summer. I certainly heard it in north Texas in my town halls. At that time it was only a 1,000-page bill. I can only imagine what they're saying about a 2,000-page bill. We don't want a 1,000-page bill to take care of a problem that actually could be taken care of with simple reform within the insurance industry.

The problem that needed to be corrected was the individual who had a tough medical diagnosis, a preexisting condition, who loses their job, loses their insurance, doesn't get coverage within the appropriate timeframe and therefore is excluded from coverage for time immemorial because of this tough medical diagnosis.

Someone my age loses their job, has a heart attack, their insurance coverage lapses. They're going to have a tough time getting back in. These are the people we heard from during the summer. Yes, we didn't want the Democrats' bill, but we do need some help for this segment of population who falls into that category. They want insurance. They would even be willing to pay a little more for the insurance because they recognize their human vulnerability is now on display. Yet they cannot find it at any price.

And some of the things that we could have talked about, had we been reasonable about this, had we been truly bipartisan about this, is we could have talked about what type of insurance reform. And, in fact, the President, when he stood here before the House of Representatives in September acknowledging that it's going to be 4 years before any of this stuff becomes available, he referenced JOHN MCCAIN's discussion during the campaign a year ago where perhaps something like an upper-limits policy or a high-risk policy would possibly bridge that gap during those few years until their new policies are available. Well, I would just simply submit if we would have spent the effort working on that bridge policy, if you will, maybe the rest of this stuff would not have been necessary.

There are ways to get at this, with high-risk pools, with reinsurance, subsidize those States that are willing to participate in that. The Congressional Budget Office estimated it would cost $20 billion over the 10-year budgetary cycle in order to beef up those high-risk plans to be able to accommodate those individuals who are involved, even make it a little more generous than that if you want. For heaven's sakes, $20 billion over 10 years is a far sight less than a trillion-plus dollars over that same 10-year interval.

And I would suggest that this Congress, if they were willing to pass the liability reform the gentleman referenced, save that $54 billion that the Congressional Budget Office said we could save, and put all of that money toward helping those people with preexisting conditions, we could go a long way towards solving these problems.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Reclaiming my time, I would like to pose a question and ask your response.

In the previous hour, the gentleman from Ohio alleged that that $54 billion that would be saved by the lawsuit abuse reform would only be 1 percent of the overall cost of our health care; therefore, it's of small consequence and apparently not worth the trouble to take on the trial lawyers for that 1 percent. And I've made a response to that, but I would offer to the gentleman for his viewpoint since that is a field of your expertise.

Mr. BURGESS. Well, in fact, that is a fairly narrow window that they're looking at. They're only looking at in the Federal system Medicare, Medicaid, SCHIP, Indian Health Service. The Federal Government pays about 50 cents out of every health care dollar that's spent in this country; so in effect you could double that number to $100 billion that you would save over all persons who are insured, covered, cash customers, and those covered by Federal programs.

In Texas we did pass significant liability reforms back in 2003. It has made a substantial difference in Texas. I will just tell you from the standpoint of a practicing OB/GYN doctor, in 1999 the cost of a policy for a million dollars of liability coverage in the Dallas/Fort Worth market was around $25,000. It had more than doubled to $57,000 by 2002. It is back down now to $35,000 in the years since this bill was passed. So there is an immediate substantial benefit in premiums, but the big savings come in the backing out of defensive medicine that is practiced.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Reclaiming my time, I thank the gentleman from Texas.

In the minute or so that we have left, I have in here in my hand a list of the new Federal agencies that are created by this bill.

This is the old chart for H.R. 3200. That's pretty scary. This is the new chart, and in the middle of that is the old chart. Now, here are all the new agencies that are created. Well, actually maybe not all of them. I've just highlighted a few of them on the front.

The program of administrative simplification, I think they know they've got something complicated. Health choices administration, that is the scary part, this guy right here. That's the new commissar-isioner, referenced by the gentleman from Texas. The qualified health benefits plan ombudsman, which tells you no one can deal with this bureaucracy so you have to have an intermediary already written into the bill. I don't know if you have to have somebody to deal with the ombudsman.

The health insurance exchange, where all of these policies and insurance companies would have to be approved. The State-based health insurance exchanges as well. Public health insurance option, well, that's the one that will squeeze out the private insurance companies.

The list of the colossal magnitude of this socialized medicine bill goes on and on: 111 new agencies, 2,030 pages altogether, and the bottom line of it is, Mr. Speaker, the dramatic reduction of Americans' choices and thereby our freedom and liberty under assault by people who believe that we have to have a nanny state and live under socialized medicine. And I stand in opposition and I will fight this all the way. And I do believe the American people will rise up and kill this socialized medicine bill.

Kill the bill, Mr. Speaker.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KISSELL) laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, November 12, 2009.

Hon. NANCY PELOSI,
Office of the Speaker, H232 Capitol, Washington, DC.

DEAR MADAM SPEAKER: Pursuant to section 1(k)(2) of H.Res. 895, One Hundred Tenth Congress, and section 4(d) of H.Res. 5, One Hundred Eleventh Congress, I transmit to you notification that Paul J. Solis, Nathaniel Wright, Kedric L. Payne, and Jon Steinman have signed an agreement to not be a candidate for the office of Senator or Representative in, or Delegate or Resident Commissioner to, the Congress for purposes of the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 until at least 3 years after they are no longer a member of the board or staff of the Office of Congressional Ethics.

Copies of the signed agreements shall be retained by the Office of the Clerk as part of the records of the House. Should you have any questions regarding this matter, please contact Ronald Dale Thomas at (202) 226–0394 or via email at Ronald.Thomas@mail.house.gov.

Sincerely,

LORRAINE C. MILLER.

AFGHANISTAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, the gentleman from California (Mr. ROHRABACHER) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. President Obama will soon make a decision that will chart the course for America's involvement in Afghanistan for years to come.

I personally am not upset that it has taken President Obama this long to determine his response to General McChrystal's request for an additional 35,000 U.S. combat troops to be sent to Afghanistan. This is a monumental decision, and it comes when the radical Islamic Taliban and al Qaeda movements seem to be gaining momentum. It also comes when our troops throughout the world are stretched to the breaking point and when our economy is frayed. It comes when the debt that America is piling up is not just alarming but suicidal. This is not the time for business as usual, nor is it the time

for brash decision-making. A decision to send U.S. troops to Afghanistan will cost money, lots of it; and it will cost lives.

In the past, powerful nations were humbled in the rugged terrain of that desolate country. Yes, a desolate country, dotted by thousands of small villages, populated by tribal people so independent and so ferocious that they have never been conquered. Throughout history, attempts to conquer Afghanistan have met with bloody failure. War there is not defeating an enemy; it is conquering a people. And these people have never been conquered.

British writer Rudyard Kipling once wrote: ''When you lie wounded on the Afghan plain and the women are coming to cut the remains, roll to your right and blow out your brains and go to your God like a soldier.''

The British Army dominated vast expansions of India for two centuries, but it was never able to subdue the Afghans. Thousands of British troops lost their lives trying to do just that. In 1842 a British force of 16,000 withdrew from their fortress in Kabul. That force was then beset upon by Afghan tribesmen who cut them to pieces. Only one member of the original contingent of 16,000 made it to the city of Jalalabad. That one person who survived was the regimental surgeon, Dr. W. Brydon. It was thought that perhaps he was permitted to survive.

Russia too has had its comeuppance in the hostile Afghan countryside. It was one of the Soviet Union's most telling chapters, and it was also one of the Soviet Union's last chapters.

After America's inglorious conclusion of its military operations in Vietnam, our Soviet global adversary was emboldened. Then with the fall of the Shah of Iran, a power vacuum was created that the Soviets hoped to fill. They were then engaged in a post-Vietnam War offensive throughout the world. So when chaos and volatility erupted in Afghanistan as a result of a blood rift between two Afghan communist factions, Soviet leaders sent in the Red Army. They did that to unify the communist factions and to pacify the countryside in Afghanistan, which was already hostile to the communist ideology and very hostile to foreign troops. Perhaps as a payback for the massive Soviet aid provided the North during our conflict in Vietnam or perhaps just as a means of weakening the Soviet global military power, during Ronald Reagan's administration, during his Presidency, our government provided weapons and other support for the Afghan insurgent forces who were battling Soviet occupation troops.

□ 1845

As compared with other 20th-century Presidents, Reagan rarely depended on a policy of deploying U.S. troops to solve problems and to combat enemies. I know that goes against what a lot of people think about Ronald Reagan. U.S. forces under Ronald Reagan, yes, were sent in to the small island nation of Grenada, which was in the throes of a Marxist military clique's murderous rampage. Grenada was a limited operation, but it was significant because it proved America was willing to use its military forces after suffering a demoralizing national malaise which is best remembered in history as the ''Vietnam Syndrome.''

Another deployment President Reagan agreed to make was sending marines into Lebanon, which resulted in a catastrophic attack on our marines which left 290 of them dead and many others severely injured. After that, Reagan was reluctant to deploy our troops. And during his administration, if you take a look at the records, he deployed troops into combat many fewer times than most other Presidents did during the last century. Yet, he is portrayed as a Cold Warrior and is branded, and was branded then, by the liberal left as a warmonger. Yet, he deployed our troops fewer times than most other American Presidents.

Yes, Ronald Reagan, more than any other leader, was one who we should basically praise for the defeat of Soviet communism. That enemy threatened our security and the freedom of our people and the freedom of people throughout the world, yet he did not send our troops into hostile action after the Beirut debacle resulted in the death of so many of our marines. Well, if he didn't send in our troops to various places, how, then, was our country so well defended during that time, and how was the evil power of Soviet communism defeated?

Well, the answer is what is called the ''Reagan Doctrine.'' This strategy was based on the concept of helping others fight their battles when their foe was our foe. Rather than sending U.S. troops into Central America, for example, when the Soviets armed its stooges who were in the process of establishing a Marxist dictatorship in Nicaragua, and the Soviet Union sent a billion and a half dollars worth of military equipment to back up that Marxist regime, no, Reagan didn't send U.S. troops down there to fight the Sandinistas. He armed those Nicaraguans who were resisting that regime, the so-called ''Contras.''

In Africa, America helped arm Jonas Savimbi and his Unita group as they fought a Soviet-backed regime in Angola. And neither of these two groups were perfect. They had many imperfections. These were flawed allies. But they were fighting for their own country, and they were fighting their own countrymen. We did not rely on sending in U.S. troops. We supported those people locally who were fighting their adversary as long as their adversary was our adversary as well.

And, of course, most importantly, we armed and we supported the Mujahedeen in Afghanistan who directly took on the military might of the Soviet Union. Again, many of the Mujahedeen were people who were totally inconsistent with our outlook and our views on respect and on freedom and individual rights. Many of them were, by the way, very, very supportive of treating people decently and were not radical Muslims in that regard. But they were flawed people who we supported to fight the Soviet Union that we brought down. That's how the Soviet Union was brought down, not by sending in U.S. troops, but not trying to be perfectionists in who we would then support, but to try to defeat our primary enemy.

During those years, I worked in the Reagan White House as a senior speech writer and, yes, as a special assistant to President Reagan. I worked with a small cadre of patriots who made the Reagan Doctrine real. In fact, the speech-writing department is actually given credit by many to actually have developed that doctrine and made it into a doctrine rather than a loose strategy.

Well, those people in the White House who made it real and turned it into a policy, into actual strategies that were being put in place and put to use during the Cold War were a very, as I say, small group of patriots; Constantine Menges, who came from the CIA and then over into the National Security Council, Bill Casey of the CIA, Colonel Oliver North, Admiral Poindexter, Dr. Paula Dobriansky, Vince Canistrano, Ken DeKrafenty, all of those on the White House team, on Reagan's team, the administration team, who played a crucial war role in defeating Soviet communism, not by orchestrating moves to send more troops here or more U.S. troops here, but instead to try to support those people throughout the world who were fighting against Soviet tyranny themselves.

And, of course, we had support, and we had an initiation of such ideas and concepts and support of the policy by Dr. Jack Wheeler, who is also a person who worked with us in the White House but was independent and went into these various places around the world and met the leaders of various anti-Soviet insurgencies throughout the world and reported directly back to us and the White House as to what was going on in those insurgencies.

Yes, of course, we need also to thank Members of Congress who were supportive of those efforts. Let us note that Ronald Reagan has often said that it was bipartisanship that ended the Cold War. But I remember very clearly Ronald Reagan being called a warmonger. I remember very clearly those efforts to defeat the expansion of Soviet power in Central America being undermined directly by people in this Congress who wanted to label Ronald Reagan as the problem rather than communist tyranny as the problem.

But there were other people on the other side of the aisle and on the Republican side of the aisle who were active in support of the Reagan Doctrine, the concept of helping freedom fighters

throughout the world instead of sending U.S. troops.

The most prominent name nowadays is Charlie Wilson. Yes, Charlie Wilson as an appropriator, who helped get the money for the Afghan freedom fighters, played a significant role, as his book and subsequent movie suggests. But he was not the only one. Charlie deserves credit, but so do those other people, some of the ones I just mentioned, and others, people who made sure that those people who are fighting for freedom in various countries did get those supplies and that the Reagan Doctrine, the concept was implemented.

We made sure that the Russians learned the lesson that we learned in Vietnam. The introduction of U.S. combat troops in Vietnam did not work. And it was that war that tremendously weakened us. But it was the introduction of combat troops, I believe, into Vietnam that weakened us because the dynamics were changed. Having massive troops deployed in a totally foreign culture did not work for our side in Afghanistan. And here we had our troops in a totally foreign land on the other side of the planet, and by introducing those troops, rather than focusing perhaps on helping the people in Vietnam to fight their battle, we set up a dynamic that worked itself out, yes, and as it worked itself out, it defeated our efforts and left the United States with 50,000 dead, a world humiliation and a country in retreat.

I spent some time in Vietnam in 1967, although I was not in the military. Part of my experience was in the Central Highlands, where I hooked up with a special forces unit that was operating out of an old French fort near the Vietnamese city in the Central Highlands by the name of Pelku. It was there that I first saw a strategy that worked. Our special forces teams had turned the montagnards, Vietnams's indigenous mountain people, into an American ally in this bloody, elongated conflict. Yes, our military forces in Vietnam were never defeated—our military likes to say that. They were never defeated on the battlefield, not in one major battle. But we lost the war. The strategy was wrong.

In the Central Highlands, the montagnards were with us. In fact, I felt very secure, and I knew the montagnards would put a high priority on protecting me while I was with them, even though I was an American. Yes, in the Highlands, the montagnards were with us. Those were the people that occupied the Highlands in Vietnam. And had the war been decided there, with those montagnards and those people, our enemies would have been defeated instead of an American defeat.

In Afghanistan, America gave the people of Afghanistan the weapons they needed to fight the Soviet Army. And when we provided them Stinger missiles, we gave them the means not just to fight, but to win. By the way, we also promised to help rebuild their torn country as we encouraged them to fight, bleed and sacrifice in order to defeat the Soviet Army.

The Afghans paid a monstrous price for their victory: 1 million killed, even more wounded, and devastation throughout their society. These brave and heroic people stood up and defeated our mutual enemy.

I was blessed with not just meeting the leaders of the anti-Soviet Mujahedeen when they visited Washington back in the 1980s. I actually went into Afghanistan with a Mujahedeen combat unit and participated for a short time in the battle of Jalalabad, which was the last major battle in which Soviet troops were present.

I do not recount these moments in history to bring praise upon myself, but instead to lend personal authority to the battles we endured then and to the issues that confront us today. That weeklong exposure to that Afghan battle gave me a lasting admiration for these unconquered people. It was the courage of the Afghan people, more than any others, that broke the will of the communist leadership in Moscow and, yes, brought about the collapse of the Soviet communist threat that had loomed over our heads for decades.

When Soviet troops moved out of Afghanistan, instead of fulfilling our promise to help rebuild their war-torn land, we left those brave people to sleep wounded in the rubble. We did not even provide them the resources they needed to clear their country of land mines that we had given them during their war against the Soviet Army. Thus, we left them with a country in which, for a decade, the legs were blown off their children as they walked through the countryside. We didn't even provide them the help to clear their mines at that time.

Now that decision to walk away from Afghanistan was the decision not of Ronald Reagan, but of President George Herbert Walker Bush. And, of course, as we walked away, the anti-Soviet Mujahedeen broke into warring factions. The chaos and misery was predictable. But, of course, we just walked away. We let them just go down into the depths of misery and of conflict and of self-mutilation of that society.

Eventually, during the Clinton years, our government made a secret pact with Saudi Arabia and Pakistan to end the chaos in Afghanistan by introducing a new force called the Taliban. Now I had seen the strategies before of assisting forces in Afghanistan who are radical Islamists. I, in fact, spent considerable time in the White House pounding on people's desks saying, why are we providing military support for people like Hekmatyar Gulbuddin, Sayaff and others of the radical Islamists, who were fighting, yes, the Soviets, but who were also killing other elements within the anti-Soviet Mujahedeens, killing them because they were not as radical in their Islamic tradition?

That backfired on us then, and, in fact, during the gulf war, the first gulf war, it is significant that the Mujahedeen radicals that we had supported, Hekmatyar Gulbuddin in particular, sided with Saddam Hussein. This after we had provided him with more than a mountain of weapons. No. I argued against this stupid strategy based on empowering religious fanatics. It was totally unjustified, especially when there was a moderate alternative. During the war with the Soviets, there was a moderate alternative in that we had groups of Mujahedeen fighters who were not the radical Islamists that eventually became the Taliban.

□ 1900

It is a mistake many people make. They think the Mujahedeen were the Taliban. The Taliban came later. But I could see that empowering religious fanatics when there was a moderate alternative was not the right way to go. And after the Soviets had been driven out, there was a moderate alternative. The moderate alternative was King Zahir Shah. He was an exiled king right before the Soviets took over. The fact is he had ruled that country for 40 years. He was the only leader who ever gave Afghanistan a time of tranquility and progress. And he did that by not trying to impose his rule on the rest of the people of Afghanistan, but instead ruled as a monarch, as a symbol, as a father of his country.

Well, he was available. He was living in exile in Rome. I argued that case that he should be the one brought back to unify the country, not some radical Muslim sect like the Taliban, but the Saudis and the Pakistanis were insistent. They thought they could control the Taliban and they would use the Taliban—control of the Taliban to control Afghanistan. Of course, America just went long with it.

President Bill Clinton and his administration signed on to that deal. Well, it is was an easy way out. We're going to provide so much money and assistance, and the Pakistanis were there. Of course, then people didn't realize that the Pakistani military and the ISI, who we have since proven were actually radical Islamists themselves, they were the allies of the worst anti-American radicals in that region.

So, in reality, America, in the mid-1990s, was covertly supporting the Taliban. We covertly supported its creation and we made sure that our aid was channeled into those areas that supported the Taliban, but we short-changed all the other nonradical Islamists like Masood and others who were there and didn't get that same level of aid.

Most importantly, the people of Afghanistan believed then, as they do now, that the United States helped create and was behind the Taliban. If they believed it, and they are living with it, the American people should know this as well.

Well, the fact that the Clinton administration was covertly supporting

the Taliban did not stop a number of us from doing something else, from trying to create another alternative. Ben Gilman, chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, along with a small team of activists—and I'm very proud to have been one of them—struggled to change U.S. policy and went out to support those who opposed the Taliban.

I was in and out of Afghanistan personally. Our team was working to build an anti-Taliban coalition by uniting ethnic and tribal leaders, especially those in the non-Pashtun areas of Afghanistan. It should be noted that we also worked with Pashtuns who are anti-Taliban; leaders like Abdul Haq, who was a terrific leader and one of the great leaders in the Mujahedeen effort to fight the Soviet army during their occupation. He was a Pashtun leader that we were working with.

Yes, there was King Zahir Shah, who was also Pashtun, but by and large we were trying at the very least to get those in the northern part of the country and those ethnic groups other than Pashtuns, because in Afghanistan, yes, not all Pashtuns are Taliban, but almost all Taliban are Pashtuns.

During that time, during the 1990s when we were working trying to create that coalition, I met with General Dostum, Commander Masood, Ishmael Khan, and many others. Our team brought together all the leaders of the ethnic groups of the Afghan ethnic groups and the significant tribes. We brought them together in Frankfurt and Bonn in 1997, and Istanbul in 1998.

Then, in December of 2000, I and Chairman Gilman brought the key Afghan players right here to Washington, D.C., to our Foreign Affairs Committee room in the Rayburn Building. As a result of that meeting, organized by Chairman Gilman and myself, what resulted from that meeting was a phone call made during that meeting from the participants here, who were anti-Taliban people that we brought here. That telephone call was made to King Zahir Shah, who was then living in exile in Rome.

During that phone call an agreement was reached that the king would return to Afghanistan into Masood's territory and lead a loya jirga, which is a gathering of leaders of Afghanistan, in July of 2001. When that agreement did not bear fruit, when that meeting did not occur, Ben Gilman and I dispatched committee staff in late August and early September of 2001 to Rome and to Pakistan to find out why that loya jirga had failed to materialize.

So whatever the Clinton administration was doing, whatever their tilt to the Taliban, there were others of us trying to do what was right, and, yes, all of that activity paid off. Eventually, after 9/11, the Afghan tribal and ethnic leaders on our team and basically those people that we had been encouraging to get together and form a coalition, that coalition emerged after 9/11 as the Northern Alliance.

Most important for Americans to understand now, it was the Northern Alliance—Afghans themselves, not U.S. combat troops—that drove the Taliban out of Afghanistan after 9/11. Many people now are very loose in their words when they discuss how the Taliban was defeated and driven out after 9/11. When we drove them out. You can hear that over and over again. Well, it was a magnificent victory, but America only had 200 troops on the ground, Special Forces, when the Taliban were driven out of Afghanistan.

So when you hear people say, Oh, well, the only thing wrong in Iraq was we didn't come in with enough boots on the ground, we only had 200 boots on the ground in Afghanistan, and, in fact, those 200 boots gave us a tremendous victory, and it also gave us a tremendous opportunity to rebuild that nation and to demonstrate the benefit of being America's friend. It gave us the opportunity to make up for breaking our word after the war with the Soviets and to regain the trust and admiration of moderate Muslims throughout the world. We had that chance.

Afghanistan, which, by the way, is about the same size as Iraq, we had driven out a force of tens of thousands of Taliban soldiers and their al Qaeda allies, not by U.S. troops—only 200 U.S. troops were there—but instead by providing air support and supplies and communications to those people in Afghanistan who were fighting against this radical Islamic gangsters who had oppressed them.

Well, after the Taliban was defeated, instead of focusing on Afghanistan, instead of keeping our promise, going back to keep our word, which we had given so long ago—and, I might say, we renewed that promise when we asked them to drive out the Taliban—instead, President Bush rushed the United States into an invasion/liberation attack of Iraq. The battle for Iraq, however, was fought by U.S. combat troops, a totally different strategy from what had worked in Afghanistan.

By the way, we could well have implemented a similar strategy in Iraq by arming the Kurds and the Shiites, by making deals and cutting deals with Shiite leaders, by reaching out to different people in their military and in their government. Instead, no, we sent in large numbers of U.S. troops in combat units. Only when we pulled our forces back and used our financial resources to buy the goodwill of people in Iraq did the Iraq war turn in the right direction.

We have heard a lot about the surge. I voted for the surge and I have tried be as supportive as I could, realizing a defeat in Iraq would have been a horrible and demoralizing event for the people of the United States, and it would have emboldened terrorists and radical Islamists throughout the world. I tried be supportive, but we were obviously doing the wrong thing. We obviously used the wrong strategy. The competence of the last administration in carrying out that war and building peace was abysmal. We could have done what we did in Afghanistan and let the Iraqis liberate themselves from Saddam Hussein's tyranny.

The human and financial cost of the Iraq liberation and how it was accomplished, all of the incompetence that went with it, will be the subject of scrutiny for years to come. However, we have moved forward and there are some signs or every sign of success in Iraq. That success—it's clear that that success was brought about not necessarily by large numbers of U.S. troops, but instead, not just the surge of troops, but General Petraeus's ability to use financial resources to win the loyalty of Sunnis and other tribal leaders in Iraq.

But what is also clear is that our Iraq focus after the defeat of the Taliban prevented us from doing what was right by the Afghan people. And there is a cost to that as well. There is a cost that we will pay for not doing what was right to the Afghan people and just rushing off to commit our treasure and our troops into Iraq by stretching ourselves too thin so we couldn't do the right thing in Afghanistan.

Now, what is that price that we're paying? Now, after years after the initial success of driving the Taliban out, the Taliban's radical Islamic threat is growing. And the response to this threat? Send in more U.S. combat troops. Whenever that's been tried as just a simple answer, it's failed. Whenever there's been unconventional warfare that we have had to deal with, that strategy of sending in more U.S. combat units has not worked, whether in Vietnam or Afghanistan or anywhere else. Foreign troops in a foreign land fighting as combat units will almost always end up in hostile territory, and even those locals inclined otherwise will eventually turn against foreign troops to side with their own countrymen. That dynamic is very easy to identify.

President Obama is being asked by General McChrystal, who I deeply admire, to send 35,000 more U.S. combat troops into Afghanistan. If my experience tells me anything, it is that the introduction of more U.S. combat units into Afghanistan will be counterproductive and perhaps disastrous. And the likely downside to sending more U.S. combat troops is recognized by our own U.S. Ambassador, General Eikenberry, who is now our U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan. General Eikenberry is a career military officer with impeccable credentials and an exemplary record. He has told President Obama that more U.S. troops will mean that the Afghans will remain dependent on our military rather than stepping forward and fighting their own battle.

By sending more U.S. combat troops, we will encourage exactly the wrong behavior by the Afghans. And, obviously, the Afghans have proved time and again that they are willing to fight. They're willing to fight for their

families, for their villages, for their way of life. And, yes, they're willing to fight for Afghanistan.

□ 1915

Well, that is so obvious. Yet the easy answer for America's decision-makers is to send more U.S. combat troops. Well, easy answers have a great deal of appeal to power brokers, but easy answers usually don't solve the problems.

Yes, sending more U.S. combat troops sounds less complicated than having to deal with Afghan ethnic, tribal, and village leaders on the ground. Sending more troops sounds a lot easier and less complicated than undoing the horrendous strategic mistakes our State Department has made in forcing a foreign structure onto Afghan society since 9/11.

In short, our government has tried to force the people of Afghanistan to accept centralized rule from Kabul. And even if that government wasn't corrupt, even if Karzai's brother wasn't a drug dealer, the centralized power and decision-making that we have tried to force on the Afghan people—or at least supported that being put on them—is totally contrary to the Afghan history and culture. These people are brave. They will not be subdued and pacified by a Kabul army or especially by a foreign army, even if it's our Army.

No, we must make allies of the brave people of Afghanistan, not send in more U.S. combat troops to fight them. Even if our troops fight against their enemies, it is still wrong because even if we're fighting against the Taliban, who are our enemies, it is still wrong because it creates a dependency of the other Afghans on us to do their fighting. And in the long run, the brave, courageous people of Afghanistan will not appreciate that we have made them dependent upon us. That will not be appreciated.

They are a people of tremendous integrity. I walked through Afghanistan that one week that I spent at the battle of Jalalabad, and I remember seeing these people. If they got wounded, if they were wounded, they were gone. There was no medical evacuation there. If they stepped on a land mine, they were gone. And when they were wounded, they didn't cry out in pain. You had young people there fighting right alongside elderly people.

These people were a country, a brave and courageous country. I remember as we walked through the countryside, the southern part of that country had been blown asunder by Soviet airplanes. People were living in caves, and they would come out. They didn't know that I wasn't an Afghan. They didn't know that I was American. I had a beard and an AK–47 strapped across my shoulder, and they came and they would say, Please let us, Mujahedeen, our brothers, let us give you some tea and bread. The people would come out of their caves where their families were living to give us tea and bread. And as we left, some of the Mujahedeen leaders that were with me said, You know, that's all the bread they had. Their family is not going to have that bread tonight.

What kind of people are these? These are wonderfully courageous people of integrity, sharing their bread because they were part of this national effort. We do not want that power and strength and integrity turned against us. We want them on our side, and we must be on their side. Sending more U.S. combat troops will not accomplish that mission.

U.S. Army Major Jim Gant has written a booklet entitled ''One Tribe At a Time.'' In it, he details his account of being embedded with Afghan villagers, and he lays out a strategy to defeat the Taliban from the bottom up, not from the top down. Certainly we will defeat them not by sending in more American combat units to do the fighting but, instead, let these ferocious people do their own fighting with our support.

It's a cost-effective plan; and even though it's more complex than simply sending more troops, it's the only plan that can succeed. It's focused on sending our teams, combat teams, to live with the Afghans in their villages, helping them build their militia structure, providing them guns and ammo and, yes, buying goodwill of their leaders and perhaps helping them rebuild their country's infrastructure. Perhaps a clinic in a region, perhaps helping them get a clean water supply.

Afghanistan has the third highest infant mortality rate of any country in the world. Yet we want to spend our money sending troops. After we promised we would help them rebuild their society, they still lose their children not just to land mines that weren't cleared off but to dirty water that destroys their children's lives, makes them sick and makes them die of diarrhea. It's a terrible, terrible thing.

And what is the cost of the 35,000 troops that is being suggested that we send to Afghanistan? Already I am saying that the strategy doesn't work. But what is the actual financial cost? The cost is $35 billion, $1 billion for every 1,000 troops annually. We can buy all the goodwill we need, and we can help rebuild Afghanistan for far less than it will cost for just 1 year's worth of 35,000 combat troops. For $1 billion, we could buy the goodwill of the tribal and ethnic leaders.

For a very small amount of money, we can help them build up their own militias by which they can then defend themselves and not worry, Is the U.S. going to go away and leave us vulnerable? Americans cannot patrol, subdue and pacify every area of the globe where hostile forces lurk, especially in Afghanistan. It will break our bank. Our young men and women in our services will be unnecessarily killed and maimed; and in the end, the same thing will happen to us that happened to the Soviet empire: it will break our bank, and the American people will not be willing to shoulder responsibility anywhere in the world because of the horrendous complications that have arisen from our jumping in to doing the battle for everyone in Afghanistan and other places of the world.

Yes, we do need to use our military forces in places; but if we do this, if we send them off to missions that can't be accomplished, we are not doing our duty by them. And how do we know that? If there are two military truisms, history lessons that should have been learned in the last century, they are: Don't march on Moscow, and don't invade Afghanistan.

Afghanistan will not fall to the Taliban if we support those brave people who defeated the Taliban. Our State Department, in their rush to centralize power in Kabul, actually organized the effort and pushed the policy of disarming the anti-Taliban Northern Alliance after their initial victory. They have then pushed not to develop the militias. Every village in Afghanistan, every male child is considered to be part of the militia and is expected to learn how to use the weapons of the day.

Now through that militia, we can mobilize that. And when they say to us—and I have read these accounts over and again. They are afraid that America might abandon them again. Well, why are they afraid? Because we haven't given them the means to defend themselves. We should not only give them the means, but we should help them, support them, provide them the air support, give them the financial resources, the communication gear so that they will win a victory against radical Islam.

That is the only way that radical Islam will be defeated—not by sending U.S. troops all over the world and especially into Afghanistan. Yet our foreign service continues to rely on more U.S. troops and, yes, on building a national army in Afghanistan that will be controlled by the government in Kabul, a corrupt government that is not trusted by the people of Afghanistan and is not even trusted by our own leaders.

This is exactly the wrong approach. Instead, as I say, we should arm every village militia which will align with us. Any village militia that will align with us, we should be on their side. We should give them guns, ammo, supplies, and communications gear. We should back them up with air support, and, yes, let's have Special Forces teams embedded in the villages, like Major Jim Gant has told us would be an effective strategy.

That strategy and buying the goodwill of tribal leaders, people who were there leading their—this is a naturally democratic society from the bottom up. By the way, our country would have failed had we insisted that all the political power in our country would have been decided by the central government. It's the States in our country that control the education. It's the States that basically control the police and the justice of our people. Had we

not had that policy from day one, our country would not have succeeded.

Yet we've been trying to push on people who are even more protective of their rights to make their own decisions for their own villagers—we're trying to push a simple government on them which they don't even know. Well, that strategy of buying the goodwill of tribal leaders will carry the day. We can go in and identify with these leaders there, work with them, work with their people. That is the strategy.

Yes, as Major Gant says, there is risk in this; but the greater risk is a strategy of sending more combat units which rumble through the countryside. I met with a group of Afghan veterans just last week, and they told me that what they were told to do by their commanding officers was, you just take hikes through the countryside until they get shot at, and then they start firing back. Or they drive their trucks and their vehicles through the Afghan countryside and through Afghan villages until they are either shot at or they run over some kind of an explosive device, and then they retaliate.

That is not a strategy for victory, and that's what happens when you send major combat units into a country rather than trying to defeat the enemy in that country from the bottom up, rather than inserting something from the top down. Such a strategy of helping the villagers there in Afghanistan who have lived under the Taliban—they hate the Taliban. They have seen their schoolteachers beheaded. They have seen their young girls being treated like dirt and like animals. They do not want to live that way, and they will not submit to the Taliban—unless, of course, they aren't given any chance to defend themselves.

The strategy of helping those people who are willing to fight against that form of radical Islam that they know and despise, that is a cost-effective way of dealing with the challenges that we confront in Afghanistan. It will cost less in blood. We won't be putting our people in harm's way. And, yes, some teams that go there—yes, some of these teams that will be embedded with those villagers, some members of those teams will lose their lives.

But I would dare say, and Major Gant says so as well, that far fewer American military personnel will lose their lives that way than if we continue the strategy, which is basically alienating the people of Afghanistan who eventually will rise up against us because the strategy is not something that takes into account their own needs at the village and tribal level. It will cost us less in blood. It will cost us less in treasure than sending more combat troops to use Major Gant's strategy and a strategy of working at the bottom level rather than just sending in more troops.

And to help them rebuild their country at long last. Rebuild their country after we promised them what we would do after they defeated the Soviet Army and after they kicked out the Taliban. But we owe it not only to the Afghan people to look very serious about this; we owe it to our troops not to send them on a mission that they cannot accomplish. We have an opportunity at this time to do the right thing and not just to place ourselves in a position to end up with a military, diplomatic, financial, and human embarrassment that we will have lost so many people and so many lives for nothing, for an outcome, another quagmire.

I have one last story that I would like to end my speech on tonight, and it is a story that I want to make sure people understand. What I am saying today is not in any way a bad reflection on our military. The fact is, I met with our veterans from Afghanistan last week in my office. They support this strategy. Just because I'm saying they can't do everything and fight every battle doesn't mean that I don't respect them. In fact, I believe they are heroes. Every one of those people willing to put their lives on the line, they are heroes. They are willing to risk their lives for us. We owe them our best judgment not just an easy answer of sending more military people into a conflict.

My family was a military family. I grew up in a Marine family. My father was a lieutenant colonel in the Marines. We were stationed in Marine bases until I was 16.

□ 1930

My brother graduated from Camp Lejeune High School in 1963. His best buddy, his very best buddy, graduated from high school with him and immediately joined the Marine Corps when he was 17 years old, David Battle. David Battle joined the Marine Corps right after he graduated with my brother, and he was my brother's best friend. Well, years later, when I went to the White House with Ronald Reagan, I went to the inaugural ceremony, and then I had off for about a week before, or a couple of weeks before, I would actually start on the payroll in the White House. My family, my mother and my father and my brother, came to the inauguration in 1980, and then we rented a car and traveled down to Camp Lejeune to see where we used to live, to see if we could remake old acquaintances.

And we found my brother's best and dearest friend, Sergeant David Battle. He was well on his way to retirement. He'd already bought himself—only a couple of years away, and he'd bought himself a boat that he was going to dig clams and mussels out in the inlets in North Carolina and sell it to the local fish markets. He would have his retirement. He had served two tours of duty in Vietnam, a wonderful man with a wonderful family. His parents were there. His lovely wife was there with their two children, and we had an evening that I will never forget, a great North Carolina evening.

And then the next day my family drove to Washington, and I entered the White House and took my place on President Reagan's staff. President Reagan, as I have mentioned, sent the marines, deployed our American marines, into Beirut. It was not a good decision. It was something that was a risky proposition and had very little chance of success. I knew that, and I actually mentioned it to a lot of people.

But what especially caught my eye when I was looking at that was that the State Department had initiated a policy, a rule of engagement, that was accepted by the military, forced on them by the State Department, that the marines would not be permitted to have bullets in their guns. Their clips would not be in their rifles, would be in pouches because the State Department was so afraid they might get trigger happy if they were shot at. Yeah. So we sent our marines in. I went around to offices in the White House and I pounded on the desk and I said, what are we doing here? How could we send our people in to try to defend us and tell them they can't, our soldiers, our marines, can't have bullets in their guns? This is insane.

And I was told over and over again, don't worry, Dana. Don't worry. Bud McFarlane, George Schultz, Jim Baker, they're all former marines. They're going to take care of this. And it didn't get taken care of because after I left and was assured it would be taken care of, that piece of paper ended up on the bottom of the stack, on the bottom of the stack, and our troops, our marines continued for weeks to be in harm's way, without bullets in their guns.

And again, I assumed that these people were going to handle it. I was told that they would. And then that horrible day when an Islamic terrorist drove a truck filled with explosives through the guard gate outside our Marine compound, and the Islamic terrorist smiling because he knew our guards could not stop him because their guns were unloaded, and he drove that truck into the Marine barracks and blew 290 marines to hell—290 marines. And I looked desperately. I looked to see who it was, and the first name on the list of casualties was Sergeant David Battle, my brother's best friend. I went into my office and wept that day.

And then I stopped crying because I said, I'm going to make a resolution right here and now that I will never cease to be pushing and pushing and trying to correct a situation that I know is wrong. If it takes me being obnoxious, I will do that, because we owe it to the people who defend us, the Sergeant David Battles, they salute and march off and put themselves in harm's way. They are doing their duty. It is up to us to do our duty by them, and not send them on a mission that they cannot accomplish, and not send them into harm's way to lose their lives for nothing.

Today, we have a major decision to make in Afghanistan. It is up—I would

call on all of my colleagues to stand up and be counted on this issue, seriously consider what the chances of success are, and if they agree with me that the approach being taken of sending more troops in, that we stand up and we prevent this policy, like the policy of sending our troops into Beirut without bullets in their guns. And we should not assume that just sending those guys there will be accomplished because other people will watch over and make sure the job's done correctly and that our troops are safe.

It is up to us, each and every one of us, to insist that this strategy of simply sending in more troops, at $35 billion, a strategy that's more likely to work and accomplish what we want to accomplish, is put into place, a strategy that will keep faith with the Afghan people, instead of just simply relying on Americans doing more of the fighting, help them rebuild their country, rearm them, arm them so they can do their own fighting. We owe it to our troops. We owe it to our marines, we owe it to the Sergeant David Battles who have given their lives over the years for our country, to make sure we do our duty by them as they do their duty by us.

9/11 CHANGED EVERYTHING

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to be here on the House floor, especially when you know the history of this floor and all that's been done to keep Americans safe, the reactions on this floor by great American leaders after tragedies such as we had after Pearl Harbor, when the President of the United States spoke from that lectern right there after Pearl Harbor. Before 9/11 that was the worst attack on American soil. But 9/11 changed things substantially. For one thing, I never thought during my 4 years in the Army, going back to the 1970s, that we'd ever see patriotism at a level that it is today, where people actually appreciate people being in the service. The Vietnam Vets knew what it was like to come home and to be spit at and ridiculed. I know when I went through basic at Fort Riley, there was an order not to wear our uniforms off post because there was supposedly violence that was done. There were people beat up who were in the service.

But somehow, for a while there, 9/11 brought this Nation together, where people began to take notice and care about first responders, and they began to care about each other. And on September 12, there on our courthouse square in Smith County, Texas, we had people of all walks of life join together, a huge group came, and it culminated in everyone holding hands and singing God Bless America. And as I looked around, there was not one single hyphenated American. We were all just Americans, all kinds of races, genders, creed, colors, national origins. But we were just Americans.

Well, after 9/11 we realized that for the first time in our history the oceans did not provide the protection that they once did. As an old history major at Texas A&M, and continuing to be a student of history since, I don't know of another Nation in the history of the world that has been so blessed and protected as we were with the Atlantic and the Pacific oceans. Even Australia, which was surrounded by water, always had to fear invasions. But after the War of 1812, for the most part, we didn't have to worry about external threats so much as we were able to think about Manifest Destiny, moving and settling the continent, the Industrial Revolution, having the effort to make the Constitution mean the same for all people, no matter what race, creed, color, gender.

But 9/11 sent a message that the oceans no longer protected us, that we were going to have to take more measures to protect ourselves. I recall back in the 1980s it being said that one of the great things about the Atlantic and Pacific, if somebody intended to be a suicide bomber, they would lose their nerve crossing the ocean. And certainly, anybody that moved here and lived among the American people would begin to see how much freedom we had here, and they would come to love America as we do, and they would not want to blow up their friends and neighbors. Again, 9/11 changed all that.

So if someone doesn't know the lessons from history, then they are destined to repeat it, as the old saying goes. Well, the Constitution, and I have a pocket Constitution here, article one, section 8, says that Congress shall have power to—and one of the things that we have the power to do in Congress is constitute tribunals inferior to the Supreme Court. And you get over to article three, section one, the judicial power of the United States shall be vested in one Supreme Court, and in such inferior courts as the Congress may from time to time ordain and establish.

Even the Supreme Court, over in section two, where it's talked about, it says in all of the other cases before mentioned the Supreme Court shall have appellate jurisdiction, but it's the law in fact, with such exceptions and under such regulations as the Congress shall make. So the Supreme Court owes its existence to the Constitution. Every single other court in America, Federal court that is, owes its existence to the Congress. We create the courts. We establish their jurisdictions. We have the right to establish their venues. And when we dealt with this issue back in 2005 and 2006, of having to deal with terrorists who are captured on the foreign battlefield, what do you do with them? You certainly don't want to bring them onto American soil, because if you did that, there'd be some court that would say, well, they have all the rights and privileges of an American citizen, which shouldn't be true, but until some court says it's true, and at that time, since we believe in following the law, even though some courts do not, they create it instead of follow it, we follow even the renegade courts when it's the law of the land.

So, we had to deal with this issue. Following all of the precedents, and I believe Justice Scalia does a phenomenal job of discussing precedents, as does Chief Justice Roberts in the Bimidian case. But we had to deal with people like Khalid Sheikh Mohammed. Khalid Sheikh Mohammed was captured in Pakistan on March 1, 2003, by the Pakistani ISI. It may have been a joint action with agents of the American Diplomatic Security Service, but he's been in U.S. custody ever since that time. In September of 2006 the U.S. government announced it had moved Mohammed from a secret prison to the facility at Guantanamo Bay detention camp.

Now, some came to believe that Guantanamo is such a horrible place. That is where we waterboard people and things like that. The waterboarding that apparently occurred, never occurred at Guantanamo. That was elsewhere. Guantanamo Bay is a place I've been a couple of times. And, having been a judge, I've had the opportunity to explore and tour many different types of prisons.

□ 1945

Attending a tour of the Guantanamo Bay facility was not unusual except that it is unusual to get there. You don't take a commercial flight to Guantanamo Bay, which is one of the reasons it's such an ideal spot for people who are a threat to our way of life.

We have also Ramzi bin Al-Shib who was captured by Pakistani forces in Pakistan around September of 2002. He was transferred to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, on or about September 26 where he also has remained.

You have other people being detained there that we know have been self-confessed terrorists and under the pleading that was filed by Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, as he said, ''We're terrorists to the bone, and if we terrorize you, kill you,'' basically, ''thanks be to God.''

These are people who do not believe we should have the freedoms that we do in America because they think freedom ultimately leads to degradation of the individual and the country. Therefore, people should not be allowed freedom, they should be told what they can or can't do; and they believe that they get a special place in Paradise if they are able to go out in this life having destroyed and killed what we consider innocents and what they consider infidels.

So we come to the announcement by the U.S. Attorney General when he announced that the Department of Justice will pursue prosecution in Federal