

on the field. Over 1 million visitors enjoyed the free festivities of Super Bowl Village, and a record 265,000 fans visited the NFL experience to test their passing and kicking skills and to meet their favorite players. So I was not surprised when Indianapolis received rave reviews for its accessibility, downtown amenities, civic commitment, and famed Hoosier hospitality.

Yet this success, Mr. Speaker, did not stop with the blocks surrounding Lucas Oil Stadium. With Commissioner Goodell and the NFL's assistance, I am confident that the impact of this Super Bowl will last far longer than the memories of that final Hail Mary pass.

Indianapolis embarked on an unprecedented effort to rebuild one of its hardest-hit areas. Even before the recession hit, Indianapolis' Near Eastside, a patchwork of neighborhoods just outside of downtown, led the Nation in foreclosures, and families were too often rattled by violent crime; but today, thanks to relentless efforts by community residents and with the Super Bowl as its springboard, Indianapolis' Near Eastside has been rejuvenated.

It has been given new life through housing developments like the St. Clair Senior Apartments, Commonwealth Apartments, and Building a Living Legacy housing initiative. These new housing options will help seniors and low-income families stay in the community they love and access the services they rely on, like the John Boner Community Center and People's Health and Dental Center. They will help the homeless find a new start and working men and women to locate near their employers.

On Super Bowl weekend, we also saw the grand opening of the Chase Near Eastside Legacy Center, which includes the area's only fitness center now offering low membership rates. This center will be home to the Youth Education Town. It is a facility that will provide classes to students of all ages through great national and local non-profits.

While other host cities spend Super Bowl weekend breaking ground on projects, Indianapolis spent ours opening doors for these new facilities. Collectively, the Near Eastside redevelopment effort serves as a model, not only for what can be achieved throughout Indianapolis, but across this great Nation. Just a few years ago, the Near Eastside and all of Indianapolis were suffering the worst of the economic downturn. We had some of the Nation's highest unemployment, foreclosure and bankruptcy rates; but today our unemployment rate is near the national average and is getting better. Our critics counted us out many times, but this weekend showed that we are a modern city.

Mr. Speaker, this weekend, Indianapolis showcased why it is America's best-kept secret. It showed that we are a prime destination for conventions and big events and that we have some

of the best sports facilities anywhere. It is with great pride that I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Indianapolis, Indiana, and all of those who worked so hard to make this event a huge success.

ASSAULT ON OUR RELIGIOUS FREEDOM, THE FIRST AMENDMENT, AND OUR FREEDOM OF CONSCIENCE

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

Mr. CRAVAACK. Mr. Speaker, I will be brief because my message is clear and concise.

I rise today out of grave concern for this most recent assault on our religious freedom, the First Amendment, and our freedom of conscience.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' order requiring every Catholic institution larger than a single church—and even in some cases a single church—to pay for contraceptives, sterilization, and morning-after abortifacients for its employees is directly contrary to the principles of the Catholic faith.

Let us ensure we do not confuse the issue here.

This is a direct attack against religious liberty for all religions—but forcing Catholic schools, hospitals, Catholic charities to comply with a Federal mandate that violates the core moral commitment of protecting the lives of the unborn is unconscionable. This act threatens to sabotage the very foundations of our First Amendment rights and our religious liberties.

Continually chipping away at our basic constitutional freedoms that set the foundation of this great country sends us down a very slippery slope to further government overreach and intrusion into our individual lives.

This must stop, and we as Americans must stop it.

AFGHANISTAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE) for 5 minutes.

Ms. LEE of California. First, let me thank my colleagues Congressmen MCGOVERN and JONES, Congresswomen WOOLSEY and WATERS, and Congressman HONDA for their efforts to bring the war in Afghanistan to a swift and safe end.

Mr. Speaker, I am here this morning to remind my colleagues that there is no military solution in Afghanistan. It is time to bring our troops home and to make sure that we leave no permanent military bases. While many, and a growing number, of my colleagues have come to this conclusion, there are still those who claim that Afghanistan is going well and that we should stay there indefinitely.

We are gathered here this morning to give some real and important insight

into the reality that nothing could be further from the truth. We are here to discuss very important revelations brought to light by a brave Army officer, Colonel Daniel Davis.

Colonel Davis has honorably served this country for over a quarter century, and has received praise from his commanders for his maturity, determination, and judgment. He recently made the brave decision to release an unclassified account of the war in Afghanistan after witnessing the huge gap between what the American public was being told about the progress in Afghanistan and the dismal situation on the ground. Declassifying the National Intelligence Estimate on Afghanistan is a necessary step so that our policy is based on accurate information.

In an article published this past Sunday in the Armed Forces Journal, Colonel Davis asks:

"How many more men must die in support of a mission that is not succeeding and behind an array of more than 7 years of optimistic statements by United States senior leaders in Afghanistan? No one expects our leaders to always have a successful plan, but we do expect—and the men," and women, I must add, "who do the living, fighting and dying deserve—to have our leaders tell us the truth about what's going on."

Mr. Speaker, the American people deserve to know the truth after spending the past decade on failed military strategies which have cost us over \$450 billion in direct funding. The costs, of course, have been even greater in injuries, lives lost, and in the trillions of dollars we will need to spend on long-term care for our veterans, including hospitals, clinics, job training, post-traumatic stress disorder treatment, housing assistance, and homeless services. But we must spend these resources for our veterans.

The American people, though, are sick and tired of these endless wars. Fully two-thirds of Americans support ending combat operations in Afghanistan in 2013, and three out of four Americans favor a speedy withdrawal of all United States troops out of Afghanistan. We are set to spend an additional \$88 billion, mind you, \$88 billion in Afghanistan over the next year while domestic cuts in education, health care, roads, bridges, and other essential priorities are sacrificed.

We cannot afford an indefinite stay in Afghanistan. We need to ask what we have to show for the past decade of war. Instead of a stable democracy, we have a broken state which is completely dependent on foreign countries for its budget, with rampant corruption and widespread violence. For the fifth straight year, civilian casualties rose in Afghanistan. In fact, 2011 was a record year for the number of Afghan civilians killed. There were 3,021 Afghan children, women, and men who were caught in the crossfire between an insurgency and the heavy presence of NATO troops.

□ 1050

The reality on the ground in Afghanistan stands in stark contrast to the steady reports of progress we have been hearing from those who seek to maintain a military presence in Afghanistan in 2014 and beyond. It's time to bring our troops home from Afghanistan—not in 2014, not next year, but right now.

Congress authorized the use of force in 2001, which I voted against because it gave the President—any President—a blank check to use force anytime, anyplace, anywhere in the world for any period of time. We should have had a debate 10 years ago when Congress failed to consider the implications of giving the Pentagon a blank check in the rush to war.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Colonel Davis for his courage and risking his career to speak out to try to let the American people and their elected representatives understand the true risks we are taking in Afghanistan. To understand what is at stake in Afghanistan, I again call on the Pentagon to declassify the National Intelligence Estimate on Afghanistan so that we can have an informed discussion moving forward.

It is time to bring our young men and women home. They have performed valiantly, with incredible courage, and have done everything we have asked them to do.

[From the Armed Forces Journal]

TRUTH, LIES AND AFGHANISTAN

(By Lt. Col. Daniel L. Davis)

I spent last year in Afghanistan, visiting and talking with U.S. troops and their Afghan partners. My duties with the Army's Rapid Equipping Force took me into every significant area where our soldiers engage the enemy. Over the course of 12 months, I covered more than 9,000 miles and talked, traveled and patrolled with troops in Kandahar, Kunar, Ghazni, Khost, Paktika, Kunduz, Balkh, Nangarhar and other provinces.

What I saw bore no resemblance to 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, that the local government and military were progressing toward self-sufficiency. I did not need to witness dramatic improvements to be reassured, but merely hoped to see evidence of positive trends, to see companies or battalions produce even minimal but sustainable progress.

Instead, I witnessed the absence of success on virtually every level.

My arrival in country in late 2010 marked the start of my fourth combat deployment, and my second in Afghanistan. A Regular Army officer in the Armor Branch, I served in Operation Desert Storm, in Afghanistan in 2005–06 and in Iraq in 2008–09. In the middle of my career, I spent eight years in the U.S. Army Reserve and held a number of civilian jobs—among them, legislative correspondent for defense and foreign affairs for Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison, R-Texas.

As a representative for the Rapid Equipping Force, I set out to talk to our troops about their needs and their circumstances. Along the way, I conducted mounted and dismounted combat patrols, spending time with

conventional and Special Forces troops. I interviewed or had conversations with more than 250 soldiers in the field, from the lowest ranking 19-year-old private to division commanders and staff members at every echelon. I spoke at length with Afghan security officials, Afghan civilians and a few village elders.

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 talked 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.

FROM BAD TO ABYSMAL

Much of what I saw during my deployment, let alone read or wrote in official reports. I can't talk about; the information remains classified. But I can say that such reports—mine and others—serve to illuminate the gulf between conditions on the ground and official statements of progress.

And I can relate a few representative experiences, of the kind that I observed all over the country.

In January 2011, I made my first trip into the mountains of Kunar province near the Pakistan border to visit the troops of 1st Squadron, 32nd Cavalry. On a patrol to the northernmost U.S. position in eastern Afghanistan, we arrived at an Afghan National Police (ANP) station that had reported being attacked by the Taliban 2½ hours earlier.

Through the interpreter, I asked the police captain where the attack had originated, and he pointed to the side of a nearby mountain.

"What are your normal procedures in situations like these?" I asked. "Do you form up a squad and go after them? Do you periodically send out harassing patrols? What do you do?"

As the interpreter conveyed my questions, the captain's head wheeled around, looking first at the interpreter and turning to me with an incredulous expression. Then he laughed.

"No! We don't go after them," he said. "That would be dangerous!"

According to the cavalry troopers, the Afghan policemen rarely leave the cover of the checkpoints. In that part of the province, the Taliban literally run free.

In June, I was in the Zharay district of Kandahar province, returning to a base from a dismounted patrol. Gunshots were audible as the Taliban attacked a U.S. checkpoint about one mile away.

As I entered the unit's command post, the commander and his staff were watching a live video feed of the battle. Two ANP vehicles were blocking the main road leading to the site of the attack. The fire was coming from behind a haystack. We watched as two Afghan men emerged, mounted a motorcycle and began moving toward the Afghan policemen in their vehicles.

The U.S. commander turned around and told the Afghan radio operator to make sure the policemen halted the men. The radio operator shouted into the radio repeatedly, but got no answer.

On the screen, we watched as the two men slowly motored past the ANP vehicles. The policemen neither got out to stop the two men nor answered the radio—until the motorcycle was out of sight.

To a man, the U.S. officers in that unit told me they had nothing but contempt for

the Afghan troops in their area—and that was before the above incident occurred.

In August I went on a dismounted patrol with troops in the Panjwai district of Kandahar province. Several troops from the unit had recently been killed in action, one of whom was a very popular and experienced soldier. One of the unit's senior officers rhetorically asked me, "How do I look these men in the eye and ask them to go out day after day on these missions? What's harder: How do I look [my soldier's] wife in the eye when I get back and tell her that her husband died for something meaningful? How do I do that?"

One of the senior enlisted leaders added, "Guys are saying, 'I hope I live so I can at least get home to R&R leave before I get it,' or 'I hope I only lose a foot.' Sometimes they even say which limb it might be: 'Maybe it'll only be my left foot.' They don't have a lot of confidence that the leadership two levels up really understands what they're living here, what the situation really is."

On Sept. 11, the 10th anniversary of the infamous attack on the U.S., I visited another unit in Kunar province, this one near the town of Asmar. I talked with the local official who served as the cultural adviser to the U.S. commander. Here's how the conversation went:

Davis: "Here you have many units of the Afghan National Security Forces [ANSF]. Will they be able to hold out against the Taliban when U.S. troops leave this area?"

Adviser: "No. They are definitely not capable. Already all across this region [many elements of] the security forces have made deals with the Taliban. [The ANSF] won't shoot at the Taliban, and the Taliban won't shoot them."

"Also, when a Taliban member is arrested, he is soon released with no action taken against him. So when the Taliban returns [when the Americans leave after 2014], so too go the jobs, especially for everyone like me who has worked with the coalition."

"Recently, I got a cellphone call from a Taliban who had captured a friend of mine. While I could hear, he began to beat him, telling me I'd better quit working for the Americans. I could hear my friend crying out in pain. [The Taliban] said the next time they would kidnap my sons and do the same to them. Because of the direct threats, I've had to take my children out of school just to keep them safe."

"And last night right on that mountain there [he pointed to a ridge overlooking the U.S. base, about 700 meters distant], a member of the ANP was murdered. The Taliban came and called him out, kidnapped him in front of his parents, and took him away and murdered him. He was a member of the ANP from another province and had come back to visit his parents. He was only 27 years old. The people are not safe anywhere."

That murder took place within view of the U.S. base, a post nominally responsible for the security of an area of hundreds of square kilometers. Imagine how insecure the population is beyond visual range. And yet that conversation was representative of what I saw in many regions of Afghanistan.

In all of the places I visited, the tactical situation was bad to abysmal. If the events I have described—and many, many more I could mention—had been in the first year of war, or even the third or fourth, one might be willing to believe that Afghanistan was just a hard fight, and we should stick it out. Yet these incidents all happened in the 10th year of war.

As the numbers depicting casualties and enemy violence indicate the absence of progress, so too did my observations of the tactical situation all over Afghanistan.

CREDIBILITY GAP

I'm hardly the only one who has noted the discrepancy between official statements and the truth on the ground.

A January 2011 report by the Afghan NGO Security Office noted that public statements made by U.S. and ISAF leaders at the end of 2010 were "sharply divergent from IMF, [international military forces, MGO-speak for ISAF] 'strategic communication' messages suggesting improvements. We encourage [nongovernment organization personnel] to recognize that no matter how authoritative the source of any such claim, messages of the nature are solely intended to influence American and European public opinion ahead of the withdrawal and are not intended to offer an accurate portrayal of the situation for those who live and work here."

The following month, Anthony Cordesman, on behalf of the Center for Strategic and International Studies, wrote that ISAF and the U.S. leadership failed to report accurately on the reality of the situation in Afghanistan.

"Since June 2010, the unclassified reporting the U.S. does provide has steadily shrunk in content, effectively 'spinning' the road to victory by eliminating content that illustrates the full scale of the challenges ahead," Cordesman wrote. "They also, however, were driven by political decisions to ignore or understate Taliban and insurgent gains from 2002 to 2009, to ignore the problems caused by weak and corrupt Afghan governance, to understate the risks posed by sanctuaries in Pakistan, and to 'spin' the value of tactical ISAF victories while ignoring the steady growth of Taliban influence and control."

How many more men must die in support of a mission that is not succeeding and behind an array of more than seven years of optimistic statements by U.S. senior leaders in Afghanistan? No one expects our leaders to always have a successful plan. But we do expect—and the men who do the living, fighting and dying deserve—to have our leaders tell us the truth about what's going on.

I first encountered senior-level equivocation during a 1997 division-level "experiment" that turned out to be far more setpiece than experiment. Over dinner at Fort Hood, Texas, Training and Doctrine Command leaders told me that the Advanced Warfighter Experiment (AWE) had shown that a "digital division" with fewer troops and more gear could be far more effective than current divisions. The next day, our congressional staff delegation observed the demonstration firsthand, and it didn't take long to realize there was little substance to the claims. Virtually no legitimate experimentation was actually conducted. All parameters were carefully scripted. All events had a preordained sequence and outcome. The AWE was simply an expensive show, couched in the language of scientific experimentation and presented in glowing press releases and public statements, intended to persuade Congress to fund the Army's preference. Citing the AWE's "results," Army leaders proceeded to eliminate one maneuver company per combat battalion. But the loss of fighting systems was never offset by a commensurate rise in killing capability.

A decade later, in the summer of 2007, I was assigned to the Future Combat Systems (FCS) organization at Fort Bliss, Texas. It didn't take long to discover that the same thing the Army had done with a single division at Fort Hood in 1997 was now being done on a significantly larger scale with FCS. Year after year, the congressionally mandated reports from the Government Accountability Office revealed significant problems and warned that the system was in danger of

failing. Each year, the Army's senior leaders told members of Congress at hearings that GAO didn't really understand the full picture and that to the contrary, the program was on schedule, on budget and headed for success. Ultimately, of course, the program was canceled, with little but spinoffs to show for \$18 billion spent.

If Americans were able to compare the public statements many of our leaders have made with classified data, this credibility gap would be immediately observable. Naturally, I am not authorized to divulge classified material to the public. But I am legally able to share it with members of Congress. I have accordingly provided a much fuller accounting in a classified report to several members of Congress, both Democrats and Republicans. Senators and House members.

A nonclassified version is available at www.afghanreport.com [Editor's note: At press time, Army public affairs had not yet ruled on whether Davis could post this longer version.]

TELL THE TRUTH

When it comes to deciding what matters are worth plunging our nation into war and which are not, our senior leaders owe it to the nation and to the uniformed members to be candid—graphically, if necessary—in telling them what's at stake and how expensive potential success is likely to be U.S. citizens and their elected representatives can decide if the risk to blood and treasure is worth it.

Likewise when having to decide whether to continue a war, alter its aims or to close off a campaign that cannot be won at an acceptable price, our senior leaders have an obligation to tell Congress and American people the unvarnished truth and let the people decide what course of action to choose. That is the very essence of civilian control of the military. The American people deserve better than what they've gotten from their senior uniformed leaders over the last number of years. Simply telling the truth would be a good start.

OBAMACARE VIOLATES FIRST AMENDMENT

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

Mr. HARRIS. Mr. Speaker, once again we are reminded why we need to repeal the President's Affordable Care Act, which most Americans know as ObamaCare. Mr. Speaker, a majority of Americans already understand how harmful ObamaCare will be to American health care, especially to the millions of seniors on Medicare who will have that program cut by \$500 billion if we don't repeal it.

But 2 weeks ago, the latest administration rule implementing ObamaCare was announced by the Secretary of Health, and that rule would impose the latest mandate, this time, a mandate on all religious institutions to provide government-mandated coverage for drugs and surgery that is contrary to the beliefs of those religions.

The greatest uproar was from the Catholic Church over the rule that would force Catholic institutions to pay the full cost of all government-mandated drugs and procedures, and that would include sterilization and abortion-causing drugs. That mandate would put those institutions in the position of either paying the full cost of

those drugs and procedures that violate their beliefs or paying a government fine. I repeat: It would end up being a government-imposed fine to practice your religious beliefs, with the administration using the broad mandates of ObamaCare to impose those fines.

But the religious intimidation by the administration didn't stop there. When the Archbishop for the Military Services, Timothy Broglio, wrote a letter about this new mandate to his diocese to be read at Sunday services, the U.S. Army Chief of Chaplains, a recent Obama appointee, ordered his chaplain corps not to read the letter at those Sunday services. Mr. Speaker, you know that those services are attended not only by the military, but by family and DOD employees. And this order was a clear violation of the First Amendment guarantees not only of the freedom of religion but the freedom of speech.

Let me read from the letter, and you will see why the administration was so concerned:

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ: It is imperative that I call to your attention an alarming and serious matter that negatively impacts the church in the United States directly and that strikes at the fundamental right to religious liberty for all citizens of any faith. The Federal Government, which claims to be 'of, by, and for the people,' has just dealt a heavy blow to almost a quarter of those people—the Catholic population—and to the millions more who are served by the Catholic faithful. It is a blow to a freedom that you have fought to defend and for which you have seen your buddies fall in battle.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services announced that almost all employers, including Catholic employers, will be forced to offer their employees health coverage that includes sterilization, abortion-inducing drugs, and contraception. Almost all health insurers will be forced to include those immoral 'services' in the health policies they write. And almost all individuals will be forced to buy that coverage as part of their policies.

In so ruling, the administration has cast aside the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, denying to Catholics our Nation's first and most fundamental freedom, that of religious liberty. And as a result, unless the rule is overturned, we Catholics will be compelled to choose between violating our consciences or dropping health coverage for our employees.

We cannot—we will not—comply with this unjust law. People of faith cannot be made second-class citizens. We are already joined by our brothers and sisters of all faiths and many others of good will in this important effort to regain our religious freedom. Our parents and grandparents did not come to these shores to help build America's cities and towns, its infrastructure and institutions, its enterprise and culture, only to have their posterity stripped of their God-given rights.

Mr. Speaker, after protest, the Chief of Chaplains finally allowed most of the letter to be read, but ordered that the line "We cannot—we will not—comply with this law" still not be read.

Mr. Speaker, now you can see why The Wall Street Journal—not usually a paper that comments on religious matters—found this issue so compelling