20 billion.

I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts, Mr. BARNET FRANK.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, first, any suggestion that this is any way disrespectful of the sacrifice of our troops is nonsense. Saying that we do not want brave Americans to continue in a very difficult situation in which they are at a great disadvantage and that in fact we would like to bring them home is no criticism of them at all, and nothing undermines their ability to stay there indefinitely. General Petraeus said the other day he sees no reason why the situation in Iraq is unlikely to change for the better. But this is all we've got.

Right now, the Members have a choice, and that's the way this place is now being run: Either you vote for this resolution or you vote it down and you give an implicit and, in some cases, explicit approval to the administration to stay there indefinitely. General Petraeus said the other day he sees no reason why the situation in Iraq is unlikely to change for the better. But this is all we've got.

Now, yes, there is some gain we could get in deterring terrorism there, although the notion that if we stop terrorism in Afghanistan, that's going to stop anywhere where there is a policy decision as to whether they should be there.

Now my friend from Washington and my friend from California have said, well, this isn't the right forum to be here. Well, from Washington said, yes, we should have a change in strategy but not this way. But this is all we've got.

We're told, well, but this was important because we deterred an attack on Europe. But where are the Europeans? The thing that most astounded me today was when my friend from Ohio (Mr. CHABOT) said, well, what about our 47 coalition partners? What about them? They're sitting this one out. They're pulling out. This is a virtually unilateral American action with a country that we are fortunate other places in the world—Somalia, Sudan, Yemen, elsewhere. We can't plug every hole in the world. And in fact this is an effort that, having been tried for 10 years, has not, unfortunately, looked to me like it's going to succeed.

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old little boy, you can’t see his eyes, but they hurt. They’re pained.

How many more Tyler Jordans are going to be waiting for their daddy or mom to come home to be buried if we stay there 4, 5, 6, or 7 more years? And that is what has been indicated by the leadership of the military and this administration.

How many more moms and dads and wives and husbands are going to be at Dover Air Force Base to receive the remains of their loved ones? That is why this debate is so important, and why we need to have a date and a time to start bringing them home.

My last poster: this absolutely handsome couple. The marine went out with PTSD. His beautiful wife, Katie, and his little boy. Last year at Camp Lejeune, McHugh Boulevard, he pulls his car over in the middle of the day, and he shoots himself in the head and kills himself.

How many more Tom Bagosys will commit suicide? How many more Tyler Jordans will not have their daddies coming home? How many moms and dads will not have their daddies come home? How many Tyler Jordans will not have their daddies coming home? How many moms and dads and wives and husbands are going to be at Dover to see those in a flag-draped coffin?

I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Utah (Mr. CHAFFETZ).

Mr. CHAFFETZ. Mr. Speaker, I am going to be voting in favor of this resolution.

The United States military is the greatest fighting force on the face of the planet. I could not be more proud of our troops who have served our country with such valor and such vigor.

This is the longest war in the history of the United States of America. And let there be no mistake, the global war on terror is real. It is very real.

I reject the notion that polls should matter in any way, shape, or form in this debate. That is not how the United States operates. This is not how we decide whether or not we go to war or we bring our troops home.

I reject the notion that bringing our troops home at some point, which I consider to be victory, is somehow a pathway or paving a pathway to another 9/11. I think that is offensive, and I think it is inaccurate.

Now, in many ways we have had success over the course of the years. Let’s understand that according to the National Intelligence Estimate, which has been printed in many newspapers, that the Taliban poses no clear and present danger to the current Afghan Government, nor do they pose a danger to the United States of America. Further, we have had our CIA Director state that there are less than 50 al-Qaeda in the entire boundaries of Afghanistan.

I believe it should be the policy of the United States of America that if we send our troops to war, we go with everything we have. We do not hold back. A politically correct war is a lost war, and at the present time we are playing politics. We aren’t going with everything we have. If we are serious about doing it, Mr. President, you go with everything. And until this President attends more funerals than he does rounds of golf, this person will be highly offended.

We have to define the mission. The President of the United States has failed to define success in Afghanistan. We are participating in the business of nation building, and I reject that. We are propping up a government that is fundamentally corrupt, and we all know it. It will not get us to where we want to go.

We must redefine the rules of engagement. Even when I was in Afghanistan visiting with General Petraeus, he admitted that we are using smaller caliber rounds. Again, we are trying to be more politically correct instead of actually protecting American lives.

Let me also say again that terrorism is a global threat. We must use our forces around the world when there is a direct threat of their going to the United States of America. That is not confined to just the boundaries of Afghanistan. It is happening globally, and it is real. We have to deal with the threats in Iran and not take our eye off the ball.

I yield.

Mr. JONES. I yield the gentleman an additional 15 seconds.

Mr. CHAFFETZ. Mr. Speaker, before I continue, may I inquire as to how much time I have left?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman may continue.

Mr. CHAFFETZ. Mr. Speaker, before I continue, may I inquire as to how much time I have left?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman has 15 seconds remaining.

Mr. CHAFFETZ. May I ask the gentleman to yield me an additional 15 seconds?

Mr. JONES. I yield the gentleman an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. CHAFFETZ. Aaron Nemelka, Carlos Aragon, Nigel Olsen, Matthew Wagstaff: Since I have been in office, these are the gentlemen who have lost their lives in Afghanistan. I honor them. I thank them. And as I have talked to each of their parents, they want those rules of engagement changed, and they want to end this war in Afghanistan, with victory. With victory.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. Thornberry), who is the chairman of the Armed Services Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities.

Mr. THORNBERRY. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, this week General Petraeus testified before Congress, and the essence of his testimony was that we are just now getting the necessary assets in place to make a difference in Afghanistan; that our troops and coalition partners are making a significant difference; that the progress is fragile and reversible; but that it is essential that we keep it up because vital national interests are at stake.

We fear that as time has passed over the last 10 years and so many other events come and go in our Nation’s life, that it is all too easy to forget that this country was attacked on 9/11 and that 3,000 Americans lost their lives. And we could come to the floor and put up their pictures of their children, of those who were killed on that day by terrorists, the attacks that were launched from Afghanistan, that were planned in Afghanistan and directed from Afghanistan.

This Congress at the time voted virtually unanimously that we would take military action to go make sure that Afghanistan would no longer be used as a launching pad for attacks against us and that from Afghanistan, people would no longer come here to kill Americans. That is the reason we are still there today, and that is the purpose of our military actions there today.

It is true that we may have a hard time plugging all the holes that could develop somewhere in the world where terrorist groups could squint out to, but it is also true, in my view, that if we don’t plug this hole, if we don’t fulfill the mission that we have set out to fulfill in Afghanistan, we are going to lose the war. The holes are developing, because people will know that we are not serious about doing what we say, and our security will be severely affected if that happens.

There have clearly been ups and downs in our military efforts there, just as there were in Iraq. But I believe that from General Petraeus on down, we have our best. They deserve our support to fulfill the mission the country has given them.

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I include for the RECORD a report from the Afghanistan Study Group that says that the current U.S. military effort is helping to fuel the very insurgency we are attempting to defeat.

Sustainability

At nine years and counting, the U.S. war in Afghanistan is the longest in our history, surpassing even the Vietnam War, and it will shortly surpass the Soviet Union’s own extended military campaign there. The surge, it will cost the U.S. taxpayers nearly $100 billion per year, a sum roughly seven times larger than Afghanistan’s annual gross national product (GNP) of $18 billion and greater than the total annual cost of the new U.S. health insurance program. Thousands of American and allied personnel have been killed or gravely wounded there. The U.S. interests at stake in Afghanistan do not warrant this level of sacrifice. President Obama justified expanding our commitment by saying the goal was to drive Al Qaeda from Afghanistan; yet Al Qaeda is no longer a significant presence in Afghanistan, and there are only some 400 hard-core Al Qaeda members remaining in the entire Afgan theater, most of them hiding in Pakistan’s northwest provinces.
America’s armed forces have fought bravely and well, and their dedication is unquestioned. But we should not ask them to make sacrifices unnecessary to our core national interests. Particularly when doing so threatens long-term needs and priorities both at home and abroad.

Instead of relying on a proxy war fought by allies, America’s armed forces have played a critical role in a war that recognizes the United States’ legitimate interests in Central Asia and is fashioned to advance them. Far from admitting “defeat,” the new strategy recognizes the manifold limitations of a military solution in a region where our interests lie in political stability. Our recommendation policy shifts our resources from an illusionary policy of strength in concert with the international community to promote reconciliation among the warring parties, advance economic development, and increase region-wise diplomatic engagement.

We base these conclusions on the following key points raised in the Study Group’s research and discussions:

1. Emphasize power-sharing and political inclusion. The U.S. should fast-track a peace process designed to decentralized power within Afghanistan and encourage a power-sharing arrangement among the warring parties. Doing so would help prevent the re-emergence of a unified Afghan state that could undermine U.S. interests.

2. Downsize and eventually end military operations in southern Afghanistan, and restrain U.S. troops to key responsibilities only. The U.S. and NATO allies have announced plans to withdraw from Afghanistan, but these plans are not yet clear. The current war is an urgent priority. Maintaining the long-term health of the U.S. economy is just as important to American security as protecting U.S. soil.

3. Focus security efforts on Al Qaeda and Taliban. The continued presence of Al Qaeda in Afghanistan is a threat to American lives and contributing to skyrocketing taxpayer debt. We conclude that the current strategy to remove Al Qaeda from Afghanistan is a failure and that the U.S. should continue to seek out and target Al Qaeda, particularly in their training facilities. In addition, part of the strategy to remove Al Qaeda involves dismantling the group, help spread conflict further, and doing more to aid Taliban recruiting than to reduce the influence of extremists more effectively.

4. Encourage economic development. Economic development is important aid to Taliban recruitment. In the study group’s analysis, economic development is more likely to succeed than international military efforts, and should continue to be a coordinated international group with万亿美元的预算支持，repair eroding U.S. infrastructure, and other critical national purposes. Our support of these issues will be better achieved as part of a coordinated international group with other nations and other U.S. coalitions.

The bottom line is clear: Our vital interests in Afghanistan are limited and military victory is not the key to achieving them. The current counterinsurgency war in Afghanistan may well do more to aid Taliban recruiting than to dismantle the group, help spread conflict further, and doing more to aid Taliban recruiting than to reduce the influence of extremists more effectively. But we should not ask them to make sacrifices unnecessary to our core national interests. Particularly when doing so threatens long-term needs and priorities both at home and abroad.

The Study Group believes the war in Afghanistan has reached a critical crossroads.

Our current path promises to have limited impact on the civil war while taking more American lives and contributing to skyrocketing taxpayer debt. We conclude that the current strategy to remove Al Qaeda from Afghanistan is a failure and that the U.S. should continue to seek out and target Al Qaeda, particularly in their training facilities. In addition, part of the strategy to remove Al Qaeda involves dismantling the group, help spread conflict further, and doing more to aid Taliban recruiting than to reduce the influence of extremists more effectively.

The Pakistan Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) has played an important role in the ongoing conflict. The ISI is a powerful organization that has played a critical role in the ongoing conflict. The ISI is a powerful organization that has played a critical role in the ongoing conflict.

Prospects for success are dim. As former Secretary of State Colin Powell warned, “Afghanistan has never been pacified by foreign forces.” The Taliban’s seizure of power in the 1990s was due to an unusual set of circumstances that no longer exist and are unlikely to be repeated. The Taliban’s seizure of power in the 1990s was due to an unusual set of circumstances that no longer exist and are unlikely to be repeated.

The worst thing for women is for Afghanistan to remain paralyzed in a civil war in which Al Qaeda cells in the region can be ready to go after Al Qaeda should they attempt to relocate elsewhere or build new training facilities. In addition, part of the strategy to remove Al Qaeda involves dismantling the group, help spread conflict further, and doing more to aid Taliban recruiting than to reduce the influence of extremists more effectively.

The central goal of U.S. foreign and defense policy is to ensure the safety and prosperity of the American people. In practical terms, that means defending against direct attacks on the U.S. homeland, while at the same time maintaining the long-term...
outside help can and cannot accomplish. It must also take care to ensure that specific policy actions do not undermine the vital interests identified above. The current U.S. policy actions that both countries agree U.S. involvement continues to maintain those objectives.''

The second vital U.S. interest is to keep the conflict in Afghanistan from seeping into instability elsewhere in Central Asia. Such discord might one day threaten the stability of the Pakistani state and the security of Pakistan's nuclear arsenal. If the Pakistani government were to fail to radical extremists, or if it were to stoke inter-ethnic rivalries, then a weapons of mass destruction could fall into the hands of terrorists. Such a scenario would be extremely destabilizing. It might even draw resources away from focused counter-insurgency efforts, it may even be counter-productive.

Beyond these vital strategic interests, the United States also favors democratic rule, human rights, and economic development. These goals are consistent with traditional U.S. values and reflect a longstanding belief that democracy and the rule of law are preferable to authoritarianism. The U.S. believes that both countries agree U.S. involvement is the foundation of all national power, and it is critical to our ability to shape the global order and preserve our core values and independent from terrorism. Hence, the United States must therefore avoid an open-ended commitment in Afghanistan especially when the costs of military engagement exceed the likely benefits.

What is at stake in Afghanistan?

The United States has only two vital strategic interests in Afghanistan. Its first strategic interest is to reduce the threat of successful terrorist attacks against the United States. In operational terms, the goal is to prevent Al Qaeda from again being a "safe haven" that could significantly enhance Al Qaeda's ability to conduct terrorist attacks against the United States and its allies. To the extent that our presence in Afghanistan affects Pakistan's ability to provide sanctuary to extremists, it could also draw resources away from focused counter-insurgency efforts, it may even be counter-productive.

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In a speech to a joint session of Congress in 2004, President Karzai said, “You [Americans] came to Afghanistan to defeat terrorism, and we Afghans welcomed and embraced you for that reason of our country... This road, this journey is one of success and victory.”

In a joint press conference with President Karzai in March of 2006, President Bush said, “We are impressed by the progress that your country is making. Mr. President [Karzai], a lot of it has to do with your leadership.”

In February of 2007, Lt. Gen. Karl Eikenberry told National Public Radio that Afghanistan was “on the steady path, right now... to, I believe, success.”

In April 2008, President Bush told news reporters, “I think we’re making good progress in Afghanistan.”

October 2008, General McKiernan, Commander of NATO forces in Afghanistan, told the press “We are not losing in Afghanistan.” In May 2009, he was replaced by General McChrystal.

October 2008, President Bush said Afghanistan is “a situation where there’s been progress and there are difficulties.”

November 2009, President Obama, visiting troops in Afghanistan, reportedly said, “Because of the progress we’re making, we look forward to our next steps. Next year, the beginning of the transition to Afghan responsibility.”

December 2009, General Stanley McChrystal, the top commander, predicted that the U.S. troop buildup in Afghanistan will make “significant progress” in turning back the Taliban and securing the country by the coming summer. “By next summer I expect there to be significant progress that is evident to us,” McChrystal said in congressional testimony.

In January 2010, General McChrystal was asked by Diane Sawyer, “Have you turned the tide?” McChrystal answered, “I believe we are doing that now.”

In May 2010, President Obama told the press that “we’ve begun to reverse the momentum” in Afghanistan.

In June 2010, Secretary Gates told a congressional committee that we are “making headway” in Afghanistan. In June 2010, General McChrystal was replaced by General Petraeus.

In August 2010, General Petraeus said, “there’s progress being made” in Afghanistan.

In February 2011, General Petraeus said, “We have achieved what we set out to achieve in 2010” which was to reverse the insurgency momentum, solidify our accomplishments, and build on successes. “We took away safe havens and the infrastructure that goes with it.”

The President has requested another $13.4 billion to continue the war in Afghanistan in FY12. That sum will be on top of $45.4 billion already spent (and borrowed) on the war to date. March 17, 2011, Congress will have the opportunity to consider whether all of this “progress” has been worth the money. It is time for Congress to exercise its fiscal responsibility and to assume its Constitutional responsibilities and end the war in Afghanistan. Vote YES on H. Con. Res. 28 and direct the President to end this war by the end of the year.

Sincerely,

DENISE J. KUCINICH, Member of Congress.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS).

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I have a senior member of the Judiciary Committee on the floor with me, the gentleman from California (Mr. BERMAN), I don’t see any other members here. But this is an important matter for the Judiciary Committee in that article I, section 8, says only Congress has the right to declare war.

Obviously, we haven’t declared war in a very, very long time, so I think that we have to find out what is the constitutional basis that we are operating under in—well, I will skip Iraq. We all know that was based on false information promulgated from the President of the United States.

But, now, getting to Afghanistan, we find that we have a resolution dating back to September 14, 2011, a use of force resolution, which was required, by any rational investigation of it. It was designed to respond to the 9/11 terrorist attack and to fight al Qaeda. But today we’re in Afghanistan on a long-term effort at rebuilding the nation.

By next summer I expect that war will be won unless we strengthen the governance of a very flawed government in Afghanistan. Unless we provide economic opportunities for that society that progress and the hearts and minds of the people of Afghanistan to the cause for which we are fighting.

It’s also a view of Afghanistan as if it’s isolated from the rest of the world. I can go through countries around the world—failed states, nearly failing states, terrible problems—which are certainly becoming safe havens for terrorism.

So when the same party that makes a strong case for our national security interests here at home, which passes legislation which slashes every aspect of our national security, I find it a strange kind of logic and a flaw in their approach to this.

I understand the economic hardships we have. If one wanted to look at the foreign assistance budget and take specific things that aren’t working and get rid of them, I would be the first person to go, and if one wanted to make proportional cuts in the foreign assistance budget. But to come with the argument, “We’re broke; we’ve got to cut spending,” and then disproportionately focus on that aspect of our national security strategy which will do a tremendous amount and will be fundamental to any effort to stop them from being safe havens for terrorism, and that is to massively slash disproportionately foreign aid, that is a terrible mistake. It terribly undermines our national security strategy that we’re trying to achieve through our operations and our presence and the money we’re spending.
in Afghanistan. It’s not thinking. I think, as clearly as needs to be thought. And I urge those in the majority to think again about how much the cuts that we need to make should be coming from that part of the budget that constitutes 1 percent of the Federal budget.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from California, I have great respect for him in many, many ways. We talk about we’ve got to enhance the governance of Afghanistan. Well, this is President Karzai’s quote from March 12, 2001. I have read it before, but I want to submit it for the RECORD:

“I request that NATO and America should stop these operations on our soil,” Karzai said. “This war is not on our soil. If this war is against terror, then this war is not here. Terror is not here.”

I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank Mr. Berman for giving us 8 minutes of his time, and I renounce the remainder of my time.

Mr. KUCINICH. May I ask, Mr. Speaker, how much time each group has remaining.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlemen from Florida controls 22 minutes; the gentleman from Ohio controls 22 minutes; the gentleman from California controls 9½ minutes; and the gentleman from North Carolina controls 16 minutes.

Mr. KUCINICH. I yield myself 1 minute.

Mr. Speaker, Members of this House are talking about cutting $100 billion from the budget. Well, we can trim the Federal budget of more than $100 billion in out-of-control spending.

Members have been very concerned about out-of-control spending. They are calling for a reduction in the Federal budget. Cutting spending on the war in Afghanistan would solve their concerns. Spending on the war is greater than the minimum amount of Federal spending certain Members believe must be cut from the budget for fiscal responsibility.

In the fiscal year 2012 budget request, the President has requested $113.4 billion to continue the war. In fact, congressional appropriations of over $100 billion for the Afghanistan war has been the rule in recent years; and as we’ve seen, there is talk of extending the war for another 10 years. $1 trillion, perhaps?

Spending on the Afghanistan war has increased much faster than overall government spending in recent years. Consider a comparison between the average annual rates of growth of government spending versus the Afghanistan war spending from 2008 through 2011.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. KUCINICH. I yield myself 10 more seconds.

Overall government spending has increased 9 percent from 2008 through 2011, but Afghanistan war spending has increased 25 percent. If you want to save $130 billion, then vote for this resolution.

I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. FILNER).

(Mr. FILNER asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FILNER. Mr. KUCINICH, I thank you for your courage in bringing this debate to the floor. It’s like the 600-pound elephant in the Nation. This war has gone on and on—and we never discuss it.

I want to applaud the courage of Mr. JONES from North Carolina. He has taken more than a lot of grief from his Republican colleagues, and he has had the courage to stand behind that with courage that is admirable.

I want to look at this debate, my colleagues, from the point of view of former chairman of the Veterans’ Affairs Committee, a position in which I was honored to serve, because that is an applause of the courage in Afghanistan that is the solution. That’s simply not realistic. But some think that cutting $100 billion, then vote for this resolution.

Mr. KUCINICH. I think you underestimate the cost of this war. I’ve never seen you so conservative.

I had a hearing last year before the Veterans’ Affairs Committee in which Nobel Prize-winning economist Joseph Stiglitz testified. He said these wars in Iraq and Afghanistan will be $5 trillion to $7 trillion wars over their whole course. Let us not forget—and that’s not calculated in your costs. Mr. KUCINICH—the veterans, those who have served in this war with great courage, with great professionalism. Treating these veterans costs hundreds of billions of dollars more, and we’re not considering that when we talk about ending this war.

We’ve been told that there have been about 45,000 casualties in these two wars in the last 10 years. Then why have almost 1 million people shown up at the Veterans Administration hospitals for war-related injuries? One million. This is not a rounding error. This is a deliberate attempt to misguide us on the cost of this war. This war is costing, in addition to what the budget says, hundreds of billions more for treating our veterans. We must calculate that into the cost of this war.

When you guys say, “deficit and debt,” we are going to say, “Afghanistan.”

In recent weeks, we have heard much from our Republican colleagues about out-of-control Federal spending. They want to cut $100 billion from our budget.

If my friends are serious about cutting the budget, they should vote for H. Con. Res. 28.

Since 2001, our Nation has wasted $1.121 trillion on the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. We are spending $5.4 billion a month in Iraq and $5.7 billion a month in Afghanistan. This is a waste of our national resources and taxpayer funding!

For FY2012, the President has requested $113.4 billion to continue the war in Afghanistan.

Between 2008 through 2011, overall government spending went up 9 percent annually. But this is nothing compared to the 25 percent annual increase in spending in Afghanistan.

Furthermore, spending on the Afghanistan war is rising at an accelerating rate. Over just three years (2010, 2011, and 2012), we will spend 45 percent more on the war in Afghanistan than we did in the preceding 8 years!

There is no better example of out-of-control Federal spending.

If Congress is really serious about being financially responsible and about cutting the Federal budget by three figures, then cutting spending on the out-of-control, hundred billion dollar a
year war in Afghanistan must be a serious consideration.

Today, we have an opportunity to do just that! A Yes vote will cut the 2012 budget by at least $111.4 billion.

If you are serious about reducing the deficit, then vote Yes. The SPEAKER pro tempore.

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. ROHRABACHER).

Mr. ROHRABACHER. You’re someone who says “billions of dollars” and “Afghanistan” both.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the resolution and in support of our military personnel who are putting their lives in jeopardy in Afghanistan. They are doing their duty for us, for which every American should be eternally grateful. Now we must do our duty to them. If our military is engaged in a dangerous mission that we believe cannot be won but for face-saving we are keeping them there, we are doing a disservice to our defenders and to our Nation.

The people of Afghanistan are as courageous and independent as any on Earth. They are indomitable and unconquerable—a lesson invaders have learned the hard way for centuries. The liberation of Afghanistan from the Taliban was accomplished, not by a massive influx of American troops, but instead by pilots of the Northern Alliance militia, with the air support that we provided them. It was a tremendous success.

When they were doing the fighting, it was a success. When we try to do the fighting all over the world, we lose. We cannot be a Nation that occupies the rest of the world. We cannot be a country that sends its troops all over the world to handle every problem.

After the great success of eliminating the Taliban from Afghanistan, our former policy bureaucracy, not our troops, set in place a government structure totally inconsistent with the village and tribal culture of the Afghan people. That information is no surprise to anybody. Most of us understand that.

They have a tribal culture there in Afghanistan and a village system. That is what works for them. Our State Department has tried to foist upon them a centralized system in which they don’t even elect their provincial governors. After being liberated from the Taliban by Afghans, our troops are now there to force the Afghan people to accept an overly centralized and corrupt system which was put in place by our State Department bureaucracy.

I’m sorry, it won’t work. It will not work. Any attempt to subjugate these people and to force them to acquiesce to our vision of Afghanistan will fail. We all understand that. If we are honest with ourselves, we know that that tactic won’t work.

If you want to talk about money, the trillion-plus dollars that 9/11 has cost us, isn’t just in economic loss, that’s why we’re there. We should not forget the mission today and why they risk their lives. If you want to talk about the State Department policies, I’m all in. I’d love to have that debate. If you want to talk about rules of engagement, I’m in, that’s a place, let’s do it, let’s have that debate.

But if you want to tell the enemy today—and by the way, for the first time, we’ve got information that their commanders are saying we don’t want to go fight. The spring offensive is being planned now, right now. Our soldiers are preparing for battle right now. This may be that last great battle in Afghanistan on behalf of our soldiers to eliminate the major components of the Taliban taking over their country.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 3 minutes to a gentleman of the minority party, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. ROGERS), the chairman of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence.

Mr. ROGERS of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, there is a lot of power and emotion in this debate today, and I’m glad for that. I am for the troops.

I recall the first time I had the chance to get to Afghanistan in late 2003. I met a woman there who had been trained as a doctor in the United States. She went to practice medicine in her home country of Afghanistan. When the Taliban took over, they stripped her of her medical duties. They sent her home. She was imprisoned in her own home for 6 years. I met her at a children’s hospital, and in the story of how she escaped, she stepped off her burka, she walked 10 miles to the town to show up to provide medical care for the first time these children as a woman in Afghanistan. With tears in her eyes she said, Thank you. These children have no chance. Afghanistan has no future.

And we saw the soccer field where they took people down and summarily executed them for violations that they deemed to be executable offenses under no law of their own, the burned buses, the burned women, the burned children. We burned to get them out of the system when the Taliban took over to apply sharia law. And none of that would matter from the pain and the loss if you’ve attended one of these fine soldiers’ funerals; it is an emotional thing, and there is pain, and hurt, and sorrow, and something lost in all of us.

So none of those other things would be alone a reason to send our soldiers to risk their lives in defense of this country, but because of the things I talked about, because they have imprisoned women in Afghanistan, because of the things that they’ve done to the people there, it created hate and ignorance and brutality, and al Qaeda saw an advantage, and they took it. They established there a safe haven where they recruited, where they financed, where they planned, where they armed themselves, where they recruited people around the world from other countries to come to train, and they sent some of them to the United States of America to slaughter 3,000 people.

And if you want to talk about money, the trillion-plus dollars that 9/11 has cost us, isn’t just in economic loss, that’s why we’re there. We should not forget the mission today and why they risk their lives. If you want to talk about the State Department policies, I’m all in. I’d love to have that debate. If you want to talk about rules of engagement, I’m in, that’s a place, let’s do it, let’s have that debate.

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The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield the gentleman an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. ROGERS of Michigan. So if that woman doctor who trained here, taking care of kids, who cried for help and support doesn’t move you, and maybe it shouldn’t; for the pain of that funeral, that loss, that soldier who gave it all for this country doesn’t move; then what ought to move you is the fact that these folks are gearing up and hoping and praying that we give up and we pull these troops out before the mission is done.

Mr. KUCINICH. I would like to include in the RECORD an article on AlterNet by Tom Engelhardt which discusses the open-ended nature of the Afghanistan war.

**How to Schedule a War: The Incredible Shrinking Withdrawal Date** (By Tom Engelhardt)

Going, going, gone! You can almost hear the announcer’s voice throbbing with excitement, only we’re not talking about home games, but about the date on which, for the United States and its military, the Afghan War will officially end.

Practically speaking, the answer to when it will be over is: just this side of never. If you take the word of our Afghan War commander, the secretary of defense, and top officials of the Obama administration and NOPE, we’re not leaving. As with any clever time traveler, every story of war that’s set always contains a verbal escape hatch into the future.

In my 1960s childhood, there was a cheesy (if thrilling) sci-fi flick, The Incredible Shrinking Man, about a fellow who passed
through a radioactive cloud in the Pacific Ocean and soon noticed that his suits were too big for him. Next thing you knew, he was living in a doll house, holding off his pet cat, and fighting an ordinary spider transformed into a monster. Finally, he disappeared entirely leaving behind only a sonorous voice to tell us that he had entered a universe where his size and the size of this small and infeasibly vast eventually meet, like the closing of a gigantic circle.

In recent weeks, without a radioactive cloud date for the drawdowns of American troops in Afghanistan has followed a similar path toward the vanishing point and is now threatening to disappear "over the horizon" (a place where, everyone knew, you could just about swim in black gold and run geopolitically rich). Then, when the invasion of Iraq was launched in March 2003, Afghanistan, still a war (if barely) was forgotten, while the Taliban returned to control their territory, and launched an insurgency that has only gained momentum to this moment. In 2008, before leaving office, George W. Bush had signed off on a new British Chief of the Defense Staff Petraeus, upsets to become the head of the Central Command which oversees America’s war zones in the Greater Middle East, including Afghanistan. Already the guru of counterinsurgency (known familiarly as COIN), Petraeus had, in 2006, overseen the production of the military’s new war-fighting bible, a how-to-manual dusted off from the Vietnam era’s failed version of COIN and made new and magical again. In June 2010, eight and a half years after the president’s request, Petraeus took over as Afghan War commander. It was clear then that he was about to sell to the administration a review of Afghan war going up to year’s end and results needed quickly. The American war was also in terrible shape.

What this meant was that, whether as CENTCOM commander or Afghan War commander, Petraeus was looking for two poten-
cially contradictory results at the same time. Somehow, he needed to wrest those nine to 10 years of war-fighting from a presi-
dent looking for a tighter schedule and, in a war zone where things were not going terribly well, a con-
temporary of the old Soviet base in the Greater Middle East, including Afghanistan. It has been run from General Petraeus’s headquarters in Kabul, the giant five-sided headquarter in Kabul, the giant five-sided

INFLECTION POINTS AND ASPIRATIONAL GOALS

Barely had 2014 risen into the headlines, however, that, too, had already been chipped away. As a start, it turned out that American planners weren’t talking about just any old day in 2014, but its last one. As Lieutenant General Stephen Townsend, head of the NATO training program for Afghan se-
curity forces, put it while holding a Q&A with a group of bloggers, “They’re talking about the end of 2014—not 2015. It’s the co-deplor-

On the eve of NATO’s Lisbon meeting, Penguin author Geoff Morrell, waxing near poetic, declared 2014 nothing more than an “aspirational goal,” rather than an actual deadline. As the conference began, NATO’s Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen launched in March 2003, Afghanistan, still a war (if barely) was forgotten, while the Taliban returned to control their territory, and launched an insurgency that has only gained momentum to this moment. In 2008, before leaving office, George W. Bush had signed off on a new British Chief of the Defense Staff Petraeus, upsets to become the head of the Central Command which oversees America’s war zones in the Greater Middle East, including Afghanistan. Already the guru of counterinsurgency (known familiarly as COIN), Petraeus had, in 2006, overseen the production of the military’s new war-fighting bible, a how-to-manual dusted off from the Vietnam era’s failed version of COIN and made new and magical again. In June 2010, eight and a half years after the president’s request, Petraeus took over as Afghan War commander. It was clear then that he was about to sell to the administration a review of Afghan war going up to year’s end and results needed quickly. The American war was also in terrible shape.

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military headquarters on the Potomac pre-
sided over by Secretary of Defense Gates, and var-
ous think-tanks filled with America’s militarized intellectuals scattered around, and it has occasionally been deemed classically successful “clear, hold, build” counterinsurgency operation. Pacification in Wash-
ington has occurred with remarkably few casualties. (Former Afghan war commander General Stanley McChrystal, axed by the president for insubordination, has been the exception, not the rule.)

Slowly but decisively, Petraeus and company con-
stricted President Obama’s war-planning to two options: more and yet more. In late 2009, the president agreed to that second surge of troops (the first had been announced that March), not to speak of CIA agents, drones, private contractors, and State Department and other civil-
ian government employees. In his December “surge” address at West Point (for the nation but visibly to the military), Obama had the te-
merity as commander-in-chief to name a spe-
cific, soon-to-arrive date—July 2011—for begin-
ing a serious troop drawdown. It was then that the COIN campaign in Washington ramped up into high gear with the goal of driving the prospective end of the war back by years.

It took bare hours after the president’s ad-
dress for administration officials to begin leaking to media sources that his drawdown would “sustain”—the word he had chosen—a phenomenon called “conditions on the ground.” (The president had indeed acknowl-
edged in his address that his administration would take into account “conditions on the ground.”) Soon, the Secretary of Defense and others took to the airwaves in a months-long campaign emphasizing that drawdown in Af-
ghanistan didn’t really mean drawdown, that leaving by no means meant leaving, and that the future was endlessly open to interpreta-
tion.

With the ratification in Lisbon of that 2014 date “and beyond,” the political clocks—an image General Petraeus loves—in Wash-
ington, European capitals, and American Kabul are now ticking more or less in un-
ison.

Two other “clocks” are, however, ticking more like bombs. If counterinsurgency is a hearts and minds campaign, then the other target of General Petraeus’s first COIN cam-
paign has been to create fear and hatred in the minds of the American and European publics. Last year a Dutch government fell over popular opposition to Afghanistan and, even as NATO met last weekend, thousands of antiwar protesters marched in London and Lisbon. Europeans generally want out and their governments know it, but (as has been true since 1945) the continent’s leaders have no idea how to say “no” to Washington. In the U.S., too, the Afghan war grows ever more unpopular, and while it was fought during election season, no politician should count on that phenomenon lasting forever.

And then, of course, there’s the literal ticking bomb, the actual war in Afghanistan. In that campaign, despite a drumbeat of American/NATO publicity about “progress,” the news has been grim indeed. American and NATO casualties have been higher this year than at any other moment in the war; the Taliban seems if anything more en-
trenched in more parts of the country; the Afghan public, ever more puzzled and less happy with foreign troops and contractors traf-
pic at their gates; and Hamid Karzai, the president of the country, sensing a situa-
tion gone truly sour, has been regularly chal-
enging the way General Petraeus is fighting the war in his country. (The nerve!)

No less unsettling, General Petraeus him-
s 

self has seemed unnerved. He was declared

“irked” by Karzai’s comments and was said to have warned Afghan officials that their president’s criticism might be making his “own position untenable, which was taken as a resignation threat. Meanwhile, the COIN-meister was in the process of imposing a new plan on Afghanistan that leaves counterinsurgency (at least as usually de-
nanced) behind. The emphasis is in the byword “protect the people.” or “clear, hold, build”; now, it’s smash, kill, destroy. The war commander has loosed American fire-
power in a Taliban stronghold of southern Afghanistan.

Early this year, then-commander McChrystal had significantly cut back on U.S. air strikes that he’d warned were meant to lessen civilian casualties. No longer. In a striking reversal, air power has been called in—and in a big way. In October, U.S. planes launched missiles or bombs on 1,000 separate Afghan missions, numbers seldom seen since the 2001 invasion. The Army has similarly loosened its massively powerful High Mobility Artillery Rocket System, firing thousands in the southern city of Kandahar. Civilian deaths are rising rapidly.

Mr. KUCINICH. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

We keep that clock back to 9/11. We’re near the eighth anniversary of the inva-
sion of Iraq, which had nothing to do with 9/11, and which was predicated on a lie, no weapons of mass destruction.

The war in Afghanistan is based on a mis-
interpretation of history. The Soviet Union understood that at hard cost. The occupation is fueling an insur-
gency.

Now, Jeremy Scahill in the Nation points out that Taliban leaders have said that the COIN campaign in Taliban ranks since 9/11 in part attributed to the widely held perception that the Karzai government is corrupt and ille-
gitimate, and that Afghans, primarily ethnic Pashtuns, want foreign occupa-
tion forces out. They’re only fighting to make foreigners leave Afghanistan. Occupation fuels insurgency. That is an ironclad fact.

I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE).

Ms. LEE. No one can deny that the increasing costs of the war in Afghan-
istan are constraining our efforts to invest in job creation and jump-start the economy.

Yesterday, I joined a bipartisan group of 86 Members of Congress in a letter to President Obama calling for a significant and sizeable re-
duction in United States troop levels in Afghanistan no later than July of this year.

This debate that we’re having today here should have occurred in 2001 when Congress authorized this blank check. It was barely debated. It was barely de-
bated, and the rush to war has created not less anger towards the United States but more hostilities, and it’s time that we put our national nor eco-

I want to point out that for those Members who are con-
cerned about the finances of this gov-
ernment, U.S. debt soared from $6.4 trillion in March 2003 to $10 trillion. Joseph Stiglitz, Nobel Prize winner economist, and his associate, Linda Bilmes, pointed out that at least a quarter of that increase is directly attrib-
utable to the war in Iraq. As a re-
result of two costly wars, funded by debt, our fiscal house was in abysmal shape even before the financial crisis, and those fiscal woes compounded the downturn. The global financial crisis was due at least in part—this is a quote—to the war.

Now they continue. The Iraq war didn’t just contribute to the severity of the fiscal crisis, though it kept us from returning to normal. My friends, finance is a national security issue. If we are broke, we can’t defend ourselves.
I yield 1 1/2 minutes to the gentleman from Vermont (Mr. WELCH).

Mr. WELCH. I thank the gentleman. Mr. Speaker, my colleagues on the other side, America does have a national security interest in protecting American citizens from terrorist attack. But the question before us is this: Is our national security interest being served by 10 years of nation building in the third most corrupt country in the entire world? Is our national security interest being served by sending 100,000 troops and $454 billion in taxpayer money to a country where there are 50 members of al Qaeda? Is it a winning and likely successful strategy when al Qaeda simply moves where we aren’t? They move out of Afghanistan into Pakistan, to Sudan, to wherever they can find a safe haven.

Does it make sense to ask our soldiers and our taxpayers to sacrifice when our Afghan partner is so profoundly corrupt? And I mean World War-class corrupt: $3 billion in pallets of cash moved out of the Kabul airport to safe havens for warlords; an Afghan Vice President who flies to Dubai with $52 million in walking-around money; when the U.S.-backed Afghan major crimes unit tries to get Karzai to act on corruption and Karzai gets his buddy out of jail. Yes, we have a national security interest in protecting America from attack, but this is a losing strategy.

Mr. KUCINICH. I yield 1 1/2 minutes to the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ).

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution. After 10 long years, $330 billion spent, 1,500 American lives lost, and thousands maimed, it is time to bring our troops home. Our servicemen and women and their coalition allies have performed valiantly. The United States has done everything possible to provide the opportunity for the American people and the chance for a democratic government there to mature and take hold. Afghanistan must now take responsibility for its own destiny.

The fact of the matter is this: If now is not the time to leave, then when? Afghanistan has become the longest war in U.S. history, with a price tag of $100 billion a year. At a time when we are contemplating cutting services for seniors, educational programs for children, and tuition assistance for working college students, that money could be spent more wisely elsewhere.

Mr. Speaker, too much of our country’s treasure has gone toward this war. Most importantly, this war in human life. American and Afghan, has been enormous. As the world’s greatest democracy, what kind of message does this war send to other nations? Do as we say, not as we do?

It is incumbent upon us to see that our actions reflect our words. Get out of Afghanistan now.

Mr. KUCINICH. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BERNAN. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, at the present time, I would like to yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. PAUL).

Mr. PAUL asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.

Mr. PAUL. I thank the gentleman.

The question we are facing today is, should we leave Afghanistan? I think the answer is very clear, and it’s not complicated. Of course we should, as soon as we can. This suggests that we can leave by the end of the year. If we don’t, we’ll be there for another decade, would be my prediction.

The American people are now with us. A group of us here in the Congress, a bipartisan group, for nearly a decade have been talking about this, arguing not to expand the war, not to be over there, not to be in nation building. And here the American people aren’t paying much attention. Now they are. The large majority of the American people now say it’s time to get out of Afghanistan. It’s a fruitless venture. Too much has been lost. The chance of winning, since we don’t even know what we are going to fight, and if they are tired of it. Financially, there’s a good reason to come home as well.

Some argue we have to be there because if we leave under these circumstances we’ll lose face; it will look bad. How many more men and how many more women have to die, how many more dollars have to be spent to save face? That is one of the worst arguments possible.

We are not there under legal conditions. This is a war. Who says it isn’t a war? Everybody talks about the Afghan war. Was the war declared? Of course not. It wasn’t declared. There was a resolution passed that said that the President at that time, under the War Powers Resolution would deal with al Qaeda, those who brought upon the 9/11 bombings. But al Qaeda is not there anymore. So we are fighting the Taliban.

The Taliban used to be our allies at one time when the Soviets were there. The Taliban’s main goal is to keep the foreign occupation out. They want foreigners out of their country. They are not al Qaeda. Yet most Americans—maybe less so now. But the argument here on the hill we have got to go after al Qaeda. This is not a war against al Qaeda. If anything, it gives the incentive for al Qaeda to grow in numbers rather than dealing with them.

The money issue, we are talking about a lot of money. How much do we spend a year? Probably about $130 billion, up to $1 trillion now in this past decade.

Later on in the day, we are going to have two votes. We are going to have a vote on doing something sensible, making sense out of our foreign policy, bringing our troops home and saving hundreds of billions of dollars. Then we also will have a vote against NPR, to cut the funding of NPR. There is a serious question about whether that will even cut one penny. But at least the fiscal conservatives are going to be overwhelmedly in support of slaying NPR, and then go home and brag about how they are selling conservative. And the very most they might save is $10 million, and that’s their claim to fame for slashing the budget. At the same time, they won’t consider for a minute cutting a real significant amount of money.

All empires end for fiscal reasons because they spread themselves too far around the world, and that’s what we are facing. We are in the midst of a military conflict that is contributing to this inevitable crisis and it’s financial. And you would think there would be a message there.

How did the Soviets come down? By doing the very same thing that we’re doing: perpetual occupation of a country.

We don’t need to be occupying Afghanistan or any other country. We don’t even need to be considering going into Libya or anywhere else. Fortunately, I guess for those of us who would like to see less of this killing, we will have to quit because we won’t be able to afford it.

The process that we are going through is following the War Powers Resolution. This is a proper procedure. It’s attention to how we slip into these wars.

I have always claimed that it’s the way we get into the wars that is the problem. If we would be precise and only go to war with a declaration of war, with the people behind us, knowing who the enemy is, and fight, win, and get it over with, that would be more legitimate. They don’t do it now because the American people wouldn’t support it. Nobody is going to declare war against Afghanistan or Iraq or Libya.

We now have been so careless for the past 50 or 60 years that, as a Congress and especially as a House, we have reneged on our responsibilities. We have avoided our prerogatives of saying that we have the control. We have control of the purse. We have control of when we are supposed to go to war. Yet the wars continue. They never stop. And we are going to be completely brought down to our knees. We can’t change Afghanistan. The people who are bragging about these changes, even if you could, you are not supposed to. You don’t have the moral authority. You don’t have the constitutional authority.

I yield 5 minutes.

Mr. JONES. I yield the gentleman 30 additional seconds.

Mr. PAUL. So I would say, the sooner, the better, we can come home. This process says come home. Under the law, it says you should start bringing troops home within 30 days. This allows up to the end of the year after
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this would be passed. But this needs to be done. A message needs to be sent. And some day we have to wake up and say, if you are a fiscal conservative, you ought to look at the waste.

Mr. JONES. I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I am so honored to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER), a member of the Armed Services Committee and a distinguished combat veteran who has served our country honorably in Iraq and Afghanistan with the United States Marine Corps.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, first, I was in the Marine Corps. I did two tours in Iraq and one in Afghanistan. I didn’t do anything exceptional; but if anybody who has served in Afghanistan, I will yield to you right now. If anybody in this Congress who has served in a military capacity in these wars in Afghanistan, I’ll be happy to yield to you.

You might have taken a few trips over, and you can tell stories about the families that are impacted who you know. You can talk about people who you know that have been impacted. You can talk about those marines and soldiers and sailors and airmen that we see injured at Bethesda and Walter Reed; but if you want to quote somebody, you can quote me. I’m in 232 Cannon.

If you want to talk to a family that’s been impacted by three deployments, two of my kids, all of them 10 or under—I have three—two of them have been through three deployments. One child, my youngest daughter, has been through one deployment, the Afghan deployment in 2007.

If you want to talk to somebody, feel free to talk to my family because they understand what it’s like. What they also understand is the reason that we’re there.

Less than 2 percent of America’s population serves. The burden from Afghanistan is on their shoulders. It’s on my family’s shoulders. They know what’s at stake. That’s why they basically allowed me to do it. They allowed me to go to Iraq and Afghanistan because of the number one reason that we’re there, the number one reason. And it’s not to nation-build. It’s to make sure that radicalized Muslims stop killing Americans. It’s to stop them from destroying this country.

They want to murder us. Every single person in this room, every American, radicalized Muslims want to murder. That’s why we have men and women over there right now fighting. That’s it. There’s no other reason for it.

Nation building is a thing we have to do there on the side to get the people, the Afghan people, on our side. But what we’re doing right now is we’re taking out the enemy.

And we have to trust General Petraeus. We have to trust President Obama, in this case, that they know what’s going on. He’s the Commander in Chief. You’re not the Commanders in chief. There’s one of them, and it’s the other side’s President.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. If you want to quote somebody who’s been there, feel free to quote me. If you want to talk about it, feel free to do it. And if you want to hold up pictures of families, hold up pictures of mine because they’ve been impacted by it.

But I thank the gentleman from Ohio for bringing up this debate because what has happened is our side has cut defense by $16 billion in H.R. 1. If we’re not going to support our troops while we’re fighting, this type of resolution might need a look at later. I don’t think now is the time.

I oppose the resolution.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER pro tempore

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. McCLINTOCK). All Members are reminded that the Chair should be addressed to the Chair and through the Chair and not to each other.

Mr. KUCINICH. I would like to insert into the RECORD a recent report from The Washington Post that says that we’ve seen a steady increase in lost limbs among soldiers and marines occurring in the last 4 months.

[From the Washington Post, Mar. 9, 2011]

REPORT REVEALS STEEP INCREASE IN WAR AMPUTATIONS LAST FALL.

(By David Brown)

The majority of American soldiers undergoing amputation for war wounds last fall lost more than one limb, according to data obtained by the health affairs committee of the Defense Health Board, a committee of experts that advises the Defense Department on medical matters. Military officials first released data showing that amputations, and especially multiple-limb losses, increased last year. The information presented to the 20-member board for the first time last fall shows that the steepest increase occurred over the last four months of the year.

In September 2010, about two-thirds of all war-tether amputation operations involved a single limb (usually a leg) and one-third two or more limbs. The split was roughly 50–50 in October and November. In December, only one-quarter of amputation surgery involved only one limb; three-quarters involved the loss of two or more limbs.

The Marine Corps, which bore 20 percent of the forces in Iraq and Afghanistan, were especially hard hit. Of the 66 wounded severely enough to be evacuated overseas in October, one-third lost a limb.

In the first seven years of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, about 6 percent of seriously wounded soldiers underwent amputation. Wounds to the genitals and lower urinary tract—known as genitourinary injuries—accounted for 11 percent of wounds over the last seven months of 2010, up from 4 percent in the previous 17 months, according to data presented by John B. Holcomb, a trauma surgeon and researcher in Afghanistan.

The constellation of leg-and-genital wounds are in large part the consequence of stepping on improvised explosive devices—homemade mines—and are known as “disemboweled IED injuries.”

The data were assembled by Holcomb and two physicians at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany, where all seriously injured soldiers are taken on their way back to the United States.

The steep increase in both the rate and number of amputations clearly disturbed both Holcomb and members of the board, which met at a Hilton hotel near Dulles International Airport.

Holcomb, who spent two weeks at Landstuhl in December, said a former head of the U.S. Army Institute of Surgical Research, said he had heard of “unwritten pacts among young Marines that if they get their legs and genitalia blown off they won’t put tourniquets on but will let each other die on the battlefield.”

Richard H. Carmona, who was U.S. surgeon general from 2002 to 2006 and is now on the board, said the information was “very disturbing.”

He said it has made him ask: “What is the endgame here? Is the sacrifice we are asking of our young men and women worth the potential return? I have questions about that now.”

Carmona, 61, served as an Army medic in Vietnam before going to college and medical school. He has a son, who is an Army sergeant and is serving in Iraq.

Jay A. Johannigman, an Air Force colonel who has served multiple deployments as a military surgeon, said a military hospital at Bagram Airfield in Afghanistan last fall “was different” both personally and medically.

“We see the enormous price our young men and women are paying. It should not be for naught,” he said. He didn’t want to elaborate.

Why amputation-requiring injuries increased so much in recent months isn’t entirely understood. It is partly a function of tactics that emphasize more foot patrols in rural areas. Some people have speculated the mines may be constructed specifically to cause the devastating wounds.

“Do the Marines know? Probably,” said Frank Butler, a doctor and retired Navy captain who has spearheaded improvements in battlefield first aid over the last decade.

“But they’re not releasing a thing. And they shouldn’t.”

I would also like to insert into the RECORD a report from the “American Conservative” which indicates that last year IED deaths among our own soldiers were up, not down.

[From The American Conservative, Mar. 10, 2011]

HOW’S THAT POPULATION-CENTRIC COIN GOING?

(Posted by Kelley Vlahos)

If the success or failure of the Afghan military “surge” rests on whether the U.S. can bring down the level of civilian casualties, the public will follow the path of least resistance by opposing the war. But the war is costing America lives—casualties among the civilian population from the Taliban—a metric that the now fading COINdinistas had once insisted could be achieved with an aggressive strategy—then two new statistics to emerge this week don’t bode well for the prospects of the nearly 2-year-old counterinsurgency operation in Afghanistan.

First, more of our soldiers today are coming home this year with amputations than in the previous year, according reports coming out of the Defense Health Board this week. According to The Washington Post, which was apparently the only mainstream news outlet to cover the board’s meeting in Northern Virginia on Tuesday, the steepest increase in lost limbs among soldiers and Marines occurred in the last four months.
The Marines, who make up 20 percent of the forces in Iraq and Afghanistan, were especially hard hit. Of the 66 wounded severely enough to be evacuated overseas in October, one-third lost a limb.

In the first seven years of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, about 6 percent of seriously wounded soldiers underwent amputation. Wound incidences and lower extremity amputations—known as gentorinjury—injuries—accounted for 11 percent of wounds over the last seven months of 2010, up from 4 percent in the previous year, according to data presented by John B. Holcomb, a trauma surgeon and retired Army colonel.

The data regarding the increased amputationstions were already reported in Friday’s WaPo, but apparently the fact they spiked in the last few months only came out in the meeting. Who knows if that point would’ve ever seen the light of day if a reporter hadn’t been there. A source close to the board told me they also show up to over 20 percent in DHt, which is a pity, because its members, which include both civilian and retired military doctors and scientists, probably know more about the subject. As Richard Holbrooke and his colleagues at the State Department’s office of Global Health and Humanitarian Response noted, “U.S. and allied operations in Afghanistan are not the only cause of amputations among our young men and women worth the potential return.”

He should definitely have questions, considering that Gen. David Petraeus, Lt. Gen. William “Swengali” Caldwell and others have been warning in recent weeks about how promising it looks in Afghanistan. The Taliban’s “halted momentum,” and all that.

Meanwhile, the other big news today is that civilian deaths in Afghanistan are up, too.

According to a new U.N. report, civilian deaths as a result of war violence rose 15 percent from the year before in Afghanistan (some of the highest levels since the war began) and two-thirds of the deaths—2,777—were caused by insurgents (up 28 percent) and 440 were caused by Afghan Army/NATO forces (down 25 percent). *While the Taliban is responsible for most civilian deaths, the U.S. has made “protecting the population” a major strategic goal for winning over the Afghan people, legitimizing U.S. and allied operations in Afghanistan. The data was presented Tuesday by John B. Holcomb, a trauma surgeon and retired Army colonel. As a former head of the U.S. Army Institute of Surgical Research, he had heard of “unwritten pacts among young men that if they get their legs and genitals blown off they won’t put tourniquets on but will let each other die on the battlefield.”

New DHB member Richard Carmona, a former U.S. Surgeon General under Bush, apparently didn’t get the memo about keeping his emotional responses in check. The Vietnam veteran called the new statistics “very disturbing,” and then asked, “What is the endgame here? Is the sacrifice we are asking of our young men and women worth the potential return? I have questions about that now.”

Well, violence is up, and deaths among NATO and its allies are up. And so are civilian casualties.

Meanwhile, while the CNN team said in June 2009 that NATO/Afghan soldier deaths were expected to rise, they also claimed that another metric of success would be an eventual flattening of IEDs (Improved Explosive Devices) incidents. Another indicator of cooperation with local Afghans is the number of roadside bombs (improved explosive devices, orIEDs) that are found and cleared versus exploded. IED numbers have risen sharply in Afghanistan (IED numbers are still low, and IEDs still unsophisticated, compared to Iraq). The coalition should expect an increase in numbers again this year. However, a rise in the proportion of IEDs being found and defused (especially when discovered thanks to tips from the local population) indicates that locals have a good understanding of these devices and can work with them on diplomacy and to be able to save lives.

I support this resolution. I wish that it would pass now. The Marines, who make up 20 percent of the forces in Iraq and Afghanistan, were especially hard hit. Of the 66 wounded severely enough to be evacuated overseas in October, one-third lost a limb.

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He should definitely have questions, considering that Gen. David Petraeus, Lt. Gen. William “Swengali” Caldwell and others have been warning in recent weeks about how promising it looks in Afghanistan. The Taliban’s “halted momentum,” and all that.

Meanwhile, the other big news today is that civilian deaths in Afghanistan are up, too.

According to a new U.N. report, civilian deaths as a result of war violence rose 15 percent from the year before in Afghanistan (some of the highest levels since the war began) and two-thirds of the deaths—2,777—were caused by insurgents (up 28 percent) and 440 were caused by Afghan Army/NATO forces (down 25 percent). *While the Taliban is responsible for most civilian deathstions were already reported in Friday’s WaPo, but apparently the fact they spiked in the last few months only came out in the meeting. Who knows if that point would’ve ever seen the light of day if a reporter hadn’t been there. A source close to the board told me they also show up to over 20 percent in DHb, which is a pity, because its members, which include both civilian and retired military doctors and scientists, probably know more about the subject. As Richard Holbrooke and his colleagues at the State Department’s office of Global Health and Humanitarian Response noted, “U.S. and allied operations in Afghanistan are not the only cause of amputations among our young men and women worth the potential return.”

Well, violence is up, and deaths among NATO and its allies are up. And so are civilian casualties.

Meanwhile, while the CNN team said in June 2009 that NATO/Afghan soldier deaths were expected to rise, they also claimed that another metric of success would be an eventual flattening of IEDs (Improved Explosive Devices) incidents. Another indicator of cooperation with local Afghans is the number of roadside bombs (improved explosive devices, or IEDs) that are found and cleared versus exploded. IED numbers have risen sharply in Afghanistan (IED numbers are still low, and IEDs still unsophisticated, compared to Iraq). The coalition should expect an increase in numbers again this year. However, a rise in the proportion of IEDs being found and defused (especially when discovered thanks to tips from the local population) indicates that locals have a good understanding of these devices and can work with them on diplomacy and to be able to save lives.

I support this resolution. I wish that it would pass now.

Mr. KUCINICH. I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LEWIS).

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong opposition to the longest running war in our Nation’s history. I want to thank my friend and colleague from Ohio for introducing this resolution.

War is not the answer. It is not the way to peace. We must root out the causes of hate and violence.

Gandhi once said: “Power is of two kinds. One is obtained by the fear of punishment, and the other by acts of love. Power based on love is a thousand times more effective and permanent than the one derived from the fear of punishment.”

Our path to peace in Afghanistan is not through war; it is not through violence. Enough is enough. The time is long overdue.

We are spending billions of dollars a week, not another nickel, not another dime, not another dollar, not another hour, not another day, not another week. We must end this war and end it now.

I urge all of my colleagues to support this resolution.

Mr. KUCINICH. I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. POLIS).
Mr. POLIS. I thank the gentleman from Ohio for bringing forth this important resolution and finally bringing to the floor of the House the discussion about the war in Afghanistan.

Wrong war, wrong time, wrong place. Intelligence estimates are that there are under 50 al Qaeda operatives in Afghanistan. With the current cost of the war effort, we’re spending between $1.5 billion and $2 billion per al Qaeda operative.

There is a very real terrorist threat to our country that comes from the loosely knit al Qaeda terrorist network, but that threat does not emanate from Afghanistan. It does not emanate from any one particular nation-state. It is a stateless menace. They go wherever they’re able to thrive on the lack of order.

To effectively combat this menace, we need targeted special operations, we need aggressive intelligence gathering, we need to make sure that we combat this menace wherever they are with the appropriate resources.

Being bogged down, occupying one particular nation-state is a waste of resources and not the best way to keep the American people safe. I strongly support this resolution.

Mr. KUCINICH. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BERMAN. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. ROHRABACHER).

Mr. ROHRABACHER. I rise in support of the resolution, and again with great respect and concern for those great people who we are sending overseas to defend us. If we don’t think they can succeed, it is incumbent upon us to bring them home as soon as possible.

I was not in the United States military in Afghanistan, but I did participate in Afghanistan when the Russians were there. I went in with the Mujahideen unit and fought in the Battle of Jalalabad in 1988. I got to know these people of Afghanistan. Foreign troops will never conquer the people of Afghanistan.

And, yes, radicalized Islamids did murder Americans on 9/11. By the way, most of them were Saudis. Most all of them who hijacked the planes were Saudis. And Saudi Arabia still has the radicization factory. It is the factory that we are talking about that supposedly brought us into this battle.

We will not succeed if we are planning to force the Afghan people to accept the centralized government that our State Department has foisted upon them. All we are going to do is lose more people. All we are going to do is have more wounded people and more of our military sent over there, because that is what they are telling us is the method they will get us out. To get out, we have to have Karzai accepted.

We have foisted on them the most centralized system of government that would never have even worked here, because we believe that local people should run the police and should elect their own local officials. If we don’t believe that system will work, and that is our plan, we should get our people out of there before more of them are killed and maimed.

Yes, we do respect DUNCAN HUNTER and all those people who have served. That is the reason, that is what motivates me.

Here we have WALTER JONES, who represents the Marine Corps down at Camp Lejeune. If they thought that they were defending our country and were going to save our lives, all of them would give their lives for us. But they are not on that mission. They are on that mission to get the Afghan people and coerce them into accepting a corrupt central government, and that won’t work. It didn’t work when I was there fighting the Russians. It won’t work again.

Mr. JONES. I continue to reserve my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, with all due respect to the gentleman from California, I would not compare a staff delegation trip to the valiant forces of our armed services who are fighting overseas.

I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. COFFMAN), a member of the Armed Services Committee, a combat veteran of the first Gulf war, who served again in Iraq 5 years ago with the United States Marine Corps.

Mr. COFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Ohio for bringing this resolution forward, and I reluctantly rise in opposition to it.

I volunteered to serve in Iraq not because I believed that invading, pacifying, and administering the country was the right course of action, but I believed that once we had made the commitment that we had to follow it through to it to a reasonable and just conclusion.

In Afghanistan, I think that what this Nation first did was great: That we were attacked on 9/11. The Taliban controlled much of the country and gave safe harbor to al Qaeda, and we gave air, logistical, and advisory support to the anti-Taliban forces in the country and they pushed the Taliban out.

We made a wrong turn after that, by forcing the so-called Karzai government, instead of using our leverage to have them reach out to the Pashtun elements of the country, and we superimposed a political process on them that doesn’t fit the political culture of the country, a government that is mired in corruption and has little capacity to govern outside of Kabul. I believe it is wrong to use conventional forces against an irregular force that make our military vulnerable to asymmetric capability. But we have security interests in Afghanistan that we must accept.

We need to make sure that the Taliban doesn’t take over the country where it becomes a permissive environment, where they can use that to destabilize Afghanistan, to assist the Taliban on the other side of the Durand Line. We need some base of operations in Afghanistan to be able to strike al Qaeda targets in the federally administered tribal areas of Afghanistan, I believe that we can do it with a lighter footprint. I think we ought to be focused on supporting factions within this region that share our strategic interests.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired. Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. I yield the gentleman an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. COFFMAN of Colorado. I thank the gentlewoman from Florida.

We have strategic interests in Afghanistan. It would be wrong, it would be irresponsible at this time to expeditiously withdraw all of our forces from Afghanistan, again, without recognizing our strategic interests there.

Although I differ on the strategy that we are using right now, I recognize the security interests of the United States that is the reason we have to maintain not only peace and stability in the region but also at home.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CONAWAY), a member of the Armed Services, Intelligence, Agriculture, and Ethics Committees.

Mr. CONAWAY. I thank the gentlewoman.

We have to get this right. I rise in opposition to this motion. I use that phrase, it comes from David Petraeus’ testimony in the last 2 days in front of the House Armed Services Committee. He tells a poignant story about a black day in Iraq when he was commander of the 101st in which two helicopters collided midair and 17 troops were killed. Really, one of his darkest days. And in the emotions of all of that and the trauma and the flight to move forward, a young FFC came up to this brass general, who brought this forward have a right to tell them that they cannot win, that this is not the right thing to do. We should not do this.

These conversations have consequences. They are heard around the world. And while the other side, the folks who will vote for this, the folks who brought this forward have a right to disagree, I think perhaps an obligation to do this, to have this conversation, these conversations affect the men and women in the fight. And for us to stand here over and over to tell them that they cannot win, that this is not going to make this happen, is irresponsible on our part.

David Petraeus is the man who knows more about what is going on on
Mr. POE of Texas. I thank the gentle-
woman for yielding.

War is expensive; and it should not be
measured in the cost of money, which
has been, really, the discussion today.
I have the greatest respect for Mr. Jones
and Mr. ROHRABACHER and you, too,
Mr. KUCINICH, but this is an important
issue and it should be measured.

Today, as we are here in the House of
Representatives, Mark Wells is being
buried. He was killed on March 5, rep-
resenting us in Afghanistan. He had
been to Iraq. And, yes, he is of Irish
heritage, so his family decided, we "want to
have his service on St. Pat-
rick’s Day."

I talked to his father, Burl, earlier this
week. And Burl is proud of his
son’s service, and he is proud of Amer-
ica’s service in Afghanistan. And Burl
told me, he said: “Congressman Poe,
it is my fear that there are dark days
ahead for America because we may not
choose to persevere.”

And what I believe he meant by that
was that those who have died for this
country, died for that concept
of freedom, people that live after
them, our soldiers that are over there,
and we who make decisions, may not
persevere and finish this war.

War is expensive. And America
never quits and America should never quit in this war.

Our enemies in Iraq and Afghanistan have always had the policy and phi-
losophy: America will get weary. Ameri-
cans will quit. They don’t have the
stomach for it.

Mr. KUCINICH. I would like to put into
the RECORD an article from the National
Interest which states that many U.S.
and western troops cannot leave
their bases without encountering IEDs or more coordinated attacks from
insurgents.

[From The National Interest, Mar. 9, 2011]

PULLING A FAST ONE IN AFGHANISTAN
(By Christopher A. Preble)

I have just returned from a discussion
of U.S. strategy in Afghanistan and Pakistan
hosted by the Foundation for the Defense of
Democracy. I sat next to journalists, think
thinkers, and current and former government officials featured intro-
ductive remarks by Gilles Dorrorsoro, vil-
leaguer of Carl von Clausewitz, and FDD’s Bill Roggio. FDD President, Cliff
May, moderated the session. The meeting
was officially on the record, but I’m relying
solely on my notes, so I won’t quote the
other attendees directly.

I would characterize the general mood as grim. A few spoke to the killing of
a number of Talib figures in both Af-
ghanistan and Pakistan, and reports of
progress in Marja and the rest of Helmand
province as evidence of progress. These
one, one speaker maintained, were sustain-
able and would not necessarily slip in the
event that U.S. forces are directed
elsewhere.

Dorrorsoro disputed these assertions. He judged that the situation today is worse
than it was a year ago, before the surge of
30,000 additional troops of individual
troops in Afghanistan, and foot-soldiers, was also
accompanied by the inadvertent killing of in-
nocent bystanders, including most recently
the children. He says the danger is that even
that over the left term
replace one dead Talib with two or four or
five of his comrades, and tribesman. How many people have said “We can’t
kill our way to victory”?

For Dorrorsoro, the crucial metric is secu-

ity, not numbers, and suspected bad
guys killed. And, given that he can’t
drive to places that he freely visited two or
two years ago, he judges that security in the
country has gotten worse, not better. Many
U.S. and Western troops cannot leave
their bases without encountering IEDs or
more coordinated attacks from insurgents.

The killing of individual
Taliban leaders, or foot-soldiers, was also ac-
accompanied by the inadvertent killing of in-
nocent bystanders, including most recently
the children. He says the danger is that even
that over the long term
replace one dead Talib with two or four or
five of his comrades, and tribesman. How many people have said “We can’t
kill our way to victory”?

For Dorrorsoro, the crucial metric is secu-

ity, not numbers, and suspected bad
guys killed. And, given that he can’t
drive to places that he freely visited two or
two years ago, he judges that security in the
country has gotten worse, not better. Many
U.S. and Western troops cannot leave
their bases without encountering IEDs or
more coordinated attacks from insurgents.

We need to send a message to them
and the rest of the world and to our
troops that are on the front lines in
Afghanistan today that we support them
and we will not get weary, we will not
quit, we will not give in or give up just
because this war has been long and hard.

And that’s just the way it is.

Mr. KUCINICH. I would like to put into
the RECORD an article from the National
Interest which states that many U.S.
and western troops cannot leave
their bases without encountering IEDs or more coordinated attacks from
insurgents.

From AlterNet, Nov. 18, 2010

AFGHANISTAN: OBSCENELY WELL-FUNDED, BUT LARGELY UNSUCCESSFUL, WAR RAGES ON OUT OF SIGHT OF THE AMERICAN PUBLIC

(Ray Juan Cole)

Not only is it unclear that the U.S. and NATO are winning their war in Afghanistan, the lack of support for their effort by the American public, the unwillingness of the American commander to the brink of resignation. In response to complaints from his constituents, Afghanistan’s mercurial President Hamid Karzai called Sunday for American troops to scale back their military operations. The supposed ally of the U.S., who only last spring petulantly threatened to join the Taliban, astonished Washington only last spring petulantly threatened to join the Taliban, astonished Washington

During the past two months, the U.S. military has fought a major campaign in the environs of the southern Pashtun city of Kandahar, launching night raids and attempting to push insurgents out of the orchards and farms to the east of the metropolis. Many local farmers were displaced, losing the midst of the violence, and forced to become day laborers in the slums of Kandahar. Presumably these Pashtun clans who found themselves in the crossfire between the Taliban and the U.S. put pressure on Karzai to call a halt to the operation.

That there has been heavy fighting in Afghanistan will come as a surprise to most Americans, who have seen little news on their televisions about the war. Various websites noted that 10 NATO troops were killed this past Saturday and Sunday alone, five of them in a single battle, but it was hardly front page news, and got little or no television coverage.

The mid-term campaign circus took the focus off of foreign affairs in favor of witches in Newark and eyes of Newt in Georgia. Distinct Kandahar was reduced to an invisible battlefront while the largely unreported $27 billion were spent on training Afghan troops, only 12 percent of them can operate independently. Karzai and his circle are extremely corrupt, with thousands of inhabitants offer insurgents new sorts of cover when they are displaced there from the countryside.

Counterinsurgency requires an Afghan partner, but all along the spectrum of Afghan institutions, the U.S. and NATO are seeking in vain for the “government in a box” once promised by Gen. Stanley McChrystal. The mayor of Helmand and Kandahar are largely hostile to U.S. and NATO troops, seeing them as dis-favorite from violence. TheyArmy in counterinsurgency and want Mullah Omar of the Taliban to join the government.

Although the U.S. and NATO have spent $27 billion on training Afghan troops, only 12 percent of them can operate independently. Karzai and his circle are extremely corrupt, with thousands of inhabitants offer insurgents new sorts of cover when they are displaced there from the countryside.

I would like to put into the RECORD an article published on AlterNet titled

The campaign in the outskirts of Kandahar had been modeled on last winter’s attack on the farming area of Marjah in Helmand Province. Marjah was a demonstration project, intended to show that the U.S. and Afghanistan security forces could “take, clear, hold and build.” Petraeus’ counterinsurgency doctrine depends on taking territory away from the insurgents. The idea is to build it for the medium term to keep the Taliban from returning and to reassure local leaders that they need not fear reprisals for “collaborating.” And then building up services and security for the long term to ensure that the insurgents can never again return and dominate the area. But all these measures have not been cleared from Marjah, which is a site of frequent gun fights between over-stretched Marines and Taliban.

There is no easy prospect of Afghan army troops holding the area, or of building effective institutions in the face of constant sniping and bombing. Marjah is only 18 square miles. Afghanistan is more than 251,000 square miles. If Marjah is the model for the campaign in the outskirts of Kandahar, then the latter will be a long, hard slog. Kandahar is even more complicated, since the labyrinthine city and its hundreds of thousands of inhabitants offer insurgents new sorts of cover when they are displaced there from the countryside.

Counterinsurgency requires an Afghan partner, but all along the spectrum of Afghan institutions, the U.S. and NATO are seeking in vain for the “government in a box” once promised by Gen. Stanley McChrystal. The mayor of Helmand and Kandahar are largely hostile to U.S. and NATO troops, seeing them as dis- favorite from violence. TheyArmy in counterinsurgency and want Mullah Omar of the Taliban to join the government.

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Totally Occupied: 700 Military Bases Spread Across Afghanistan, by Nick Turse

(TomDispatch.com)

In the nineteenth century, it was a fort used by British forces. In the twentieth century, it was an outcome of the American Air Force to its crumbling bases. In December 2009, at this site in the Shinwar district of Afghanistan’s Nangarhar Province, U.S. troops joined members of the Afghanistan’s National Army in preparing the way for the next round of foreign occupation. On its grounds, a new military base is expected to rise, one of hundreds of camps and outposts scattered across the country.

Nearly a decade after the Bush administration launched its invasion of Afghanistan, TomDispatch offers the first actual count of American, NATO, and other coalition bases there, as well as facilities used by the Afghan security forces. Such bases range from the small sites, under construction or in operation, to the large bases like Kandahar Airfield, which boasts one of the busiest runways in the world, and Bagram Air Base, a former Soviet airfield that received complete with Burger King and Popeyes outlets, and now serves more than 20,000 U.S. troops, in addition to tens of thousands of coalition forces and civilian contractors.

In fact, Kandahar, which housed 9,000 coalition troops as recently as 2007, is expected to have a population of as many as 35,000 troops by the time President Obama’s surge is complete, according to Colonel Kevin Wil- son who oversees building efforts in the southern half of Afghanistan for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. On the other hand, according to TomDispatch, the U.S.-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), tells TomDispatch that there are, at present, nearly 400 U.S. and coalition bases in Afghanistan, including camps, forward operating bases and outposts. In addition, there are at least 300 Afghan National Army (ANA) and Afghan National Police (ANP) bases, most of them housed, or supported by the U.S. A small number of the coalition sites are mega-bases like Kandahar Airfield, which boasts one of the busiest runways in the world, and Bagram Air Base, a former Soviet airfield that received complete with Burger King and Popeyes outlets, and now serves more than 20,000 U.S. troops, in addition to thousands of coalition forces and civilian contractors.

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the 30,000 extra American troops and thousands of NATO forces beginning to arrive in the country.

"Currently we have over $3 billion worth of work out on Afghanistan," said Colonel Wilson, "and probably by the summer, when the dust settles from all the uplift, we'll have about $1.3 billion to $1.4 billion worth of that."

...between 2002 and 2008, the Army Corps of Engineers spent more than $4.5 billion on construction projects, most of it base-building, in Afghanistan.

The site at the future FOB in Shinwar, more than 135 private construction contractors attended what was termed an "Afghan-Coalition rodeo," according to Lieutenant Fernando Roach, a contracting officer with the U.S. Army's Task Force Mountain Warrior, the event was designed "to give "our contractors a synchronized walkthrough of the area so they'll have a solid overview of the scope of work."

The construction firms then bid on three separate projects: the renovation of the more than 30-year old Soviet facilities, the building of new living quarters for Afghan and coalition forces, and the construction of a two-kilometer wall for the base.

In the weeks since the "rodeo," the U.S. Army has announced additional plans to upgrade other forward operating bases. At FOB Airborne, located near Kandahar, for instance, the Army intends to put in reinforced concrete bunkers and a series of concrete barriers as laey concrete foundations for Re-Locatable Buildings (prefabricated, trailer-like structures used for living and working quarters).

Similarly, work has been scheduled for FOB Altalur, an Army camp in Logar Province.

The Afghan base boom

Recently, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Afghanistan District-Kabul, announced that it would be seeking bids on "site selection and planning for Afghan National Security Forces District Headquarters Facilities nationwide."

When asked by TomDispatch, Colonel Radmanesh of the Afghan Ministry of Defense would state only that major bases were located near Kandahar, Zabul, Khost, and Mazar-e-Sharif, and that ANA units operate all across Afghanistan. Recently U.S. Army contractors have been providing services to Afghan army and police bases, however, suggest that there are no fewer than 300 such facilities that are, according to an ISAF spokesman, not counted among the coalition base inventory.

As opposed to America's fast-food-franchise-filled bases, Afghan ones are often decidedly more rustic affairs. The police headquarters in Khost Farang District, in Logar Province, for example, was described by a U.S. Army contractor as "the most austere base on the entire base or the city."

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we’re talking about human lives being lost because of our concern about oil in this part of the world. It hasn’t got a darn thing to do with our national security. I just hope and pray that one day we would be able to say we know we made a mistake and withdraw from this part of the world and for the future of this great country.

Thank you for this opportunity.

Mr. Berman. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. Jones. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. Ros-Lehtinen. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. Bartlett), the chairman of the Armed Services Subcommittee on Tactical Air and Land Forces.

(Mr. Bartlett asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. Bartlett. Thank you very much for yielding.

If our only reason for being in Afghanistan was to deny sanctuary to al Qaeda, I probably would have asked time from the gentleman from Ohio and be speaking from the other side, because when we are successful in Afghanistan, it will not have denied sanctuary to al Qaeda because they will simply go over into Pakistan. If not there, they’ll go to Yemen and Somalia. If we leave Afghanistan now or if we leave Afghanistan before victory in Afghanistan, in the withdrawal, we will have sent a message to the world that their suspicions are really true, that all you have to do to the United States is make it tough for them and they will pull out. We did it in Beirut. We did it in Somalia. It is absolutely essential that we win here, or our credibility is gone forever as a major player in geopolitical things in the world.

A second good reason for staying in Afghanistan is that if we can have a fledgling democracy there, that will send a very powerful message to the Middle East from which most of the world’s oil comes. There is a lot of upheaval there, and a stable democracy in Afghanistan would be enormously important.

Beyond denying sanctuary to al Qaeda, there are very good reasons for staying in Afghanistan until we have victory. Our young people there are doing an incredible job. I just came from a service event a week ago, and I can succeed there, and I think we must succeed for the two reasons I mentioned.

Ms. Ros-Lehtinen. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. Gibson), a member of the Armed Services Committee and a decorated combat veteran who ended his 24-year military career as a colonel in the United States Army.

Mr. Gibson. I thank the lady.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to the resolution. I served in Iraq when it was hard and unpopular, and I thank God that I live in a country that had the intestinal fortitude to see it through.

This year, we’re going to complete our objectives in Iraq, and the remaining 48,000 troops that are going to come home. There’s going to be a small contingent, about 150 or so, that will remain at the Embassy, but we will have completed our objectives and Iraq will be stable and friendly.

Now, Afghanistan is different from Iraq. It would be a battle. The surge has accomplished its primary aim, to seize the initiative from the Taliban. But now we need to finish the job of building out the institution, the security and the civil institutions. I’m recently back from Afghanistan, and I had an opportunity to meet the leadership there. I feel confident we’ve got the right plan going forward. And I support the President’s plan, the President’s plan to begin withdrawal this year and to complete combat operations by 2014. I believe this plan will stabilize Afghanistan and help protect our cherished way of life, preventing al Qaeda from regaining sanctuary.

Now going forward, I think we need to learn from these experiences. Some comments were made here earlier about us, whether or not we’re a Republic or an empire. I share those concerns and those sentiments. We’re a Republic, and we need to learn from these experiences. But we need to see this through. We need to stand with our Commander in Chief. We need to stand with our troops. Complete this task.

And then finally let me say that I join all today on both sides of the aisle who honor our service men and women who have fell in the line of battle. We pray for their souls. We pray for their families. We remember those wounded in battle, those who bear physical scars. Those who bear physical scars who are emotionally scarred, we pray for them. We honor them.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Ms. Ros-Lehtinen. I yield the gentleman an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. Gibson. And let me say this: That going forward, that this body, whether it be this issue or any issue, that this body and that this country shall be worthy of the sacrifices of our service men and women.

Ms. Ros-Lehtinen. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. Palazzo), a member of the Armed Services Committee and a Marine veteran of the first Gulf war who continues to serve with the Army National Guard.

Mr. Palazzo. Mr. Speaker, the resolution proposed by my colleague from Ohio does a disservice to the men and women who have courageously defended our country from our enemies in Afghanistan. This past weekend I had the distinct pleasure and honor of welcoming home the 287th Engineering Company, commonly referred to as Sappers, based in Lucedale, Mississippi. They have the most dangerous mission in Afghanistan. They were the ones that cleared routes so that our men and women in uniform could have safe passage. They’re the ones that protected the American embassy and the roadsides bombs. And I’m happy to say they came back 100 percent, with one wounded warrior, but they did their mission.

While they were obviously overjoyed to see their loved ones again, the soldiers I spoke with were good to go with that mission and what they had accomplished. They fully understand that there are those who want to indiscriminately kill and maim Americans and we would rather take the fight to them overseas and abroad instead of having them come to our backyard, to our schools and our playgrounds.

Just yesterday, I had the chance to speak personally with General Petraeus after his testimony before the House Armed Services Committee. Again, as a Marine veteran of the Persian Gulf war and currently serving in the Mississippi National Guard, I know firsthand what good military commands look like, and General Petraeus is a great leader, a professional soldier, and someone whose opinion I respect very much.

Based on this resolution, his quote was, “The Taliban and al Qaeda obviously would trumpet this as a victory, as a success. Needless to say, it would completely undermine everything that our troopers have fought and sacrificed so much for.”

Mr. Speaker, Congress’ constitutional responsibility is to ensure that the courageous men and women in our armed services have the tools and equipment and training to do their job and come home safely to their families.

Our warfighters don’t need armchair generals in this Congress arbitrarily dictating terms that will cause irreparable harm to them and to the national security of this country.

I urge my colleagues to oppose this resolution.

Mr. Kucinich. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire how much time is remaining for each individual.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Ohio (Mr. Kucinich) has 5 1/2 minutes remaining; the gentleman from Florida (Ms. Ros-Lehtinen) has 3 1/2 minutes remaining; the gentleman from California (Mr. Berman) has 9 minutes remaining; and the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. Jones) has 5 minutes remaining.

Mr. Kucinich. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 30 seconds.

Mr. Speaker, spending on the Afghanistan war is rising at an accelerating rate. Over just 3 years—2010, 2011, and 2012—we will spend 45 percent more on the war in Afghanistan than we did in the preceding
8 years, $336.9 billion versus $231.2 billion. This is an example of out-of-control Federal spending.

If Congress is serious about being fiscally responsible and about cutting the Federal budget by three figures, then cutting spending on the out-of-control $100 billion war in Afghanistan must be a serious consideration. This legislation, House Concurrent Resolution 28, gives those who are concerned about the costs of this war an opportunity finally to have a choice.

I reserve the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Who seeks recognition?

The Chair will recognize Members for closing speeches in the reverse order of opening. That is, the gentleman from North Carolina, the gentleman from California, the gentleman from Ohio, and finally the gentlewoman from Florida.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRIES

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I have a parliamentary inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlemman from North Carolina has the floor. Recognition is in the discretion of the Chair.

Mr. KUCINICH. Further parliamentary inquiry. Does the Chair have the right to determine that closing statements are in order?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. It is in the discretion of the Chair to recognize Members in the reverse order of their opening statements to make their closing statements.

Mr. KUCINICH. Further parliamentary inquiry. Does the Chair have the ability to direct individual Members that they are to give their closing statements?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. A Member may yield his last amount of time to another Member at his discretion.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina.

Mr. JONES. I yield myself 3 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, first I would like to say to every Member that has been on the floor that served in our military, thank you and God bless you, as I say all the time to those who are overseas for this country.

Because I did not serve, I sought out a Marine general that every Marine that I talk to today, I said his name—but I don’t have permission—they would salute him. They know him.

Let me share with you what this Marine general said to me back in November when I told him I was reading an article in The New York Times that an Army general said to me back in November that spoke on the floor today, if I said his name—but I don’t have permission. He closed by saying this: “What do we say to the mother and father, the wife, of the last Marine killed to support a corrupt government and a corrupt leader in a war that cannot be won?”

I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, if I could ask my good friend the gentleman from California if he would yield 2 minutes of his time to me.

Mr. Berman. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask unanimous consent to yield 2 minutes of my remaining time to my chairman, the gentlewoman from Florida.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Mr. Ros-Lehtinen. The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Mr. Ros-Lehtinen. I reserve the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Who seeks recognition?

Seeing none, we will proceed with the closing statements in the reverse order of the opening statements.

First, the gentleman from North Carolina.

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, how much time do I have remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from North Carolina has 3½ minutes remaining.

Mr. JONES. I yield the balance of my time to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH).

Mr. KUCINICH. The 2001 authorization of military force and the justification for our continued military presence in Afghanistan is that the Taliban in the past provided a safe haven for al Qaeda or could do so again in the future. General Petraeus has already admitted that al Qaeda has little or no presence in Afghanistan. Al Qaeda is an international organization, and, yes, they are a threat to America. The Taliban is only a threat to us as long as we continue our military occupation in Afghanistan.

After more than 9 years of military occupation of Afghanistan, can we really continue to claim to be acting in self-defense? The premise that the presence of our troops on the ground keeps us safer at home has been replicated by terrorist attacks on the United States, all done by people other than Afghans outraged at continuing U.S. military occupation of predominantly Muslim countries. That is not to justify what they do, but it is to clarify the condition that we have in Afghanistan.

For how long are we going to continue to dedicate hundreds of billions of dollars and thousands of lives before we realize we can’t win Afghanistan militarily?

At the end of the year, the administration and U.S. military leaders were touting peace talks to end the war with high-level Taliban leaders. These Taliban leaders turned out to be fake.

A November 2010 article in The New York Times detailed joint U.S. and Afghan negotiations with Mullah Akhtar Muhammad Mansour, a man the U.S. claimed was one of the most senior commanders in the Taliban. According to the New York Times, “the episode underscores the uncertain and even bizarre nature of the atmosphere in which Afghan and American leaders search for ways to bring the American-led war to an end. The leaders of the Taliban are believed to be hiding in Pakistan, possibly with assistance of the Pakistani government, which receives billions of dollars in U.S. aid.”

How can we claim that a cornerstone of our counterinsurgency strategy is to talk out Taliban strongholds across the country while at the same time conducting negotiations with the Taliban in an effort to end the war?

This episode further underlines the significant weakness in our strategy. We think we can separate the Taliban from the rest the Afghan population. Our counterinsurgency strategy fails to recognize a basic principle: Occupations fuel insurgencies. Occupations fuel insurgencies. Occupations fuel insurgencies.

The Taliban is a local resistance movement that is part and parcel of the indigenous population.

We lost the Vietnam war because we failed to win the hearts and minds of the local population. Without providing them with a competent government that provided them with basic security and a decent living, we’re committing the same mistake in Afghanistan.

News reports indicate the Taliban is regaining momentum. The increase in civilian casualties due to higher levels of violence by insurgents further underlines the assurances of progress. As we send more troops into the country and kill innocent civilians with errant air strikes, the Taliban gains more support from insurgents of foreign occupation. If we accept the premise that we can never leave Afghanistan until the Taliban is eradicated, we’ll be there forever.

I would like to insert into the Record an article from The Nation, “America’s Failed War in Afghanistan—No Policy Change Is Going to Affect the Outcome.” That’s by Jeremy Scahill.
The hard reality U.S. officials don't want to face is that the Taliban is not a unified body. The Afghan insurgency is fueled by an ideology that is wide variances of the Taliban. Bolstering the Taliban's recruitment efforts is the perception in Afghanistan that the Taliban pays better than NATO or the Afghan army or police. The hard reality U.S. officials don't want to face is that the Taliban is not a unified body. The Afghan insurgency is fueled by an ideology that is wide variances of the Taliban. Bolstering the Taliban's recruitment efforts is the perception in Afghanistan that the Taliban pays better than NATO or the Afghan army or police.

The hard reality U.S. officials don't want to discuss is this: the cultural and religious values of much of the Pashtun population—which make up the majority of people in Afghanistan—more closely align with those of the Taliban than they do with Afghan government or U.S./NATO forces. The Taliban operate in a country in large swaths of which are not under the control of the Afghan government, which is widely distrusted. “The objectives and goal of the American troops in Afghanistan are not clear to the people and therefore Afghans call the Americans ‘invaders’,” said Muttawakli. “Democracy is a very new phenomenon in Afghanistan. Most people don’t know the meaning of democracy. And now corruption, thieves and fakes have decreased. Don’t call democratic forces be imposed because people will never adopt any value by force.”

The U.S. strategy of attempting to force the Taliban into a peace negotiation rests almost exclusively on attempts to decapitate the Taliban leadership. While Taliban leaders acknowledge that special forces on the ground are killing their leaders, they say the targeted killings are producing more radical leaders who are far less likely to negotiate with the United States. “We shall never surrender,” said Zaeef, adding: “It will be worse for everyone if the [current] Taliban leadership disappears.”

In October, there were a flurry of media reports that senior Taliban leaders were negotiating with the Karzai government and that U.S. forces were helping to insure safe passage for the talks to come to Kabul. The Taliban passionately refuted those reports, saying they were propaganda aimed at dividing the insurgency. Last week the New York Times published on this point as Karzai spoke in markedly modest terms on the issue. He told The Washington Post that three months ago he had met with some of the very Taliban leaders. He characterized the meeting as “the exchange of desires for peace,” saying the Taliban “feel the same as we do here—that too many people are suffering for no reason.”

Update: [On Tuesday, The New York Times reported that NATO and the Afghan government have held a series of “secret” peace negotiations with a man who posed as a senior Taliban leader, Mullah Akhtar Muhammad Mansour. A Western diplomat involved in the talks would be jeopardized—and Mr. Karzai spoke in markedly modest terms on the issue. He told The Washington Post that three months ago he had met with some of the very Taliban leaders. He characterized the meeting as “the exchange of desires for peace,” saying the Taliban “feel the same as we do here—that too many people are suffering for no reason.”

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any manner and the Afghan people don’t like these raids in any manner,” Karzai said. “We don’t like raids in our homes. This is a problem between us and I hope this ends as soon as possible. Unilateral or not, it is not inviting. Afghan homes and fighting terrorism is not being intrusive in the daily Afghan life.”

Karzai’s comments angered the Obama administration, who warned that continued US military action in Afghanistan would need to be ‘reasonable and proportionate’ to undertaking the task of fighting terrorism. The US military has been criticized for the use of drone strikes in Afghanistan, which have been accused of causing civilian casualties and leading to increased violence.

On the other hand, hard news from the field is critical. In spite of the US army’s efforts to rebuild t Generation X was not interested in politics and did not know much about the war.

Against this background, the Afghan government has been forced to consider a number of options, including the possibility of a negotiated settlement with the Taliban. However, there is little evidence that the Taliban is willing to negotiate, and the US military remains committed to a military solution.

In the meantime, the US military continues to face a growing number of challenges, including the need to deal with the Taliban’s growing capabilities, the impact of drone strikes on civilians, and the increasing cost of the war.

What is clear is that the US military is facing a number of significant challenges, and it remains to be seen whether it will be able to achieve its objectives in Afghanistan.

Running out of options

The Afghan government’s incapability to take control of the task of fighting terrorism is the key to the country’s future. The capacity of the Obama administration to break the Taliban’s momentum does not bode well for an early conclusion of the war.

To their credit some of Obama’s war and surge supporters realize that there is no military solution for Afghanistan. Clearly, the process of battle has to help justify the rush to talk to the Taliban.

But it is not yet clear whether the presumably ongoing exploratory secret negotiations while the Taliban are still a major factor will lead to comprehensive negotiations and eventually a lasting deal. The last “Taliban commander” Washington talked with in the fall turned out to be an impostor—a shopkeeper from Quetta!

If the Taliban does eventually accept to sit down with Obama or Karzai, the US needs to explain why it fought for 10 years only to help the group back to power.

Secretary of state Hillary Clinton has become the humiliating backtracking last month: “Now, I know that reconciling with an adversary that can be as brutal as the Taliban sounds distasteful, even unimaginable, and diplomats and international organisations would only have to talk to our friends. That is not how one makes peace.”

Facing up to the reality

The mere fact that the world’s mightiest superpower cannot win over the poorly armed Taliban after a long decade of fighting, means it has already failed strategically, regardless of the final outcome.

The escalation of violence and wasting billions more cannot change that. It is history.

The quicker the Obama administration recognizes its misfortunes, minimizes its losses and convenes a regional conference over the future of Afghanistan under UN auspices, the easier it will be to evacuate without humiliation.

Only the US, eventually loses the war and declares victory, negotiates a settlement and withdraws its troops, remains to be seen. What is incontestable is that when you fight the fight for too long, you start to lose.

All of which explains the earlier blunt comments made in a speech at the end of February by U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates when he said “… any future defense secretary who advises the president to again send a big American land army into Asia or Africa should have his head examined,” as General MacArthur so delicately put it.”

Amen.

I would like to insert a report from AlterNet an article by Derrick Crowe and Robert Greenwald. posted on February 6, 2011, titled Damning New Report Shows U.S. Strategy is Blocking Chance for Peace in Afghanistan.

[From AlterNet, Feb. 6, 2011]

DAMNING NEW REPORT SHOWS U.S. STRATEGY IS BLOCKING CHANCE FOR PEACE IN AFGHANISTAN

(By Derrick Crowe and Robert Greenwald)

See: [http://www.alternet.org/story/149015]

The new report from NYU’s Center for International Cooperation is a damning description of the U.S. policies in Afghanistan since 2001, and a warning that the escalated military strategy blocks the road to peace while prolonging the Taliban’s success.

Separating the Taliban from al-Qaeda: The Core of Success in Afghanistan is the latest
the September 11 attacks on New York and after a US invasion launched in the wake of this political and military effort,’’ he said.

somehow humanitarian work is lumped into tion in parts of the Afghan population that hardly any access to the remaining 40 per cent.

And it is an emotional issue for American troops, who fear that their sacrifices could be squandered. At least 103 American soldiers have died in or near the valley’s maze of steep gullies and soaring peaks, according to a count by The New York Times, and many times more have been wounded, often severely.

Military officials say they are sensitive to those perceptions. People say, ‘You are coming out of the Pech;’ I prefer to look at it as realigning to provide better security for the Afghans,” said John F. Campbell, the commander for eastern Afghanistan.

“I don’t want the impression we’re abandoning the Pech.”

The reason this follows the complete Afghan and American withdrawals from isolated outposts in nearby Nuristan Province and the Korangal Valley, runs the risk of providing the Taliban with an opportunity to claim success and raises questions about the latest strategy guiding the war.

At the heart of the Pech Valley battle is a simple and compelling: the valley consumed resources disproportionate with its importance; those forces could be deployed in other areas; and there are not enough troops to win decisively in the Pech Valley in any case.

If you continue to stay with the status quo, where will you be a year from now?” said General Campbell.

We’ve now confronted with security problems that we’d never dream that we’d have.

“When I returned from the Pech, this valley has turned the corner. . . . we still see these very difficult security problems.”

UN relief agencies now have regular access to just 30 per cent of the country. Access is mixed for another 30 per cent while there is hardly any access to the remaining 40 per cent.

Mr. Watkins says a key issue is the “conflation of political, military, developmental and humanitarian aid.”

“People are dispersed in Afghanistan. . . . it has contributed to perception in parts of the Afghan population that somehow humanitarian work is lumped into this political and military effort,” he said.

“We have to emphasise that we recognise that there has to be separation and we have to be very careful to try to address this perception.”

But he pointed out that a positive development was that the international and Afghan military have publicly acknowledged that some kind of negotiated settlement was necessary to end the instability.

“This could be a crucial year if there is a breakthrough in finding some kind of reconciliation efforts,” he said.

The Taliban, a hardline Islamist movement, was forced from power in late 2001 after a costly American-led military effort,” he said.

“We have to have the American and the Afghan population to work together to find peace in this area.”

The Taliban, in a continuous string of statements from Afghan experts that the U.S. war policies that were launched a year ago aren’t making us safer and aren’t worth the substantial cost in human life. Afghanistan per year, for a total of more than $375.5 billion wasted so far. The report is written by Alex Strick van Linschoten and Felix D. Pham based on research funded by the US government.

“Because of the way aid is dispersed in Afghanistan, it becomes the battlefield in the mind,” he said.

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blood in the valley, has ignited a sometimes painful debate among Americans veterans and active-duty troops. The Pech Valley had long been a hub of American military operations, including the Korangal Valley, the Wargal Valley (where the battle of Wanat was fought in 2008), the Shuryak Valley and the Nuristan River corridor (where Combat Outpost Keating was nearly overrun in 2009)—the Pech Valley was a region rivaled only by Helmand Province as the deadliest Afghan acreage for American troops.

On one in 2005, 19 service members, including 11 members of the Navy Seals, died.

As the years passed and the toll rose, the area became the site of attacks—by military and civilians who had seen the region as the hallowed ground. “I can think of very few places over the past 10 years with as high and as sustained a level of violence,” said Col. Dan Albin, who commanded a Marine battalion in the area in 2006 and helped establish the American presence in the Korangal Valley.

In the months after American units left the Korangal last year, insurgent attacks increased sharply, prompting the current American battalion in the area, First Battalion, 327th Infantry, and Special Operations units to carry out raids into places that American troops once patrolled regularly.

Last August, an infantry company raided the village of Omar, which the American military said had become a base for attacks into the Pech Valley, but which earlier units had viewed as mostly calm. Another American operation last November, in the nearby Watapal Valley, led to fighting that left seven American soldiers dead.

This article has been revised to reflect the following correction.

Correction: February 24, 2011

An earlier version of this article referred incorrectly to a pullback of American forces in eastern Afghanistan. It is a pullback from remote territory within Kunar Province, not from the province as a whole.

The SPEAKER pro tempore, the gentleman from California (Mr. Berman) has 7/2 minutes remaining.

Mr. Berman. I simply would very quickly make the point here that the resolution should be voted against for several reasons. Initially, because it improperly invokes a provision of the War Powers Act that’s inapplicable. This war was authorized by the U.S. Congress. Secondly, the manner in which it would force withdrawal is irresponsible and I don’t think is the right way to do it. And, thirdly, that I am not prepared, from this point of view, to say that failure is in any way inevitable, and that’s what this resolution should not at this time make. I would say that we should get the judgment that the pullout is going to be from what we are doing in Afghanistan.

I would urge a “no” vote on the resolution.

In 2001, Mr. Speaker, I joined with Members of this House in voting for the authorization of military force following the terrorist attacks on 9/11. I don’t take a backseat to anyone in standing up to defend this country. But as the United States continues in what is one of the longest wars in American history, it has become clear that the authorization for military force is being used as a carte blanche for circumventing Congress’ role as a coequal branch of government.

I want you to hear this. We’re a coequal branch of government. We’re not lap dogs for the President. We’re not servants of generals. We are a coequal branch of government expressing the sovereign will of the American people.

It has become clear this administration, just as the last administration, is willing to commit us to an endless war and an endless stream of money, just a year after a commitment of an additional 30,000 troops to Afghanistan and continued assurances of “progress.”

Therefore, I urge a “no” vote.

Regardless of your support or opposition to the war in Afghanistan, this debate has been a critical opportunity to evaluate the human and the economic cost as this Congress works to address our country’s dire financial straits. Those of us that supported the withdrawal may not agree on a timeline, but an increasing number of us agree it’s time to think and rethink our current national security strategy. And we have to know the costs are great.

We can’t get away from the costs of this war.

Nobel Prize-winning economist Joe Stiglitz and Linda Bilmes, his associate, wrote a book about the Iraq war. They projected then a minimum of $3 trillion in costs.

I would like to include in the RECORD, Mr. Speaker, a statement that I made over 8 years ago at the beginning of the Iraq war, where I pointed out there was nothing—no reason why we should be going to war in Iraq because there was no proof that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction.

I mention that in terms of this debate because we’re at the confluence of the events—the anniversary of the Iraq war, the confluence of the funding of the war in Afghanistan. We’ve got to get out of Afghanistan. We’ve got to get out of Iraq. We’ve got to start taking care of things here at home.

ANALYSIS OF JOINT RESOLUTION ON IRAQ BY DENNIS J. KUCINICH

WASHINGTON, Oct. 2, 2002.—Whereas in 1990 in response to Iraq’s aggression against and illegal occupation of Kuwait, the United States forged a coalition of nations to liberate Kuwait and its people in order to defend the national security of the United States and enforce United Nations Security Council resolutions relating to Iraq;
KEY ISSUE: In the Persian Gulf war there was an international coalition. World sup- port was for protecting Kuwait. There is no world support for invading Iraq.

Whereas the liberation of Kuwait in 1991, Iraq entered into a United Nations sponsored cease-fire agreement pursuant to which Iraq unequivocally agreed, among other things, to destroy its nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons programs and the means to deliver and develop them, and to end its support for international ter-
inors.

Whereas the efforts of international weap-
on inspectors, the United States intelligence agencies, and the Iraqis defectors led to the discovery that Iraq had large stockpiles of chemical weapons and a large scale biological weapon program, and that Iraq had an advanced weapons development program that was much closer to producing a nuclear weapon than intelligence reporting had previously indicated;

KEY ISSUE: UN inspection teams identified and destroyed nearly all such weapons. A lead inspector, Scott Ritter, said that he believes that nearly all other weapons not found in the Gulf War. Furthermore, according to a published report in the Washington Post, the Central Intel-
lence has no up to date accurate report on their capabilities.

Whereas, in direct and flagrant viola-
tion of the cease-fire, attempted to thwart the efforts of weapons inspectors to identify and develop the means to deliver and develop pro-
ions inspectors, United States intelligence

Whereas in 1998 Congress concluded that Iraq’s continuing weapons of mass destruct-
d by default, and subsequent withdrawal of UN resolution 688, and threatening its neighbors or

KEY ISSUE: The UN Charter forbs all member nations, including the United States, from unilaterally enforcing UN reso-
lutions.

Whereas in December 1991, Congress ex-
expressed its sense that it “supports the use of all necessary means to achieve the goals of United Nations Security Council Resolution 687 as being consistent with the Authorization of the use of military force against Iraq Resolution (Public Law 102-1),” that Iraq’s failure to comply with its international obligations, and refusal or obstruction of United Nations Security Council Resolution 688 and “contributes a continuing threat to the peace, security, and stability of the Persian Gulf region,” and that Congress, “sup-
ports the use of all necessary means to achieve the goals of United Nations Security Council Resolution 688.”

Whereas the Iraq Liberation Act (Public Law 105-338) expressed the sense of Congress that it should be the policy of the United States to support efforts to remove from power the current Iraqi regime and promote the emergence of a democratic government to replace that regime;

KEY ISSUE: This “sense of Congress” reso-

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ening international peace and security in the region, by refusing to release, repatriate, or account for non-Iraqi citizens wrongfully de-
tained by Iraq, including an American serv-
ner, and a non-Iraqi man, and by refusing to return to the United States or its Armed Forces or provide them

Whereas in December 1991, the United Nations Security Council Resolution 678 authorizes the use of all nec-

Whereas the Iraq Liberation Act (Public Law 105-338) expressed the sense of Congress that it should be the policy of the United States to support efforts to remove from power the current Iraqi regime and promote the emergence of a democratic government to replace that regime;

KEY ISSUE: This “sense of Congress” reso-

Whereas Congress in the Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution (Public Law 102-1) has authorized the President “to use United States Armed Forces pursuant to United Nations Security Council Resolution 678 in order to achieve implementation of Security Council Resolutions 660, 661, 662, 664, 665, 666, 667, 669, 670, 671, and 677”

KEY ISSUE: The UN Charter forbids all member nations, including the United States, from unilaterally enforcing UN reso-
lutions with military force.

KEY ISSUE: Where it is the opinion of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 688 that Iraq continued its efforts to develop nuclear weapons since 1998, there is no logical or moral basis for taking such actions.

Whereas the Iraq Liberation Act (Public Law 105-338) expressed the sense of Congress that it should be the policy of the United States to support efforts to remove from power the current Iraqi regime and promote the emergence of a democratic government to replace that regime;

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KEY ISSUE: This “sense of Congress” reso-
I am pleased and honored to yield the balance of my time to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. McCOTTER), a member of the Financial Services Committee, a former member of our Foreign Affairs Committee. I would like to remind my good friend that we still have a DP of Congress in the committee and we need freedom and democracy believers like the gentleman from Michigan; seniority retained.

Mr. McCOTTER. I thank the gentle lady. I thank her for her kind words and her attention.

In this age of hope and peril, today we all assemble with earnestness and sincerity to discuss matters of liberty and tyranny, matters of life and death.

What we see in Afghanistan is a counterrinsurgency operation being led by the United States. It is the most difficult and painful type of military operation to witness because it does involve working with the population, winning hearts and minds, and helping to build the institutions of democracy and liberty at the community and national levels, which have been non-existent for decades.

Yet because the cause is difficult, it does not mean we can turn away from it, because the Afghan people cannot turn away from it.

In 2006, I was fortunate to be on a CODEL with many of my colleagues, and we had the opportunity to meet women who were serving in the Afghan National Assembly. Despite the difficulties in translation, it was very clear that they wanted to accomplish two things: they wanted to serve the Afghan people, who had entrusted them with their positions; and they wanted to honor the men and women of the United States military, who had risked and given so much for them to have that opportunity.

As I said, I deeply appreciate the sincerity and earnestness of this debate today because, in this instance, clearly, it is not one based upon partisan division, but one based upon the dictates of conscience. I think it is very important that we look into this situation and see that it is not simply the United States that is involved here and that it is not simply a question of leaving without consequence. If we leave now, if we back this resolution, there will be consequences for the Afghan National Assembly parliamentarians, who are trying to build freedom within that country.

In my discussion with those brave women, they brought up how difficult it was for them: how hard it would be to build a sustainable democracy: to build an economy; to build, in many ways, what we here take for granted.

I said to them that it was very important to remember that the United States, itself, was not always a great champion of hope and freedom and that in our darkest days after the Revolution there were many who thought this free Republic would fail, and there were enemies who sought its destruction. Yet, at the founding time, the people of the United States and their leaders were able to take this Nation’s democracy and turn it into one that not only secured freedom for itself but one that expanded it to others.

I said that it was within the Halls of the United States Congress, within the Halls of our institution, that you could see the pictures of the Founders, like Jefferson and Madison, hanging from the walls, which remind us of what we have endured, what we enjoy, and what we must return.

I told the Afghan National Assembly women that one day their daughters and granddaughters would look up and see on the walls their portraits hanging in a free Afghanistan that was allied with the Free World against terrorism and that it was a beacon, itself, to those who were oppressed because they will be the cause of our duty not to seek mischievously to hold our own freedom for ourselves, and because we will follow what Lincoln said:

In seeking to extend freedom to the enslaved, we ensured freedom for ourselves.

We will continue to stand with the Afghan people. We will continue to honor the commitment to the solemn word of the United States as it gave to that country; and one day, we will look back, and we will be proud of the votes we cast today.

Mr. DeFazio. Mr. Speaker, we have now been in Afghanistan for 113 months, ten months longer than the war in Vietnam. The war in Afghanistan is now the longest conflict in United States history.

Here at home, Americans are out of work, teachers are facing budget cuts, police departments are overstretched, and yet the President and much of Congress continue to cling to the notion that if given more time and more precious taxpayer dollars borrowed from China we will finally—after a decade of war—gain the edge to “finish the job” in Afghanistan.

Mr. Speaker, I don’t believe that the American people who are paying the bill for the Afghanistan war can afford to enable a new generation of leaders to continue a war in Afghanistan.

I continue to be extremely concerned that the Afghanistan war has drawn the U.S. into a black hole not completely unlike Vietnam, where we propped up a corrupt government that had no relationship to the rest of the country, and boycott elections, and throughout the Middle East have shown us the consequences of similar policies.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly support our troops. They have fought heroically and done everything we have asked of them. We should honor those who have served and sacrifice for their country. But we are not honoring those who have served and those who continue to serve by supporting a war without
clear objectives, a clear exit strategy, and without any substantial hope for a “military victory.”

Clearly an orderly withdrawal can not be accomplished in 9 months. But supporting H. Con. Res. 28 provides an opportunity to send a message to the President that the current strategy and cost of the war in Afghanistan are unsustainable. We need a clear exit strategy. We need a less expensive, less troop intensive policy that could bring about a much better result in Afghanistan. We need to prioritize the needs here at home instead of spending our blood and blood on a seemingly open-ended war in Afghanistan. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H. Con. Res. 28.

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, today the House has a chance to make a judgment about the wisdom of continuing our combat role in Afghanistan. In 2009, I came to the floor of the House and declared that I would give the President at least a year to show that his approach could work. For those who choose to actually look at the facts and the results to date, it is clear; it is time—past time—for us to leave Afghanistan.

And time, our military forces would take out one of their field commanders, and every time several more rise to take their place. This is the nature of insurgency, it is the nature of this war that confronts us, and it is not a problem that will be resolved by the continuous, endless use of military force. The number of insurgent attacks is at an all-time high. The corruption and dysfunctionality of the Afghan government has become legitimate. The cost of this war is that our service members killed and wounded, including the long-term care costs for the hundreds of thousands of veterans of this war—continue to rise. I voted for this resolution today in order to show that I am no longer willing to allow our military and our nation to bear the endless, deadly burden of a war without end that is moving neither our country nor theirs closer to safety and security. I hope the President takes note and works with us to bring our troops home.

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, Secretary Gates recently stated that in Afghanistan—past the 2014 deadline for complete troop withdrawal. Meanwhile, more than 60 percent of Americans oppose this war, with more than 70 percent of people believing that we should withdraw most troops from Afghanistan this summer. The number of insurgent attacks is at an all-time high. The corruption and dysfunctionality of the Afghan government has become legitimate.

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able to sacrifice more money and more lives this way. I urge my colleagues to join me in voting to bring the U.S. involvement in the war in Afghanistan to a close.

Now, I want to say a word about supporting the troops. I believe it is more supportive of the troops and does not make us any safer if they should not be fighting than it is to give them weapons to fight an unnecessary war in which some of them, unfortunately, will lose their lives.

So, I say support our troops. Bring them home. Support the country. Stop fighting where it no longer makes sense.

Vote for this resolution. Let’s bring our troops home.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise to support H. Con. Res. 28, a resolution requiring the removal of all United States Armed Forces from Afghanistan. I believe it is time to bring the United States Military’s involvement in Afghanistan to a close.

Since the beginning of the Afghan War, the United States and Coalition Forces have lost 2,347 service members and tens of thousands have suffered from other disabilities or psychological harm. With thousands of Texas Guardsmen currently serving in Iraq and Afghanistan, I will never forget their bravery in fighting for the freedoms, liberties, and human dignity of all people.

Our nation’s economic and national security interests are not served by a policy of an open-ended war in Afghanistan.

Mr. Speaker, our soldiers have fought for us, now it’s time for us to fight for them. I encourage my colleagues to support this resolution and help bring our soldiers home.

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. Speaker, while I support the intent of this bill, I rise in reluctant opposition to H. Con. Res. 28, legislation introduced by Congressman KUCINICH directing the President to remove U.S. Armed Forces from Afghanistan within 30 days.

I agree with Congressman KUCINICH that we must have an exit strategy and a concrete plan to withdraw troops from Afghanistan. However, I voted against this resolution when it came up for a vote last year because I believed that withdrawing all troops 30 days after enactment of the bill was unrealistic.

Yesterday, along with a large number of my like-minded colleagues in the House, I sent a letter to President Obama urging him to prepare for a significant and sizeable drawdown of troops from Afghanistan that begins this July. I ask for permission to include this letter for the record.

Last December, the Obama Administration concluded in its review of the war in Afghanistan that we should begin a responsible drawdown in July 2011. This week, General Petraeus testified before Congress that he would keep our military and counterinsurgency gains in mind as he begins to provide recommendations to the President on commencing our military drawdown in July.

We have now entered the tenth year that American troops have been in Afghanistan, the longest war in U.S. history. An overwhelming majority of the American people—including an increasing number of Members of Congress—support a safe and significant redeployment of U.S. troops from Afghanistan soon.

There is no question that we need to end our mission in Afghanistan. I will carefully view the Obama Administration’s assessment of the war effort, including plans for a drawdown, in the coming months. Insufficient progress in withdrawing U.S. troops by July 2011 will compel me to support a resolution like this in the future.
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Bernice Johnson; Hank Johnson, Jr.; Timothy V. Johnson; Walter B. Jones; Barbara Lee; John B. Larson; John Lewis; Zoe Lofgren; Ben Ray Luján; C. A. Dutch Ruppersberger; Edward J. Markey; Doris O. Matsui; Jim McDermott; James P. McGovern; Michael H. Michaud; George Miller; Gwen Moore; Jared Polis; Christopher S. Murphy; Grace Napolitano; Eleanor Holmes Norton; John W. Olver; Bill Pascrell, Jr.; Ron Paul; Donald M. Payne; Charles B. Rangel; Lucille Roybal-Allard; Linda T. Sánchez; Lo reta Sánchez; Janice D. Schakowsky; Bobby Scott; José E. Serrano; Albio Sires; Louise McIntosh Slaughter; Jackie Speier; Pete Stark; Mike Thompson (CA); John F. Tierney; Edolphus Towns; Niki Tsongas; Maxine Waters; Anthony D. Weiner; Peter Welch; Lynn C. Woolsey; Members of Congress.

Ms. MOORE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to support this resolution with great reluctance. I have had many great conversations and discussions with the sponsor of this resolution since coming to Congress about the issues of war and peace and justice. He even came to my district last year to join me in a town hall on the war in Afghanistan. He’s been a great leader on this issue and a great friend.

I agree with the gentleman about the need to bring our troops home from Afghanistan as soon as possible. Recently, I joined a number of my colleagues in writing to the President to make clear our belief that the troop withdrawals from Afghanistan should be “substantial, significant, and orderly.” The gentleman from Ohio did not join that letter although as I said, I know he shares the same goals of all those who signed it.

A few weeks ago, I voted for an amendment to H.R. 1 that would limit funding for the war in Afghanistan to $10 billion, with the hope that those funds would be used by the Defense Department to plan and implement a timetable for the safe and expeditious withdrawal of our troops.

I want an end to these wars. One of the criteria that I have used for supporting those efforts and peace and justice is the past number of my colleagues is that we have to allow our military planners to implement that withdrawal in a way that is safe, orderly, and responsible.

I doubt that the 30-day-withdrawal deadline in this bill meets that criteria. The bill itself recognizes that by giving the President the option to delay that withdrawal through the end of the year. Although I am eager to withdraw, I am beset with a nagging question: how practical is it to move 100,000 troops and the associated equipment out of a country half way around the world in 30 days in an orderly, safe, and responsible fashion?

I support getting our troops out of Afghanistan. But we have to do so wisely. We can’t waive a magic wand today and they are gone tomorrow or dismiss concerns about their safety. That is why on the issue of how that withdrawal is conducted, I have always supported legislation that defers that question to our military planners.

I urge the letter that was sent to the President recently by a number of my colleagues, such as BARBARA LEE and Jim MCGOVERN, who like myself opposed the escalation of this war and want all of our troops home soon, does not dictate size or set a timetable for those withdrawals after July 2011.

That letter however did make clear that “a significant redeployment from Afghanistan begins in July,” a looming signal that the United States does not seek a permanent presence in Afghanistan.”

Even though July does not begin for over 100 days from now, sending that letter in March allows the military to have plenty of time to plan for a sizeable withdrawal.

This was the same gist of several bills by Mr. MCGOVERN last year that asked the military to give us their withdrawal plan by a certain date, including any reasons for why a redeployment might be delayed, rather than having Congress mandate that date.

Again, I support this resolution reluctantly because it sends an important signal to the government and its people that the U.S. is not intent on an endless occupation and that after ten years in America’s longest war, the country, political or financial, can continue to afford this war. To the extent this resolution does that, I am in full support. However, again, my concerns remain about its method.

Mrs. MALONEY. Mr. Speaker, once again we are debating this issue. And once again I will vote in support of ending our involvement in Afghanistan.

Our ongoing commitment in Afghanistan has proved exceedingly difficult and costly—and at a time when we can ill-afford the $100 billion a year to sustain it. After years of war, the economic and military costs are straining our servicemembers, their families, and the country—they are simply too high.

President Obama increased our commitment there by defining it as a goal of withdrawal. But our increased efforts have not yielded enough progress.

I have joined with my colleagues in sending a letter, led by Rep. BARBARA LEE, to the President supporting his planned drawdown of the U.S. military in Afghanistan beginning no later than July of this year.

It is time to bring this war to a responsible end.

Our brave men and women in uniform have fought well and continue to deserve our full support and commitment to bring them home safely to their families and loved ones. They have fought with honor, at great cost, in the face of great challenges. I am humbled by their sacrifice.

While I support the President and our military leadership, I believe we must send a message that the U.S. cannot sustain further commitments in Afghanistan.

I believe the resolution before us today sends that message, and that is why I support it.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time for debate has expired.

Pursuant to the order of the House of Wednesday, March 16, 2011, the previous question is ordered.

The question is on the concurrent resolution.

The question was taken, and the SPEAKER pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

PROHIBITING FEDERAL FUNDING OF NATIONAL PUBLIC RADIO

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 174, I call up the bill (H.R. 1076) to prohibit Federal funding of National Public Radio and the use of Federal funds to acquire radio content, and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The bill is considered read.

The text of the bill is as follows:

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. PROHIBITION ON FEDERAL FUNDING OF NATIONAL PUBLIC RADIO AND RADIO CONTENT ACQUISITION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—No Federal funds may be made available—

(1) to an organization that is incorporated as of the date of the enactment of this Act for each of the purposes described in subsection (c), or to any successor organization; or

(2) for payment of dues to an organization described in paragraph (1); or

(3) for the acquisition of radio programs (including programs to be distributed or disseminated over the Internet) by or for the use of a public broadcast station that is a public broadcast station (as defined in section 397(6) of the Communications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 397(6))).

(b) RULES OF CONSTRUCTION.—

(1) OTHER PURPOSES.—Paragraphs (2) and (3) of subsection (a) shall not be construed to prohibit the making available of Federal funds to any entity, including an entity that engages in the payment described in such paragraph (2) or the acquisition described in such paragraph (3), to the extent such payment or acquisition—

(2) RADIO CONTENT ACQUISITION BY BROADCASTING BOARD OF GOVERNORS OR DEFENSE MEDIA ACTIVITY.—Subsection (a)(3) shall not be construed to apply to the acquisition of radio programs by the Broadcasting Board of Governors or the Defense Media Activity.

(3) PURPOSES DISCUSSED.—The purposes described in this subsection are the following:

(1) To propose, plan and develop, to acquire, purchase and lease, to prepare, produce and broadcast, and to distribute commercial educational transmission and broadcast content, and ask for its immediate consideration.

(2) To engage in research study activities with respect to noncommercial educational radio programming and broadcasting.

(3) To lease, purchase, acquire or own, to order, have, use and contract for, and to otherwise obtain, arrange for, and to otherwise obtain, provide technical equipment and facilities for the production recording and distribution of radio programs for broadcast over noncommercial educational radio broadcast stations, networks and systems.

(4) To establish and maintain one or more service or services for the production, duplication, promotion and circulation of radio programs on tape, cassettes, records or any other medium or means, and to otherwise obtain the use of noncommercial educational transmission and broadcast thereof.