

I think what it takes is simply some vision and some courage. That is why people sent us here in the first place. Congress should act, demonstrating the leadership to avoid the worsening infrastructure deficit, put people to work, make our families safer, healthier, and more economically secure.

AFGHANISTAN

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

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, during the Thanksgiving break, I wrote a letter to President Obama, which I would like to submit for the record.

The letter respectfully reminded the President that President Karzai continues to thumb his nose in the eyes of the American taxpayer. We have seen many news articles reporting Karzai's refusal to sign the bilateral security agreement that this administration has proposed, an agreement that would obligate United States money and United States troops for at least 10 more years in Afghanistan.

In an Associated Press article printed in my State paper, titled, "Afghanistan President Delays Deal," the subtitle goes on to read, "U.S. says it will pull out troops if security agreement isn't signed."

Mr. Speaker, it is my hope that the House will encourage the President to pull our troops out and stop spending money that we do not have in a country that does not even want our help. Furthermore, it is my hope that the House and Senate leadership will, in 2014, allow Congress to vote on this issue of the bilateral strategic agreement.

Mr. Speaker, it is wrong that the Afghan Parliament may vote on whether they want this agreement with the United States, but the House and the Senate that represent the American people can't even have a debate and vote on the will of the American people. I know that the American people want this debate to take place. Hopefully, in 2014, the leadership of the House will at least let us have this debate on the floor of the House.

Mr. Speaker, if you could have traveled with me during the break last week, you would have heard many people in the Third District of North Carolina who said to me that they are outraged that we will continue spending money in Afghanistan at a time when we have so many financial needs at home. It is absolutely unacceptable that a single American would give his life or limb overseas without the approval of Congress. It is absolutely unacceptable that the American taxpayer would give money to a corrupt regime while young and old alike go hungry here in the United States.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to say to the President: Pull the troops out and bring them home now. There is not one

thing history says we will ever change in Afghanistan, and nothing, history says, will change in Afghanistan. It is time to end this senseless waste of American lives and American money in Afghanistan.

Mr. Speaker, this poster beside me was in the Greensboro newspaper where Mr. McGOVERN and I had written a letter saying it was time for us to pull our troops out. Mr. Speaker, this poster says "News & Record, Greensboro, North Carolina, February 2011." That's 3 years ago. We are still there, and we are talking about 10 more years. Let Congress debate. Let Congress speak. Let Congress vote the will of the American people.

Mr. Speaker, I ask God to please bless our men and women in uniform and to bless their families, and please, God, continue to bless America.

NOVEMBER 26, 2013.

PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA,
The White House, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: I write today due to the ongoing discussion between the United States and Afghanistan regarding a 10-year Bilateral Security Agreement to allow our troops to remain overseas beyond 2014. After reading today's Washington Post article titled "Karzai tells Susan Rice of more demands for accord extending U.S. troop presence," I once again urge you to reconsider your stance on U.S. relations with Afghanistan.

This agreement will obligate billions of American tax dollars and expose American troops to further danger overseas—all while meeting President Karzai's ever-growing list of demands. After 12 years, billions of dollars, and President Karzai's continued disrespect for the United States, many in the House and Senate believe it is time to end our commitment to Afghanistan. However, despite the risks involved, the agreement will not be brought before Congress for a vote. It is a sad day when the Afghan government has voted on the agreement, but that opportunity has been denied to the United States Congress.

Mr. President, I have seen many people and spoken at many events while at home in Eastern North Carolina, and I have received nothing but support for my position that this agreement is entirely unacceptable. I respectfully ask you to take the wishes of the American public into consideration and oppose the Bilateral Security Agreement with Afghanistan.

Sincerely,

WALTER B. JONES,
Member of Congress.

THE PLIGHT OF SYRIA'S CHRISTIANS

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

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, as winter descends upon the Middle East, the plight of Syria's people who have endured nearly 3 years of savage civil war grows more desperate with each passing day.

Fighting rages on throughout much of the country, and with the government forces making headway in recent months, many of the rebel groups have splintered, turning on each other. As in wars throughout history, it is civilians,

especially children, who have borne much of the suffering.

More than 9 million Syrians are in need of humanitarian assistance, and a quarter of these, 2.2 million, have fled the country, mostly to neighboring Lebanon, Jordan, and Turkey. Half of those refugees, more than a million people, are children.

Another 6.5 million Syrians are internally displaced, having fled their homes, but remaining inside the country, often in parts of Syria that have changed hands on multiple occasions and with attendant civilian suffering.

While all of Syria's people have been affected by fighting, it is Christians, who make up about 10 percent of the country's population, who are at greatest risk, given their small numbers and the increasingly religious nature of a war that started out as a broad-based secular movement that sought to change the character of the Syrian regime but not the regime itself.

For two millennia, Syria has been home to one of the oldest Christian communities in the world, a population dominated by the eastern churches, but also including smaller numbers of Catholics and Protestants. Syria's Christians have been comfortably and fully integrated into the economic, political, and cultural life of modern Syria and, despite their small numbers, are well represented among the country's elite. Tragically, this long, peaceful coexistence has been shattered, and half a million Syrian Christians, nearly one in four, have fled the country since the fighting began.

Like minorities the world over, Syrian Christians have tried to avoid getting dragged into the fighting that has gripped their homeland; but with their top two population centers, Aleppo and Homs, having seen some of the most savage fighting in the war, Christians have been unable to avoid being drawn into the conflict.

While the uprising against Syrian President Bashar Assad did not start out as a sectarian conflict, it has increasingly taken on a religious tone, as many of the rebels have wrapped themselves in the mantle of fundamentalist Islam.

Initially, the Free Syrian Army and other large rebel groupings distanced themselves from the more religious rebel factions, some of whom are linked to al Qaeda, but even they have adopted an increasingly Islamist tone in recent months. This has exacerbated the plight of the Christians who are increasingly targeted simply because they are Christian and because they are seen by many Muslims as having backed the government.

The truth is that Syrian Christians, many of whom have family members among my Armenian American constituents, did not rally to the regime. Syrian Christians, like most other Syrians, simply wanted a freer, more open society and a greater voice in their own government. It is a testament to the depth of Christian desperation that

atrocities perpetrated by radical Islamists have done more to test Christian neutrality than the use of chemical weapons and war crimes by the Assad regime.

Ending the Civil War through a negotiated solution represents the best prospect for peace, and the international community must insist that any agreement reached at the upcoming peace talks in Geneva or thereafter will guarantee the safety of Syria's minority populations.

In the meantime, America can do more to help those seeking refuge. That is why I have been working for much of the past year to convince the administration to allow humanitarian parole for the nearly 6,000 Syrians with approved immigrant petitions to the United States.

As hundreds of millions around the world prepare to celebrate the most joyful day of the Christian calendar, the international community must intensify its efforts to end this terrible war, and also to protect Syria's Christians and ensure the continued vitality of this 2,000-year-old community.

AMAZON PRIME AIR

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the innovativeness of American enterprise flies off the radar.

According to Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos, the company is fixing to deliver packages to its customers via drones. It is called "Amazon Prime Air."

That's right. In just a few years, Bezos said people will be able to order something online and have it in their hands within 30 minutes by the use of drones. It sounds like something out of the Jetsons, doesn't it? Gone will be the days of the neighborhood mail carriers. Soon there will be a drone to replace them. According to Amazon, these drones can deliver packages up to 5 pounds, which makes up 90 percent of their deliveries.

Mr. Speaker, thousands of Americans use Amazon every year, especially around the holiday season. Amazon, unlike the glitch-ridden government Web sites, can efficiently use online Internet services that get a timely product to market. Think of how many drones could soon be flying around the sky. Here a drone, there a drone, everywhere a drone in the United States.

Mr. Speaker, Amazon is just one of many companies that will be looking to take advantage of this cost-effective drone technology in the coming years. And good for Amazon. I congratulate them.

The FAA is charged with the responsibility of coming up with ways to regulate drones for safety reasons, but who is watching out for the privacy of American citizens? Congress has the responsibility and the duty to set clear regulation for all drones in domestic use. Absent legislation to prevent sur-

veillance of Americans, companies could use drones not only for delivery, but other ways that, in my opinion, violate the constitutional right of privacy.

The issue of concern, Mr. Speaker, is surveillance, not the delivery of packages. That includes surveillance of someone's backyard, snooping around with a drone, checking out a person's patio to see if that individual needs new patio furniture from the company.

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Photographing swing sets, pools, or the people that are in the pools, or even looking into windows, all of that could be done with the use of drones under corporate America or by individuals. This would all be possible. So Congress must ensure that the expanded use of drones in the coming years does not come at the expense of the individual right to privacy.

After all, this is a right guaranteed to all Americans under the Fourth Amendment. That's why I have, along with Representative ZOE LOFGREN (Calif), introduced the bipartisan Preserving American Privacy Act. Our bill would deal with several things, and, once again, Mr. Speaker, we're talking about regulating surveillance and setting guidelines for the expectation of privacy for citizens.

It would, first of all, deal with the government. It would prohibit the government from using drones for targeted surveillance of an individual or their property without a search warrant. The Fourth Amendment applies to the use of drones when the government is involved. It would also prohibit individuals or companies from using drones to take photographs or audio recordings of private individuals without their consent.

This is private surveillance, or spying, or snooping, whatever you want to call it. It would restrict private individuals and law enforcement agencies from arming drones, which can be done.

As we enter this uncharted world of drone technology, Congress must be proactive and establish boundaries for drone use that safeguard the constitutional rights of Americans and not leave this up to the FAA.

Individuals are somewhat concerned that these new eyes in the skies may threaten their privacy, so Congress can and should immediately balance this high-tech development with our constitutional right of privacy.

Boundaries are needed before drones flood the skies of America. Just because Big Brother or individuals or companies can look into someone's backyard or through a window of a house doesn't mean it should be allowed. As the innovativeness of American enterprise flies off the radar, we should be mindful that technology may change, but the Constitution does not.

And that's just the way it is.

END HUNGER NOW

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

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I want to welcome all of my colleagues back from their Thanksgiving holiday, and I trust that, like me, everybody had a great Thanksgiving along with a wonderful meal. But I'm here today to remind my colleagues, so that they don't forget, that for millions of our fellow citizens, they were without a Thanksgiving dinner. In fact, for millions of our fellow citizens, they go without meals on a regular basis. Men, women, and children, close to 50 million Americans, go hungry in our country, the richest country in the history of the world. It is a national scandal, and it is something that we need to do something about.

Mr. Speaker, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, otherwise known as SNAP, helps struggling families put food on the table. It's a good program that, sadly, has come under attack by some—not all—but by some of my Republican friends, and for the life of me, I can't understand why.

The average SNAP benefit is about \$1.40 per meal. The No Kid Hungry campaign, launched by the group Share Our Strength, recently did a chart which shows that the average cost of one Thanksgiving dinner is about \$49.04. That's equal to about 35 SNAP meals.

The fact is that our food banks are at capacity. I went to a Thanksgiving dinner sponsored by my bishop that was filled with people looking for food. That same group run by the Catholic Charities delivered well over 1,000 meals to people in my community on that one Thanksgiving Day. But the notion that somehow charity can do it all, or that food banks can do it all, or that churches or synagogues or mosques can do it all, is just wrong.

I would urge my colleagues to visit a food bank, to visit a food pantry, talk to the people who run those organizations and let them inform you of who is showing up at their doorsteps. Talk to the people who go to these food banks. These are average people. Many of them are working families who earn so little that they still qualify for the SNAP benefit.

The White House released a report over the Thanksgiving holiday talking about the importance of the nutrition assistance program. The report highlights, among other things, that in 2012 SNAP kept nearly 5 million people out of poverty, including 2.2 million children. SNAP reduced child poverty by 3 percentage points in 2012, the largest child poverty impact of any safety net program other than refundable tax credits.

The program's benefits are targeted to those most in need and designed to support work. The large majority of SNAP participants are children, the elderly, or people with disabilities, and