

Question four: How long will these troops be there? It's not enough to decide we can manage it for another year or two with greater deployment. Without a specific end date, a decision to increase deployment today means more troops next year and the year after that.

Question five: Where will we get enough troops with the experience needed in Afghanistan? The military needs more IED experts to diffuse roadside bombs; however, it takes 11 months to train a bomb specialist, and these specialists are already in short supply.

We also need translators, medical officers, and other specialists that could require a great deal of training, yet we continue to kick out such specialists because of the immoral and extraordinarily shortsighted "don't ask, don't tell" policy.

Question six: How many NATO forces can we count on, and how will we maintain an effective command structure? We are told that this cannot be a go-it-alone mission, but resources in other NATO countries are limited, and incidents such as the German airstrike show the dangers of coalition warfare.

Question seven: Can we count on the Government of Pakistan to remain with us in this fight? Pakistan has a great deal of trouble controlling the tribal areas, and our continued presence is causing more unrest in the cities.

Question eight: Is it worth American lives to prop up the Government of Afghanistan? The Government faces serious charges of election fraud and corruption, and it appears to be losing control over much of the country as the Taliban moves in.

Question nine: Is this a winnable war? In General McChrystal's recent report he states that although the situation is serious, success is still achievable, but we still don't have a definition of success.

Final question: Is the war in Afghanistan really the best approach to protect the American people from terrorism? Our focus needs to be on protecting the people of the United States and stopping the international spread of terrorism. If this war is not the best way to do that, we need to leave. We cannot send more troops to fight for an undefined amount of time in an undefined mission and for an undefined success.

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

(Mr. POE of Texas addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

RESPECTING FAITH OF MILITARY CHAPLAINS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gen-

tleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, this year, I introduced H.R. 268, a bill to make sure that our military chaplains of all faiths and religions are able to close a prayer in any way they see fit.

America was built on religious freedom, and that is why I am truly disturbed by a letter that was sent to Secretary Gates from the Freedom from Religion Foundation. This organization has taken exception to the fact that while speaking on the anniversary of D-day in France, U.S. Military Chaplain Thomas MacGregor closed a prayer in the name of Jesus Christ. This is just another example of how this country's Judeo-Christian values have been under assault.

As I think my colleagues know, I am a man that respects all faiths, whether it be Christian, Jewish, Muslim, and I would be just as upset if a chaplain from a non-Christian religion came under the same attack. I respect the rights of nonbelievers just as I respect the rights of believers.

It is a sad day in America when a military chaplain is criticized for closing his prayer in a way that is true to his faith.

In closing, with our young men and women fighting for religious freedom for people overseas, it is our duty to protect our own military chaplains and respect the faith of each of them.

Mr. Speaker, before I close, I do this frequently on the floor of the House because my heart aches for those over in Afghanistan and Iraq. I ask God to please bless our men and women in uniform. I ask God to please bless the families of our men and women in uniform. I ask God, in His loving arms, to hold the families who have given a child dying for freedom in Afghanistan and Iraq. And I ask God to please bless the President of the United States with wisdom, strength and courage to do what is right for America. And I close three times, God please, God please, God please continue to bless America.

TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF POLAND'S SUCCESSION TO NATO

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, September 1, 2009, and September 17, 2009, mark the 70th anniversary of Poland's invasion on the west by Nazi Germany and on the east 3 weeks later by the Soviet Red Army. It triggered the start of World War II. World War II began with the invasion of Poland.

Poland suffered the loss of more citizens, percentage-wise, during that war—over 20 percent of its people—under domination by the Nazis and Communists than any other nation. You would think that to mark these historically important and solemn occasions on this 70th anniversary our Congress and our President would have

passed a commemoration supporting Poland's struggle for liberty and its recent democratic advances. You would think that our Nation, a nation that owes so much to Poland for inspiring our own struggle for freedom at our Nation's founding, and to its great generals, Thaddeus Kosciuszko, chief engineer of our Continental Army, and Casimir Pulaski, who saved the life of General George Washington, that we would have risen to praise the 10th anniversary of Poland's succession to NATO and its support of our current military engagements in the war on terror.

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This year Poland will mark one decade as a signatory of NATO, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, an intrinsic part of the United States' strategic foreign policy. September 17 should have been a reverent commemoration of an extraordinary effort that cost so many lives but seeded and bequeathed a powerful sense of freedom and democracy inside the Nation of Poland that ultimately yielded solidarity and strikes that began in 1956 until the final solidarity victory in 1989 and the collapse of the Berlin Wall. September 17 should be a day that commends the valiant people of Poland for their historic struggle against fascism and communism and commemorates the sacrifices made by the Polish people, including those who have since become American citizens.

On that day, our President should have called for strength and partnership in the NATO organization, North Atlantic Treaty Organization, European Union alliances, and continued friendship with our Polish allies in the furtherance of freedom's cause. We should have honored the historic ties that our two great nations have fashioned over two centuries.

Instead, on September 17, on the very anniversary date of the heinous Communist invasion of Poland, our government and the Obama administration chose to withdraw support of the proposed antiballistic missile shield in Poland and the Czech Republic. Whatever one's views of the merits or demerits of that defensive system, the choice of that date to announce this historic withdrawal is truly an insult to the Nation of Poland and to the people of Poland. Our Nation not only owes Poland an apology, we owe her affirmative support.

The United States has had diplomatic relations with this region since they were first established in April 1919—after having been wiped off the maps of Europe for over a century—with the then-newly formed Polish Republic, while the two nations have enjoyed consistently warm bilateral relations since 1989. The Polish Government has been a strong supporter of continued American military and economic presence in Europe. We have a shared love of freedom and democracy. They have supported our global war on

terror, Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan, and our coalition efforts in Iraq.

Why did the administration do this? Poland cooperates closely with American diplomacy on such issues as democratization, nuclear proliferation, human rights, regional cooperation in Central and Eastern Europe, and U.N. reform. Now is definitely the moment for this Congress and the administration to restore a level of credible relationship with Poland in order to continue an abiding friendship that should not be smeared by this really tactless decision to announce this consequential defense decision on September 17, a date which harkens back to some of the worst memories that Poland has as part of her history.

I besiege this Congress and the administration to correct a great mistake.

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

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

MORE VETERINARIANS ARE NEEDED IN RURAL AMERICA

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

Mr. SMITH of Nebraska. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss an issue not at the forefront of debate here in Washington but which will impact many areas of our country and many aspects of our lives. I am referring to the need for skilled veterinarians in many communities across America. This may not be a topic which makes its way to the House floor very often, but I assure you, it is an issue for many areas of our country.

Our food animal veterinary workforce is on the front lines of food safety, public health and animal health. This vital profession, however, is facing a critical shortage in the public, private, industrial and academic sectors. To make matters worse, the problem is on the rise. Large animal veterinarians, in particular, are integral to small rural communities. But in many of these communities, communities with few people but large numbers of animals, we are seeing a very distressing trend.

Let me show you. This map is a geographic display of total food animals by county in the United States. The dark gold areas have particularly high concentrations of animals per county, more than 250,000. As you can see, States such as Iowa, Nebraska, Colorado, Texas and California all have extremely high concentrations of counties with 250,000 or more food animals.

Now let's take a look at a map showing total food animal veterinarians by

county. The areas of dark green indicate counties with 35 or more food animal veterinarians by county, certainly quite a difference.

Finally, let's take a look at a map showing food animal concentration per veterinarian. I want to draw your attention to the red flags that dot the map. We all know that red flags mean danger or a hazard ahead. The red flags on this map indicate counties without one single food animal veterinarian but which have more than 25,000 food animals, several counties across the country.

According to the most recent data from the USDA, Cherry County, one county in my district, has 145,000 food animals per veterinarian. Fillmore County, also in Nebraska, has 112,000 food animals but not one food animal veterinarian. It's absolutely necessary for the farmers, ranchers, hobbyists—not lobbyists but hobbyists—and even animal lovers to have access to qualified local veterinary clinics.

To this end, Mr. Speaker, I have introduced H.R. 3519, the Veterinarian Services Investment Act. The legislation authorizes the Secretary of Agriculture to award competitive grants to help develop, implement and sustain veterinary services, especially in underserved areas. These grants may be used to support a wide array of activities based on the needs of an area, such as veterinarian and veterinary technician recruitment; expanding and establishing practices in high-need areas; surveillance of food animal disease and the utilization of veterinary services; establishing mobile/portable clinics and tele-vet services; and accredited veterinary education programs, including continuing education, distance education and faculty recruitment.

Under my bill, eligible applicants must carry out programs or activities which will substantially relieve the veterinary shortages throughout our country, as indicated on a geographical basis. These include entities such as veterinary clinics located in underserved or rural areas; veterinary practices which meet food animal protection needs; State, national, allied or regional veterinary organizations and specialty boards; colleges or schools of veterinary medicine; and State, local or tribal veterinary agencies.

I am proud to say that more than 30 of my colleagues, Democrat and Republican, have joined me as cosponsors of H.R. 3519. It has been endorsed by, among others, the American Veterinary Medical Association, the South Dakota Veterinary Medical Association, the Iowa Veterinary Medical Association, Nebraska and Minnesota as well, the Farm Bureau, the Animal Health Institute, the National Association of Federal Veterinarians and the National Cattlemen's Beef Association.

Veterinarians make a difference every day. They understand animals and are integral parts of our rural communities. Unfortunately, too many rural communities don't have this nec-

essary support. The Veterinary Services Investment Act will go a long way in this direction.

SOCIAL SECURITY RECIPIENTS NEED A COST OF LIVING ADJUSTMENT NEXT YEAR

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, earlier today the House passed a bill that will give relief to about a quarter of the Nation's seniors on Social Security by not having them experience a Medicare premium increase this year. That's all well and good and meritorious. Times are tough. But it doesn't go to the other three-quarters of the Nation's Social Security recipients, and it doesn't get to the bottom line that there is, for the first time since we had a regularly adjusted Social Security COLA—it used to be into the fifties and early sixties before we put in place a regular COLA, a cost of living adjustment for seniors on Social Security. They would get one in election years, strangely enough. The Congress would wake up, notice that seniors were out there and give them some sort of an increase.

We fixed that problem many years ago by saying, Well, Social Security benefits would be automatically adjusted. But the measure that is used is incredibly flawed, and it was not only flawed to begin with. The cost of living index is calculated on a lot of things that seniors don't buy, things that have gotten cheaper in this bad economy, actually, like giant flat screen televisions, computers and cell phones and other things that are not consumed to any great extent by our Nation's seniors.

But if anybody has checked the price of pharmaceuticals or medical care or basic utilities or many other must-have expenses, they haven't gone down. In fact, they've gone up. But seniors, some of whom are living only on a Social Security check, many who are principally dependent upon a Social Security check, are not going to get a cost of living adjustment this year because the formula that is used is faulty. It's not only faulty; it was actually tampered with by the Republicans and Alan Greenspan, that great guru, the guy who helped almost destroy the world's economy recently through his deregulationist philosophy which became so embedded that Wall Street ran wild.

Alan Greenspan has always hated Social Security since he was on a commission many years ago and tried to find ways to go after it. A number of years ago he convinced a Republican Congress that the cost of living index actually overestimated inflation and that you should take away one point before you give a COLA to seniors on Social Security. The Republican Congress did that.