

Unfortunately, the Army has reported a similar increase in suicides. The suicide rate among Army soldiers hit its highest level in three decades in 2008 when there were 128 confirmed suicides.

Yesterday, at a hearing of the Armed Services Subcommittee on Military Personnel, I was impressed with the comments by military leaders from each of the four services who described the steps they are taking to combat psychological stress among servicemembers. I was also pleased to read in the Marine Corps Times that the Corps has taken increased suicide rates seriously by rolling out a new suicide prevention program and implementing additional all-hands prevention training. However, I also believe that the policymakers in Washington have a role to play.

With Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune and Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point in my district, I am well aware of the strain that the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have placed on our Nation's marines and their families. Military officials have speculated that repeat combat deployments and the toll these deployments have taken on servicemembers' marriages and families have contributed to increased suicide rates.

Mr. Speaker, I also believe that continuous war without a clearly defined goal is contributing to anxiety and depression among some of the members of our military.

In recent days, I have come to the House floor to talk about our Nation's military involvement in Afghanistan and the importance of knowing the end point to our war strategy. After nearly 8 years in Afghanistan, President Obama's order for a surge of additional troops will certainly lead to more killed and wounded, more frequent deployments and more stress on our military and their families. That is the price of war.

While American military personnel faithfully conduct their missions abroad, elected officials here in Washington also need to take seriously their responsibility to develop a viable, long-term strategy for these operations.

I have spoken to many in the Army and Marine Corps who say our Nation needs an end point to its war strategy. Many servicemembers have gone to Iraq and Afghanistan more than once, and their desire to serve this Nation is greater than ever, but the stress placed on our all-volunteer forces cannot continue forever.

That is why I will continue to urge the President to work with his military commanders and the Congress to articulate to our men and women in uniform what is to be achieved and to develop the best possible strategy for achieving our goals and wrapping up our military commitment in Afghanistan. I will also continue to work with my colleagues in Congress to ensure adequate funding for mental health programs for servicemembers and veterans.

Before closing, Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the Department of Defense and our military leaders who are doing everything possible to help servicemembers who suffer from anxiety and depression.

Mr. Speaker, as I do just about every night that I come to the floor of the House, I have to close this way, because I regret that I voted to send our troops to Iraq. I have signed over 8,000 letters to the families and extended families so that I could say to God, forgive me for making that decision.

So my close will be this. God, please bless our men and women in uniform. God, please bless the families of our men and women in uniform. God, in Your loving arms, hold the families who have given a child dying for freedom in Afghanistan and Iraq.

And, dear God, because America is in so much trouble, I will close three times by asking, God please, God please, God please continue to bless America.

THE COST OF AFGHANISTAN AND IRAQ SOON TO BE \$1 TRILLION

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, I would like to thank Congressman WALTER JONES for his 5-minute speech. That was a perfect lead-in to my remarks tonight.

Mr. Speaker, last week I stood in the House to mark two tragic milestones. I said that July had become the deadliest month for our soldiers in Afghanistan since the conflict began, and I reported that the number of American troops who have died in Afghanistan and Iraq had gone over the 5,000 mark.

Today, I rise to warn the House that a third tragic milestone is coming up. According to a report by the Congressional Research Service, Congress has approved \$941 billion in war-related spending since 9/11. If Congress approves the administration's request for the next fiscal year, funding for Afghanistan and Iraq will go over the \$1 trillion mark. And that is just for direct military operations, Mr. Speaker. The \$1 trillion figure doesn't include the indirect costs, such as health care for our wounded veterans. Many of our veterans will need care for the rest of their lives. Joseph Stiglitz, the Nobel-winning economist, has estimated that when you add it all up, the occupation of Iraq alone will cost us over \$3 trillion.

Tragically, all that spending has not made us any safer. Violent extremists have launched more attacks around the world since 9/11 than before 9/11. The war spending hasn't made us any richer either. It has contributed to our economic crisis, exploded the lid off our national debt, and diverted funds from desperately needed domestic priorities.

Besides Iraq and Afghanistan, Congress has also approved spending for a

third war called the global war on terror. That war has been a big mistake, too. As the Rand Corporation has pointed out, when you use the word "terrorist," you elevate them. You elevate them to the status of holy warriors and it encourages them to conduct holy war against the United States.

We need to call terrorists what they really are, criminals and violent extremists. To stop them, we need good intelligence and good police work in the communities where they hide, not massive military occupations that don't get the job done and bleed our Treasury dry.

I am glad that President Obama and Secretary of State Clinton have stopped using the phrase "war on terror." That is a good first step. But now we need to take several more steps. We must speed up the withdrawal of our troops and military contractors from Iraq. We must change our mission in Afghanistan to emphasize economic development, humanitarian aid, education, jobs, and better government.

This is the kind of help that the people of Afghanistan want and need from the United States. This is the kind of help that will give the Afghan people real hope for the future and a reason to reject extremism.

And throughout the world, we must replace military power with the tools of smart power, such as diplomacy, multilateral action, and nuclear non-proliferation. I have offered a "SMART Security Platform for the 21st Century" which could put these tools to work and make the world a safer place.

Mr. Speaker, America cannot afford to keep using military power as our only option. It is dumb foreign policy, dumb military policy, and dumb fiscal policy. Smart power will save lives and money and build a more peaceful world for our children and their children.

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

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

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

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

RECOGNIZING THE OUTSTANDING WORK OF TAKE STOCK IN CHILDREN

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. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to recognize the outstanding work of Take Stock in Children, an amazing program throughout