

at the 'Terror Tuesday' meetings, his unspeaking presence a visible reminder of what everyone understood: a successful attack would overwhelm the president's other aspirations and achievements."

This revelation is in keeping with the reporting of Bob Woodward in Obama's Wars. Woodward indicated that discussions of the war strategy were infused with political calculations. Woodward also wrote of an administration that "wrestled with the most basic questions about the war . . . What is the mission? What are we trying to do? What will work?"

These are questions that demand answers and could have been taken up by an Af-Pak Study Group. But I venture that such a group would not have factored politics into their calculus. Was that a consideration in your decision to disregard congressional intent as it relates to the Af-Pak Study Group?

Our men and women in uniform have fought bravely and served with distinction in Afghanistan and will continue to do so until they are called home. Any shortcomings in our strategy or overall vision for success are not their burden to bear. As too often happens, they have found themselves at the mercy of the latest political winds blowing through Washington. And I have been deeply disappointed that, as president, you appear to have allowed these political winds to drive the war strategy.

It is not at all certain what will unfold when U.S. troops exit or significantly decrease in number—there are varied sobering scenarios, including the Taliban once again seizing the reins of power; a destabilized and nuclear armed Pakistan; Afghanistan as a haven for international terrorists. Only history will tell. But I believe one thing is clear: your administration missed a golden opportunity when, for two years, it failed to convene an Afghanistan-Pakistan Study Group to provide an independent, outside analysis of the most pressing national security matter of your presidency.

Best wishes,
Sincerely,

FRANK R. WOLF,
Member of Congress.

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, December 13, 2012.

Hon. BARACK H. OBAMA,
The President, The White House, Washington DC.

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: This week, the New York Times reported on the bleak state of affairs in Afghanistan. Citing a Pentagon report, the article stated, "The assessment found that the Taliban remain resilient, that widespread corruption continues to weaken the central Afghan government and that Pakistan persists in providing critical support to the insurgency. Insider attacks by Afghan security forces on their NATO coalition partners, while still small, are up significantly: there have been 37 so far in 2012, compared with 2 in 2007." Given this disturbingly dreary assessment, I remain deeply disappointed that you have refused to use the money provided by Congress to appoint the Afghanistan/Pakistan Study Group (APSG) to review United States strategy.

The report's stark assessment of Afghan capabilities is all the more discouraging, given the recent comments of Afghan President Hamid Karzai. As you may know, in a recent interview, President Karzai blamed the insecurity in Afghanistan on the United States and our NATO countries, saying, "Part of the insecurity is coming to us from the structures that NATO and America created in Afghanistan." It is appalling that President Karzai would make such statements, given the enormous sacrifice made over the last 11 years by coalition forces.

With your policy faltering and the Afghan president blaming us for all the ills in his country, it perplexes me that you refuse to use appropriated dollars to establish the APSG. More than 2,000 service members have been killed since fighting commenced in 2001. Many service members have served four or more tours in multiple theaters, yet you refuse to use money authorized by Congress to convene a panel that could offer solutions that could decrease the number of U.S. casualties. In fact, both your current and former Defense secretaries served as members of the Iraq Study Group, so they both know the success it achieved and that similar results could be produced by the APSG.

In addition to the strategic failure of your policy, the most recent report from the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) documented numerous incidents of U.S. aid money being wasted through graft, corruption and mismanagement. In just one example, the SIGAR report notes that an Army sergeant pleaded guilty to approving fake documents that allowed \$1.5 million worth of fuel to be stolen. While I am sure your administration takes the SIGAR reports seriously and is trying to address the problems raised, at the same time you are actively ignoring policy resources that could provide valuable insight and possible solutions to these and other problems.

I find all the arguments your administration officials have used to oppose the creation of the APSG to be woefully insufficient. In his November 5 letter to me, General Martin Dempsey claims that using the \$1 million authorized for the APSG would be an unwise diversion of resources. Yet in May, the media reported that more than \$800,000 had been spent to fly your secretary of defense to his home in California many weekends, a figure that now likely exceeds \$1 million. I do not know if this was an arrangement you made specifically with Secretary Panetta before he accepted the job, but the money spent flying him to and from California could have more than paid for the APSG.

The wasted money cited by the SIGAR report, as well as the money spent flying Secretary Panetta back to the comfort of his home in California, would provide more than enough resources to establish the APSG. Do you believe that flying Secretary Panetta home every weekend—a luxury certainly not provided to a service member on their fifth tour of duty—is a better use of taxpayer money than getting the best minds in our country to provide "fresh eyes" on U.S. policy in this troubled region? As public officials, we have a solemn duty to protect those we order into combat. For the sake of our forces in theater and the safety of our nation, I once again implore you to use the money available to create the APSG.

As I have stated many times, I do not have the answers on how to assure a successful outcome in Afghanistan and Pakistan. However, I firmly believe that the APSG could provide insight into the problems plaguing the region and ways that we can better protect national security for decades to come.

Best wishes.
Sincerely,

FRANK R. WOLF,
Member of Congress.

RECOGNIZING THE HONORABLE JACK R. HEFLIN UPON HIS RETIREMENT FROM SERVICE AS CIRCUIT JUDGE IN OKALOOSA COUNTY, FLORIDA

HON. JEFF MILLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 21, 2012

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to congratulate Judge Jack R. Heflin upon his retirement after 24 years as Circuit Judge in Okaloosa County, Florida.

In his first years after his graduation from Indiana University, Judge Heflin worked as a purchasing agent for Bell Telephone Labs and Western Electric Company. His career in public service began in 1967 with his commissioning as a second lieutenant in the United States Air Force. He served in uniform until receiving an honorable discharge at the rank of captain in 1971. Subsequent to his service in the Air Force, he attended law school at the University of Florida, earning his Juris Doctor in 1973.

Judge Heflin entered private practice upon being admitted to the Florida Bar in 1973 and specialized in the areas of commercial law, family law, bankruptcy law, and general practice. He has maintained a focus on domestic violence since 1973. In 1988, Judge Heflin was appointed to serve as Circuit Judge for Pensacola and has served in his current role as Okaloosa County Circuit Judge since 1991.

Without question, Judge Heflin's positive contributions to northwest Florida and our nation have been immense, and his mark on the judicial landscape will remain for years to come. Northwest Florida is a better, safer place because of his service.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the United States Congress, it gives me great pride to congratulate Judge Jack R. Heflin on his retirement and thank him for his service. My wife Vicki joins me in wishing Judge Heflin; his wife, Linda; and their daughters, Heather, Hillary, and Harmony, all the best.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 4310, NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2013

SPEECH OF

HON. ROB BISHOP

OF UTAH

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 20, 2012

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, In a perfect world, I would have preferred that language offered by Senator FEINSTEIN and Senator LEE on detainees and habeas corpus would have prevailed in this final conference agreement.

However, when carefully comparing and analyzing both the House and Senate language on detainees clarifying the rights of habeas corpus, I believe that both versions clearly are a step forward in preserving and protecting citizen's civil liberties against any implied powers of the Executive branch. Both provisions make clear that every U.S. citizen or permanent resident alien have their full habeas corpus rights intact.

There are many members on the House side which have worked hard and tirelessly on this issue. In particular, I would like to thank the gentleman from Texas, Mr. GOHMERT, who served with distinction as a federal judge prior to coming to this body and has a keen understanding of the legal implications and interpretations of statutory language. He, along with Mr. RIGELL and Mr. LANDRY, have been instrumental leaders in working with all sides of this issue and helping to come up with compromise language which moves us forward in a positive way.

This language is not perfect, but it moves us in the direction we need to go. We should continue to work on this next year.

RECOGNIZING ERNIE LEE MAGAHA FOR HIS SERVICE AS THE CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT AND COMPTROLLER FOR ESCAMBIA COUNTY, FLORIDA

HON. JEFF MILLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 21, 2012

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker. I rise today to recognize Ernie Lee Magaha for his service as the Clerk of the Circuit Court and Comptroller for Escambia County, Florida. For more than fifty-five years, Mr. Magaha has served the people of Escambia County with constant professionalism and an unwavering commitment to service.

Mr. Magaha is a native northwest Floridian and a graduate of Century High School. After graduating from Century, Mr. Magaha enlisted in the Army and served our nation with honor and distinction in the South Pacific during World War II. In 1947, Mr. Magaha was honorably discharged from the Army, and he enrolled at Auburn University, where he graduated with a degree in Economics in 1950.

After graduating from Auburn, Mr. Magaha returned to northwest Florida, where he married his wife, Lucile, and together they raised their two sons Ernie Lee, Jr. and James. In 1951, Mr. Magaha was hired as the Florida State Auditor in Escambia County. He worked in this position in the State Comptroller's Office until 1956, when he decided to run for elected office. Mr. Magaha's commitment to public service was evident to the voters of Escambia County, and in 1957 he took office as the Clerk of the Court.

When Mr. Magaha was elected as the Clerk of Court, there were only three employees. Escambia County and the Clerk's office have grown immensely in Mr. Magaha's fifty-five years in office. Today, the Clerk's office serves a population of nearly 300,000 citizens. Thanks to Mr. Magaha's constant leadership, the Clerk's office has maintained an excellent service record and is an integral part of the northwest Florida community.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the United States Congress, I am privileged to recognize Ernie Lee Magaha for his years of outstanding leadership and service to Escambia County. My wife Vicki and I wish Mr. Magaha and his family all the best.

INTENT TO VOTE YES ON H.R. 3197

HON. E. SCOTT RIGELL

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 21, 2012

Mr. RIGELL. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 646 for H.R. 3197, I mistakenly voted "no" when I intended to vote "yes."

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. TIM GRIFFIN

OF ARKANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 21, 2012

Mr. GRIFFIN of Arkansas. Mr. Speaker, I was ill with the flu and missed seven votes: on Tuesday, December 11, 2012, rollcall vote No. 620; on Wednesday, December 12, 2012, rollcall vote No. 621, rollcall vote No. 622, and rollcall vote No. 623; and, on Thursday, December 13, 2012, I missed rollcall vote No. 624, rollcall vote No. 625, and rollcall vote No. 626.

If I had been present, I would have voted "nay" on rollcall Vote No. 620 (Approval of the Journal). I also would have voted "aye" for each of the following: rollcall vote No. 621 (H. Res. 827 Previous Question), rollcall vote No. 622 (H. Res. 827), rollcall vote No. 623 (H.R. 6190), rollcall vote No. 624 (H.R. 4310, On Motion to Instruct Conferees), rollcall vote No. 625 (H.R. 4310, On Motion to Its Permit Closed Conference Meetings), and rollcall No. 626 (H.R. 4053).

RECOGNIZING THE SERVICE OF ANNE BODENSTEIN UPON HER RETIREMENT FROM THE SANTA ROSA COUNTY, FLORIDA OFFICE OF SUPERVISOR OF ELECTIONS

HON. JEFF MILLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 21, 2012

Mr. JEFF MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker. I rise today to recognize the retirement of Anne Bodenstein after an extensive career of service to the citizens of Santa Rosa County, Florida.

Ms. Bodenstein's career with the Office of Supervisor of Elections began in 1992, when she volunteered and dedicated her time as a poll worker and as Polling Place Coordinator. Her involvement with the electoral process continued and she was selected to serve as Inspector, and later as Clerk in her local precinct.

Her commitment and strong work ethic were recognized by many, including Governor Jeb Bush, who appointed her as the Santa Rosa County Supervisor of Elections to fill the remainder of her predecessor's term. Her abilities were also recognized by the Santa Rosa County electorate, who eventually elected her to the Office of Supervisor of Elections, a role which she has held since January 2005.

While serving as Supervisor of Elections, Ms. Bodenstein led a permanent staff of six and orchestrated upwards to 500 Election Day employees. She also oversaw the implementa-

tion of four separate voting machine upgrades during her tenure.

Ms. Bodenstein is truly an exemplary public servant with numerous commendable accolades, including 1996 Santa Rosa County Employee of the Year. The Northwest Florida community is grateful for the integral role she has played in our electoral process.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the United States Congress, I am privileged to recognize Anne Bodenstein for her exceptional public service to Santa Rosa County. My wife Vicki and I wish her all the best in her retirement.

A VOTE FOR SPEAKER BOEHNER'S PLAN B IS A VOTE FOR TAX INCREASES

HON. JIM McDERMOTT

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 21, 2012

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, last night we hoped to have proof that Republicans can raise taxes. Speaker BOEHNER's Plan B not only raised taxes on millionaires, but on working families too. Yet, Grover Norquist, tax lobbyist and self-appointed Emperor of Taxes, proclaimed that Plan B does not violate his "no tax increases pledge." Sorry Grover, it does, and conservative groups know it.

Heritage Action, Club for Growth, Citizens United, Tea Party Express and others all agree that this bill raises taxes, and oppose it for exactly that reason.

We were hopeful that Speaker BOEHNER decided to send a message to Grover Norquist that his tax pledge days are over—every Republican that would have voted for the plan would break the pledge by voting to raise taxes. Norquist's pledge was ridiculous to begin with. Presidents Reagan and Bush both said they wouldn't raise taxes, but did because it was the responsible thing to do.

Unfortunately, last night the Republican caucus failed to stand up to their misguided ideology on tax increases. At the last minute, Speaker BOEHNER pulled the bill because it didn't have the votes. Rather than take a difficult vote, the Speaker showed us, yet again, that the House Republicans cannot deal with the problems of this country.

HONORING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF INOVA LOUDOUN HOSPITAL

HON. FRANK R. WOLF

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 21, 2012

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Inova Loudoun Hospital, which celebrates 100 years of serving Loudoun County this year.

Inova Loudoun Hospital first opened as "Leesburg Hospital" on June 5, 1912 in a rented house on Market Street by Mr. P. Howell Lightfoot, Dr. William C. Orr, Dr. John A. Gibson and Mr. Horace Littlejohn. In 1997, due to the growing population in Loudoun County, "Loudoun Hospital" expanded and moved to the Lansdowne location where it currently exists today. The hospital again grew