successful national government, and it is time that the House and Senate understand that it is not worth one more life of our young men and women to stay in Afghanistan.

Mr. Speaker, before I yield back the balance of my time, I will ask God to please bless our men and women in uniform. I will ask God to please bless the families of our men and women in uniform. I will ask God in his loving arms to hold the families who have given a child dying for freedom in Afghanistan and Iraq. And I will ask God to bless the House and Senate, that we will do what is right in the eyes of God, and God give strength, wisdom and courage to the President of the United States, Mr. Obama, that he will do what is right in the eyes of God. And three times I will close, God please, God please, God please bless America.

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

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

KEEPING OUR PROMISE TO SERVICEMEMBERS

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

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, a few weeks ago when we sat down to turkey dinner with our families, we certainly had plenty to be thankful for. Our thoughts, however, were thinking about the men and women of the Armed Forces, both active duty and retired, who have risked life and limb for all of us, and these folks, these troops, were in our prayers of thanks and in our hopes.

But, Mr. Speaker, it is critical that our gratitude to these courageous Americans be expressed not just with kind thoughts around the Thanksgiving table or speeches on Veterans Day. We need to show our thanks with deeds, not words, which is why it was important last week that the House passed the Physician Payment and Therapy Relief Act, ensuring that seniors and military families continue to see their doctors.

But even as we were taking that important step, military health benefits continue to be endangered, because Defense Secretary Gates is considering a proposal to increase the amount that military retirees pay for their health insurance under the TRICARE program.

Let me be clear: I couldn't agree more with Mr. Gates's belief that the Pentagon is overextended. I share his concern about the ''gusher of defense spending,'' as he himself refers to it. If we are having a serious conversation about the bloated DOD budget, then I am all in. In fact, the Congressional Progressive Caucus has proposed $600 billion in cuts, much of it from obsolete, overpriced and untested weapons systems that are doing absolutely nothing to protect America or advance our national security interests.

But with so much waste, fraud and abuse, why in the world would we cut the Pentagon budget by taking it out of the hide of the military families who have already sacrificed so very much? Why should they take the hit, while DOD has historically shown little spending discipline or fiscal responsibility, throwing billions upon billions of dollars at inefficient programs? Instead of targeting affordable health care for the people who have worn the uniform, how about we start by pulling the plug on the V–22 Osprey, notoriously over budget and also responsible for 30 accidental deaths over the years?

Norbert Ryan, Jr., of the Military Officers Association of America, put it well to The New York Times. He wrote: ''Don't ask the folks who have done so much for this country, who have been called to act since 9/11, to be first in line to give some more.''

It is indeed true, Mr. Speaker, that military retirees and their families get a good benefits package. To those who say they should pay more, I say they have already worked for a higher premium in the form of their service and sacrifice than any of us can even imagine. The bottom line is that military retirees have earned the benefits they receive. They deserve them. We owe it to them. It is a promise we must keep to them.

But let me take this argument one step further, Mr. Speaker. I have got a broader solution that attacks the problem two different ways. First, ending the war in Afghanistan will cut military spending dramatically, and it will also mean fewer military retirees requiring fewer health care services, yet another urgent, compelling reason to bring our troops home.

□ 1400

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

LYING IS NOT PATRIOTIC

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

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, WikiLeaks' release of classified information has generated a lot of attention worldwide in the past few weeks. The hysterical reaction makes one wonder if this is not an example of killing the messenger for the bad news.

Despite what is claimed, information so far released, though classified, has caused no known harm to any individual but it has caused plenty of embarrassment to our government. Losing a grip on our empire is not welcomed by the neoconservatives in charge.

There is now more information confirming that Saudi Arabia is a principal supporter and financier of al Qaeda, and this should set off alarm bills since we guarantee its sharia-run government. This emphasizes even more the fact that no al Qaeda existed in Iraq before 9/11, and yet we went to war against Iraq based on the lie that it did.

It has been discharged by self-proclaimed experts that Julian Assange, the Internet publisher of this information, has committed a heinous crime, deserving prosecution for treason, and execution or even assassination.

But should we not at least ask how the U.S. Government can charge an Australian citizen with treason for publishing U.S. secret information that he did not steal? And if WikiLeaks is to be prosecuted for publishing classified documents, why shouldn't the Washington Post, the New York Times, and others that have also published these documents be prosecuted? Actually, some in Congress are threatening this as well.

The New York Times, as a result of a Supreme Court ruling, was not found guilty in 1971 for the publication of the Pentagon Papers. Daniel Ellsberg never served a day in prison for his role in obtaining these secret documents.

The Pentagon Papers were also inserted into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD by Senator Mike Gravel with no charges being made of breaking any national security laws. Yet the release of this classified information was considered illegal by many, and those who lied us into the Vietnam War and argued for its prolongation were outraged. But the truth gained from the Pentagon Papers revealed that lies were told about the Gulf of Tonkin attack, which perpetuated a sad and tragic episode in our history.

Just as with the Vietnam War, the Iraq war was based on lies. We were never threatened by weapons of mass destruction or al Qaeda in Iraq, though the attack on Iraq was based on this false information.

Any information that challenges the official propaganda for the war in the Middle East is unwelcome by the administration and supporters of these unnecessary wars.

Few are interested in understanding the relationship of our foreign policy and our presence in the Middle East to the threat of terrorism. Revealing the real nature and goal of our presence in so many Muslim countries is a threat to our empire, and any revelation of this truth is highly resented by those in charge.

Questions to consider:

No. 1, do the American people deserve to know the truth regarding the ongoing war in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Yemen?

No. 2, could a larger question be how could an Army private gain access to so much secret information?

No. 3, why is the hostility mostly directed at Assange, the publisher, and not our government's failure to protect classified information?

No. 4, are we getting our money's worth from the $80 billion per year we spend on intelligence gathering?

No. 5, which has resulted in the greatest number of deaths: Lying us into war or WikiLeaks' revelations or the release of the Pentagon Papers?

If Assange can be convicted of a crime for publishing information that he did not steal, what does this say about the future of the First Amendment and the independence of the Internet?

No. 7, could it be that the real reason for the near universal attacks on WikiLeaks is more about secretly maintaining a seriously flawed foreign policy of empire than it is about national security?

No. 8, is there not a huge difference between releasing secret information to help the enemy in a time of declared war, which is treason, and the releasing of information to expose our government lies that promote secret wars, death, and corruption.

No. 9, was it not once considered patriotic to stand up to our government when it's wrong?

Thomas Jefferson had it right when he advised, ''Let the eye of vigilance never be closed.''

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

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

FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION'S AIRSPACE REDESIGN PLAN

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

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong and continued opposition to the Federal Aviation Administration's airspace redesign plan, and, frankly, it just gets worse and worse and worse. First they say that there will be hundreds of new air flights from Newark Airport flying over my constituents in Rockland County, New York, and now we learn that they have changed the plan and made it even worse. They are now redirecting an additional 100 flights per day from John F. Kennedy International Airport over Rockland County.

The FAA made this decision without consulting me or, to the best of my knowledge, any other elected official whose constituents are affected by the increased air traffic. More so, when we originally requested that the redesign be altered so that the flights would be directed over less populated areas, the FAA had the gall to say that the plan could not be changed because it could then be opened up to lawsuits. Now we find that they have gone and changed the plan anyway to suit their own ends. I find this insulting and hypocritical, typical government agency bureaucracy.

This plan was concocted with zero input from the residents it harms the most, particularly my constituents in Rockland County who would be most adversely affected by the plan. And specifically, in addition to the 300 to 400 planes heading daily to Newark Liberty International Airport, this plan would now direct 100 flights a day from JFK airport. The FAA doesn't seem to mind inconveniencing residents on the ground.

Additionally, there was no consultation or notification to myself or any other elected officials whose constituents are affected by the proposed plan. While several town halls were held throughout the FAA airspace redesign process, they were held throughout the FAA redesign process, a redesign that, again, I strongly oppose. I have not been made aware of any community involvement with this recent decision.

In the past, I was able, after begging, pleading, cajoling and threatening, to get the FAA to hold a town hall meeting in Rockland County, where 1,200 residents attended and spoke in universal opposition to this plan. But, again, the public be damned. The government knows better. The FAA did not listen then, and look where we are now. In this instance, however, we have had no such opportunity.

It's been clear for many years that the FAA has had no intention to listen to the people of Rockland County, and this recent decision only reinforces that. I have spoken to and written letters to the FAA and to Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood asking for reconsideration of their redesign plan, and I am outraged at the decision to direct even more flights over the county. There are other ways to address the problems facing airports and delayed flights without requiring the people of Rockland County to bear this burden.

As my constituents have noted to me, the noise and air pollution in the area will increase. It is unknown how this increase in air pollution will affect a disproportionate rate of childhood asthma in my district.

Another issue not taken into account by the FAA is a lack of preparedness for severe airline emergency in this densely populated area. It is likely that first responders would have to be trained for the event of a catastrophic airplane crash, God forbid, causing added cost to local police, fire, and EMT departments that are already stretched thin.

In addition, while the flight plans will not route commercial aircraft directly over the Indian Point nuclear power plant, the proximity could lead to an extremely dangerous scenario. Over 20 million people live within 50 miles of Indian Point.

I believe it is clear this redirection will cause a significant decrease in the quality of life for my constituents in Rockland County. And what for? The expected result of this scheme is the paltry reduction of delays—an average of 3 minutes per flight.

The modernization of our aviation system is necessary to bring it into the 21st century, to keep pace with the increased number of flights, and to also maintain our technological advancements by implementing new equipment to keep our system the safest in the world. However, there are several alternatives to this new plan, including the redirection of these flights over the underutilized airspace over the Atlantic Ocean.

I am outraged by this decision, and I call on the Department of Transportation and the Federal Aviation Administration to not say one thing only to do another, all to the detriment of my constituents in Rockland County. I am against this new move by the FAA and will continue to fight against its implementation.

□ 1410

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HEINRICH). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. GARRETT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

PARTISAN POLITICS IS NOT THE WHOLE STORY

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

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, over the past couple of weeks, the average American might have gotten the impression that partisan politics is the only force to be reckoned with in Washington, but that is not always the case.

Members of Congress certainly often disagree on how to move our country forward. Nevertheless, I am confident that underscoring our divergent world views is a bedrock desire to see our country thrive, prosper and succeed.

In fact, I've had conversations with outgoing Representatives from parts of the country like Wisconsin and New Jersey who lost elections last month. You know what? The thing they pressed home with me was not bitterness in defeat. No, it was their desire for me and others to lend our support to those who defeated them because they want them to be successful as Representatives of their districts and their country.

Even in defeat, these Members were focused on the betterment of their