

Last week, Defense Secretary Panetta said that by mid- or the latter part of 2013 we'll be able to make a transition from a combat role to a training, advice, and assistance role. I urge the administration to fulfill this aspiration and bring our troops home to their families. They have sacrificed enough.

The Afghanistan war began as a war of necessity. After the horrific September 11 attacks, we sent our troops to eliminate al Qaeda and their leaders and destroy their training camps to prevent a future terrorist attack. Our troops carried out this mission with extraordinary courage and dedication. Osama bin Laden was driven out of Afghanistan, and he is now dead.

Furthermore, the intelligence community affirms that al Qaeda is virtually extinguished from Afghanistan; yet the war continues. End this war now and focus like a laser on terrorists wherever they may be.

Our troops in Afghanistan are no longer fighting terrorists who pose a threat to the United States. They are now fighting domestic Afghanistan factions and defending a corrupt and inept Afghanistan Government. Our servicemembers are dying in another country's civil war. This has become a war of choice.

I recently met with Lieutenant Colonel Danny Davis, who described to me what a civil war looks like on the ground. He has served two combat deployments in Afghanistan and has traveled throughout the country talking to U.S. troops stationed all over. A recent evaluation of Colonel Davis reads: "His maturity, tenacity and judgment can be counted on in even the hardest situations, and his devotion to mission accomplishment is unmatched by his peers."

Now, this is what Colonel Davis has described as to what he has observed: "What I saw bore no resemblance to the rosy official statements by U.S. military leaders about conditions on the ground. Entering this deployment, I was sincerely hoping to learn that the claims were true: that conditions in Afghanistan were improving. Instead, I witnessed the absence of success on virtually every level.

"I saw the incredible difficulties any military force would have to pacify even a single area of any of those provinces; I heard many stories of how insurgents controlled virtually every piece of land beyond eyeshot of a U.S. or International Security Assistance Force, ISAF, base. I saw little to no evidence the local governments were able to provide for the basic needs of the people. Some of the Afghan civilians I walked with said the people didn't want to be connected to a predatory or incapable local government. From time to time, I observed Afghan security forces collude with the insurgency."

Colonel Davis' candid testimony reinforced my own conviction that there is no military solution to the conflict in

Afghanistan, only the prospect of continued shedding of American blood in a war that is not ours to fight. Only through negotiated political settlement amongst the Afghan factions, not through an open-ended U.S. military presence, could Afghanistan become a stable and developing country.

America faces new threats now. More than \$1 trillion spent on two wars over the course of a decade undermines our financial stability and takes away much-needed funds for American jobs and investments at home. The Obama administration has shown courageous leadership in eliminating Osama bin Laden. They have also shown leadership in bringing the war in Iraq to an end and in planning to ensure that the U.S. military commitment in Afghanistan is not an open-ended one. As President Obama clearly stated in his speech on the drawdown plan last year, we need to focus on nation-building at home. I agree. I strongly support ending U.S. combat operations in Afghanistan and bringing our troops home by mid-2013, if not sooner. It's us, the 435 Members of this body, the United States Congress, that can choose when this war ends.

BRING OUR TROOPS HOME FROM AFGHANISTAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) for 5 minutes.

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, I join my friend from California who just spoke, and my friend from Massachusetts who spoke before him, Mr. GARAMENDI and Mr. MCGOVERN.

I joined in that meeting with Lieutenant Colonel Davis. He is a very brave man. In fact, if any of my colleagues would like to read the article in *The New York Times* on Monday, the title is: "In Afghan War, Officer Becomes a Whistle-Blower," with a subtitle of "A Solo Campaign to Tell the Truth." And as my two friends who have just spoken said, the truth does matter. Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ spoke the truth, and it's time that we in Congress demand the truth on this war in Afghanistan.

I think Colonel Davis is doing this country a tremendous favor by trying to say: Congress, ask the right questions. Stop listening to those who keep telling you that training the Afghan soldiers and the Afghan to be policemen is going well. I'm on the Armed Services Committee, and I've been hearing that for 10 years. You can teach a monkey to ride a bicycle sooner than 10 years. How many more young men and women have to give their legs and their arms?

Last week, I had a Marine general in my office and a Navy admiral. After we talked about the issues impacting eastern North Carolina where we have three bases, we got into this war on Afghanistan. I was telling them that the broken bodies I've seen at Walter Reed

and Bethesda—which now have been consolidated to Walter Reed at Bethesda, and I'll be there next Tuesday—I was telling them about seeing four young men that have no body parts below their waist. They're living. They would have died in Vietnam.

Medical technology has advanced to the point that a young man or young woman can live with half a body, nothing below their waist. The admiral told me of seeing a young man that he visited that has no arms or legs, no arms or legs and he's living. Uncle Sam, you've got a tremendous responsibility to take care of these heroes for the next 10, 15, 20, 25, 30 years; and this Congress can't even balance the budget. No veteran from these two wars should ever be told that your check did not come in this month because Uncle Sam cannot pay his bills.

Mr. Speaker, before closing, these two little girls beside me on this poster, their father, Sergeant Balduff from Camp Lejeune, was sent to Afghanistan with Colonel Palmer from Cherry Point Marine Air Station to train Afghans to be policemen. Sergeant Balduff emailed his wife, Amy, the night before he died and said, "I don't trust them. I don't trust them. I don't trust any of them." The next night, a trainee stood up at a dinner and shot and killed the colonel and the sergeant.

To my friends who have spoken and my friends who are speaking after me, we must demand that this Congress awaken from its sleep on Afghanistan.

□ 1020

The American people are ready to bring our troops home. We don't need to wait till 2013, 2014, or 2015. We need to say to the President, Start the process this fall. It will take a year to bring them home. If you announce that you're going to bring them home this year, it will take a year before they come home.

These two little girls are standing at their father's grave at Arlington Cemetery. How many children have cried, and how many children have felt pain, and how many babies will never know their father or their mother?

To my colleagues on the other side and my colleagues on this side, let's come together. Let's end the war in Afghanistan. Karzai is a crook. Afghanistan's history said no great nation will ever conquer Afghanistan.

So, as I close, Mr. Speaker, as always, 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've given a child dying for freedom in Afghanistan and Iraq. I ask God to bless the House and Senate, that we will do what is right in the eyes of God for the American people. And I ask God to please bless the President, that he will do what is right in the eyes of God for the American people.

And I close by asking three times, God, please, God, please, God, please continue to bless America.

INCREASE FUNDING FOR RARE DISEASE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. TOWNS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, recently I met Jill Wood from my district in Brooklyn. I was very moved by this meeting as she described the struggles of her son, who is diagnosed with a rare genetic disease known as Sanfilippo syndrome.

Before we met, I was not familiar with this particular disease, but she touched my heart to hear about her child's courage. Every day he has to overcome physical disabilities that make it almost impossible for him to complete a very simple task that we complete with ease. I was inspired by the strength of their family and the bond that they share.

I have long been a strong advocate for rare disease research and development. In fact, this is why I am working with my colleague from Florida, Congressman STEARNS, on H.R. 3737, the ULTRA Act. This bill would codify the flexibility the FDA needs to encourage development of treatments for rare diseases like Sanfilippo syndrome.

It is our duty, as Members of the United States Congress, to come together and support measures that aid the rare disease community. Imagine being afflicted with a disease your physician has never heard of and has no idea as to how to treat it. Can you imagine the devastation this would cause to your family?

We must provide the National Institutes of Health with additional funding to support the important research for orphan and rare diseases. We must also give flexibility and support to the FDA to help the agency bring potential cures and treatments to the market much sooner.

How long must we wait and continue to suffer until lifesaving treatments are available?

Nearly 30 million Americans are affected by 7,000 rare diseases. We must do everything in our power to support education, advocacy, research, and patient assistance to bring this number down. Imagine the families out there watching their loved ones suffer because we have not yet provided enough support for this cause.

We are a great Nation of innovation, but that innovation and drive only goes so far without the proper support coming from the government. Our constituents need to know that we hear their needs and that, as their elected officials, we are determined to make available the resources that will support them.

The next time I speak to a family affected by rare diseases, I want to be able to look them in the eyes and tell them that we have helped, that we made available the means necessary to support lifesaving research and development, we care and we will do everything in our power to ensure that ev-

eryone has the chance to live full, healthy, and prosperous lives.

Thank you, Jill, for bringing this to my attention.

I urge my colleagues to support the ULTRA Act and increase funding for rare disease research and development. It is so important that we do everything possible to be able to bring the numbers down.

OFFICER KEVIN BRENNAN, NEW YORK POLICE DEPARTMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, recently, in one of New York's neighborhoods, gunshots rang out. One of NYPD's finest, Police Officer Kevin Brennan, quickly responded to the call. When he arrived at the scene with his partners, they recognized a familiar face. It was outlaw Latin Kings gang member Luis "Baby" Ortiz. Brennan gave the suspect a chance to turn himself over to the police by yelling, "Stop. Police," but Ortiz took off running in the darkness of the night. The officers gave chase. Officer Brennan cornered Ortiz in a hallway, and rather than give up, Ortiz shot Officer Brennan, point blank, in the head. Ortiz was trying to flee the scene of the shooting so fast that he ran out of one of his shoes and left it at the crime scene.

Police Commissioner Ray Kelly said Ortiz may have tried to fire off a second shot into Officer Brennan's head. Obviously, Ortiz has a total disrespect for human life.

When Police Officers Michael Burbridge and Christopher Mastoros arrived and found Officer Brennan, he was lying in a pool of his own blood, left to die. But Officer Brennan miraculously survived this attack.

The outlaw was captured. When "Baby" was brought to court, he made a mockery of the judicial system, waving at the cameras, asking them to take his photograph, while blowing kisses to his family. His family, too, showed disdain for the justice system and the police by yelling obscenities to the police and banging their hands and fists on a police cruiser that led Ortiz back to the jailhouse.

On Ortiz's second appearance in the court, the courtroom was packed with a sea of blue. NYPD had come to support their wounded fellow officer.

Disturbing, but not surprising, this would-be assassin has been arrested 14 times in his just 21 years of a lifetime of crime and lawless, worthless existence. His crimes have included drugs, assault, and armed robbery; yet he has walked free every time, beating the system.

One more detail worth noting. The weapon used to shoot Officer Brennan was the same one used in a New Year's Day murder in New York. Coincidence? Probably not.

Officer Brennan, a 6-year veteran of NYPD, is married and has a young baby daughter.

Mr. Speaker, in my other life, I was a prosecutor and a criminal court judge in Texas. I have been privileged to meet a lot of Texas peace officers and other officers in the United States. I've had the opportunity to meet many New York police officers when I go to New York to do presentations and training. After we get through the language barriers, I've found them to be a remarkable bunch of dedicated crime fighters.

Officer Brennan and thousands of his comrades throughout America wear the blue uniform of the law every day. They pin the shield and badge over their chest, over their heart, as a symbol of their duty to defend the people against outlaws like Ortiz. They are the last strand of wire in the fence between the fox and the chickens. They are all that separate the lawful citizens from the lawless bandits.

They go into dangerous areas of our city looking for drug dealers, child molesters, wife beaters, robbers, bandits and other street terrorists that would do the rest of us harm. They deserve our respect, our admiration, and our appreciation. We thank the Good Lord for people like Officer Brennan and the others of NYPD blue.

As for "Baby," it's past time that "Baby" met the long arm of justice.

□ 1030

He's looking at doing 40 years behind bars in the "Do-Right" Hotel.

Our society cannot allow street trash like Ortiz to get away with their desire to wreak havoc in their neighborhoods and shoot peace officers. After all, Mr. Speaker, "We've got too many gangsters doing dirty deeds, too much corruption and crime in the streets. A man has to answer for the wicked things he's done because justice is the one thing you should always find." May it be swift and harsh, because justice is what we do in this country.

And that's just the way it is.

FOOD STAMP PRESIDENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. GUTIERREZ) for 5 minutes.

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Mr. Speaker, I have to admit that when Newt Gingrich first used the phrase the "food stamp President," I was outraged, but then I started looking at the facts. I did my homework. I crunched the numbers, and I have to admit, food stamp President might be on target.

I think we have to be willing to understand the numbers and speak the truth even when that truth might hurt. So I've come to the floor today with some facts and figures—all sourced and backed up—because I know that Newt Gingrich wouldn't have it any other way. So let's learn about the food stamp President.

Here are the facts:

It clearly shows that the food stamp President increased spending on food stamps by more than \$19 billion. Let me repeat that: under the food stamp