NOT VOTING—14

Barrett (SC)	Davis (AL)	Roskam
Bartlett	Deal (GA)	Schakowsky
Boswell	Hoekstra	Wamp
Camp	Matsui	Young (FL)
Conyers	Peterson	

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). Members have 2 minutes remaining in this vote.

□ 1409

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

AFGHANISTAN WAR POWERS RESOLUTION

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 1146, I call up the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 248) directing the President, pursuant to section 5(c) of the War Powers Resolution, to remove the United States Armed Forces from Afghanistan, and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CAPUANO). Pursuant to House Resolution 1146, the concurrent resolution is considered read.

The text of the concurrent resolution is as follows:

H. CON. RES. 248

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring),

SECTION 1. REMOVAL OF UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES FROM AFGHANISTAN.

Pursuant to section 5(c) of the War Powers Resolution (50 U.S.C. 1544(c)), Congress directs the President to remove the United States Armed Forces from Afghanistan—

(1) by no later than the end of the period of 30 days beginning on the day on which this concurrent resolution is adopted; or

(2) if the President determines that it is not safe to remove the United States Armed Forces before the end of that period, by no later than December 31, 2010, or such earlier date as the President determines that the Armed Forces can safely be removed.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The concurrent resolution shall be debatable for 3 hours, with 90 minutes controlled by the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH) or his designee and 90 minutes equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

The gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH) will control 90 minutes. The gentleman from California (Mr. BERMAN) and the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) each will control 45 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio.

Mr. KUCINICH. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, in 2001 I joined the House in voting for the Authorization for Use of Military Force. In the past 8½ years, it has become clear that the Authorization for Use of Military Force is being interpreted as carte blanche for circumventing Congress' role as a coequal branch of government.

My legislation invokes the War Powers Resolution of 1973. If enacted, it would require the President to withdraw U.S. Armed Forces from Afghanistan by December 31, 2010.

The debate today will be the first opportunity we have had to revisit the 2001 Authorization for Use of Military Force, which the House supported following the worst terrorist attack in our country's history. Regardless of your support or opposition to the war in Afghanistan, this is going to be the first opportunity to evaluate critically where the Authorization for Use of Military Force has taken us in the last 8½ years.

This 2001 resolution allowed military action ''to prevent any future acts of international terrorism against the United States.'' Those of us who support the withdrawal from Afghanistan may or may not agree on a timeline for troop withdrawal, but I think we agree that this debate is timely.

The rest of the world is beginning to see the folly of trying to occupy Afghanistan: The Dutch Government recently came to a halt over the commitment of more troops from their country. In Britain public outcry over the war is growing. A recent BBC poll indicated that 63 percent of the British public is demanding that their troops come home by Christmas. In Germany opposition to the war has risen to 69 percent. Russia has lost billions of dollars in the 9 years it spent attempting to control Afghanistan.

Our supposed nation-building in Afghanistan has come at the destruction of our own. The military escalation cements the path of the United States down the road of previous occupiers that earned Afghanistan its nickname as the ''graveyard of empires.''

□ 1415

One year ago last month, a report by the Carnegie Endowment concluded ''the only meaningful way to halt the insurgency's momentum is to start withdrawing troops. The presence of foreign troops is the most important element driving the resurgence of the Taliban.''

So with this debate today, Mr. Speaker, we will have a chance for the first time to reflect on our responsibility for troop casualties that are now reaching 1,000; to look at our responsibility for the costs of the war, which approaches $250 billion; our responsibility for the civilian casualties and the human costs of the war; our responsibility for challenging the corruption that takes place in Afghanistan; our responsibility for having a real understanding of the role of the pipeline in this war; our responsibility for debating the role of counterinsurgency strategies, as opposed to counterterrorism; our responsibility for being able to make a case for the logistics of withdrawal.

After 8½ years, it is time that we have this debate.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the resolution, and I yield myself 4 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, first of all, I want to say I have quite enjoyed working with the gentleman from Ohio on this issue and a number of the issues we have had dealings with since I have become chairman, and I fundamentally agree with him and other supporters of the resolution that it is right for the House to have an open, honest debate on the merits of our ongoing military operations in Afghanistan, and outside, outside, the context of a defense spending bill or a supplemental appropriations bill. This is a good thing to be doing.

By vesting the power to declare war with the Congress, the Founders intended the United States would go to war only when absolutely necessary, and it is incumbent on this body to consider as thoroughly as possible the purpose and ongoing necessity of committing U.S. forces to battle.

Now, as a procedural matter, I take issue with the invocation of section 5(c) of the War Powers Resolution as the basis for this debate, because that section authorizes a privileged resolution, like the one before us today, to require the withdrawal of combat forces when Congress has not authorized the use of military force.

There really can't be any doubt that Congress authorized U.S. military action in Afghanistan. The authorization for the use of military force passed by Congress in late September 2001 explicitly empowers the President to use force against the terrorists responsible for the 9/11 attacks and those who harbored them. President Obama is doing just that.

But putting aside procedure, the notion that at this particular moment we would demand a complete withdrawal of our troops from Afghanistan by the end of the year, without regard to the consequence of our withdrawal, without regard to the situation on the ground, including efforts to promote economic development, expand the rule of law, and without any measurement of whether the ''hold'' strategy now being implemented is indeed working, I don't think is the responsible thing to do.

Our troops are fighting a complex nexus of terrorist organizations—al Qaeda, the Taliban—all of which threaten the stability of the Afghan Government, and they have demonstrated their ability to strike our homeland. If we withdraw from Afghanistan before the government there is capable of providing a basic level of security for its own people, we face the prospect that the Taliban once again will take the reins of power in Kabul and provide safe haven to al Qaeda. That would be a national security disaster.

I am keenly aware that even if we remain in Afghanistan, and here I want to emphasize this, there is no guarantee we will prevail in this fight. But if we don't try, we are guaranteed to fail.

President Obama has taken a very deliberative approach. He has examined numerous options over the course of several months and consulted with all relevant military leaders and allies. He really left no stone unturned and no issue unvetted as part of this review. He deserves an opportunity now to implement his strategy. He has given us the timeline for when he expects to see results, and there will be a reassessment of our strategy in 18 months.

General McChrystal, the commander of the U.S. and international forces, indicated that we have made progress since the new strategy was announced on December 1. We are witnessing the first major joint NATO-Afghanistan military operation in the city of Marja, considered a strategic fulcrum for ridding the region of the Taliban.

Our troops are working side by side with their Afghan counterparts. They retook Marja in 3 weeks of hard but well-executed efforts. They are making the Afghan people their number one priority, which is the basis for this counterinsurgency strategy. And to that end, the State Department and USAID have been working very hard to develop a concrete governance and development strategy.

I was here during the frenzied debate following 9/11 when Congress authorized the use of force against those responsible for the horrors of that day and those who chose to provide the perpetrators a safe haven.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. BERMAN. I yield myself 30 additional seconds.

And I was here for the vote a year later to authorize military force against Iraq. Please don't conflate the two. The fight in Afghanistan is the fight against those who attacked us.

I am not endorsing an open-ended commitment. I am not advocating that we remain without assessing our progress. But I do believe this strategy of our President deserves support, and I urge opposition to the resolution.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in strong opposition to this resolution. As we are all aware, U.S. forces at this very moment are engaged in battle against heavily armed enemy forces in a strategically important region of Afghanistan. Our brave men and women are making steady progress against a deadly foe, and are doing so at great risk to their lives.

This offensive is part of a new strategy in Afghanistan focused on the immediate goals of disrupting, dismantling, and defeating al Qaeda, denying al Qaeda a safe haven, and reversing the momentum of the Taliban. This offensive is already producing dramatic success, including the capture of senior Taliban leaders, the routing of their forces, and the stabilization of key areas.

A winning strategy should be supported, not undermined. We must not give Taliban leaders and fighters a shield against U.S. forces that they otherwise cannot stop. No enemy was ever vanquished, no victory was ever secured by running away. Those who wish to destroy us would surely follow us, convinced that we had been beaten and eager to attack us wherever we go, as they would be confident that we can, in fact, be beaten again.

Mr. Speaker, let us dispel any myths or illusions about the consequences of a forced withdrawal. As General Petraeus has warned, ''I was in Kandahar. It was in Kandahar that the 9/11 attacks were planned. It was in the training camps in eastern Afghanistan where the initial preparation of the attackers was carried out before they went to Hamburg and flight schools in the U.S. It is important to recall the seriousness of the mission and why it is that we are in Afghanistan in the first place and why we are still there after years and years of hard work and sacrifice that have passed.''

One of the principal reasons that we have been spared a repeat of those attacks is that U.S. forces quickly toppled the Taliban regime that was protecting the terrorists and drove it and its al Qaeda allies out of their safety zone and into the remote mountains. Years of constant U.S. military pressure have forced them to turn their attention from planning more attacks against our homeland to fighting for their own survival.

To leave Afghanistan now would pave the way for the reestablishment of a vast and secure base from which al Qaeda and other deadly enemies could strike Americans around the world. Having withdrawn and abandoned our hard-won positions, to our allies and the people of Afghanistan, U.S. credibility would be significantly and perhaps irrevocably damaged. This, in turn, could leave the U.S. alone and more vulnerable than ever to the threats of radical Islamic extremists.

Our retreat would be seen around the world by friends and opponents alike as a surrender, as a sign that America no longer has the will to defend herself. We might attempt to fool ourselves into believing that it was merely a temporary setback, that we have suffered no long-term blow, but no one else would be fooled. It would be proof to every group that wishes to attack and destroy us that we can be fought and we can be beaten, that eventually America will just give up, regardless of the consequences.

We should support our troops by supporting their efforts to disrupt and dismantle and defeat al Qaeda and the Taliban.

As many of you know, my daughter-in-law Lindsay served in Iraq and Afghanistan. I also have two committee staffers, one in the Army Reserves and one in the Marine Reserves, who are on their way now to Afghanistan. This is not their first time in battle. Both of these gentlemen have served bravely in Iraq, but the prospect of entering combat never becomes routine. They, like my stepson Douglas, who served as a Marine fighter pilot in Iraq, have recounted to me how the debates in Congress to mandate a withdrawal of our forces in Iraq demoralizes U.S. troops.

The request of my staffers to me as they embark on their mission to Afghanistan is to provide them with all of the tools and all of the support that they need to defeat the enemy and to win. They ask that we strengthen our commitment, our resolve, to the mission in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Our enemies are redoubling their efforts. We must also.

In June of last year, Osama bin Laden noted that U.S. efforts had been, and I quote, ''transferred to Afghanistan and Pakistan. Thus, jihad must be directed at that region.''

Bin Laden later said in September, ''Not much longer, and the war in Afghanistan will be over. Afterwards, not even a trace of the Americans will be found there. Much rather, they will retreat far away behind the Atlantic. Then only we and you will be left.''

We must do everything possible to deny bin Laden and al Qaeda such a victory.

Mr. Speaker, the Afghan people are also listening to today's debate. For us to succeed in Afghanistan, we need their support. But the Afghan people will not be giving that support if they believe that we will abandon them.

As Admiral Michael Mullen, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, has said, ''When I am in Afghanistan, I get the same question asked as when I am in Pakistan, which is, are you going to leave us again? Because they remember very well that we have in the past. And so there is a trust here. There is uncertainty through Afghanistan's eyes as to whether or not we will stay.''

In cooperating with us, in trusting us, they know that they are risking their lives and those of their families. Our troops are listening as well.

This debate today reminds me of the many times that I have come down to the floor to speak against a forced withdrawal from Iraq and the need to support our mission there.

Mr. Speaker, it is an illusion to believe that we can protect ourselves from our enemies by picking and choosing easy battles and turning away from those that require patience and sacrifice. This Congress cannot, must not, turn away from its responsibility to defend our country and our citizens simply because the task seems too difficult. The men and women in uniform who willingly risk their lives to defend our country do not believe that.

□ 1430

Mr. Speaker, as with all of my fellow Members and citizens, I hope for a

world one day without war. But in the world we live in, some wars are forced upon us. And we have no choice but to fight and to win them if we are to survive.

I urge my colleagues to resoundingly defeat this resolution.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. KUCINICH. I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. NADLER).

Mr. NADLER of New York. Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of this resolution. I am not convinced that the United States and its allies can end the 35-year civil war in Afghanistan, nor is that our responsibility. We should not use our troops to prop up a corrupt government. It is simply not justifiable to sacrifice more lives and more money on this war. We must rethink our policy. If we do not, we are doomed to failure and further loss of American lives.

In late 2001, we undertook a justified military action in Afghanistan in response to the attacks of 9/11, and with moral clarity and singular focus we destroyed the al Qaeda camps, drove the Taliban from power, and pursued the perpetrators of mass terrorism. I supported that action. Today, however, our presence in Afghanistan has become counterproductive. We are bogged down amidst a longstanding civil war between feuding Afghans of differing tribes, classes, and regions whose goals have little to do with our own. Moreover, our very presence in Afghanistan has fueled the rising insurgency and emboldened those who oppose foreign intervention or occupation of any kind, who see us as foreign invaders. In seeking security and stability in Afghanistan, we have supported corrupt leaders with interests out of sync with the interests of ordinary Afghans. By backing the Afghan government, we have further distanced ourselves from the Afghan people and empowered the insurgency.

If our mission in Afghanistan is indeed to prevent the safe harbor of terrorists within a weak or hospitable nation, that mission is largely accomplished, since we are told there are now fewer than a hundred al Qaeda in Afghanistan. In reality, terrorist plots can be hatched anywhere, in any nation, including our own. In fact, much of the planning for the 9/11 attacks took place in Western Europe.

This does not mean we should stop pursuing terrorists. On the contrary. We must continue the multipronged effort to disrupt, dismantle, and destroy their ability to harm the United States. We must continue to track and block terrorist financing across the globe, increase intelligence activities focused on terrorists, increase diplomacy to rally our allies to our cause against terrorism, and, if necessary, use our Armed Forces to attack terrorist targets wherever they may be—a function quite distinct from using the military to secure a nation so that it can be rebuilt. Rebuilding Afghanistan is beyond both our capability and beyond our mandate to prevent terrorists from attacking the United States. I believe that a short and definitive timetable for withdrawing our troops is the only way to minimize further loss of life and to refocus our efforts more directly at the terrorists themselves.

I do have one reservation, that the resolution before us seems to leave no room for a military role in Afghanistan under any circumstances. I believe we must reserve the right to use our Armed Forces to attack terrorist targets wherever they may be, and that would include terrorist training camps in Afghanistan, if they were reestablished there. But those camps are not there now, and our troops should not be there either. Mr. KUCINICH's resolution points us in the right direction, a direction far better than the direction in which we are now headed. Accordingly, I urge approval of the resolution.

Mr. BERMAN. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. KUCINICH. I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES).

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Ohio, first, for presenting this resolution and, secondly, for fighting for so long to get us to have this debate. I want to say to Mr. BERMAN, thank you for agreeing to let this be debated.

I want to start by saying that Peggy Noonan has called for this debate in ''A 'Necessary' War?'' I want to read this: ''So far, oddly, most of the debate over Afghanistan has taken place among journalists and foreign policy professionals.'' All of them have been honest in their opinions about the war in Afghanistan. But when you really look at the facts, nobody elected these people to debate the war. ''Washington has to get serious, and the American people have a right to know the facts and options.''

[From the Wall Street Journal, Oct. 10, 2009]

A 'NECESSARY' WAR? THE PRESIDENT AND CONGRESS, DISTRACTED, HAVE LEFT A VOID

(By Peggy Noonan)

So far, oddly, most of the debate over Afghanistan has taken place among journalists and foreign-policy professionals. All power to them: They've been fighting it out on op-ed pages and in journals for months now, in many cases with a moral seriousness, good faith, and sense of protectiveness toward the interests of the United States that is, actually, moving. But nobody elected them. We need a truly national debate.

So thank you both for allowing this debate to take place today. But I join my friends in saying that it's time to bring an end to this war. I have Camp Lejeune Marine Base in my district, Cherry Point Marine Air Station, and Seymour Johnson Air Force Base. Brave men and women. God bless them all.

I want to start my comments and would like to share this with you from the Marine Corps Times, March 1, 2010: ''Left to Die. They called for help. 'Negligent' Army leadership refused—and abandoned them on the battlefield.'' Four died, handcuffed to do their job for this country. That's awfully sad to me.

I would like to read also from the Marine Corps Times: ''Caution killed my son. Marine families blast 'suicidal' tactics in Afghanistan.'' I would like to read the words from a father whose son died for this country. I would like to read the words of this man because he served in the Marine Corps, a sergeant himself. His frustration about how his son died because he was not helped led him to write to Admiral Mullen and also Senator COLLINS. This is his response back to the letters from Admiral Mullen and his response back to SUSAN COLLINS:

''Sergeant Bernard said the letter is 'smoke and mirrors' and overlooks his consistent concern: A counterinsurgency strategy won't work as long as Afghanistan is filled with warring tribes that have no empathy for the United States and its way of life.''

He further stated in his letter to Senator COLLINS, ''I have already spoken to your office,'' and he further said, ''Don't let him,'' meaning Admiral Mullen, ''spin this crap.''

I'm quoting him now. These are not my words. This is what he said to Admiral Mullen. This is a father whose son died for this country. I repeat that:

''Don't let him spin this crap,'' Bernard said. ''There's no indication that Afghanistan has changed anywhere. Our mission should be very, very simple: Chase and kill the enemy.''

Well, I just gave you two examples of where we're not really fighting the war in Afghanistan. Because why in the world would those marines have been killed who were asking for cover, and yet the Army said, No, we can't give you cover because of our policy—and our policy is: We don't want to kill civilians. But as Sergeant Bernard said, and he's right—I've never been to war, let me be honest about it, but he has been to war and knows that war is ugly. It's mean. And therefore we're saying to our troops we're going to ''handcuff'' you, and we're going to do what we can to protect those in Afghanistan, but you might have to give your life and you couldn't even fire a gun. That is not what we should be doing in Afghanistan.

Last point, the book that's called ''The Three Trillion Dollar War,'' it is a book written by the economist Joe Stiglitz, and he says in the book that to take care of the wounded from Afghanistan and Iraq for the next 25 years, a minimum cost of $2 trillion.

I want to end with this story: Three years ago, three years ago, Congressman GENE TAYLOR and WALTER JONES, myself, went to Walter Reed to visit the wounded, as many Members of Congress in both parties do. And we go into a room where a young man, 19 years old, had been shot in the neck, sitting in a wheelchair, will never walk again. As Gene and I speak to him and tell him we thank him so much for his service, his mom comes in and she looks at us like a deer in headlights.

Scared. She should be scared. She doesn't know what the future is for her son.

And then she said to GENE TAYLOR and myself, after we introduced ourselves, Can you guarantee me that this government will take care of my son 40 years from now? He is 19 years old.

And one of us said to her, This country should take care of your son 40 years from now. But you know what I would tell her today? I'm not sure we can take care of your son.

We need to understand we can't police the world anymore. It's time that we protect ourselves from the enemy, the terrorists. But going around the world and trying to police the world doesn't work anymore.

So I want to thank the gentleman for giving me this time. And I join you in this resolution and hope that these debates will continue and continue so we will meet our constitutional responsibility and we will be able to say one day to that 19-year-old soldier or marine: We will take care of you 40 years from now. Because right now we cannot do it.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. At this time I'd like to yield 5 minutes to an esteemed member of our House Foreign Affairs Committee, as well as the Judiciary Committee, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE).

Mr. POE of Texas. This is about our troops. This is about Americans who have been willing to protect the rest of us when duty calls and in time of war. Army Specialist Jarrett Griemel was one of those noble Americans. He was a patriot. He joined the United States Army right out of high school. He had completed basic training before he graduated from high school in his junior year at La Porte High School in Texas. In 2008, Jarrett married his high school sweetheart, Candice, in a small ceremony before the justice of the peace. She joined him in Alaska, where he was deployed by the Army, to begin their young married lives together. He was a petroleum supply specialist assigned to the 425th Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division Battalion.

Last June, Jarrett was killed at the age of 20 years in Afghanistan. This is his photograph. He is on this board—the board with 27 other Texans from our congressional district area. He is the latest to have been killed in Iraq or Afghanistan as a volunteer to go overseas and protect the rest of us in time of war. He believed in protecting our country. He believed in it so much he was willing to leave his wife and go halfway around the world to fight an enemy on the enemy's own turf. And he believed in it so much that he was willing to give his life for the rest of us. So if we pass this resolution, what message do we send to Jarrett's family or Jarrett's young bride—that his sacrifice just wasn't enough? That it was all for naught?

We don't quit war because war is hard. War has always been hard. Every good thing this country has ever achieved has been hard. We don't quit and run because it is difficult. We stay because we believe, like Jarrett, that the fight against an enemy that is bent on our destruction is worth it. That is the reason these other 27 from all races and both sexes fought in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Last December, I had the privilege to go to Afghanistan and meet Americans like Jarrett and these others who are risking their lives for us here at home. They told me that they missed their families, they missed their kids, but also they believe the work they're doing is worth it, and they're eager to finish the job and get back home. They continue to fight, and fight hard, and they want success. And we must remember, Mr. Speaker, they're all volunteers. America's finest.

General McChrystal's new strategy is effective and already leading to key victories. It makes no sense to all of a sudden pick up and leave when we're the ones winning this war and the enemy is receiving crushing blow after crushing blow. We cannot pull the rug out from underneath our troops. Of course, al Qaeda and the Taliban would say, I told you so. The Americans, they just don't have the stomach for war. They would once again, these enemies of the world, creep back into the seats of power and darkness and would turn their countries back a thousand years. Women would once again not be allowed to go to school, political dissidents would be murdered, and Afghanistan would once again become a safe haven for terrorists to plot and plan their next attacks against people they don't like throughout the world, including Americans. All Americans would be in danger.

War is hard. The cut-and-run crowd do not understand if we retreat unilaterally and quit this war, the war will not be over, because our enemies will continue the war against us whether we continue against them or not. Our troops would return home with one question: Why? Why would you bring us home when victory was so close? Why did we fight so hard, make so many sacrifices, only to have those that believe in peace at any price say it's time to quit?

Now is not the time to retreat. This enemy is real. It must be defeated. This is not about the politics of fear with some hypothetical enemy but assessing reality and supporting these men and women and others that are over there and protecting our home from terrorists that want nothing more than to destroy us wherever they find us in the world. Past successes don't guarantee future success. Victory is close, but we have not obtained it yet. Abandonment and retreat—those are not strategies. We stay because it's in our interest to stay and secure a victory against the enemies of the world.

General Petraeus said, ''We've got to show that we are in this; that we are going to provide sustained, substantial commitment.'' Make no mistake about it, Mr. Speaker, the troops and their families are watching this debate today to see what we shall do here in Congress. They are looking for who will support them and who will not. We must defeat this resolution and the Taliban and the al Qaeda and support our military.

□ 1445

Last Saturday, March 6, was the 174th anniversary of the battle at the Alamo where those people walked across that line rather than give in to the enemy.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. I yield an additional 30 seconds to the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. POE of Texas. I thank the gentlelady. They were led by a 27-year-old individual from South Carolina by way of Alabama. He said at the Alamo, ''I shall never surrender or retreat,'' and they did not surrender or retreat because war was hard then, and it cost them all their lives. But victory was obtained later, and freedom was obtained.

War is hard. It is always hard. And we shall not give in. We shall not surrender or retreat. It is in our interest and in the interest of America to defeat the enemy and let them have no doubt in their minds that we will be victorious.

And that's just the way it is.

Mr. KUCINICH. I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. FILNER).

Mr. FILNER. Yes, Mr. POE, war is hard. I've got news for you: peace is harder. Talk to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Talk to Nelson Mandela. Peace is harder. Peace is really hard. I've heard Mr. POE's words: Victory is close. What message are we sending to our troops? The Alamo as a metaphor for this? Come on, Mr. POE. And Mr. POE started with, ''This is about our troops.'' That's exactly right: this is about our troops.

I would like to thank the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH) for allowing us to have a debate. Here we have spent hundreds of billions of dollars, and we've had no real debate. So I thank him for bringing this resolution and allowing us to debate. We need a debate in this democracy so that everybody understands the costs, the costs of war, the costs of not going to war. The material costs, the human costs. This is about our troops. I agree with Mr. POE.

You know, I have been to Iraq and Afghanistan. I have met these incredible young men and women who are fighting this war. As Mr. POE suggested, they are incredible. It's the policymakers I am worried about. We report as killed in our two wars almost 1,000 in Afghanistan and a little over 4,000 in Iraq. We report around 40,000 casualties. Let me tell you, I am chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee in this Congress. We have had

almost 1 million veterans from these wars show up at the VA for injuries received during the war, service-related injuries, hundreds and hundreds of thousands. This is not just a mathematical error by the Department of Defense. This is a deliberate attempt to keep the cost of war from our people.

We've got hundreds of thousands of people with post-traumatic stress disorder, hundreds of thousands with traumatic brain injury, all of whom were undiagnosed when they left the battle front. The military doesn't want to know about these injuries. They don't want to tell the American people about these injuries. This kind of war produces those injuries. I didn't hear that from Mr. POE. What do we tell the mom? We tell the mom that we shouldn't be sending her child there because of the nature of the war. There is no ''Victory is close.'' I would like to have someone define for me what that victory is.

As I said, we have had almost 1 million veterans from these wars already come to the VA. The suicide rate among active duty troops in Iraq and Afghanistan is higher than the rate in Vietnam, which was the highest that we've ever had as Americans. These are our children. These are our children. They come home with these invisible wounds. They may kill themselves from the demons that they got from this war. A third of those who had been diagnosed with PTSD—and that's only a small fraction of those who actually have it—have committed felonies in this Nation, of which several hundred were homicides, usually of their own family members. These kids did not come home to kill their spouses or their children, but they were so wounded, and they were not taken care of by our people who sent them there. We bring them home, and we say, Okay, you're on your own. And then what do we have? Suicides, homicides.

This war is tearing apart those who have taken part in it. It will have the same influence that the Vietnam War had on our civilian society. Half of the homeless on the streets tonight are Vietnam vets.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman from California has expired.

Mr. KUCINICH. I yield the gentleman 30 seconds.

Mr. FILNER. The rate of homelessness amongst our troops who served in Iraq and Afghanistan is higher. More Vietnam vets have died from suicide than died in the original war. That is what these wars are doing to our society. These are our children. It's time to take care of them. It's time to bring them home. Let's support the resolution on the floor.

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to yield 4 minutes to my very good friend, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON), the chairman of the House Armed Services Committee.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, have we forgotten? Have we forgotten what happened to America on 9/11? Have we forgotten who did it? Have we forgotten those who protected and gave them a safe haven?

Let me speak a word in favor of those young men and young women who wear a uniform today that are doing something about it. I'm so proud of them. Every American should be proud of them and their professionalism, their devotion to duty, their patriotism. Thus, I rise in strong opposition to this ill-timed resolution that threatens to undermine the recent gains by U.S. forces and our Afghan and coalition partners.

Six months ago, I wrote a letter to the President while he was conducting a full review of our strategy in Afghanistan, urging him to adopt and fully resource an effective counterinsurgency strategy in Afghanistan. I still maintain that pursuing such a policy offers the best chance for success in our mission there. Afghanistan is the epicenter of terrorism. We cannot forget that it was the genesis of multiple attacks that killed thousands of Americans—children, parents, spouses, neighbors. We must do everything we can to ensure that it will not happen again and be used as a safe haven for those who seek to do us harm.

Last December, after 8 long years with no strategy in Afghanistan, President Obama recommitted our Nation to defeating al Qaeda and reminded us that the success of this mission requires us to work with our international allies and Afghan partners, and we are. The President also announced that our military commander in Afghanistan, General Stanley McChrystal, the best we have in this type of conflict, would receive an additional 30,000 troops to implement this counterinsurgency strategy. These additional combat troops, combined with those already in theater, would allow our troops and civilian experts to partner with their Afghan counterparts, reverse the momentum of the Taliban and create conditions needed for governance and economic development.

Even with just a fraction of these reinforcements in place, we already see signs of success. Last month Afghan, allied, and U.S. forces launched an operation to push the Taliban out of Marjah, a town of about 50,000 people in central Helmand province that became a new hub of activity for the Taliban and insurgents after our marines drove them out of nearby Garmsir. They successfully pushed the Taliban out of Marjah and are now beginning to reestablish government in that area, the second phase of that operation. A new Afghan administrator has been put in place, and the process of building that government has begun. Additionally, in recent days, Pakistani forces made the most significant Taliban captures since the war began, detaining the Taliban's second in command, the former Taliban finance minister and two shadow governors of Afghan provinces.

This mission will be costly. It will not be easy. Hard fighting lies ahead for our forces. The Afghan people have to recommit themselves to building a government that is mostly free of corruption and is capable of providing justice and security, and it is unclear if there will be future captures in Pakistan.

But this counterinsurgent strategy is the best we have to prevent Afghanistan from becoming a safe haven for al Qaeda and those who wish to kill Americans. If we vote to pull out now and abandon those Afghans who have only recently been freed from the Taliban, I have no doubt that the Taliban would be able to reestablish their hold on southern Afghanistan, if not the entire country.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman from Missouri has expired.

Mr. BERMAN. I yield the gentleman an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. SKELTON. After 8 long years, we finally have a strategy for success in Afghanistan, and we have a President who has appointed the right leaders in General McChrystal and Ambassador Eikenberry, who's willing to provide those leaders with the military and civilian experts that they need.

Success is not guaranteed in this mission, but passing this resolution guarantees failure in Afghanistan and poses a serious risk that we will once again face the same situation that existed on September 11, 2001. I hope my colleagues will join me in opposition to this resolution.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I proudly yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. MCKEON), the ranking member on the House Armed Services Committee.

Mr. MCKEON. Mr. Speaker, I rise with the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON), my chairman, the chairman of the Armed Services Committee. I join with my colleagues from the Foreign Affairs Committee and my colleagues from the Armed Services Committee in opposition to this resolution. I am very disappointed that the House Democratic leadership would allow this resolution to come to the floor at this time for a vote. One only has to look at the headlines to know that our military forces are making progress in their offensive against the Taliban insurgents in Helmand province, even as they face snipers, mines, improvised explosive devices, and a skeptical Afghan population.

The Kucinich resolution does nothing to advance the efforts of our military commanders and troops as they work side by side with their Afghan and coalition partners. Representative KUCINICH's resolution, if enacted into law, would mandate the withdrawal of all U.S. troops from Afghanistan by the end of 2010. Why consider this resolution now? Why second-guess the Commander in Chief and his commander so soon after the announcement of a new strategy? Four months ago, the President reminded us why we are in Afghanistan. It was the epicenter of

where al Qaeda planned and launched the 9/11 attacks against innocent Americans. The President recommitted the United States to defeating al Qaeda and the Taliban and authorized the deployment of 30,000 additional U.S. forces. A portion of those forces have arrived and others are readying to deploy.

Like most Republicans, I support the President's decision to surge in Afghanistan. I believe that with additional forces, combined with giving General McChrystal the time, space and resources he needs, we can win this conflict. We do not have a choice. We must defeat al Qaeda and the Taliban. This means taking all necessary steps to ensure al Qaeda does not have a sanctuary in Afghanistan or Pakistan.

At the end of last year, I had hoped that the war debate in this country had ended, and we would give a chance for that strategy to work, we would give a chance for those soldiers, marines, airmen, sailors who have been sent there to carry out their mission, to be successful. I had hoped, as a Nation, we could move toward a place of action; we wouldn't be in a position of second-guessing before we even had a chance to complete that mission. During the debate last year, no one said that it was going to be easy.

The current operation in Afghanistan has been successful but has not come without challenges. However, as we stand here today, the Afghan flag is flying in Marjah city center. The Taliban flag has been removed. This lone flag sends a clear message to Afghans that the central government is committed to people there, that we're not going to cut and run. We're going to be with them and help successfully conclude this mission so that they can finally have peace.

Some have compared our efforts there to Russians or others in the past and have talked about the defeat of other nations in this country. We're not there to take over this country. We're there to provide them freedom. That's why we're going to be successful.

□ 1500

However, this debate is not being conducted in a vacuum. Our troops are listening. Our allies are listening. The Taliban and al Qaeda also are listening. And finally, the Afghan people are listening. This resolution sends the message, ''Pay no attention to the flag over Marjah. America cannot be trusted to uphold its own values and commitments.''

I will be attending a funeral Saturday. Each of us I am sure here have had to perform that duty. It is not one I am looking forward to. I have attended several in the past. But at this point, for me to go to that funeral and tell the Geligs that their son, Sergeant Gelig, lost his life over an effort that we are going to cut and run from is something I cannot do.

Mr. Speaker, I want to send a clear message to the Afghan people and government that our coalition partners, our military men and women, this Congress believes in you, we support you, we honor your dedication and your sacrifice. I urge my colleagues to vote ''no'' on this resolution.

Mr. KUCINICH. I just want to say that you can talk about how the Democratic leadership is bringing this up at the time that there is obviously a surge about to begin, but why question the timeliness of the debate when in fact my friend in the minority, their party didn't bring this up for 8 years of debate? Eight years. I mean I think it's timely. That is the whole point.

I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. PAUL).

(Mr. PAUL asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PAUL. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution. I thank the gentleman from Ohio for bringing this issue up. It is late. This war started 9 years ago. It's about time we talked about it. It was said earlier on it is hard to quit a war, and we shouldn't be quitting. I will tell you what the real problem is, it is too easy to start a war. It is too easy to get involved. And that is our problem.

The founders of this country tried very hard to prevent this kind of a dilemma that we are in now; getting involved in no-win wars and nobody knowing exactly who the enemy is. The war was started and justified by quoting and using the war powers resolution written in 1973. That was written after the fiasco of Vietnam to try to prevent the problem of slipping into war. Yet that resolution in itself was unconstitutional because it literally legalized war for 90 days without Congressional approval. It did exactly the opposite.

So here we are, the 90-day permission for war at that time now is close to 9 years. I am afraid that this is too little, hopefully not too late for us to do something about this. Are we going to do it for 10 more years? How long are we going to stay? And the enemy is said to be the Taliban. Well, the Taliban, they certainly don't like us, and we don't like them. And the more we kill, the more Taliban we get.

But I want to quote the first line of the resolution passed back in 2001, explaining the purpose for giving the President the power, which was an illegal transfer of power to the President to pursue war at will. It said, ''To authorize the use of United States Armed Forces against those responsible for the recent attacks launched against the United States.'' The Taliban didn't launch an attack against the United States. The Government of Afghanistan didn't launch it.

The best evidence is that of those 20 individuals who participated in the 9/11 attacks, two of them might have passed through Afghanistan. A lot of the planning was done in Germany and Spain, and the training was done here in the United States. Oh, yes, the image is that they all conspired, a small group of people with bin Laden, and made this decision. Right now the evidence is not there to prove that. But certainly bin Laden was very sympathetic, loved it, and wanted to take credit for it.

One of the reasons why he wanted to take credit was that it would do three things he wanted: First, it would enhance his recruitment efforts for al Qaeda and his attacks against western powers who have become overly involved in control of the Middle East and have had a plan for 20 years to remake the Middle East. He also said that the consequence of 9/11 will be that we will bog the American people down in a no-win war and demoralize the people. There is still a lot of moral support, but there is a lot of people in this country now that the country is totally bankrupt and we are spending trillions of dollars on these useless wars that people will become demoralized, because history shows that all empires end because they expand too far and they bankrupt the country, just as the Soviet system came down. And that is what bin Laden was hoping for. He also said that the dollars spent will bankrupt this country. And we are bankrupt. And yet there is no hesitation to quit spending one cent overseas by this Congress.

We built a huge embassy in Baghdad, we built an embassy in Kabul, billion-dollar embassies, fortresses, and it's all unnecessary. Nobody is really concerned. If people were concerned about the disastrous effect of debt on this country, we would change our foreign policy and we would be safer for it. We are not safer because of our foreign policy. It is a policy of intervention that has been going on for a long time, and it will eventually end.

This war is an illegal war. This war is an immoral war. This war is an unconstitutional war. And the least you could say is it is illegitimate. There is no real purpose in this. The Taliban did not attack us on 9/11. You know, after we went into Afghanistan, immediately the concerns were shifted to remaking the Middle East. We went into Iraq, using 9/11 as a justification. It was nothing more than an excuse. Most Americans, the majority of Americans still believe that Saddam Hussein had something to do with 9/11. And I imagine most Americans believe the Taliban had something to do with 9/11. It is not true.

We need to change our foreign policy and come back to our senses and defend this country and not pretend to be the policeman of the world.

Mr. KUCINICH. Could I ask, Madam Speaker, how much time is remaining on each side?

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California). The gentleman from Ohio has 68½ minutes. The gentleman from California has 36 minutes. The gentlewoman from Florida has 27½ minutes.

Mr. KUCINICH. I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. KENNEDY).

Mr. KENNEDY. I thank the gentleman from Ohio.

Let me just say at the outset while I am speaking on behalf of the same resolution the gentleman just before me spoke on behalf of, I couldn't disagree more that our interests do lie in protecting our national security by being in Afghanistan. My opposition is our strategy. My opposition is that somehow we are going to control the ground by maneuvering ourselves militarily to control the ground as if it is a nation-state.

I hear my colleagues talk about the flag of Afghanistan as if Afghanistan is a country. In case anybody has bothered to look at it, it is a loose collection of 121 different sovereign tribes, none of whom get along with each other, and it is a mountainous terrain of rock and gravel; and the notion that our soldiers are over there laying down their lives to secure ground. We ought to be after the Taliban and the terrorists, anybody who is organizing to strike at our country. I am for that.

But I am not for organizing an organized military campaign where we are having to go in and take in these towns and subject our soldiers to unnecessary threats where we are putting our treasure and the lives of our men and women in uniform on the line unnecessarily.

Now, someone, I can't even believe I heard this, said, oh, I can't go to a funeral and tell the parents of someone who just died that they lost their child in vain. Somewhere I heard that during the Vietnam war. So what is it we have to do? We have to double down on a bad policy to protect the honor of those who have already died? I don't think so. There isn't a soldier in this country who has laid down their lives for our Nation that isn't a hero. And no one in here disagrees with that.

What is shameful is our policy that puts them in harm's way when they don't need to be. And make no mistake about it, this is not about national security. Because if it is about national security, it is about whether we put our treasure and our lives on the line in Afghanistan, or whether we put it in Kuwait, or whether we put it in the Sudan, or whether we put it in some other place in the world, all of which is where we need it.

Where do we need it the most? That should be the question. Because we don't have the resources to put it everywhere. So don't come and tell me our national security requires that we have it in Afghanistan because that is not the only place we need it. The question is where our priorities should be. And you take it from one place, you have to put it somewhere else.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. KUCINICH. I yield the gentleman an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. KENNEDY. Finally, if anybody wants to know where cynicism is, cynicism is that there are one, two press people in this gallery. We're talking about Eric Massa 24–7 on the TV. We're talking about war and peace, $3 billion, a thousand lives, and no press? No press? You want to know why the American public is sick? They're sick because they're not seeing their Congress do the work that they're sent to do. It's because the press, the press of the United States, is not covering the most significant issue of national importance, and that is the laying of lives down in the Nation for the service of our country. It is despicable, the national press corps right now.

Mr. BERMAN. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the chairman of the Middle East and South Asia Subcommittee of our committee, my friend from New York (Mr. ACKERMAN).

Mr. ACKERMAN. I thank the chairman.

Madam Speaker, I rise in opposition to the resolution. I am frankly astonished that the resolution has even come to the floor. I am afraid some of our colleagues either misunderstand the plain text of the War Powers Act or would like the House to initiate a legislative version of the so-called ''memory hole'' described by George Orwell in his foreboding novel 1984. The War Powers Act provides that in the event U.S. forces are engaged in hostilities without either a declaration of war or a specific statutory authorization, a concurrent resolution can be considered to force the withdrawal of our troops. An important piece of law to be sure, but one that is wholly irrelevant to the actual circumstances under which our troops are currently fighting.

Like many others in the House, I was present on September 14, 2001, when the House passed House Joint Resolution 64, to authorize the use of United States Armed Forces against those responsible for the then-recent attacks launched against the United States. The vote, I would remind you, was 420 in favor and one against. I would note that the gentleman from Ohio, along with myself, was present and voted aye, as was the gentleman from Texas, as were 420 of us.

I would like to quote from that resolution which we are seeking to deny existed, which became Public Law 107–40 on September 18, 2001. It says, quote, ''That the President is authorized to use all necessary and appropriate force against those nations, organizations, or persons he determines planned, authorized, committed, or aided the terrorist attacks that occurred on September 11, 2001, or harbored such organizations or persons, in order to prevent any future acts of international terrorism against the United States by such nations, organizations, or persons.''

□ 1515

Members may like or dislike the war in Afghanistan. They may think the President's new strategy is wise or foolish. They may regard the costs of the war as bearable or not, but they are plainly not entitled to argue that the hostilities were not pursuant to specific authorization by the United States Congress.

The 107th Congress authorized the use of force. The President of the United States signed that authorization into law. If a Member of this House is opposed to the war, and I am sympathetic to such views, then the proper remedy is to pass legislation to mandate withdrawal through the Congress under regular order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. BERMAN. I yield the gentleman an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. ACKERMAN. They can likewise vote against the annual and supplemental appropriations that fund the war.

What Members ought not be able to do is to waste 3 full hours of the House's time debating a resolution founded, at best, on a mistake and, at worst, a willful intention to pretend that recent history that we did authorize this war by a 420–1 vote can be dropped into the ''memory hole.''

No matter what Members believe about the war in Afghanistan, this resolution deserves to fail.

Mr. KUCINICH. Madam Speaker, I would like to respond to my friend that the authorization for the use of military force, which passed September 14, 2001, had in its provision this particular line: ''Nothing in this resolution supersedes any requirement of the War Powers Resolution.''

So the war powers resolution is properly the subject of a debate and properly serves as a vehicle to bring this debate to the House of Representatives, and we don't need to cede our right under article I, section 8 at any time to determine whether or not we go to war. This is clearly a constitutional issue. And when I take an oath to defend the Constitution, I don't cross my fingers behind my back and say, Well, I will let the President make the final decision regarding war.

Our Founders didn't want to do that. Our Founders said in order to restrain the dog of war, they would put the ability to declare war in the legislative branch. They were very clear about that.

Do not disrespect this institution when it comes to the Constitution. Remember, the War Powers Act specifically was mentioned in the resolution that was passed on September 14, 2001. It was not superseded. And I might add that while I voted for the authorization for the use of military force because I believe America has a right to defend herself, I didn't give any President carte blanche to go and carry or prosecute a war wherever he or she, in the future, determines necessary.

I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DUNCAN).

Mr. DUNCAN. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me

this time, and I rise in support of this resolution.

There is nothing conservative about the war in Afghanistan. In fact, it goes against every traditional conservative position I have ever known. It has meant massive foreign aid which we cannot afford and of which conservatives have traditionally been the biggest critics. It has meant huge deficit spending, shortly after a time when the Congress has raised our national debt to over $14 trillion. Conservatives have traditionally been against huge deficit spending. Conservatives have been the biggest critics of the U.N. and biggest opponents to world government, and certainly the war in Afghanistan has gone right along with that.

Fiscal conservatives should be the most horrified about the hundreds of billions that has been spent over there. This war has gone on for more than 8 years. At a time when the war in Iraq had gone on for a far shorter time than that, William F. Buckley, who opposed the war in Iraq, wrote this about that war: ''A respect for the power of the United States is engendered by our success and engagements in which we take part. A point is reached when tenacity conveys not steadfastness of purpose, but misapplication of pride.''

He went on to say, if this war drags on, talking about the war in Iraq, he said, ''Where there had been skepticism about our venture, there will be contempt.''

All of those words apply equally well to the war in Afghanistan. There is nothing conservative about the war in Afghanistan.

Georgie Ann Geyer, the conservative foreign affairs columnist, she wrote also about the war in Iraq, but it applies to this war as well. She said, ''Critics of the war have said since the beginning of the conflict that Americans, still strangely complacent about overseas wars being waged by minorities in their name, will inevitably come to a point where they will see they have to have a government that provides services at home or one that seeks empire across the globe.''

We should remember, Madam Speaker, that even General Petraeus said we should never forget that Afghanistan has been known as the ''graveyard of empires.'' Our Constitution does not give us the power or the right to run another country, and that is what we have been doing.

It should have come as no surprise, Madam Speaker, that President Karzai of Afghanistan told ABC News recently that the U.S. needs to stay there for 15 to 20 years more, spending megabillions, of course. He wants our money, and he wants to stay in power.

But listen to what columnist George Will has said. He has now changed his position and has written about Afghanistan, that the budget will not support an expansion there. The military ''will be hard-pressed to execute it, and America's patience will not be commensurate with Afghanistan's limitless demands. This will not end well.'' Those are not my words. Those are the words of George Will.

A very small but very powerful group called neoconservatives, who are really not conservative at all, have almost totally controlled U.S. foreign policy for many years. They are supported by very large companies and government officials who benefit from perpetual war and the billions of spending it requires.

George Will wrote in that same column that the neoconservatives are ''magnificently misnamed'' and that they are really the ''most radical people in this town.''

The Pentagon now says it costs $1 billion per year for each 1,000 troops we send there. We can't afford this. We can't afford to keep spending hundreds of billions in Afghanistan.

We are not cutting and running. We have been there over 8 years now. If this resolution passes, we will be there 9 years. That is too long. It is not only enough, it is far too long. It is time to do the best thing we can do for our troops and bring our young men and women home and start putting Americans first once again.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I would like to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. FORTENBERRY), a member of our Committee on Foreign Affairs and the ranking member of the Agriculture Subcommittee on Department Operations and Oversight.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. I thank the gentlewoman from Florida for her leadership on Foreign Affairs and for the time.

Madam Speaker, the situation in Afghanistan is complex, and it has been difficult. And it has serious ramifications for regional and global stability. Congress understood this in the aftermath of September 11 and authorized the use of force in Afghanistan. The situation is no less serious today.

We would all like to see our troops come home as quickly as possible, leaving Afghanistan a stronger and better place. And we all deeply care about our troops, particularly those who are now wounded, who have fought so valiantly.

But, Madam Speaker, decisions regarding the disposition of our forces in Afghanistan should be made in concert with our commanders in the field who take seriously their responsibility for our troops and the success of that mission. I have confidence that General McChrystal, after a thorough and painstaking calculus, has provided a clear plan to increase stability in Afghanistan and allow our troops to withdraw as quickly and as responsibly as possible. Moreover, now is not the time to leave fledgling civil society programs more vulnerable to intimidation and attack.

So, Madam Speaker, I respectfully submit that we cannot afford to risk compromising the future of that region at this most difficult time, and I urge my colleagues to vote ''no'' on this resolution.

Mr. KUCINICH. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE).

(Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Madam Speaker, I was one of those Members who understood the horror of 9/11 and joined with the then-President of the United States to respond to an attack on the United States. Subsequently in the Iraq war, I voted against that war knowing that it had nothing to do with the attack on the United States on 9/11. So I do not stand on this floor with a heart that is not heavy-laden and an understanding of the importance of this resolution. This resolution is grounded in the Constitution and it has merit; for the question is, when we responded to 9/11, it was a war on terror.

Today, we find that this is a war of insurgents. There is no real documentation that al Qaeda still lingers in Afghanistan. But we do understand that we have lost 1,000 Americans to date—70 in 2010 and 316 in 2009—soldiers that we honor and respect. Never will there be one soldier that we don't call for an honor and respect of the United States. In fact, I filed legislation to have a day of honor for all of our returning soldiers. None of them should come home to silence. We should always provide great honor for them.

But here is where we are as it relates to the situation in Afghanistan. Today, although he has the right to do so, President Karzai is greeting the President of Iran. I hope they work together for peace. But the questions are: What are our soldiers doing to help impact the governance of Afghanistan? The governance that requires the fighting of corruption; the governance to fight for freedom and for human rights and the right to worship; governance to establish schools for the girls and boys and allow girls and boys to go.

Yes, we need nation building, but not with our soldiers out walking step by step trying to bypass IEDs, many times missing it and losing arms and legs and eyes. This is the time to give the President, who did do the right thing, who deliberated and who took time and responded to his generals—we salute him for that. But now is the time for the United States Congress and the constitutional separation of the branches of government to be able to assess whether or not this particular conflict must continue and whether there is a benefit to the American people.

I would make the argument there is much to do. There is much to do in cleaning up Afghanistan. There is much to do in providing for the opportunity of governance. We can do that in a way that will support the State Department with support staff from the military. And if there is a need to defend the United States, I have no doubt that the brave men and women of the United States military will stand at attention and will rise to the occasion. Now we owe their families,

these young men and women, 165,000 who came home from Iraq, many of whom are suffering from posttraumatic disorder.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Mr. KUCINICH. I yield the gentlewoman an additional minute.

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. When we send them into battle, we have the obligation of saying there is a beginning and an end. World War I, World War II, wars that we may have liked or disliked, but we knew as they went into battle that there was an ending. And how brave they were.

As we saluted the women who participated in the Air Army Corps for Women, the WASPs today, some hundreds of them, we know that there is no doubt that they are brave. But I would say to you, end this war with Afghanistan and end this partnership with Pakistan. There are ways to be able to support the structure of both governments without our soldiers losing their lives on and on and on.

This resolution says that if the President finds it necessary to extend, he can do so. But we are asking for the troops to be out by the end of this year. So many of us have spoken to that over and over again.

Madam Speaker, this is not something unusual. This is not a cause of the fearful. This is not a cause of those who are nonpatriotic. This is a cause for people who believe in the red, white, and blue, who stand here today loving their country and believe that our soldiers are owed this respect to bring them home as heroes. We ask that you support this resolution.

Madam Speaker, I rise in solemn opposition to a war that has cost too many American lives and too many American dollars. To date, over 1,000 Americans have lost their lives in the Afghan theatre, including 70 in 2010. In 2009, 316 Americans lost their lives. The war in Afghanistan should end as safely and quickly as possible, and our troops should be brought home with honor and a national day of celebration. I strongly believe that this can and must be done by the end of the year.

This stance is borne from my deeply held belief that we must commend our military for their exemplary performance and success in Afghanistan. As lawmakers continue to debate U.S. policy in Afghanistan, our heroic young men and women continue to willingly sacrifice life and limb on the battlefield. Our troops in Afghanistan did everything we asked them to do. We sent them overseas to destroy the roots of terror and protect our homeland; they are now caught in the midst of an insurgent civil war and continuing political upheaval.

Throughout the discussion of the administration's proposed surge, I expressed my concern for the cost of sending additional troops, as well as the effect that a larger presence in Afghanistan will have on troop morale. The White House estimates that it will cost $1 million per year for each additional soldier deployed, and I believe that $30 billion would be better spent on developing new jobs and fixing our broken healthcare system. Many leaders in our armed forces, including Secretary Gates, have said that it is optimal for troops to have two years between overseas deployments; yet, today, our troops have only a year at home between deployments. Expanding the number of U.S. forces in Afghanistan by 30,000 will negatively impact troop morale and will bring us further away from the conditions necessary to maintain a strong, all-volunteer military. This is not President Obama's war and I applaud his thoughtful leadership—the Congress now needs to give counsel to have a time certain for the troops to come home.

I very strongly believe that our nation has a moral obligation to ensure that our veterans are treated with the respect and dignity that they deserve. One reason that we are the greatest nation in the world is because of the brave young men and women fighting for us in Iraq and Afghanistan. They deserve honor, they deserve dignity, and they deserve to know that a grateful nation cares about them. Whether or not my colleagues agree that the time has come to withdraw our American forces from Afghanistan, I believe that all of us in Congress should be of one accord that our troops deserve our sincere thanks and congratulations.

It is because I respect our troops that I am voting to bring them home from a war that has strayed far beyond its original mandate. The United States will not and should not permanently prop up the Afghan government and military. To date, almost $27 billion—more than half of all reconstruction dollars—have been apportioned to build the Afghan National Security Forces. The focus should be on strengthening the civilian government for it to lead. And we should continue to chase the real terrorists that are now lodged in Pakistan. We must support governments with a diplomatic surge—more resources for schools, hospitals, and government reform.

U.S. military involvement in Afghanistan will come to an end, and when U.S. forces leave, the responsibility for securing their nation will fall to the people and government of Afghanistan. Governance is more than winning elections, it is about upholding human rights, especially the rights of women; it requires fighting corruption. Governance requires fighting corruption. Governance requires providing for the freedom to worship. Governance requires establishing schools that provide education from early childhood through higher education.

Yet, Afghanistan has largely failed to institute the internal reforms necessary to justify America's continued involvement. The recent elections did not reflect the will of the people, and the government has consistently failed to gain the trust of the people of Afghanistan. The troubling reports about the elections that were held on August 20, 2009 were the first in a series of very worrisome developments. The electoral process is at the heart of democracy, and the disdain for that process that was displayed in the Afghanistan elections gives me great pause. The Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction recently released his quarterly report which detailed our nation's efforts to work with contractors and the Afghanistan government to prevent fraud and enhance transparency. This is the 8th report by the Special Inspector General, but as a recent series in the Washington Post showed, we are unable to stem the flow of corruption and waste within Afghanistan, despite our efforts at reforming our own contracting procedures. This money likely comes from the opium trade and U.S. assistance and, the Washington Post estimates, totals over one billion dollars each year.

The task of establishing legitimate governing practices remains formidable. A November 17, 2009 report from Transparency International listed Afghanistan as the second most corrupt country in the world, continuing its second straight year of declining in the corruption index. Such news is disparaging and provides an important dynamic to how we consider our strategy with regards to Afghanistan going forward. In January, a U.N. survey found that an overwhelming 59 percent of Afghans view public dishonesty as a bigger concern than insecurity (54 percent) and unemployment (52 percent). This is telling for a country with widespread violence and an unemployment rate of 40 percent.

As co-chair of the Congressional U.S.-Afghanistan Caucus, I have called for policies that allow the United States to provide benefits to the people of Afghanistan. Our effort must enhance our efforts at building both hard and soft infrastructure in Afghanistan. Change in Afghanistan is going to come through schools and roads, through health care and economic opportunity, and through increased trade and exchange. The Afghan people need our help to achieve these objectives, but I am not convinced that our military is the solution. If the Government of Afghanistan can demonstrate a responsible and non-corrupt commitment to its people, I believe that America should respond with appropriate and targeted foreign assistance.

I am also concerned that the United States is shouldering too much of the burden in Afghanistan. Although the terror attacks on American soil prompted NATO to respond with collective military action, no nation is immune from the threat of terrorism. Although the troops and resources provided by our allies have been invaluable to date, especially regarding development for the people of Afghanistan, questions must be raised about how long other nations will remain involved in Afghanistan. France and Germany, for example have already questioned whether or not to send additional troops. NATO resources must continue to focus on improving the livelihoods of the Afghan people, but if the support of these governments wavers, American troops and Afghan citizens will suffer the consequences.

I agree with our President that a stable Afghanistan is in the best interest of the international community, and I was pleased to see President Obama's outreach to our allies for additional troops. Currently, 41 NATO and other allied countries contribute nearly 36,000 troops. That number is expected to increase by nearly 6,000 with at least 5,000 additional troops coming from NATO member countries. Multilateralism is vital to ensuring that our operations in Afghanistan succeed.

Madam Speaker, today, we face difficult realities on the ground. The Taliban attacks our forces whenever and wherever they can. Agents of the Taliban seek to turn the people of Afghanistan against us as we attempt to provide them with help in every way we can. This situation is unsustainable. Afghanistan's history has earned it the nickname, ''The Graveyard of Empires,'' and I believe that we should not take this grim history lightly. By including a timetable for our operations in Afghanistan, we focus our mission and place it in a long-term context.

Although development to improve the lives of the Afghan people is important, defeating al-Qaeda and the threat they pose to America and our allies is the most important objective of our operations. To that end, I believe that Pakistan, not Afghanistan, is now the key to success and stability in the region. Over the past eight years, coalition forces have successfully pushed most of al-Qaeda out of Afghanistan and into Pakistan. This has not only put them outside the mandate of our forces, but has also forced Pakistan to address an enlarged terrorist threat.

During his State of the Union Address, President Obama spoke of the importance of Pakistan when he noted "America will remain a strong supporter of Pakistan's security and prosperity long after the guns have fallen silent, so that the great potential of its people can be unleashed." As the co-chair of the Congressional Pakistan Caucus, I know, firsthand, of the great potential of the Pakistani people, and I strongly believe that the recently approved assistance package to Pakistan will work to this end. U.S. foreign assistance to Pakistan will improve Pakistan's capacity to address terrorist networks within its own borders, but I worry that a troop increase will cause even more refugees and insurgents to cross into Pakistan.

Ultimately, we in Congress must decide what is in the best interest of the American people. Fighting al-Qaeda was in the best interest of the American people in 2001, as it continues to be today. Yet, we are now fighting an insurgency—not al-Qaeda—in Afghanistan. This should not be their mission, and we must bring our troops home.

□ 1530

Mr. KUCINICH. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BERMAN. Madam Speaker, before I yield to the gentlewoman from California, I just want to take 15 seconds to make a point with respect to the gentleman from Ohio that, while the authorization for the use of force in 2001 certainly referenced the War Powers Act, our point is that, while this debate makes sense and is appropriate, it is truly not pursuant to the War Powers Act because the War Powers Act says the direction to withdraw comes when there has not been an authorization for the use of military force, and here there was an authorization for the use of military force. I am for the debate; I am against the basis on which the debate is being held.

I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. HARMAN), the chair of the Intelligence Subcommittee of the Homeland Security Committee.

Ms. HARMAN. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Madam Speaker, our colleague, Mr. KUCINICH, should be commended for causing us to debate this issue on the House floor. This is a good and thoughtful debate, and I applaud especially the passionate statement of PATRICK KENNEDY of Rhode Island.

Madam Speaker, the war in Afghanistan has continued for 9 years, and the Obama administration continues to rely on the almost decade-old authorization to use military force which Congress passed, as we have heard, by an overwhelming vote a few days after 9/11/2001. Most who voted for it, including me, thought it was limited in time and place, but it became the basis for many actions taken by the Bush administration. In my view, the AUMF has been overused and abused as the basis for policy. It is time for us to consider whether it should sunset, and I believe that it should. But the resolution before us is not, in my view, the right place to address that issue.

After years of giving Afghanistan short shrift, tolerating rampant government corruption, and standing by as the Taliban reestablished itself, we now have a better strategy. That strategy, developed by President Obama late last year, includes a promised drawdown of our troops beginning in July 2011—or possibly sooner, according to Defense Secretary Robert Gates, who visited there earlier this week.

Let me be clear, I do not support the surge of an additional 30,000 additional American troops in Afghanistan. I do support multinational, NATO-led efforts to clear, hold, build, and transfer to a noncorrupt Afghan Government control over parts of that country which are or could become training grounds for terrorists intent on attacking the United States.

The good news is that Pakistan is making greater effort to crack down on Taliban and al Qaeda terror groups on its soil, and those efforts are yielding results which should help stabilize Afghanistan.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman's time has expired.

Mr. BERMAN. I yield the gentlelady an additional 30 seconds.

Ms. HARMAN. Like Mr. KUCINICH, I want the U.S. military out of Afghanistan at the earliest reasonable date, but accelerating the Obama administration's carefully calibrated timetable could take grievous risks with our national security. I share Mr. KUCINICH's sentiment, but not his schedule.

Mr. KUCINICH. I want to thank Mr. BERMAN for agreeing to make this debate possible. I do appreciate it very much. You have been open to that, and I think the country should appreciate that about you.

I also want to say that this CRS study, Congressional Research Study, on the Authorization for the Use of Military Force makes it very clear in it that the War Powers Act is not superseded, and I would like to submit this for the RECORD.

AUTHORIZATION FOR USE OF MILITARY FORCE IN RESPONSE TO THE 9/11 ATTACKS (P.L. 107–40): LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

[From the Congressional Research Service, Jan. 16, 2007]

(By Richard F. Grimmett)

SUMMARY

In response to the terrorist attacks against the United States on September 11, 2001, the Congress passed legislation, S.J. Res. 23, on September 14, 2001, authorizing the President to "use all necessary and appropriate force against those nations, organizations, or persons he determines planned, authorized, committed, or aided the terrorist attacks that occurred on September 11, 2001, or harbored such organizations or persons. . . ." The President signed this legislation into law on September 18, 2001 (P.L. 107–40, 115 Stat. 224 (2001)). This report provides a legislative history of this statute, the "Authorization for Use of Military Force" (AUMF), which, as Congress stated in its text, constitutes the legislative authorization for the use of U.S. military force contemplated by the War Powers Resolution. It also is the statute which the President and his attorneys have subsequently cited as an authority for him to engage in electronic surveillance against possible terrorists without obtaining authorization of the special Court created by the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) of 1978, as amended. This report will only be updated if events warrant.

On September 11, 2001, terrorists linked to Islamic militant Usama bin Laden hijacked four U.S. commercial airliners, crashing two into the twin towers of the World Trade Center in New York City, and another into the Pentagon building in Arlington, Virginia. The fourth plane crashed in Shanksville, Pennsylvania near Pittsburgh, after passengers struggled with the highjackers for control of the aircraft. The collective death toll resulting from these incidents was nearly 3,000. President George W. Bush characterized these attacks as more than acts of terror. "They were acts of war," he said. He added that "freedom and democracy are under attack," and he asserted that the United States would use "all of our resources to conquer this enemy."

In the days immediately after the September 11 attacks, the President consulted with the leaders of Congress on appropriate steps to take to deal with the situation confronting the United States. These discussions produced the concept of a joint resolution of the Congress authorizing the President to take military steps to deal with the parties responsible for the attacks on the United States. The leaders of the Senate and the House decided at the outset that the discussions and negotiations with the President and White House officials over the specific language of the joint resolution would be conducted by them, and not through the formal committee legislation review process. Consequently, no formal reports on this legislation were made by any committee of either the House or the Senate. As a result, it is necessary to rely on the texts of the original draft proposal by the President for a use of military force resolution, and the final bill, S.J. Res. 23, as enacted, together with the public statements of those involved in drafting the bill, to construct the legislative history of this statute. Between September 12 and 14, 2001, draft language of a joint resolution was discussed and negotiated by the White House Counsel's Office, and the Senate and House leaders of both parties. Other members of both Houses of Congress suggested language for consideration through their respective party leaders.

On Wednesday, September 12, 2001, the White House gave a draft joint resolution to the leaders of the Senate and the House. This White House draft legislation, if it had been enacted, would have authorized the President (1) to take military action against those involved in some notable way with the September 11 attacks on the U.S., but it also would have granted him (2) statutory authority "to deter and pre-empt any future acts of terrorism or aggression against the United States." This language would have seemingly authorized the President, without durational limitation, and at his sole discretion, to take military action against any nation, terrorist group or individuals in the

world without having to seek further authority from the Congress. It would have granted the President open-ended authority to act against all terrorism and terrorists or potential aggressors against the United States anywhere, not just the authority to act against the terrorists involved in the September 11, 2001 attacks, and those nations, organizations and persons who had aided or harbored the terrorists. As a consequence, this portion of the language in the proposed White House draft resolution was strongly opposed by key legislators in Congress and was not included in the final version of the legislation that was passed.

The floor debates in the Senate and House on S.J. Res. 23 make clear that the focus of the military force legislation was on the extent of the authorization that Congress would provide to the President for use of U.S. military force against the international terrorists who attacked the U.S. on September 11, 2001 and those who directly and materially assisted them in carrying out their actions. The language of the enacted legislation, on its face, makes clear—especially in contrast to the White House's draft joint resolution of September 12, 2001—the degree to which Congress limited the scope of the President's authorization to use U.S. military force through P.L. 107–40 to military actions against only those international terrorists and other parties directly involved in aiding or materially supporting the September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States. The authorization was not framed in terms of use of military action against terrorists generally.

On Friday, September 14, 2001, after the conclusion of the meetings of their respective party caucuses from 9:15 a.m. to 10:15 a.m., where the final text of the draft bill was discussed, S.J. Res. 23, jointly sponsored by Senators Thomas Daschle and Trent Lott, the Senate Majority and Minority leaders respectively, was called up for quick consideration under the terms of a unanimous consent agreement. S.J. Res. 23 was then considered and passed by the Senate by a vote of 98–0. As part of the Senate's unanimous consent agreement that set the stage for the rapid consideration and vote on S.J. Res. 23, the Senate agreed to adjourn and to have no additional votes until after the following Wednesday. That action effectively meant that if the House amended S.J. Res. 23, no further legislative action on it would occur until the middle of the following week. After the House of Representatives received S.J. Res. 23 from the Senate, on Friday, September 14, 2001, the House passed it late that evening, after several hours of debate, by a vote of 420–1, clearing it for the President. Prior to passing S.J. Res. 23, the House considered, and then tabled an identically worded joint resolution, H.J. Res. 64, and rejected a motion to recommit by Rep. John Tierney (D–Mass.), that would have had the effect, if passed and enacted, of requiring a report from the President on his actions under the joint resolution every 60 days after it entered into force.

S.J. Res. 23, formally titled in Section 1 as the ''Authorization for Use of Military Force,'' was thus passed by Congress on September 14, 2001, and was signed into law by the President on September 18, 2001. The enacted bill contains five ''Whereas clauses'' in its preamble, expressing opinions regarding why the joint resolution is necessary. Four of these are identical to the ''Whereas clauses'' contained in the White House draft joint resolution of September 12, 2001. The fifth, which was not in the original White House draft, reads as follows: ''Whereas, the President has authority under the Constitution to take action to deter and prevent acts of international terrorism against the United States. . . .'' This statement, and all of the other Whereas clauses in P.L. 107–40, are not part of the language after the Resolving clause of the Act, and, as such, it is not clear how a Court would treat such provisions in interpreting the scope of the authority granted in the law.

Section 2(a) of the joint resolution, authorizes the President ''to use all necessary and appropriate force against those nations, organizations, or persons he determines planned, authorized, committed, or aided the terrorist attacks that occurred on September 11, 2001, or harbored such organizations or persons, in order to prevent any future acts of international terrorism against the United States by such nations, organizations or persons.'' The joint resolution further states, in Section 2(b)(1), Congressional intent that it ''constitute specific statutory authorization within the meaning of section 5(b) of the War Powers Resolution.'' Finally, Section 2(b)(2) of the joint resolution states that ''[n]othing in this resolution supercedes any requirement of the War Powers Resolution.''

A notable feature of S.J. Res. 23 is that unlike all other major legislation authorizing the use of military force by the President, this joint resolution authorizes military force against ''organizations and persons'' linked to the September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States. In its past authorizations for use of U.S. military force, Congress has permitted action against unnamed nations in specific regions of the world, or against named individual nations, but never against ''organizations or persons.'' The authorization of use of force against unnamed nations is consistent with some previous instances where authority was given to act against unnamed states when they became aggressors or took military action against the United States or its citizens.

President George W. Bush in signing S.J. Res. 23 into law on September 18, 2001, noted the Congress had acted ''wisely, decisively, and in the finest traditions of our country.'' He thanked the ''leadership of both Houses for their role in expeditiously passing this historic joint resolution.'' He noted that he had had the ''benefit of meaningful consultations with members of the Congress'' since the September 11 attacks, and that he would ''continue to consult closely with them as our Nation responds to this threat to our peace and security.'' President Bush also asserted that S.J. Res. 23 ''recognized the authority of the President under the Constitution to take action to deter and prevent acts of terrorism against the United States.'' He also stated that ''In signing this resolution, I maintain the longstanding position of the executive branch regarding the President's constitutional authority to use force, including the Armed Forces of the United States and regarding the constitutionality of the War Powers Resolution.''

It is important to note here that Presidents frequently sign bills into law that contain provisions or language with which they disagree. Presidents sometimes draw attention to these disagreements in a formal statement at the time they sign a bill into law. While Presidential ''signing statements'' may indicate that the President views certain provisions to be unconstitutional, they do not themselves have the force of law, nor do they modify the language of the enacted statute. Should the President strongly object to the language of any bill presented to him, he has the option to veto it, and compel the Congress to enact it through voting to override his veto. Once a bill is enacted into law, however, every President, in accordance with Article II, section 3 of the U.S. Constitution, is obligated to ''take care that the laws be faithfully executed. . . .'' Thus, unless its current language is changed through enactment of a new statute that amends it, or its effect is modified by opinions of the Federal Courts, the ''Authorization for Use of Military Force'' statute, P.L. 107–40, retains the legal force it has had since its enactment on September 18, 2001.

TEXT OF ORIGINAL DRAFT OF PROPOSED WHITE HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION (SEPTEMBER 12, 2001)

JOINT RESOLUTION

To authorize the use of United States Armed Forces against those responsible for the recent attacks launched against the United States.

Whereas on September 11, 2001, acts of treacherous violence were committed against the United States and its citizens; and

Whereas such acts render it both necessary and appropriate that the United States exercise its rights to self-defense and to protect United States citizens both at home and abroad; and

Whereas in light of the threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States posed by these grave acts of violence; and

Whereas such acts continue to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States,

Now, therefore be it

Resolved by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled—

That the President is authorized to use all necessary and appropriate force against those nations, organizations or persons he determines planned, authorized, harbored, committed, or aided in the planning or commission of the attacks against the United States that occurred on September 11, 2001, and to deter and pre-empt any future acts of terrorism or aggression against the United States.

TEXT OF S.J. RES. 23 AS PASSED SEPTEMBER 14, 2001, AND SIGNED INTO LAW

JOINT RESOLUTION

To authorize the use of United States Armed Forces against those responsible for the recent attacks launched against the United States.

Whereas on September 11, 2001, acts of treacherous violence were committed against the United States and its citizens;

Whereas such acts render it both necessary and appropriate that the United States exercise its rights to self-defense and to protect United States citizens both at home and abroad;

Whereas in light of the threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States posed by these grave acts of violence;

Whereas such acts continue to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States; and

Whereas the President has authority under the Constitution to take action to deter and prevent acts of international terrorism against the United States; Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This joint resolution may be cited as the ''Authorization for Use of Military Force.''

SECTION 2. AUTHORIZATION FOR USE OF UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—That the President is authorized to use all necessary and appropriate force against those nations, organizations, or

persons he determines planned, authorized, committed, or aided the terrorist attacks that occurred on September 11, 2001, or harbored such organizations or persons, in order to prevent any future acts of international terrorism against the United States by such nations, organizations or persons.

(b) WAR POWERS RESOLUTION REQUIREMENTS—

(1) SPECIFIC STATUTORY AUTHORIZATION—Consistent with section 8(a)(1) of the War Powers Resolution, the Congress declares that this section is intended to constitute specific statutory authorization within the meaning of section 5(b) of the War Powers Resolution.

(2) APPLICABILITY OF OTHER REQUIREMENTS—Nothing in this resolution supersedes any requirement of the War Powers Resolution.

I would also like to say that section 4 of the War Powers Act requires the President to report to Congress whenever he introduces U.S. Armed Forces abroad in certain situations. And of key importance is section 4(A)(1) because it triggers the time limit in section 5(B). Section 4(A)(1) requires reporting within 48 hours, in the absence of a declaration of war or congressional authorization, the introduction of U.S. Armed Forces into hostilities or into situations where imminent involvement in hostilities is clearly indicated by the circumstances.

The resolution that is before us, H. Con. Res 248, therefore directs the President, pursuant to section 5(C) of the War Powers Resolution, to remove the United States Armed Forces from Afghanistan.

I yield 4 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY).

Ms. WOOLSEY. Madam Speaker, I read a news article in which Defense Secretary Robert Gates, during a visit to Afghanistan just recently, cautioned against overoptimism about how the military campaign is going over there. Well, no worries there, Mr. Secretary. I can't muster optimism for a war that's been going on for 8½ years and still hasn't achieved its objectives, nor has it defeated the enemy. In fact, it's hard to be optimistic now that we have lost more than 1,000 brave Americans in Afghanistan, nearly one-third of them since this last summer.

Frankly, Mr. Speaker, I am downright pessimistic about the government we are propping up in Afghanistan, which seems to reach a new low for corruption and incompetence every single day. That is why I enthusiastically support the resolution offered by my friend, the gentleman from Ohio, to bring our troops home from Afghanistan by the end of the year at the latest. The fact is that our military presence is what is fueling the very insurgency we are trying to defeat. You would think we would have learned a lesson of history by now, actually. The Afghan people have always resisted occupation, whether it was Great Britain in the 19th century or the Soviet Union just 30 years ago.

Madam Speaker, ending the war does not mean ending American support. It would be completely irresponsible of us to wash our hands of Afghanistan. There is too much humanitarian work to be done there. I propose that we replace our military surge with a civilian surge as part of a new smart security plan. We can protect America, fight terrorism, and stabilize Afghanistan with more compassion and good will than we can with rockets and guns. So let's bring the troops home. Let's replace them with more development workers, democracy promotion specialists, and economic development experts.

It costs, as we've all learned, a staggering $1 million to deploy a single soldier to Afghanistan for 1 year. Smart security would not only be more effective and more peaceful, it would be fiscally responsible to do that in the first place. The money we are currently spending in Afghanistan desperately needs to be invested in our struggling families right here at home.

Soon, Madam Speaker, the Congressional Progressive Caucus, which I co-Chair with Congressman RAÚL GRIJALVA, will release its 2011 budget alternative. It will call for redirecting billions of dollars in military spending into domestic programs that have been overlooked for far too long right here at home, like school construction, affordable housing, transportation and infrastructure, job training, health care, on and on. It is nothing short of appalling that during a crippling recession we here in the United States are nickel and diming the American people over things like unemployment benefits while the Pentagon gets a blank check to continue a failed war.

Secretary Gates warns of dark days ahead. Well, I appreciate his refusal to be a Pollyanna about Afghanistan. The fact is that there have been more than 3,000 dark days in Afghanistan already and the patience of the American people is wearing thin.

I encourage my colleagues to support H.Con.Res 238, bring the troops home, bring them home safely, and end the dark days once and for all.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I'm pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Florida, Congresswoman GINNY BROWN-WAITE, a member of the House Committee on Ways and Means.

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida. I thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

You know, earlier this afternoon, our Democrat colleague, Mr. SKELTON, a decorated war hero himself, came down to the floor and he posed the question, ''Have we forgotten 9/11?'' I think that this resolution perhaps sends the wrong message that this Congress has forgotten 9/11, and also the wrong message to Americans.

Just as our young men and women are always ready and always there for us in the military, we must show equally steadfast loyalty to them. Over 1.4 million men and women are bravely serving our Nation in active military duty today. I have attended sendoff ceremonies for the troops from my district headed overseas, and I have welcomed them home. I have rejoiced with those mothers and fathers and wives who, after months of not being with their loved soldier, are able to spend time with him or her. I have also wept for those who made the ultimate sacrifice. I have wept with their families. They made the ultimate sacrifice for our country, for our safety.

Every single soldier that I have spoken to who has been to Iraq and Afghanistan would say that they would go back again. They believe in the mission. It is pretty sad that Congress doesn't. They believe in the work that they're doing out there, and they need our support, not this resolution, which is, I believe, a demoralizing resolution to our troops. Rather, I would encourage my colleagues to vote against this resolution because by voting against this resolution I believe you will be voting for our troops.

Mr. KUCINICH. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN).

Ms. BALDWIN. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of the effort by my colleague from Ohio to draw our collective attention, both in this Congress and throughout the Nation, to bringing our troops home from Afghanistan.

In September, 2001, following the al Qaeda attacks on New York and Washington, D.C., Congress approved a resolution authorizing then-President Bush to ''use all necessary and appropriate force against those nations, organizations, or persons he determines planned, authorized, committed, or aided the terrorist attacks that occurred on September 11, 2001, or harbored such organizations or persons, in order to prevent any future acts of international terrorism against the United States by such nations, organizations or persons.''

I voted in favor of that resolution and to continue to support all efforts focused on achieving that limited and specific mission. That resolution led to our military action in Afghanistan because at the time al Qaeda was using Afghanistan as a safe haven for its terrorist training camps, and the Taliban government in Afghanistan was supporting al Qaeda's presence within its borders.

As a result of the U.S. combat operations in Afghanistan, the Taliban was driven from power, many al Qaeda operatives were killed, and others fled to nearby Pakistan or other more distant countries. National and local democratic elections have been held, a constitution has been written and ratified by the people, and attempts have been made to establish stability and the rule of law in Afghanistan. Yet, after more than 8 years at war, there is evidence that the democratically elected government has little control outside the city of Kabul. Many parts of the country are ungoverned or lawless, opium production is increasing, and

the al Qaeda terrorists whom we seek to kill or capture are no longer present in Afghanistan.

I am deeply concerned that our brave men and women in harm's way in Afghanistan are now expected to perform functions not authorized in the September 2001 authorization of military force. And President Obama's strategy for moving forward in Afghanistan places insufficient emphasis on political, diplomatic, and development initiatives, contains no real exit strategy, and ignores the clear fact of mission creep.

Nobody can question the bravery of our men and women in harm's way in Afghanistan. Their service is courageous and admirable, bringing peace, stability, health, and well-being to a country that has suffered throughout years of conflict and war. But we can question whether these efforts extend beyond the very limited and specific mission articulated in the authorization of use of military force.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman's time has expired.

Mr. KUCINICH. I yield the gentlewoman 1 additional minute.

□ 1545

Ms. BALDWIN. I remain deeply committed to keeping America and American interests abroad safe from acts of terrorism, but we cannot afford to have tens of thousands of troops remain in a country where al Qaeda no longer operates. At a time when our Nation is facing such extraordinary challenges at home, I believe we should focus on rebuilding our own Nation and on putting our people back to work.

Mr. BERMAN. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to a member of our committee, to the Chair of the organization of NATO parliamentarians, known as the North Atlantic Assembly, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. TANNER).

(Mr. TANNER asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TANNER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Madam Speaker, if we were in Afghanistan by ourselves, perhaps this debate would be worthwhile, but the fact is we are not.

I am presently serving as the president of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly. The Afghan effort is a NATO-led effort.

NATO, arguably, one, if not the most successful military alliances in the modern era, is not only involved with us as allies in Afghanistan, but we know that our military might is no longer a deterrent like it was most of my life, most of our lives, during the Cold War. With a doctrine of mutually assured destruction, even though you had the bipolar world of East versus West and even though you had the USSR and their buddies and the United States and our allies, there was this, not only feeling, but we were protected by our military might. 9/11 shattered that. These people who are trying to kill us don't care how many aircraft carriers we have, how many tanks we have, how many submarines we have. It doesn't matter.

Therefore, if our military might is no longer our primary defense, what is? I would suggest that it is accurate, timely intelligence to know who, what, when, where, and how they want to try to attack us again so we can stop it.

How do we maximize that defense? We do it through allies. We do it through friends of ours. The French really have the best intelligence network in northern Africa. They are helping. They are helping in NATO.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. BERMAN. I yield the gentleman an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. TANNER. If you look at all of the former Warsaw Pact countries that are now members of NATO, we are in a conflict that is global in nature. NATO is evolving from a static, land-based defense force to a security force that relieves our men and women to the extent they supply troops. It relieves the American taxpayer to the extent they help us pay for these efforts toward our common defense.

Again, were this just an American expedition, perhaps this debate would be more worthwhile, but it's not. So in the strongest possible terms, I would urge my colleagues to reject this.

Mr. KUCINICH. I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. GRAYSON).

Mr. GRAYSON. Madam Speaker, I have good news.

The good news is this: We won the war in Afghanistan. Now, it happened a while ago; so I may be the only person who actually remembers this, but after the 9/11 attack, within 3 months, we had expelled the Taliban government, and we did so with the use of only 1,000 U.S. Special Forces troops. Within 4 months, we had expelled al Qaeda from Afghanistan. If you don't believe me about that, you can listen to General Petraeus, who said a year ago that al Qaeda wasn't in Afghanistan anymore.

I have more good news about Iraq. The news is: We won. We won the war in Iraq years and years ago. Facing the fourth largest army in the entire world, we swept through Iraq, and within 3 weeks, we had deposed the Saddam Hussein government.

We won. Now we can go home. In fact, we could have gone home a long time ago.

What is happening now in Afghanistan and what is happening now in Iraq you can't even call a war. It is a foreign occupation. You could read the Constitution from beginning to end, and you would find nothing in the Constitution that permits or that authorizes a foreign occupation, much less one that goes on for almost a decade. Both in the price of money and in the price of blood, we simply can't afford these wars anymore.

I would like to call your attention to a report in the New England Journal of Medicine, a report dated January 31, 2008. This report reads that 15 percent of all the troops who have served in Iraq return with permanent brain damage. That's right. Permanent brain damage. Here are some of the symptoms described: a loss of consciousness, general poor health, missed workdays, medical visits, and a high number of somatic and postconcussive symptoms.

Later on in the report, on page 459, this report reads that, in this study, nearly 15 percent of soldiers reported an injury during deployment that involves a loss of consciousness or altered mental state. These soldiers, defined as having what is euphemistically referred to as mild traumatic brain injury, were significantly more likely to report high combat exposure in a blast mechanism of injury than were the 17 percent of soldiers who reported other injuries.

So, Mr. President, when you say that you are sending 50,000 more troops to Afghanistan, what you are really saying is that you are condemning 7,500 young Americans to live for the rest of their lives with brain damage. That's what you are really saying.

Beyond that, we have spent over $3 trillion on the war in Iraq. That's over $10,000 for every man, woman, and child in this country. It's over $70,000 for my family of seven. For what? What have we accomplished in 2010 that we could not have accomplished in 2009 or in 2008 or in 2007 or in 2006?

In fact, what have you heard from the other side today that they couldn't have said back then and that they will want to say next year and the year after that?

Now think about this: Our total national wealth is only $50 trillion. We have spent $3 trillion, 6 percent of that, on the war in Iraq. That kind of economic damage is something that could not have possibly been accomplished by al Qaeda itself. Osama bin Laden, on his best day, couldn't have done anything like that. He would have had to have vaporized all of New England to have come close.

Listen, we are the most powerful nation on Earth. Nobody can force us out of Iraq. Nobody can force us out of Afghanistan. We have to make that decision ourselves. Remember, we need not only strength; we need wisdom. We need to know that the worst things that happen to us as a country are the things that we do to ourselves, including these two wars.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER), a member of the Armed Services Committee, who, during his service with the U.S. Marine Corps, served a combat tour in Afghanistan. We thank him for his service.

Mr. HUNTER. I thank the gentlewoman from Florida for yielding.

I speak to you today, Madam Speaker, not just as a United States Congressman but as a United States marine. That's what my ballot title says

in San Diego. It reads: ''U.S. Representative/Marine.''

I've served in Iraq twice. I've served in Afghanistan once. I was part of the 1st Marine Division. I, for one, don't appreciate being lectured to, especially from a gentleman like the one from Florida who just spoke, about how I'm brain-injured, about how I might have PTSD, about how I'm less of a person because I've served overseas.

This is an ill-conceived resolution. It is a resolution that is hurtful to our troops on the ground who are fighting now, and it is a resolution that is hurtful to their families. If we had passed a similar resolution about Iraq, we wouldn't have been victorious in Iraq now. We wouldn't have less than 1,000 marines in Iraq now. They have all pulled out. Why did they pull out? Because we've won. Iraq is no longer a threat.

I've had friends give their lives for this great Nation in both Iraq and Afghanistan. A vote for this resolution is sending a message to their families that their sacrifices and willingness to stand in the gap against the forces of tyranny and destruction and radical Islam were false errands.

This is the wrong message to send. Our message should be one of support and encouragement. As congressional Representatives, we should be standing side by side with our troops in the field, not abandoning our cause when our military needs us the most. If we were to pull out of Afghanistan, we would be inviting those terrorists and al Qaeda to attack us here again on American soil. We don't need another 9/11.

This resolution could well be named ''the retreat and abandonment of our military resolution.'' I don't believe the purpose of this resolution is to protect our men and women serving in harm's way. The point of this resolution, I think, would be to make America weaker.

I'll tell you why I believe this: Unlike any other Member of Congress, I have served both in Iraq and Afghanistan. Unfortunately, not any person who is in favor of this resolution has ever come and talked to me. The gentleman from Florida never came to me and asked me what I thought about it.

This isn't about the military. This is about a political ideology to make America weak and to lose our strength as a great Nation.

I would appreciate it if maybe I could be listened to next time. If we are going to work in a bipartisan fashion and if this resolution is truly for the men and women of the military, I've been here for 15 months, and I've never talked to anybody about it.

We need to make sure that we support our troops and their families and that we not allow al Qaeda to become stronger by passing this resolution.

Once again, I've raised my right hand like every other Member of Congress here to support and defend the U.S. Constitution, but I also did that as a United States marine in one of the first officer candidate classes after 9/11. I graduated in March 2002. I deployed in 2003 to Iraq, in 2004 to the battle of Fallujah, and in 2007 to Afghanistan.

My wife and three kids have lived at Camp Pendleton. They've lived on the base. I know what families in the military live like. I know what marines on the ground are going through right now.

I know what victory costs. I know what victory takes. What it doesn't take is a misrepresenting resolution that is going to hurt our military when it needs us the most.

Did I enjoy going overseas? Did I enjoy leaving my three small kids and family behind? Did I enjoy leaving steak and all the great comforts of this Nation behind? No.

It was worth it because I know, in my heart, that what we are doing in Afghanistan is going to make my children not have to go over and fight the same Islamofascists that we are over there fighting now. I know that we are going to have a safer country because of me, because of people like me, and because of people who are over there serving now. Because they are over there, fighting, my kids aren't going to have to.

So was it fun going to war? No. Was it worth it? Yes.

I urge my colleagues to vote ''no'' on this resolution.

Mr. KUCINICH. I just want to say to the gentleman who just spoke, to Mr. HUNTER, that we honor his service to our country both as a Member of Congress and in the military, as we honored your father's service. You have served this country well. You are well-spoken, and we appreciate that you are here.

I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS).

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Con. Res. 248, and I commend the gentleman, my friend from Ohio, for his introduction of it.

Madam Speaker, I yield to no man, no woman in terms of my support for the heroic sacrifices that our troops in the military make each and every day of their lives and each and every day of our lives. They make sacrifices on the battlefield. They fight the wars. We are elected to be decision makers, and we can decide whether there is war or whether there is peace or, at the very least, whether there is peaceful pursuit.

□ 1600

I believe, as the people do in my congressional district, that there is a time and a season for everything, and after several years of war and hundreds and thousands of casualties in Iraq and Afghanistan, that the time has come for us to draw a line in the sand and say that it is time to bring our troops home. It is time to have a concrete strategy and a concrete date by which we can extricate ourselves from Afghanistan.

I want to commend the gentleman from Ohio for having the courage and the strength of his conviction to provide the opportunity to debate this issue. The people in my congressional district unequivocally and without a doubt are in agreement, and I strongly support passage of this resolution.

Mr. BERMAN. Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to yield 3 minutes to my friend the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. SESTAK).

Mr. SESTAK. Madam Speaker, I was stationed at the Pentagon when 9/11 happened. A few months later, I was on the ground in Afghanistan as head of the Navy's anti-terrorism unit for a short mission. I watched as the Taliban and al Qaeda flowed across that border over to Pakistan. And then came that tragic misadventure in Iraq. We took that edifice of security of our Special Forces and others and placed them in that country. And what we might have done to truly have better won this global war of terror with the other elements of power, such as fix the illiteracy rate of women in Afghanistan, which is 98 percent, never occurred.

I support the President's policies not because of Afghanistan—it has spiraled too far downward to try to resurrect what we once might have done—but because of Pakistan, the most dangerous place in the world.

It should have sent chills down everybody's back when General Hayden, 3 years ago, said al Qaeda now has a safe haven in Pakistan where we cannot go, several hundred of those criminals there to plan safely against us.

I support the President's policy because, as General Gates said in a closed hearing in December, we need to seal that border. So as Pakistan, once united now again with us, moves to North Waziristan through the Taliban on its side of the border to eradicate the danger to us, the safe haven of al Qaeda, that they do not flow back over into Afghanistan whence Pakistan, who created the Taliban, might once again spread its bets.

If Pakistan becomes a failed state and al Qaeda remains, we may get out the nuclear weapons. But there are 2,000 nuclear-trained scientists in that nation who have access to the radiological material and the knowledge in a failed state potentially controlled by the Taliban and al Qaeda that endangers us.

I support this President's policy in a limited window of opportunity to help Pakistan eradicate, yes, the danger to them, but to us, that al Qaeda.

I strongly do believe that this President still needs to provide this Nation something, however, and that is what he promised us a year ago, and that was an exit strategy. Every warrior knows that when you go into battle, you have an exit strategy, which is merely benchmarks by which you measure success or failure. And if success succeeds, exit, and if the costs of failure become greater than success, exit to an alternative strategy. I believe that needs to be provided to this

Nation who, after 7 or 8 years of war, deserves to see how its national treasure is being used and if it is being successful.

But as I end, to my colleague from Ohio, I served for 31 years with the wonderful men and women of this Nation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. BERMAN. I yield the gentleman an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. SESTAK. And I will always remember what the former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff said when asked about these debates here: Our men and women in the military are wise enough to know, this is your sacred duty here in the Halls of Congress, to have a debate about the use of their lives. When I led them into war, I would hope my lawmakers would have that debate if we were being used wisely.

So I thank you for bringing forward this debate, although I oppose the resolution.

Mr. KUCINICH. I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. DENT), the ranking member of the Homeland Security Subcommittee on Transportation, Security, and Infrastructure Protection.

Mr. DENT. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to this House Concurrent Resolution 248 that directs the President to remove U.S. Armed Forces from Afghanistan within 30 days of adoption of this resolution unless the President determines that it is not safe to remove U.S. forces before the end of the 30-day timeline. But even if there is an identified danger, U.S. forces would still have to be removed by December 31.

Really, here is the catch: There is a clear and present danger in removing our men and women from the field while they are engaged in the first major assault of President Obama's reaffirmed counterinsurgency strategy in Afghanistan.

But here is another danger: damaging the morale of the troops who sacrifice their safety and well-being to fight to protect our homeland, our freedoms, by not providing them with the support and resources they need to complete their mission.

This is a very dangerous business, moving troops out of a country. I have sat with Secretary Gates on more than one occasion over the years talking about withdrawing troops, in this case from Iraq, and how complex a situation this is and how dangerous it is and the logistical realities of moving this many people safely.

But don't take my word for it. I think we should also listen to the words of our Commander in Chief, President Barack Obama, who, on December 1 in his address to the Nation, said, ''I am convinced that our security is at stake in Afghanistan and in Pakistan. This is the epicenter of violent extremism practiced by al Qaeda. It is from here that we were attacked on 9/11, and it is from here that new attacks are being plotted as I speak.'' President Barack Obama's words.

He goes on. ''This is no idle danger. No hypothetical threat. In the last few months alone, we have apprehended extremists within our borders who were sent here from the border region of Afghanistan and Pakistan to commit new acts of terror, and this danger will only grow if the region slides backwards and al Qaeda can operate with impunity. We must keep the pressure on al Qaeda, and to do that we must increase the stability and capacity of our partners in the region.'' Again, that was President Obama.

He goes on in another address on March 27 of 2009, where he made another statement. He says, ''And if the Afghan Government falls to the Taliban or allows al Qaeda to go unchallenged, that country will again be a base for terrorists who want to kill as many of our people as they possibly can.''

Secretary Gates, a very fine Secretary of Defense, and I am pleased President Obama has kept him on, said on February 5 of this year, ''This is a critical moment in Afghanistan. I am confident that we can achieve our objectives, but only if the coalition continues to muster the resolve for this difficult and dangerous mission.''

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, on September 23, said, ''Some people say, well, al Qaeda is no longer in Afghanistan. If Afghanistan were taken over by the Taliban, I can't tell you how fast al Qaeda would be back in Afghanistan.'' Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.

I also want to mention what General Petraeus has said.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. I would like to yield an additional 30 seconds to Mr. DENT.

Mr. DENT. And our very fine commander, David Petraeus, I met with him in Florida a few months ago. He said, on January 25, ''It was in Kandahar that 9/11 attacks were planned. It was in training camps in eastern Afghanistan where the initial preparation of the attackers was carried out before they went to Hamburg and flight schools in the U.S. It is important to recall the seriousness of the mission and why it is that we are in Afghanistan in the first place and why we are still there after years and years of hard work and sacrifice that have passed.''

Again, I strongly urge that we defeat this resolution. We owe it to our troops. They are watching this debate as we speak. They want us to oppose it too.

Mr. KUCINICH. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LEWIS).

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I want to thank my friend and colleague from Ohio for bringing this resolution before us today.

Madam Speaker, I rise today to join my colleagues in speaking out against the war in Afghanistan. How much death must we bear, how much pain must we suffer, how much blood should we spill before we say enough is enough? Can we lay down the burden of war and lift up the power of peace?

Now is the time for the elected representatives of the people to give peace a chance. Now is the time for those of us who believe in peace, and not war, to speak up, to speak out, and to find a way to get in the way.

Madam Speaker, war is bloody, war is messy. It tends not just to hide the truth, but to sacrifice the truth, to bury the truth. It destroys the hopes, the dreams, and the aspirations of a people.

As one great general and President of the United States, Dwight D. Eisenhower, once said, ''Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired, signifies in the final sense a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and not clothed.''

As I said some time ago, I urge to heed the words of the spiritual: ''I'm going to lay my burden down, down by the riverside. I ain't gonna study war no more.'' We should follow the wisdom of that song.

Madam Speaker, this war has gone on long enough. Enough is enough. It is time to bring this war to an end. I urge all of my colleagues to vote for this resolution.

Mr. BERMAN. Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to yield 3½ minutes to my friend and colleague from Georgia (Mr. JOHNSON), a member of the Armed Services Committee.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Madam Speaker, what a dubious situation I find myself in, having to go behind the Honorable John Lewis, my colleague from Georgia, and to be in opposition to his view. But that is the position that I am in, and I will take on the responsibility.

Madam Speaker, I rise in opposition to the Afghan War Powers Resolution which is before us today and give the reason why, although I do want to commend Representative KUCINICH for enabling the House to have a debate on such an important issue, and I thank you for that.

□ 1615

But I cannot foresee any good coming out of a situation where we enable the Taliban to regain control over Afghanistan and to thus become a safe haven for terrorist recruitment, development, and deployment. I'm concerned that passage of this resolution would be an extraordinary usurpation of the power of the Commander in Chief in favor of a Congress where petty, partisan politics have lately been trumping policy.

Our strategy in Afghanistan and Pakistan is achieving some promising successes. Pakistan is increasingly cooperating against militants within its

border and our military campaigns in Afghanistan are routing the Taliban from their strongholds while decimating Taliban and al Qaeda leadership. The President clearly stated that he would bring focus to our efforts in Afghanistan and he would seek to improve conditions prior to drawing down U.S. forces. Passage of this resolution would prevent him from implementing that strategy and force a premature withdrawal.

Madam Speaker, let me be clear. My intent is always to oppose war. I believe that the President shares that instinct. However, I oppose this resolution, not because I support war, but because this resolution is ill-timed and ill-conceived. Now is not the time for Congress to start a constitutional turf war. I find the premise of this resolution to be flawed at the outset. Remember, we have authorized ongoing operations in Afghanistan, and we are having enough trouble managing our ordinary legislative duties as it is. Let the President execute the strategy he said he would implement and which is yielding positive results. Passage of this resolution would send a message to the world that our President's authority to conduct foreign policy has weakened in favor of a Congress that bickers over arcane Senate rules when major policy decisions are left hanging in the balance.

After too many years wasted in Iraq, an unfocused deployment of our troops in Afghanistan, this President has finally chosen to use the authority of Congress to provide a focus on the real threat. I'm happy to hear Republicans saying that the President is doing a good job, and I urge my colleagues to oppose this resolution.

Mr. KUCINICH. I would gently remind my colleague from Georgia that article 1, section 8 of the Constitution of the United States places expressly in the hands of Congress the power to declare war. This resolution does not seek to usurp our Commander in Chief. It seeks to reset the balance in our Constitution so that we reclaim what the Founders rightly intended—that the war power be in the Congress and, by reference, that we have the power to determine not just when a war starts, but when a war stops. It is also telling that in this war, in this surge, we're essentially announcing to the Taliban where we are proceeding and when.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. I'm so pleased to yield 6 minutes to the chairman of the House Republican Conference and a wonderful and esteemed member of our Committee on Foreign Affairs, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. PENCE).

(Mr. PENCE asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PENCE. I thank the distinguished ranking member of the committee and the chairman of the committee for their words and efforts today.

I think the gentleman from Ohio knows that I respect his passion, but I rise in strong opposition to this resolution today. I believe that it should be opposed because H. Con. Res. 248, directing the President pursuant to the War Powers Resolution to remove United States Armed Forces from Afghanistan, is not supported by the law, is not supported by the facts, and it is not supportive of our troops, and it should be opposed.

Let me speak to each of those issues. First, with regard to facts. The War Powers Resolution requires the President to notify Congress within a specific time of committing forces. Its constitutionality has been questioned over the years. This is a matter of clear public record. The gentleman cites the Constitution frequently. There is great constitutional debate about the very foundation of that legislation. But specifically, and I believe the distinguished chairman has made this point several times during the debate, the powers that are being cited here only apply in moments where there has not been a declaration of war or a statutory authorization for use of force.

I was here on September 11th. I was here for debates, Madam Speaker, over the resolution authorizing the use of force in Afghanistan. Therefore, I believe this resolution is out of order. And while I don't raise a procedural motion on that basis, I think it's worth noting.

Secondly, I think this resolution is not supported by the facts. I just returned from a bipartisan delegation trip to Kabul and Kandahar. I met with General McChrystal. Stanley McChrystal is the commander of the ISAF forces. I met with our soldiers at Camp Eggers. I went out into Afghanistan. And I have strongly supported President Obama's decision to send reinforcements into Afghanistan.

The sense that we receive from our military leaders in Afghanistan, from Afghani military and political leaders, and, most importantly, from our soldiers on the ground is that we are leaning into the fight. We are providing our soldiers with the resources and the reinforcements they need to come home safe. So now is not the time for the Congress of the United States to be second-guessing our commanders in the field and second-guessing the Commander in Chief. And so I believe, based on what I've seen and heard within the last month and a half in Afghanistan, that we have the right strategy, we have the right tactics, and we ought to continue to proceed on the course that we are proceeding on.

We're talking about real lives. I can't help but reflect on the experience of having been just north of Kandahar, where we visited with the governor of the Arghandab River area. He spoke about the Taliban's being on the run. In Kandahar there's an old proverb that says, He who controls Kandahar controls Afghanistan. The Taliban was in effect born in Kandahar, and this spring there is, as is evidenced on the evening news, an effort by the Taliban to reclaim that historic city. But as I talked to the governor of the Arghandab River province, he simply said that the only thing the Taliban has anymore with the population is threats. They don't have popular appeal, or so he told me.

But the very idea that U.S. forces or forces in the NATO coalition would precipitously withdraw would leave a vacuum into which the Taliban would readily flow. And as has been discussed here eloquently by Congressman DUNCAN HUNTER, who wore the uniform in harm's way, that vacuum would be filled not just by the Taliban but by their evil twin, al Qaeda, to, no doubt, nefarious effects.

So I think this resolution is wrong on the law. I think it's wrong on the facts. But, lastly, let me just say that I believe it's also not supportive of our troops. In the many trips that I have made downrange to visit soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan, it's impossible for me to meet with those soldiers without being profoundly inspired. And I will acknowledge the gentleman from Ohio has spoken in glowing terms about those in uniform. I do not suggest that he has done otherwise. But I believe with all my heart that a resolution of this nature in the midst of a moment when we are, in fact, providing our soldiers with the reinforcements and the resources to be successful in Afghanistan has the potential of having a demoralizing effect on the very men and women who, separated from their families and in harm's way, are doing freedom's work.

And so I believe this resolution, however intended, should be opposed. It's not supported in the law, it's not supported by the facts, and it's not supportive of our troops. I believe it should be rejected.

Mr. KUCINICH. I yield myself 5 minutes.

To my friend from Indiana, who cited his disagreement based on law and facts and the troops, I would like to respond categorically.

First of all, section 4(a)(1) of the War Powers Act requires the President to report to Congress any introduction of U.S. forces into hostilities or imminent hostilities. When the President reports, he does so consistent with but not pursuant to the War Powers Resolution. That's nuance when we're speaking about reporting requirements, because if President Obama did submit a report pursuant to the War Powers Resolution, it would trigger a vote on withdrawal from Afghanistan. Or Congress, on the other hand, has the ability, as I have, to bring a privileged resolution forward.

Now, I have heard a lot of talk about the troops here. I don't take a backseat to anyone in support of the troops. There are some that believe the way that we support the troops is to keep them in Afghanistan. There are others who believe that the way to support the troops is to bring them home.

The Washington Post this week carried one of a series of presentations of what they call ''Faces of the Fallen.'' We owe our gratitude to each and every person who has served this country. We support those who served. But it is our obligation to be able to question the mission at any time. We should honor those who serve and those who have given their lives and made the supreme sacrifice. We owe it to them to continually critically analyze the cost of the war, the purpose of the war, and the continuation of the war.

I never had the opportunity to serve. I had a heart murmur during the Vietnam era. But my father was a World War II marine veteran who had his knee shot out in a campaign in the South Pacific. My brother Frank, who is now deceased, served in combat in Vietnam and came home with post-traumatic stress. It changed his whole life. My brother Gary, a Vietnam-era Marine veteran; my sister Beth Ann, who recently passed, an Army veteran; my nephew Gary, an Iraq combat veteran. I come from a family which believes in service. The American family, the large family of our Nation, believes in service to our country. Yet, it is true that the death toll, as The Washington Post reports in Afghanistan, is at least at 1,000, and we have to have this debate to either recommit to continuing the war and giving the reasons to the troops why we're doing that or to suggest that maybe this is the opportunity for us to take a new direction.

I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1630

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. KIRK), a member of the Committee on Appropriations.

Mr. KIRK. Madam Speaker, I feel compelled to rise today as the only Member of this body who has deployed twice to Afghanistan, both times as a Navy Reserve intelligence officer in Kandahar in 2008 and 2009. I'm not worried about the outcome of this debate. My colleague from Ohio will be defeated today more decisively than during his Presidential campaign.

I am worried about why the Speaker scheduled this debate. In the face of record job losses, a trillion-dollar health care takeover bill, and serious corruption charges leveled by the bipartisan Ethics Committee on some of the most powerful Members of this House, the Speaker has thrown an irresponsible bone to the far fringe of her party by scheduling this debate on the only unqualified success of the Obama administration, his surge to Afghanistan. By setting up this pointless debate, she risks undermining the Obama administration's admirable combat record in Afghanistan. Parts of this debate will now be replayed and misquoted by the Taliban and Iranian radios in ways that will hurt the elected government of Afghanistan, our NATO allies and Americans who wear the uniform now in the field.

I can speak from personal experience. There are no Republicans or Democrats in Afghanistan. There are American troops, our troops, who delivered a stunning set of military successes just in the last 3 months. General Nicholson and his marines took the narco-Taliban stronghold of Marjah in a single week, sending the Taliban fleeing. This is the heroin heartland that has funded the rerise of the Taliban.

In a quiet shadow war, our allies then captured the Taliban's top military commander, the equivalent of our Secretary of Defense. And when he was interrogated, we then followed up by capturing the Taliban governors of several provinces and key military leaders. If the Taliban military was a company, it has lost its CEO, its vice president, and its best salesman. At this rate, the guy who is running the mail room will now be attempting to run the Taliban soon.

We all witnessed 9/11. Especially for those of us representing large cities, the lessons that we learned on that day have now come to the core of our public service. It's obvious to say that President Obama, Secretary of State Clinton, and Secretary of Defense Gates fiercely oppose this resolution. Given our overwhelming bipartisan opposition to the resolution, many of our troops would ask, Don't they know that we're winning? What are they doing in Congress? And I would ask, given the growing ethical cloud over this House, given record unemployment in the United States, given a trillion-dollar flawed health care bill, why would the Speaker choose to schedule a forum to question of one of the biggest successes of our President?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. I yield an additional 30 seconds so Mr. KIRK can finish his thoughts.

Mr. KIRK. I will just say that we know the resolution will be defeated. But given the opportunities that it gives Taliban propagandists on the radio, we should ask, Why did the Speaker even schedule such a lopsided debate on this floor?

Mr. BERMAN. Madam Speaker, I yield myself 1 minute to deal with the comments of my friend, the previous speaker.

I would suggest that the decision to schedule this debate did not come out of a desire to make a gesture to the extreme left or any such particular move. It was rather some sense of fealty to the institution of Congress, the institution vested with the war-declaring authority, the oversight of how our expenditures are spent. And I don't understand why you and I, who both have feelings about the wisdom of pursuing the current strategy of this administration on this issue, should be afraid of that debate or wanting to attribute motivations to the willingness to have that debate other than the congressional responsibility to have such discussions and have such debate.

Mr. KIRK. Would the gentleman yield?

Mr. BERMAN. I would be happy to yield.

Mr. KIRK. I would just say that we probably spend enough time naming post offices in the House of Representatives during the worst economy in our country——

Mr. BERMAN. To reclaim my time, this is not a discussion of post offices. This is not a discussion of suspension legislation, and both parties seem to like naming post offices and introducing other kinds of resolutions. This is a discussion about the decision to send our forces into harm's way. It's worthy of a serious debate. There is nothing wrong with that debate. I don't believe our troops are going to get demoralized by our having that debate. I believe for the country, they are going to say, We are proud to represent a country that is willing to undertake that debate.

Mr. KUCINICH. I want to thank the gentleman from California (Mr. BERMAN), who, you know, we do have a difference of opinion about this resolution, but we're united in the fact that this House should debate it, and any Member of this House, whatever their opinion is on this resolution, has the right to debate it. And to try to diminish this institution by saying, Well, this is not a proper subject for debate—we're about to begin a surge. This is a proper subject for debate, and this is why we're here.

If we wait 8½ years to debate this, and people say, Well, why are we debating it now? Should we wait another 8½ years to have a debate? Or should we have it now before we commit more and more people into combat?

I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. SERRANO).

(Mr. SERRANO asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SERRANO. It is time for us, as a Congress, to have this long overdue discussion on our involvement in Afghanistan. According to the War Powers Resolution, we have a role to play; and it is time that we, as a Congress, exercised our authority. Whether you agree or disagree with the escalation in Afghanistan, we need to debate it. We need to vote on it, and we need to make a decision. We must not give up the powers that we were given in the Constitution.

In the wake of 9/11, I did support a military response to the direct threat that Afghanistan posed to our Nation. I believed then that it was the correct response, and I believe now that it was in concert with our NATO allies. Nine years later, I believe that Congress has the duty to reevaluate America's involvement in a war that seems to have gotten bogged down, with very few signs of success. I believe that had we not taken our focus off Afghanistan in order to invade and occupy Iraq, we would not be in the situation we're in today. But pressing ahead without regard to our Nation's best interests and ignoring Congress' war powers prerogative is the wrong course.

Let us be clear: We cannot tolerate the presence of terrorists seeking to harm our Nation anywhere in the world, but we must ask ourselves if long-term occupations are the correct answer to this threat. We must also be clear in our analysis of our situation in that country. We have a partnership with a government that seems to be increasingly unstable, corrupt and almost completely incapable of maintaining control over vast stretches of the country.

We seem unable to eradicate the Taliban enemy. They scatter before our troops into lawless regions and then return once our troops leave. Without an effective government in Afghanistan, it's hard to see this pattern changing, as the local population cannot count on the Taliban ever being gone for good.

This is a costly war without an end in sight. It's a costly war to our brave soldiers and to their families. It is costly because resources desperately needed to feed the hungry, to find a way forward on health care reform, and to fix our failing schools are being redirected to an effort whose success is questionable.

Here at home, we have had precious little debate over this war. We have seen our troops' numbers rise to above those in Iraq, and yet we have no real benchmarks or goals after which we can leave. We continue to spend massive amounts of money to maintain the occupation of both countries; and worst of all, we ask our brave men and women in uniform to continue to sacrifice their lives and bodies for this war without our Nation sacrificing similarly. The least we can do to honor their service is to debate and vote properly on this floor and to ensure that our Nation is not sending them into battle without careful thought and reflection.

Let me conclude by saying that I am from New York City, the place where 9/11 took place; and so I know firsthand the devastation that this caused to my own community. Although I supported the effort to confront bin Laden and the perpetrators of that act, I cannot now, 9 years later, agree to an effort which has moved in a different direction with different goals.

To the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH), I commend you for raising this painful subject and allowing our Chamber to engage in an honest and an open debate. Your courage is beyond anything that other Members can ever think of. Our troops and our Nation deserve no less, and you've given us the chance to debate this, and I thank you.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I yield 2½ minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN), the ranking Republican member on the Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development.

(Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. I rise in opposition to the resolution.

My colleagues, this is clearly the wrong resolution offered at precisely the wrong time. Can you imagine being a soldier in Afghanistan hearing of this resolution? Instead of debating a withdrawal from Afghanistan, we should be adopting a resolution praising the all-volunteer men and women of our Armed Forces and their families for their courage, dedicated service, and their continuing sacrifice in the name of protecting Americans everywhere.

Our Nation's Commander in Chief, our President, made the decision to act in Afghanistan, a difficult decision that was supported overwhelmingly by Congress. By the skill and bravery of our soldiers and marines, sailors and airmen, we've eliminated al Qaeda's operations in Afghanistan. But it is clear that we must ensure that our efforts to prevent Afghanistan from becoming a safe haven once again do not falter, do not weaken, and do not waver.

I concurred with the administration's decision to support General Stanley McChrystal's counterinsurgency strategy. That was an important step towards stabilizing Afghanistan. The President's reinforcement of our marines and soldiers, the so-called surge, helps achieve that objective and does provide additional security. The reinforcements have worked. There is success in Afghanistan. Our troops deserve support, and this resolution deserves to be soundly defeated.

Mr. KUCINICH. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

One of the things that really doesn't often get discussion here on this floor with respect to a war is the specifics about how it affects people back home. And because I come from Cleveland, I just want to share with you some things just about my community.

Cleveland, as some of you may know, was the epicenter of the subprime mortgage meltdown. Predatory lenders descended on neighbors in our community and were able to take people into contracts that eventually led them into foreclosure and losing their homes.

Now, I don't think that even the most powerful camera would be able to pick up the sea of red dots across our metropolitan area that represents foreclosures, but you get an idea that we have a desperate need not only in Cleveland but across the country for helping to keep people in their homes. And yet more and more, our priorities are to spend money not just on these wars but to increase the Pentagon budget.

I would like to point out that just with respect to the amount of money that is being spent, allocated by congressional districts—this is the National Priorities Project that I am quoting which includes the fiscal 2010 budget. They point out that taxpayers in the 10th Congressional District that I represent will pay $591.9 million for total Afghanistan war spending, counting all the spending since 2001.

And they go on to say, Here's what that money could have been spent for instead. It could have been used to provide 209,812 people with health care for 1 year. Or it could have been used to provide 13,404 public safety officers for 1 year, or 9,063 music and arts teachers for 1 year, or 68,299 scholarships for university students for 1 year. Or it could have been spent for 106,658 students receiving Pell grants of $5,550. Or it could have been spent to provide for 5,521 affordable housing units. It could be have been spent for providing 355,972 children with health care for 1 year, or 92,161 Head Start places for children for 1 year, or 9,433 elementary school teachers for 1 year, or 662,950 homes with renewable electricity for 1 year.

□ 1645

When we spend money on wars and we spend money expanding the budget for military spending, we may say we are making things safer at home, but there is plenty of evidence to suggest that the shift in allocation of funds and the shift for spending towards wars, which were off-budget for quite a while, have put our country in a position where we are not really able to meet our needs.

When you look at this, this is from the Friends Committee on National Legislation, they say for each dollar of Federal income tax we paid in 2009, the government spent about 33 cents for Pentagon spending for current and past wars; 27 cents supporting the economy, which is the recovery and the bailouts; 17 cents for health care; 11 cents responding to poverty; 9 cents for general government, and of that 7 cents goes for interest on the public debt; 2 cents for energy, science and environment; and a penny of the Federal dollar for diplomacy, development, and war prevention.

We are setting our priorities here constantly. When we remain silent about war spending, we actually have put ourselves in a position where we go headlong. And the headlong momentum that occurs from being silent about a war just carries us into all these reshaped priorities, whether we realize it or not. That is why I have asked this resolution to be brought forth, so we could talk about this.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. KINGSTON), the ranking member of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, FDA, and Related Agencies.

Mr. KINGSTON. Madam Speaker, I rise in opposition to this resolution, but I do appreciate Mr. KUCINICH for bringing it up. And I think it is proper to debate this. I am a member of the Appropriations Committee. And many years ago in committee we voted to support the Skaggs amendment to an appropriations rule that would have put the war powers in effect during something in the Clinton administration, but I don't remember what the

skirmish was. So I think it is appropriate for us to debate this. However, I think the timing is not exactly optimal, particularly with troops in the field.

I also want to point out that it does appear to me that if the Democrat leadership was serious about this, they would have allowed hearings in the committee, and they should have had a committee vote rather than just put it on the House floor. But I am glad that you brought it up, and I know your absolute sincerity in this.

I also want to point out to you, as somebody who voted ''no'' on the litany I am about to give on spending, that if we are looking for money, perhaps in May of '08 we should not have passed a stimulus program of $168 billion; in July of 2008, a $200 billion bailout of Fannie Mae; in August '08, $85 billion by the Federal Reserve for AIG, which is now up to $140 billion; and in November of '08, $700 billion for the TARP bailout; and in January of '09, $787 billion for a stimulus program which was designed to keep us from getting to 8 percent unemployment, and we are now pushing 10 percent unemployment. That was followed by a $410 billion omnibus spending bill. And then we had in December of '09, a $165 billion jobs program. So we're spending a lot of money. And there's a lot of it out there.

But I would suggest if we're looking for money, what we need to do is get out of the bailout business, from General Motors to the banks. And I think we could find a lot of money on a bipartisan basis. And I know the gentleman is one of the strongest critics of corporate welfare, and yet that is what we have spent 2 years doing, Democrats and Republicans alike. I won't say it started with President Obama.

I do want to say this about the troops in the field. And I do respect your support of troops. I just got back from Afghanistan. I was there Saturday, and I was in Pakistan Sunday, meeting with General McChrystal, meeting with our leadership on the ground over there. We do have a new strategy. It is shape, clear, hold, build, and transfer. And in our first muscle movement under this, as you know we went to Marja, we went to the Helmand Province, and we had a military victory. But rather than leave it there, we have now worked on a successful civilian transfer to make sure that the Afghanis are ready to take on this new conquered territory.

Karzai was briefed from the beginning on the battle for Marja. One-third of the troops were Afghanis. They fought shoulder to shoulder with the coalition forces. The governor of the Helmand province was briefed. There is a new police force that is coming in there to crack down on the corruption in the Afghan police force, because that is one of the problems.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. I am pleased to yield 30 additional seconds to the gentleman from Georgia.

Mr. KINGSTON. I thank the gentlewoman.

Thirdly, we now have an engaged Pakistan. One hundred forty-seven thousand troops have closed off the safe havens the Taliban has been running to in Pakistan itself in the meantime. Things are happening. And while I support the gentleman's concept of making sure the War Powers Act is followed, I think the timing is poor. So I will not support it at this time because of the progress on the ground, because of the troops that are on the ground.

But again, I want to congratulate the gentleman in his strong conviction of this. I do think it is something that we in Congress need to look at. We need to look at it carefully. I hope that the committee will have some hearings on this. And I hope that we might have some regular order and have an opportunity for the minority party to maybe even offer an amendment or a motion to recommit or something like that that I think would be very beneficial for us to have this national debate.

Mr. KUCINICH. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I want to thank the gentleman from Georgia for the collegial manner in which he has approached this debate, and also to suggest that I think that while this is a very emotional matter, that it is possible for us to talk about it in terms that are clear and logical. I also want to say to my friend that I think I probably joined you in voting against the Wall Street bailouts. That was the fiscal conservative in me.

I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Maryland (Ms. EDWARDS).

Ms. EDWARDS of Maryland. I thank the gentleman from Ohio for bringing this resolution.

I think it is high time that we actually had this debate here in Congress. While it may seem untimely, there is never enough time to have a debate about war and peace that this Congress should be engaged in, and not just the actions of any President.

I want to also join with my colleagues in expressing my support for the men and women who serve this Nation. And as a daughter of one who served through Korea and Vietnam and subsequently, you couldn't find a stronger supporter of our servicemen and women. So I would hope that on both sides of the aisle that we don't confuse our debate about policy and about a resolution with support for our men and women in uniform. Because that would be unfortunate for them and it would be disrespectful of us.

I believe that this Congress has an obligation to send a strong message to the White House that the war must come to an end. And as others have pointed out, we began this war effort to fight al Qaeda following the tragedy of September 2001. But as National Security Adviser Jim Jones has told us, there are only 100 al Qaeda left in Afghanistan. Who are we fighting? Well, now we are fighting the Taliban. And that just shows you that over the course of this time, this war and its mission and its goals have morphed and morphed and morphed to the point that we find ourselves in now.

I have no doubt that our well-trained and brave and dedicated Armed Forces will continue to be victorious on the field of battle. I am humbled by their service. But bringing stability to Afghanistan can only happen by rebuilding a truly functioning civil society—forget that, building a truly functional civil society, something that Afghanistan has not had the privilege to enjoy. This won't come by military force.

The question remains really as to the future capacity of Afghanistan's military and government to do what is required of them to build their country. We really have little evidence, if any, that this outcome is likely given the levels of corruption in the existing Karzai government that continue as well as the intertribal violence that also changes over time.

I am struck, there was a Time magazine article just this past week on the Taliban, on the fighting in Marja, and the limited success, the success that our NATO forces are having. But as was pointed out there, the take and hold and build strategy only happens if you really can transfer. And it is the transfer that I am concerned about. It is the transfer that actually endangers our troops to the point where they may transfer at one point and then have to go back and start the fight over again because that is the nature of the battle in Afghanistan.

Even more troubling is that Afghanistan shouldn't be our top national security priority.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Mr. KUCINICH. I yield the gentlewoman an additional 1 minute.

Ms. EDWARDS of Maryland. Our military risk their lives and our Nation spends resources in a country that has so little hope of future success, that international terrorism actually flourishes in so many countries. Estimates are that this kind of terrorism actually flourishes in about 70 countries. And yet we are so heavily invested in Afghanistan that it leaves us little time, opportunity, or resources to really fight the battle where that needs to happen. By focusing our military and our energy and our treasury on Afghanistan, we are really operating under the inaccurate Bush era philosophy that the threat we face is both well-organized, centralized, and advanced.

We know that violent fundamentalism often operates with little centralization and little organization. It is part of the reason that it can be so successful. This war is a constant reminder that our response to the quickly evolving threat of international terrorism is static, and we must end this war and look for ways to more effectively disrupt violent plots to protect our citizens, our national security, our

safety and security, and to build nations in a way that they respect processes and people.

Mr. BERMAN. Madam Speaker, first I would like to yield at the end of the ranking member's time an additional 5 minutes from our time on the assumption that 2 of those 5 minutes will be given to someone from California.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentlewoman from Florida will control 5 additional minutes.

There was no objection.

Mr. BERMAN. Second, I would like to now yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOCCIERI), one of only two Members of this body who actually have been deployed in our uniformed services in Afghanistan.

Mr. BOCCIERI. Madam Speaker, as Chairman BERMAN has said, I am one of just a handful of Members who have served in Afghanistan. I remember serving on the ground there as I was deployed as a tactics officer in Operation Vigilant Sentinel. As a C–130 pilot, they sent some forward-deployed troops there to make sure that our troops got the right supplies, and that the missions that we were doing were safe, and that our crews would come home very honorably and soon.

I have to tell you that I remember that day walking to the chow hall. I had my 9-millimeter strapped to my side, walking in my uniform. And there were soldiers gathered along the streets on either side. I kind of peeked my head around, and then a Humvee drove by with the flag on it. And everybody was standing at perfect attention. I was asking somebody what that was. And they said, well, that was one of the soldiers who had recently been killed in action, and he is on his journey back to the United States.

I began to think about that soldier. Who were they? What branch of service were they in? How did they meet their fate? Did they know after C–130 pilots would fly in and unload them, cargo and troops on that very geographic spot, if they knew that they were going to fly home that way. And I remember that anonymous soldier because the mission that we have there is very important.

□ 1700

Whether we agree with this war or not, we have to understand that those troops deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan are there only because our country asked them to go. I believe that we do need to bring our troops home safely, honorably, and soon, but not yet. Discussion is good, but arbitrary deadlines are not. I am concerned about walking away from Afghanistan too prematurely. We must ensure some stability not only in Afghanistan, but also in Pakistan, because of their arsenal of nuclear weapons. It would be disastrous if we allowed some terrorist to get their hands on that arsenal of weapons.

So our policy in Afghanistan has a direct impact on the stability of our region. That is important to me, and we must continue our pursuit of those perpetrators of 9/11 in that region.

The gentleman I serve with from Ohio is a deeply honorable man, and he believes, as I do, that we need to bring our troops home safely, honorably, and soon. However, the only person that is in a position to judge the number of troops needed in Afghanistan, after considering the advice and counsel of the Secretary of Defense and the generals tasked with executing our strategy, in my opinion, is the President of the United States.

Congress's responsibility is to judge the President's strategy, making sure it meets our national defense goals, and provide him with the resources required for success. The war in Afghanistan is a top national security priority for our country. Having flown dozens of missions in and out of Bagram and Kandahar, I understand that success can only be achieved when the Afghan Government stands on its own and defends itself against any threats, whether those threats are physical, economic, or constitutional.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. BERMAN. I yield the gentleman an additional minute.

Mr. BOCCIERI. This means that the Afghan Government needs to be fully functional, standing on its own with an army and police force capable of defending the country, and sealing the border with Pakistan; an economy that provides its citizens with an acceptable standard of living; and a reliable government and judicial structure that delivers critical services and enforces a uniform rule of law throughout the country.

Afghanistan needs civilian investments, comparable if not bigger than our military investment. While securing Afghanistan is important to our national security, our troops cannot do it alone.

It has been said that we need a foreign policy based on realism rather than idealism, and I concur with that. That's why I will not be supporting this resolution today. While I do support the gentleman's efforts to have this discussion, we need to take a very long-term strategy and find out how we do bring our troops home safely, honorably, and soon.

Mr. KUCINICH. Madam Speaker, I just would like to talk for a minute about the mission in the context of what is going on with the government in Kabul. The Washington Post did a story on February 25 which talks about ''Officials puzzle over millions of dollars leaving Afghanistan by plane for Dubai,'' and I will include that for the RECORD.

[From the Washington Post, Feb. 25, 2010]

OFFICIALS PUZZLE OVER MILLIONS OF DOLLARS LEAVING AFGHANISTAN BY PLANE FOR DUBAI

(By Andrew Higgins)

KABUL.—A blizzard of bank notes is flying out of Afghanistan—often in full view of customs officers at the Kabul airport—as part of a cash exodus that is confounding U.S. officials and raising concerns about the money's origin.

The cash, estimated to total well over $1 billion a year, flows mostly to the Persian Gulf emirate of Dubai, where many wealthy Afghans now park their families and funds, according to U.S. and Afghan officials. So long as departing cash is declared at the airport here, its transfer is legal.

But at a time when the United States and its allies are spending billions of dollars to prop up the fragile government of President Hamid Karzai, the volume of the outflow has stirred concerns that funds have been diverted from aid. The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, for its part, is trying to figure out whether some of the money comes from Afghanistan's thriving opium trade. And officials in neighboring Pakistan think that at least some of the cash leaving Kabul has been smuggled overland from Pakistan.

''All this money magically appears from nowhere,'' said a U.S. official who monitors Afghanistan's growing role as a hub for cash transfers to Dubai, which has six flights a day to and from Kabul.

Meanwhile, the United States is stepping up efforts to stop money flow in the other direction—into Afghanistan and Pakistan in support of al-Qaeda and the Taliban. Senior Treasury Department officials visited Kabul this month to discuss the cash flows and other issues relating to this country's infant, often chaotic financial sector.

Tracking Afghan exchanges has long been made difficult by the widespread use of traditional money-moving outfits, known as ''hawalas,'' which keep few records. The Afghan central bank, supported by U.S. Treasury advisers, is trying to get a grip on them by licensing their operations.

In the meantime, the money continues to flow. Cash declaration forms filed at Kabul International Airport and reviewed by The Washington Post show that Afghan passengers took more than $180 million to Dubai during a two-month period starting in July. If that rate held for the entire year, the amount of cash that left Afghanistan in 2009 would have far exceeded the country's annual tax and other domestic revenue of about $875 million.

The declaration forms highlight the prominent and often opaque role played by hawalas. Asked to identify the ''source of funds'' in forms issued by the Afghan central bank, cash couriers frequently put down the name of the same Kabul hawala, an outfit called New Ansari Exchange.

Early last month, Afghan police and intelligence officers raided New Ansari's office in Kabul's bazaar district, carting away documents and computers, said Afghan bankers familiar with the operation. U.S. officials declined to comment on what prompted the raid. New Ansari Exchange, which is affiliated with a licensed Afghan bank, closed for a day or so but was soon up and running again.

The total volume of departing cash is almost certainly much higher than the declared amount. A Chinese man, for instance, was arrested recently at the Kabul airport carrying 800,000 undeclared euros (about $1.1 million).

Cash also can be moved easily through a VIP section at the airport, from which Afghan officials generally leave without being searched. American officials said that they have repeatedly raised the issue of special treatment for VIPs at the Kabul airport with the Afghan government but that they have made no headway.

One U.S. official said he had been told by a senior Dubai police officer that an Afghan diplomat flew into the emirate's airport last

year with more than $2 million worth of euros in undeclared cash. The Afghan consul general in Dubai, Haji Rashoudin Mohammadi, said in a telephone interview that he was not aware of any such incident.

The high volume of cash passing through Kabul's airport first came to light last summer when British company Global Strategies Group, which has an airport security contract, started filing reports on the money transfers at the request of Afghanistan's National Directorate of Security, the domestic intelligence agency. The country's notoriously corrupt police force, however, complained about this arrangement, and Global stopped its reporting in September, according to someone familiar with the matter.

Afghan bankers interviewed in Kabul said that much of the money that does get declared belongs to traders who want to buy goods in Dubai but want to avoid the fees, delays and paperwork that result from conventional wire transfers.

The cash flown out of Kabul includes a wide range of foreign currencies. Most is in U.S. dollars, euros and—to the bafflement of officials—Saudi Arabian riyals, a currency not widely used in Afghanistan.

Last month, a well-dressed Afghan man en route to Dubai was found carrying three briefcases stuffed with $3 million in U.S. currency and $2 million in Saudi currency, according to an American official who was present when the notes were counted. A few days later, the same man was back at the Kabul airport, en route to Dubai again, with about $5 million in U.S. and Saudi bank notes.

One theory is that some of the Arab nation's cash might come from Saudi donations that were supposed to go to mosques and other projects in Afghanistan and Pakistan. But, the American official said, ''we don't really know what is going on.''

Efforts to figure out just how much money is leaving Afghanistan and why have been hampered by a lack of cooperation from Dubai, complained Afghan and U.S. officials, who spoke on the condition of anonymity. Dubai's financial problems, said a U.S. official, had left the emirate eager for foreign cash, and ''they don't seem to care where it comes from.'' Dubai authorities declined to comment.

Previous to that, the Post did a story about money funneled through a Kabul bank and companies owned by the bank's founder to individual friends, family, and business connections of Hamid Karzai. When you consider the amount of corruption that is going on in Afghanistan, it can only be called, charitably, ''crony capitalism.'' In fact, The Washington Post printed an article on February 22, entitled ''In Afghanistan, Signs of Crony Capitalism,'' and I include this for the RECORD.

[From the Washington Post, Feb. 22, 2010]

IN AFGHANISTAN, SIGNS OF CRONY CAPITALISM

(By Andrew Higgins)

KABUL.—Afghanistan's biggest private bank—founded by the Islamic nation's only world-class poker player—celebrated its fifth year in business last summer with a lottery for depositors at Paris Palace, a Kabul wedding hall.

Prizes awarded by Kabul Bank included nine apartments in the Afghan capital and cash gifts totaling more than $1 million. The bank trumpeted the event as the biggest prize drawing of its kind in Central Asia.

Less publicly, Kabul Bank's boss has been handing out far bigger prizes to his country's U.S.-backed ruling elite: multimillion-dollar loans for the purchase of luxury villas in Dubai by members of President Hamid Karzai's family, his government and his supporters.

The close ties between Kabul Bank and Karzai's circle reflect a defining feature of the shaky post-Taliban order in which Washington has invested more than $40 billion and the lives of more than 900 U.S. service members: a crony capitalism that enriches politically connected insiders and dismays the Afghan populace.

''What I'm doing is not proper, not exactly what I should do. But this is Afghanistan,'' Kabul Bank's founder and chairman, Sherkhan Farnood, said in an interview when asked about the Dubai purchases and why, according to data from the Persian Gulf emirate's Land Department, many of the villas have been registered in his name. ''These people don't want to reveal their names.''

Afghan laws prohibit hidden overseas lending and require strict accounting of all transactions. But those involved in the Dubai loans, including Kabul Bank's owners, said the cozy flow of cash is not unusual or illegal in a deeply traditional system underpinned more by relationships than laws.

The curious role played by the bank and its unorthodox owners has not previously been reported and was documented by land registration data; public records; and interviews in Kabul, Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Moscow.

Many of those involved appear to have gone to considerable lengths to conceal the benefits they have received from Kabul Bank or its owners. Karzai's older brother and his former vice president, for example, both have Dubai villas registered under Farnood's name. Kabul Bank's executives said their books record no loans for these or other Dubai deals financed at least in part by Farnood, including home purchases by Karzai's cousin and the brother of Mohammed Qasim Fahim, his current first vice president and a much-feared warlord who worked closely with U.S. forces to topple the Taliban in 2001.

At a time when Washington is ramping up military pressure on the Taliban, the off-balance-sheet activities of Afghan bankers raise the risk of fmancial instability that could offset progress on the battlefield. Fewer than 5 percent of Afghans have bank accounts, but among those who do are many soldiers and policemen whose salaries are paid through Kabul Bank.

A U.S. official who monitors Afghan finances, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to comment publicly, said banks appear to have plenty of money but noted that in a crisis, Afghan depositors ''won't wait in line holding cups of latte'' but would be ''waving AK–47s.''

Kabul Bank executives, in separate interviews, gave different accounts of what the bank is up to with Dubai home buyers. ''They are borrowers. They have an account at Kabul Bank,'' said the bank's chairman, Farnood, a boisterous 46-year-old with a gift for math and money—and the winner of $120,000 at the 2008 World Series of Poker Europe, held in a London casino.

The bank's chief audit officer, Raja Gopalakrishnan, however, insisted that the loan money didn't come directly from Kabul Bank. He said it was from affiliated but separate entities, notably a money-transfer agency called Shaheen Exchange, which is owned by Farnood, is run by one of Kabul Bank's 16 shareholders and operates in Kabul out of the bank's headquarters.

The audit officer said Farnood ''thinks it is one big pot,'' but the entities are ''legally definitely separate.''

A NEW ECONOMY

In some ways, Kabul Bank is a symbol of how much has changed in Afghanistan since 2001, when the country had no private banks and no economy to speak of. Kabul Bank has opened more than 60 branches and recently announced that it will open 250 more, and it claims to have more than $1 billion in deposits from more than a million Afghan customers.

Kabul Bank prospers because Afghanistan, though extremely poor, is in places awash with cash, a result of huge infusions of foreign aid, opium revenue and a legal economy that, against the odds, is growing at about 15 percent a year. The vast majority of this money flows into the hands of a tiny minority—some of it through legitimate profits, some of it through kickbacks and insider deals that bind the country's political, security and business elites.

The result is that, while anchoring a free-market order as Washington had hoped, financial institutions here sometimes serve as piggy banks for their owners and their political friends. Kabul Bank, for example, helps bankroll a money-losing airline owned by Farnood and fellow bank shareholders that flies three times a day between Kabul and Dubai.

Kabul Bank's executives helped finance President Hamid Karzai's fraud-blighted reelection campaign last year, and the bank is partly owned by Mahmoud Karzai, the Afghan president's older brother, and by Haseen Fahim, the brother of Karzai's vice presidential running mate.

Farnood, who now spends most of his time in Dubai, said he wants to do business in a ''normal way'' and does not receive favors as a result of his official contacts. He said that putting properties in his name means his bank's money is safe despite a slump in the Dubai property market: He can easily repossess if borrowers run short on cash.

A review of Dubai property data and interviews with current and former executives of Kabul Bank indicate that Farnood and his bank partners have at least $150 million invested in Dubai real estate. Most of their property is on Palm Jumeirah, a man-made island in the shape of a palm tree where the cheapest house costs more than $2 million.

Mirwais Azizi, an estranged business associate of Farnood and the founder of the rival Azizi Bank in Kabul, has also poured money into Dubai real estate, with even more uncertain results. A Dubai company he heads, Azizi Investments, has invested heavily in plots of land on Palm Jebel Ali, a stalled property development. Azizi did not respond to interview requests. His son, Farhad, said Mirwais was busy.

Responsibility for bank supervision in Afghanistan lies with the Afghan central bank, whose duties include preventing foreign property speculation. The United States has spent millions of dollars trying to shore up the central bank. But Afghan and U.S. officials say the bank, though increasingly professional, lacks political clout.

The central bank's governor, Abdul Qadir Fitrat, said his staff had ''vigorously investigated'' what he called ''rumors'' of Dubai property deals, but ''unfortunately, up until now they have not found anything.'' Fitrat, who used to live in Washington, last month sent a team of inspectors to Kabul Bank as part of a regular review of the bank's accounts. He acknowledged that Afghan loans are ''very difficult to verify'' because ''we don't know who owns what.''

Kabul Bank's dealings with Mahmoud Karzai, the president's brother, help explain why this is so. In interviews, Karzai, who has an Afghan restaurant in Baltimore, initially said he rented a $5.5 million Palm Jumeirah mansion, where he now lives with his family. But later he said he had an informal home-loan agreement with Kabul Bank and pays $7,000 a month in interest.

''It is a very peculiar situation. It is hard to comprehend because this is not the usual way of doing business,'' said Karzai, whose home is in Farnood's name.

Karzai also said he bought a 7.4 percent stake in the bank with $5 million he borrowed from the bank. But Gopalakrishnan, the chief audit officer, said Kabul Bank's books include no loans to the president's brother.

Also in a Palm Jumeirah villa registered in Farnood's name is the family of Ahmad Zia Massoud, Afghanistan's first vice president from 2004 until last November. The house, bought in December 2007 for $2.3 million, was first put in the name of Massoud's wife but was later re-registered to give Farnood formal ownership, property records indicate.

Massoud, brother of the legendary anti-Soviet guerrilla leader Ahmad Shah Massoud, said that Farnood had always been the owner but let his family use it rent-free for the past two years because he is ''my close friend.'' Massoud added: ''We have played football together. We have played chess together.'' Farnood, however, said that though the ''villa is in my name,'' it belongs to Massoud ''in reality.''

Haseen Fahim, the brother of Afghanistan's current first vice president, has been another beneficiary of Kabul Bank's largesse. He got money from Farnood to help buy a $6 million villa in Dubai, which, unusually, is under his own name. He borrowed millions more from the bank, which he partly owns, to fund companies he owns in Afghanistan.

In an interview at Kabul Bank's headquarters, Khalilullah Fruzi, who as chief executive heads the bank's day-to-day operations, said he didn't know how much bank money has ended up in Dubai. If Karzai's relatives and others buy homes ''in Dubai, or Germany or America . . . that is their own affair,'' Fruzi said, adding that the bank ''doesn't give loans directly for Dubai.''

Fruzi, a former gem trader, said Kabul Bank is in robust health, makes a profit and has about $400 million in liquid assets deposited with the Afghan central bank and other institutions. Kabul Bank is so flush, he added, that it is building a $30 million headquarters, a cluster of shimmering towers of bulletproof glass.

The bank is also spending millions to hire gunmen from a company called Khurasan Security Services, which, according to registration documents, used to be controlled by Fruzi and is now run by his brother.

The roots of Kabul Bank stretch back to the Soviet Union. Both Fruzi and Farnood got their education and their start in business there after Moscow invaded Afghanistan in 1979.

While in Moscow, Farnood set up a successful hawala money-transfer outfit to move funds between Russia and Kabul. Russian court documents show that 10 of Farnood's employees were arrested in 1998 and later convicted of illegal banking activity. Fearful of arrest in Russia and also in Taliban-ruled Afghanistan, Farnood shifted his focus to Dubai.

In 2004, three years after the fall of the Taliban regime, he got a license to open Kabul Bank. His Dubai-registered hawala, Shaheen Exchange, moved in upstairs and started moving cash for bank clients. It last year shifted $250 million to $300 million to Dubai, said the chief audit officer.

The bank began to take in new, politically connected shareholders, among them the president's brother, Mahmoud, and Fahim, brother of the vice president, who registered his stake in the name of his teenage son.

Fahim said two of his companies have borrowed $70 million from Kabul Bank. Insider borrowing, he said, is unavoidable and even desirable in Afghanistan because, in the absence of a solid legal system, business revolves around trust, not formal contracts. ''Afghanistan is not America or Europe. Afghanistan is starting from zero,'' he said.

Fahim's business has boomed, thanks largely to subcontracting work on foreign-funded projects, including a new U.S. Embassy annex and various buildings at CIA sites across the country, among them a remote base in Khost where seven Americans were killed in a December suicide attack by a Jordanian jihadiist. ''I have good opportunities to get profit,'' Fahim said.

''LIKE WILD HORSES''

Kabul Bank also plunged into the airline business, providing loans to Pamir Airways, an Afghan carrier now owned by Farnood, Fruzi and Fahim. Pamir spent $46 million on four used Boeing 737–400s and hired Hashim Karzai, the president's cousin, formerly of Silver Spring, as a ''senior adviser.''

Farnood said he also provided a ''little bit'' of money to help Hashim Karzai buy a house on Palm Jumeirah in Dubai. Karzai, in brief telephone interviews, said that the property was an investment and that he had borrowed some money from Farnood. He said he couldn't recall details and would ''have to check with my accountant.''

Noor Delawari, governor of the central bank during Kabul Bank's rise, said Farnood and his lieutenants ''were like wild horses'' and ''never paid attention to the rules and regulations.'' Delawari said he didn't know about any property deals by Kabul Bank in Dubai. He said that he, too, bought a home in the emirate, for about $200,000.

Fitrat, the current central bank governor, has tried to take a tougher line against Kabul Bank and its rivals, with little luck. Before last year's presidential election, the central bank sent a stern letter to bankers, complaining that they squander too much money on ''security guards and bulletproof vehicles'' and ''expend large-scale monetary assistance to politicians.'' The letter ordered them to remain ''politically neutral.''

Kabul Bank did the opposite: Fruzi, its chief executive, joined Karzai's campaign in Kabul while Farnood, its poker-playing chairman, organized fundraising events for Karzai in Dubai. One of these was held at the Palm Jumeirah house of Karzai's brother.

The government has returned the favor. The ministries of defense, interior and education now pay many soldiers, police and teachers through Kabul Bank. This means that tens of millions of dollars' worth of public money sloshes through the bank, an unusual arrangement, as governments generally don't pump so much through a single private bank.

Soon after his November inauguration for a second term, President Karzai spoke at an anti-corruption conference in Kabul, criticizing officials who ''after one or two years work for the government get rich and buy houses in Dubai.'' Last month, he flew to London for a conference on Afghanistan, attended by Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and other leaders, and again promised an end to the murky deals that have so tarnished his rule.

Also in London for the conference were Farnood, who now has an Afghan diplomatic passport, and Fruzi, who served as a financial adviser to Karzai's reelection campaign and also owns a house in Dubai. ''If there is no Kabul Bank, there will be no Karzai, no government,'' Fruzi said.

As a result, U.S. taxpayers and aid organizations are investing billions of dollars in Afghanistan, but the leaders of the country are investing in real estate in Dubai. We care about democracy. Try building democracy in a place which is rife with narcotraffic, crony capitalism, and villas in Dubai. What is this about? Why are we there? I mean, I am from Cleveland, Ohio. The people I represent are very basic people. When you tell them that the head of Afghanistan has his hands in all of these crooked deals, you start to wonder, We are going to build a democracy on this person's shoulders? I don't think so.

We are supporting a government where corruption is epidemic. Last year, USAID reported that corruption in Afghanistan is significant, a growing problem, and that pervasive, systemic corruption was at an unprecedented scope in the country's history. On November 17, Transparency International ranked Afghanistan as the second most corrupt nation in the world. And to compound the fears, in President Karzai's fraud-filled election late last year, he recently took over the country's election watchdog group. Is this the kind of person that we can trust to have a partnership with for democracy? I don't think so.

A January 2010 report by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime reveals that Afghan citizens were forced to pay an estimated $2.5 billion a year in bribes. According to evidence collected through wiretaps and bank records, a senior border police official in Kandahar allegedly collected salaries of hundreds of ghost policemen and stole money from a government fund intended to pay orphans and widows. Is this the kind of environment where we can build a democracy?

Our troops in Afghanistan have to deal with corrupt officials on a daily basis. A commander of the Afghan border police offered to give the U.S. military prime land at a crossing with Pakistan to build a waiting area for supply vehicles needed for President Obama's troop increase. The same man, U.S. officials believe, earns tens of millions of dollars a year trafficking opium and extorting cargo truck drivers. Is this the kind of person that we can create movement toward a democracy with?

[From the Nation, Nov. 30, 2009]

HOW THE U.S. FUNDS THE TALIBAN

(By Aram Roston)

On October 29, 2001, while the Taliban's rule over Afghanistan was under assault, the regime's ambassador in Islamabad gave a chaotic press conference in front of several dozen reporters sitting on the grass. On the Taliban diplomat's right sat his interpreter, Ahmad Rateb Popal, a man with an imposing presence. Like the ambassador, Popal wore a black turban, and he had a huge bushy beard. He had a black patch over his right eye socket, a prosthetic left arm and a deformed right hand, the result of injuries from an explosives mishap during an old operation against the Soviets in Kabul.

But Popal was more than just a former mujahedeen. In 1988, a year before the Soviets fled Afghanistan, Popal had been charged in the United States with conspiring to import more than a kilo of heroin. Court records show he was released from prison in 1997.

Flash forward to 2009, and Afghanistan is ruled by Popal's cousin President Hamid Karzai. Popal has cut his huge beard down to a neatly trimmed one and has become an immensely wealthy businessman, along with his brother Rashid Popal, who in a separate case pleaded guilty to a heroin charge in 1996 in Brooklyn. The Popal brothers control the huge Watan Group in Afghanistan, a consortium engaged in telecommunications, logistics and, most important, security. Watan Risk Management, the Popals' private military arm, is one of the few dozen private security companies in Afghanistan. One of Watan's enterprises, key to the war effort, is protecting convoys of Afghan trucks heading from Kabul to Kandahar, carrying American supplies.

Welcome to the wartime contracting bazaar in Afghanistan. It is a virtual carnival of improbable characters and shady connections, with former CIA officials and ex-military officers joining hands with former Taliban and mujahedeen to collect U.S. government funds in the name of the war effort.

In this grotesque carnival, the U.S. military's contractors are forced to pay suspected insurgents to protect American supply routes. It is an accepted fact of the military logistics operation in Afghanistan that the US government funds the very forces American troops are fighting. And it is a deadly irony, because these funds add up to a huge amount of money for the Taliban. ''It's a big part of their income,'' one of the top Afghan government security officials told The Nation in an interview. In fact, US military officials in Kabul estimate that a minimum of 10 percent of the Pentagon's logistics contracts—hundreds of millions of dollars—consists of payments to insurgents.

Understanding how this situation came to pass requires untangling two threads. The first is the insider dealing that determines who wins and who loses in Afghan business, and the second is the troubling mechanism by which ''private security'' ensures that the US supply convoys traveling these ancient trade routes aren't ambushed by insurgents.

A good place to pick up the first thread is with a small firm awarded a US military logistics contract worth hundreds of millions of dollars: NCL Holdings. Like the Popals' Watan Risk, NCL is a licensed security company in Afghanistan.

What NCL Holdings is most notorious for in Kabul contracting circles, though, is the identity of its chief principal, Hamed Wardak. He is the young American son of Afghanistan's current defense minister, Gen. Abdul Rahim Wardak, who was a leader of the mujahedeen against the Soviets. Hamed Wardak has plunged into business as well as policy. He was raised and schooled in the United States, graduating as valedictorian from Georgetown University in 1997. He earned a Rhodes scholarship and interned at the neoconservative think tank the American Enterprise Institute. That internship was to play an important role in his life, for it was at AEI that he forged alliances with some of the premier figures in American conservative foreign policy circles, such as the late Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick.

Wardak incorporated NCL in the United States early in 2007, although the firm may have operated in Afghanistan before then. It made sense to set up shop in Washington, because of Wardak's connections there. On NCL's advisory board, for example, is Milton Bearden, a well-known former CIA officer. Bearden is an important voice on Afghanistan issues; in October he was a witness before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, where Senator John Kerry, the chair, introduced him as ''a legendary former CIA case officer and a clearheaded thinker and writer.'' It is not every defense contracting company that has such an influential adviser.

But the biggest deal that NCL got—the contract that brought it into Afghanistan's major leagues—was Host Nation Trucking. Earlier this year the firm, with no apparent trucking experience, was named one of the six companies that would handle the bulk of US trucking in Afghanistan, bringing supplies to the web of bases and remote outposts scattered across the country.

At first the contract was large but not gargantuan. And then that suddenly changed, like an immense garden coming into bloom. Over the summer, citing the coming ''surge'' and a new doctrine, ''Money as a Weapons System,'' the U.S. military expanded the contract 600 percent for NCL and the five other companies. The contract documentation warns of dire consequences if more is not spent: ''service members will not get food, water, equipment, and ammunition they require.'' Each of the military's six trucking contracts was bumped up to $360 million, or a total of nearly $2.2 billion. Put it in this perspective: this single two-year effort to hire Afghan trucks and truckers was worth 10 percent of the annual Afghan gross domestic product. NCL, the firm run by the defense minister's well-connected son, had struck pure contracting gold.

Host Nation Trucking does indeed keep the US military efforts alive in Afghanistan. ''We supply everything the army needs to survive here,'' one American trucking executive told me. ''We bring them their toilet paper, their water, their fuel, their guns, their vehicles.'' The epicenter is Bagram Air Base, just an hour north of Kabul, from which virtually everything in Afghanistan is trucked to the outer reaches of what the Army calls ''the Battlespace''—that is, the entire country. Parked near Entry Control Point 3, the trucks line up, shifting gears and sending up clouds of dust as they prepare for their various missions across the country.

The real secret to trucking in Afghanistan is ensuring security on the perilous roads, controlled by warlords, tribal militias, insurgents and Taliban commanders. The American executive I talked to was fairly specific about it: ''The Army is basically paying the Taliban not to shoot at them. It is Department of Defense money.'' That is something everyone seems to agree on.

Mike Hanna is the project manager for a trucking company called Afghan American Army Services. The company, which still operates in Afghanistan, had been trucking for the United States for years but lost out in the Host Nation Trucking contract that NCL won. Hanna explained the security realities quite simply: ''You are paying the people in the local areas—some are warlords, some are politicians in the police force—to move your trucks through.''

Hanna explained that the prices charged are different, depending on the route: ''We're basically being extorted. Where you don't pay, you're going to get attacked. We just have our field guys go down there, and they pay off who they need to.'' Sometimes, he says, the extortion fee is high, and sometimes it is low. ''Moving ten trucks, it is probably $800 per truck to move through an area. It's based on the number of trucks and what you're carrying. If you have fuel trucks, they are going to charge you more. If you have dry trucks, they're not going to charge you as much. If you are carrying MRAPs or Humvees, they are going to charge you more.''

Hanna says it is just a necessary evil. ''If you tell me not to pay these insurgents in this area, the chances of my trucks getting attacked increase exponentially.''

Whereas in Iraq the private security industry has been dominated by US and global firms like Blackwater, operating as de facto arms of the US government, in Afghanistan there are lots of local players as well. As a result, the industry in Kabul is far more dog-eat-dog. ''Every warlord has his security company,'' is the way one executive explained it to me.

In theory, private security companies in Kabul are heavily regulated, although the reality is different. Thirty-nine companies had licenses until September, when another dozen were granted licenses. Many licensed companies are politically connected: just as NCL is owned by the son of the defense minister and Watan Risk Management is run by President Karzai's cousins, the Asia Security Group is controlled by Hashmat Karzai, another relative of the president. The company has blocked off an entire street in the expensive Sherpur District. Another security firm is controlled by the parliamentary speaker's son, sources say. And so on.

In the same way, the Afghan trucking industry, key to logistics operations, is often tied to important figures and tribal leaders. One major hauler in Afghanistan, Afghan International Trucking (AIT), paid $20,000 a month in kickbacks to a US Army contracting official, according to the official's plea agreement in US court in August. AIT is a very well-connected firm: it is run by the 25-year-old nephew of Gen. Baba Jan, a former Northern Alliance commander and later a Kabul police chief. In an interview, Baba Jan, a cheerful and charismatic leader, insisted he had nothing to do with his nephew's corporate enterprise.

But the heart of the matter is that insurgents are getting paid for safe passage because there are few other ways to bring goods to the combat outposts and forward operating bases where soldiers need them. By definition, many outposts are situated in hostile terrain, in the southern parts of Afghanistan. The security firms don't really protect convoys of American military goods here, because they simply can't; they need the Taliban's cooperation.

One of the big problems for the companies that ship American military supplies across the country is that they are banned from arming themselves with any weapon heavier than a rifle. That makes them ineffective for battling Taliban attacks on a convoy. ''They are shooting the drivers from 3,000 feet away with PKMs,'' a trucking company executive in Kabul told me. ''They are using RPGs [rocket-propelled grenades] that will blow up an up-armed vehicle. So the security companies are tied up. Because of the rules, security companies can only carry AK–47s, and that's just a joke. I carry an AK—and that's just to shoot myself if I have to!''

The rules are there for a good reason: to guard against devastating collateral damage by private security forces. Still, as Hanna of Afghan American Army Services points out, ''An AK–47 versus a rocket-propelled grenade—you are going to lose!'' That said, at least one of the Host Nation Trucking companies has tried to do battle instead of paying off insurgents and warlords. It is a US-owned firm called Four Horsemen International. Instead of providing payments, it has tried to fight off attackers. And it has paid the price in lives, with horrendous casualties. FHI, like many other firms, refused to talk publicly; but I've been told by insiders in the security industry that FHI's convoys are attacked on virtually every mission.

For the most part, the security firms do as they must to survive. A veteran American manager in Afghanistan who has worked there as both a soldier and a private security contractor in the field told me, ''What we are doing is paying warlords associated with the Taliban, because none of our security elements is able to deal with the threat.'' He's

an Army veteran with years of Special Forces experience, and he's not happy about what's being done. He says that at a minimum American military forces should try to learn more about who is getting paid off.

''Most escorting is done by the Taliban,'' an Afghan private security official told me. He's a Pashto and former mujahedeen commander who has his finger on the pulse of the military situation and the security industry. And he works with one of the trucking companies carrying US supplies. ''Now the government is so weak,'' he added, ''everyone is paying the Taliban.''

To Afghan trucking officials, this is barely even something to worry about. One woman I met was an extraordinary entrepreneur who had built up a trucking business in this male-dominated field. She told me the security company she had hired dealt directly with Taliban leaders in the south. Paying the Taliban leaders meant they would send along an escort to ensure that no other insurgents would attack. In fact, she said, they just needed two armed Taliban vehicles. ''Two Taliban is enough,'' she told me. ''One in the front and one in the back.'' She shrugged. ''You cannot work otherwise. Otherwise it is not possible.''

Which leads us back to the case of Watan Risk, the firm run by Ahmad Rateb Popal and Rashid Popal, the Karzai family relatives and former drug dealers. Watan is known to control one key stretch of road that all the truckers use: the strategic route to Kandahar called Highway 1. Think of it as the road to the war—to the south and to the west. If the Army wants to get supplies down to Helmand, for example, the trucks must make their way through Kandahar.

Watan Risk, according to seven different security and trucking company officials, is the sole provider of security along this route. The reason is simple: Watan is allied with the local warlord who controls the road. Watan's company website is quite impressive, and claims its personnel ''are diligently screened to weed out all ex-militia members, supporters of the Taliban, or individuals with loyalty to warlords, drug barons, or any other group opposed to international support of the democratic process.'' Whatever screening methods it uses, Watan's secret weapon to protect American supplies heading through Kandahar is a man named Commander Ruhullah. Said to be a handsome man in his 40s, Ruhullah has an oddly high-pitched voice. He wears traditional salwar kameez and a Rolex watch. He rarely, if ever, associates with Westerners. He commands a large group of irregular fighters with no known government affiliation, and his name, security officials tell me, inspires obedience or fear in villages along the road.

It is a dangerous business, of course: until last spring Ruhullah had competition—a one-legged warlord named Commander Abdul Khaliq. He was killed in an ambush.

So Ruhullah is the surviving road warrior for that stretch of highway. According to witnesses, he works like this: he waits until there are hundreds of trucks ready to convoy south down the highway. Then he gets his men together, setting them up in 4x4s and pickups. Witnesses say he does not limit his arsenal to AK–47s but uses any weapons he can get. His chief weapon is his reputation. And for that, Watan is paid royally, collecting a fee for each truck that passes through his corridor. The American trucking official told me that Ruhullah ''charges $1,500 per truck to go to Kandahar. Just 300 kilometers.''

It's hard to pinpoint what this is, exactly—security, extortion or a form of ''insurance.'' Then there is the question, Does Ruhullah have ties to the Taliban? That's impossible to know. As an American private security veteran familiar with the route said, ''He works both sides . . . whatever is most profitable. He's the main commander. He's got to be involved with the Taliban. How much, no one knows.''

Even NCL, the company owned by Hamed Wardak, pays. Two sources with direct knowledge tell me that NCL sends its portion of US logistics goods in Watan's and Ruhullah's convoys. Sources say NCL is billed $500,000 per month for Watan's services. To underline the point: NCL, operating on a $360 million contract from the US military, and owned by the Afghan defense minister's son, is paying millions per year from those funds to a company owned by President Karzai's cousins, for protection.

Hamed Wardak wouldn't return my phone calls. Milt Bearden, the former CIA officer affiliated with the company, wouldn't speak with me either. There's nothing wrong with Bearden engaging in business in Afghanistan, but disclosure of his business interests might have been expected when testifying on US policy in Afghanistan and Pakistan. After all, NCL stands to make or lose hundreds of millions based on the whims of US policy-makers.

It is certainly worth asking why NCL, a company with no known trucking experience, and little security experience to speak of, would win a contract worth $360 million. Plenty of Afghan insiders are asking questions. ''Why would the US government give him a contract if he is the son of the minister of defense?'' That's what Mahmoud Karzai asked me. He is the brother of President Karzai, and he himself has been treated in the press as a poster boy for access to government officials. The New York Times even profiled him in a highly critical piece. In his defense, Karzai emphasized that he, at least, has refrained from US government or Afghan government contracting. He pointed out, as others have, that Hamed Wardak had little security or trucking background before his company received security and trucking contracts from the Defense Department. ''That's a questionable business practice,'' he said. ''They shouldn't give it to him. How come that's not questioned?''

I did get the opportunity to ask General Wardak, Hamed's father, about it. He is quite dapper, although he is no longer the debonair ''Gucci commander'' Bearden once described. I asked Wardak about his son and NCL. ''I've tried to be straightforward and correct and fight corruption all my life,'' the defense minister said. ''This has been something people have tried to use against me, so it has been painful.''

Wardak would speak only briefly about NCL. The issue seems to have produced a rift with his son. ''I was against it from the beginning, and that's why we have not talked for a long time. I have never tried to support him or to use my power or influence that he should benefit.''

When I told Wardak that his son's company had a US contract worth as much as $360 million, he did a double take. ''This is impossible,'' he said. ''I do not believe this.''

I believed the general when he said he really didn't know what his son was up to. But cleaning up what look like insider deals may be easier than the next step: shutting down the money pipeline going from DoD contracts to potential insurgents.

Two years ago, a top Afghan security official told me, Afghanistan's intelligence service, the National Directorate of Security, had alerted the American military to the problem. The NDS delivered what I'm told are ''very detailed'' reports to the Americans explaining how the Taliban are profiting from protecting convoys of US supplies.

The Afghan intelligence service even offered a solution: what if the United States were to take the tens of millions paid to security contractors and instead set up a dedicated and professional convoy support unit to guard its logistics lines? The suggestion went nowhere.

The bizarre fact is that the practice of buying the Taliban's protection is not a secret. I asked Col. David Haight, who commands the Third Brigade of the Tenth Mountain Division, about it. After all, part of Highway 1 runs through his area of operations. What did he think about security companies paying off insurgents? ''The American soldier in me is repulsed by it,'' he said in an interview in his office at FOB Shank in Logar Province. ''But I know that it is what it is: essentially paying the enemy, saying, 'Hey, don't hassle me.' I don't like it, but it is what it is.''

As a military official in Kabul explained contracting in Afghanistan overall, ''We understand that across the board 10 percent to 20 percent goes to the insurgents. My intel guy would say it is closer to 10 percent. Generally it is happening in logistics.''

In a statement to The Nation about Host Nation Trucking, Col. Wayne Shanks, the chief public affairs officer for the international forces in Afghanistan, said that military officials are ''aware of allegations that procurement funds may find their way into the hands of insurgent groups, but we do not directly support or condone this activity, if it is occurring.'' He added that, despite oversight, ''the relationships between contractors and their subcontractors, as well as between subcontractors and others in their operational communities, are not entirely transparent.''

In any case, the main issue is not that the US military is turning a blind eye to the problem. Many officials acknowledge what is going on while also expressing a deep disquiet about the situation. The trouble is that—as with so much in Afghanistan—the United States doesn't seem to know how to fix it.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING), a member of the Agriculture and Small Business Committees and the ranking member on the Judiciary Subcommittee on Immigration, Citizenship, Refugees, Border Security, and International Law.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Florida for yielding to me.

I rise in opposition to H. Con. Res. 248. It is not with disrespect for my colleague from Ohio, and I am confident that the gentleman from Ohio is aware of that, but I read the resolution, and to me it reads as a retreat resolution. I think about the times that America has been characterized as retreating. As I look back through the history that I have lived through and the history that I have studied, I think of a little book I have in my office that I wish I would have brought over here. It is the book, ''How We Won the War,'' by General Giap of Vietnam, North Vietnam at the time. And I ran across that book randomly, and I began to read through that, and what would be going through the mind of a Vietnamese general.

First, I would make the point that we didn't lose the war tactically in Vietnam; it was lost here in the United

States, and a lot of it exactly on the floor of this Congress and in debates that began and flowed through similar to these debates that we have today.

As I read that, it is on page 8, it is not worth reading the book, it says that they got the inspiration because the United States had negotiated an agreement with Korea. Where did they get their inspiration to win the war against us in Vietnam? They saw that we didn't fight the Korean war through to a final victory but negotiated a settlement. And then I would fast-forward to June 11, 2004, where I was sitting waiting to go into Iraq the next day, and on the screen of Al Jazeera TV came Muqtada al-Sadr speaking in Arabic with English closed caption. He said, If we continue to attack Americans, they will leave Iraq the same way they left Vietnam, the same way they left Lebanon, the same way they left Mogadishu. That is the inspiration not just for our enemies of al Qaeda in Iraq and in Afghanistan and around the world, it is the inspiration for all of our enemies around the world, and it was the inspiration for Osama bin Laden when he ordered the attack on the United States on September 11.

We cannot lose our will. When we engage in an operation, we have to push it through to success. In fact, that legacy of Lebanon, Vietnam, and Mogadishu has been put to rest by a victory in Iraq, a victory that would not have been achieved if the people who brought these debates to the floor 44 times in the 110th Congress, resolutions that were designed to unfund, underfund, or undermine our troops, we fought off all of those resolutions. Now we have a victory in Iraq that is being claimed by this administration who opposed it back then.

I don't trust the judgment of people who have always been against armed conflict. I trust the judgment of the people who fight and win wars and the people who lead us through those wars that we fight and win.

This is an American destiny question that is before us. If we walk away from this conflict in Afghanistan for any reason, America's destiny will forever be diminished, and they will never take us seriously again.

Mr. KUCINICH. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. FARR).

Mr. FARR. Madam Speaker, I rise today for this opportunity to speak as an original cosponsor of this bill on what I believe is the foremost foreign policy issue facing the United States today. There is perhaps no more important matter on the table right now than Afghanistan, not least because every dollar we spend abroad for war is a dollar of investment lost to all of our communities here at home.

We have spent more than $250 billion fighting and occupying Afghanistan. President Obama is now implementing his plan to send an additional 30,000 troops to Afghanistan, which will cost another $33 billion. This is an enormous amount of money, and the security gains are dubious when there are more al Qaeda in other parts of the globe.

So long as the United States has a major military presence in Afghanistan, long-term stability will continue to be a goal just out of our reach. More troops are not the answer.

We need to turn the corner. We must rebuild. We must build a governing capacity among the Afghans, not military fighting capacity. As long as Afghanistan is able to depend exclusively on the United States for stability, the longer they will continue to do so. The quicker we prepare for transfer authority to the Afghans, the sooner we will be able to leave the country.

Over a year ago, President Obama announced his strategy to disrupt, dismantle, and defeat al Qaeda in its safe havens of Afghanistan and Pakistan. I made clear that I would not rubber-stamp his strategy for more troops. The only way we can solve this mess is to put in place a regional strategy with international buy-in. That strategy must include a strong civilian component capable of achieving diplomatic and development objectives, as well as security goals.

I was distressed to read several months ago that Special Envoy Richard Holbrooke acknowledged that we had built almost no capacity in the Afghan authorities.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. EDWARDS of Maryland). The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. KUCINICH. I yield the gentleman another 30 seconds.

Mr. FARR. We sent our troops to war in Afghanistan, but after more than 8 years of war, we are only now actively trying to support peace. For years, I have worked to develop a Civilian Response Corps that can bring the whole of government approach to winning the peace.

We have proven time and time again that we can kick down doors, but we have not yet proven that we can build peace. We are finally standing up the Civilian Response Corps, and we are finally developing the capacity so that war without end is not our only option.

In the recent operation in Marjah, the military aspect of the operation started in February 12, and by February 25 the Afghan flag was raised. This week, Afghan President Karzai, together with General Stanley McChrystal, visited Marjah. They met with elders who told President Karzai they wanted Afghan troops, not international forces, in their town. They expressed frustration at the government's lack of ability to provide services. It is those public services—provided by a civilian corps supported by Afghan security—that will win the peace.

The long-term solution in Afghanistan will be a civilian solution, and the sooner we move to this next phase the better. For this reason, I believe a vote for success in Afghanistan is a vote for this resolution to remove our military troops by year's end.

Mr. BERMAN. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to yield 1 minute to the majority leader, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER).

Mr. HOYER. Madam Speaker, I rise in opposition to this resolution, which would urge the withdrawal of American troops from Afghanistan, in my opinion, at great cost to America's security and, indeed, the Afghan people. But I want to rise as well to thank my friend, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH), with whom I work closely. This issue needs to be debated. This issue needs to be raised. The American people have a right to have us debate this issue.

□ 1715

Their young men and young women are in harm's way. They are in harm's way at our insistence, or at least at our sufferance. So it is right to have this debate. And while I disagree with the gentleman from Ohio, I appreciate the fact that he provides this opportunity to discuss this very, very important issue.

Madam Speaker, after years in which Afghanistan was a secondary concern, in my view, President Obama has set our policy on a new course which is already showing significant results. I believe that this is not the time to change that policy.

There is vast agreement that an indefinite presence in Afghanistan or Iraq is unacceptable. In Iraq we have reached the transition point of handing over responsibility to the central Government to take care of its own people. We see positive signs, such as the recent Iraq election in which 62 percent of the voters turned out in the face of terrorist violence. Was it perfect? It was not. Are there concerns yet about who could run and who could not? There are, appropriate concerns. But nevertheless, we see progress.

Given the increasing stability of the Iraq Government, President Obama is proceeding with responsible troop withdrawals. Today, 96,000 American troops remain, down from 140,000 troops, and calculated and careful drawdowns continue. All American combat troops are set to leave Iraq by the end of August.

At the same time, the President conducted a comprehensive reevaluation of our Afghanistan policy, one in which all viewpoints were heard. Some thought it took too long; some of us believed it was a careful, thoughtful, and correct attention to an important decision.

The Obama administration came to the conclusion that a failed Afghanistan was the launching pad for terrorist attacks that killed thousands of Americans as well as a source of regional instability, and that a newly failed Afghan state could pose the same danger again. That is why we, in a bipartisan way, authorized troops to go to Afghanistan about a decade ago. That is why the President committed to a strategy of troop increases, not as an open-ended commitment, but as part of a limited strategy of counterinsurgency with withdrawals set to begin in the summer of 2011.

This is not a war we fight alone. Our allies understand that the threat of terrorism affects us all and have pitched in accordingly. Since the President's December 1 speech announcing his new policy, we have seen a sharp increase in international cooperation with our allies, pledging approximately 10,000 additional troops and more military trainees.

Our new Afghan strategy has already seen real success in Afghanistan and in Pakistan, which demonstrates that this resolution is especially ill-timed. Among the highlights of that success have been the capture of Mullah Baradar, the second-highest ranking member of the Taliban and most significant Taliban capture since the beginning of the war, and Mullah Abdul Kabir, a senior Taliban leader. Both were captured in Pakistan, which illustrates increased cooperation from the Pakistan Government, thanks in large part to the administration's careful diplomacy.

As The Washington Post put it on February 23, ''Pakistani security forces have long supported or turned a blind eye to Afghan Taliban members seeking sanctuary in Pakistan. The recent arrests seem to mark a change in that attitude.'' Clearly, success in Afghanistan will be posited on the success of those in Pakistan to act against sanctuaries. At the same time, the leadership of al Qaeda and Taliban has been severely damaged through strikes in Pakistan. And the new counterinsurgency strategy has been put to work in Marjah, an important district in Helmand province, where American, coalition, and Afghan troops have worked and fought successfully together to strengthen the central Government against Taliban fighters.

Let me say, the gentleman has made some comments about the Afghan central Government. All of us share the gentleman's concerns about the central Government. These are concerns that are properly raised and need to be addressed. However, there is no doubt that years of war against the Taliban and terrorists have imposed a heavy cost on the Afghan people. Despite those heavy costs, the Afghan people support the coalition's continued presence in their country, perhaps because they know that reprisals from an unchecked Taliban would be fierce and unforgiving. In fact, our failure to follow through when the Soviets withdrew resulted, very frankly, in the Taliban's presence.

According to a recent poll conducted by the BBC, ABC, and German television, 68 percent of Afghans want American troops to stay in their country and 56 percent of Afghans believe their country is headed in the right direction, compared to just 30 percent last spring. Just since last spring, we have seen almost a doubling of the view that Afghanistan is heading in the right direction on behalf of Afghan citizens.

Madam Speaker, there is no question that our strategy in Afghanistan and Pakistan has suffered from neglect, poor planning, and minimal diplomacy, but passing this resolution would show that we've learned the wrong lessons from those years of relative neglect. Abandoning Afghanistan just when a new strategy and new leadership has begun to bear fruit I think would be a mistake. And although I appreciate the gentleman's leadership and incisive analysis, which bears listening to, on this issue we disagree.

I would urge, therefore, my colleagues to vote ''no'' on the resolution before us.

Mr. KUCINICH. I want to thank our majority leader for his participation and also for his cooperation in ensuring that this debate could happen. You and our Speaker and Mr. BERMAN are appreciated for your willingness to provide for this moment to happen so that the House could be heard from, so thank you.

I would ask, Madam Speaker, how much time remains in the debate? I am sure we're winding down here.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Ohio has 13½ minutes remaining. The gentleman from California has 9 minutes remaining. And the gentlewoman from Florida has 5 minutes remaining.

Mr. KUCINICH. I yield myself 3 minutes.

One of the areas of concern that I have about our presence in Afghanistan that I haven't seen discussed that much deals with the role of oil and gas, particularly in Afghanistan. Paul Craig Roberts, who was an Assistant Secretary of Treasury under the Reagan administration, reported in November of last year on a former British ambassador to Uzbekistan, Craig Murray, who was fired from his job when he spoke out about documents he saw ''proving that the motivation for U.S. and U.K. military aggression in Afghanistan had something to do with the natural gas deposits in Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan.'' He continues, and these are his words, ''The Americans wanted a pipeline that bypassed Russia and Iran and went through Afghanistan. To ensure this, an invasion was necessary.''

I did some additional research on that and I found an article by Craig Murray where he claims that Mr. Karzai ''was put in place because of his role with Unocal in developing the Trans-Afghanistan Gas Pipeline project. That remains a chief strategic goal. The Asian Development Bank has agreed finance to start construction in spring, 2011. It is, of course, a total coincidence that 30,000 extra U.S. troops will arrive 6 months before, and that the U.S. (as opposed to other NATO forces) deployment area corresponds with the pipeline route.''

I have a map of the pipeline. It's probably not easily visible, but it starts on the west in Turkmenistan, goes through Afghanistan, south to Pakistan and India, and it touches near both Helmand and Kandahar province, which is exactly where our troop buildup is occurring. I will put this article by Mr. Murray into the RECORD.

OBAMA IS WRONG ON BOTH COUNTS

(By Craig Murray)

Obama loves his rhetoric, and his speech on the Afghan surge was topped by a rhetorical flourish:

''Our cause is just, our resolve unshaken''.

He is of course wrong on both counts.

The occupation of Afghanistan by the US and its allies is there to prop up the government of President Karzai. Karzai's has always been an ultra-corrupt government of vicious warlords and drugs barons. I have been pointing this out for years, http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-469983/Britain-protecting-biggest-heroin-crop-time.html#ixzz0VS78HVR1

The CIA is up to its usual tricks again supporting the drug running of key warlords loyal to them. They are also setting up death squads on the Central American model, in cooperation with Blackwater.

Fortunately Karzai's rigging of his re-election was so blatant that the scales have fallen from the eyes of the public and even the mainstream media. Politicians no longer pretend we are promoting democracy in Afghanistan.

Karzai comes directly from the Bush camp and was put in place because of his role with Unocal in developing the Trans Afghanistan Gas Pipeline project. That remains a chief strategic goal. The Asian Development Bank has agreed finance to start construction in Spring 2011. It is of course a total coincidence that 30,000 extra US troops will arrive six months before, and that the US (as opposed to other NATO forces) deployment area corresponds with the pipeline route.

Obama's claim that ''Our cause is just'' ultimately rests on the extraordinary claim that, eight years after the invasion, we are still there in self-defence. In both the UK and US, governments are relying on the mantra that the occupation of Afghanistan protects us from terrorism at home.

This is utter nonsense. The large majority of post 9/11 terror incidents have been by Western Muslims outraged by our invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq. Put bluntly, if we keep invading Muslim countries, of course we will face a violent backlash. The idea that because we occupy Afghanistan a Muslim from Dewsbury or Detroit disenchanted with the West would not be able to manufacture a bomb is patent nonsense. It would be an infinitely better strategy to make out theoretical Muslim less disenchanted by not attacking and killing huge numbers of his civilian co-religionists.

Our cause is unjust.

We are responsible for the deaths of tens of thousands of civilians in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and for the further of radicalisation of Muslim communities worldwide. That threatens a perpetual war—which is of course just what the military-industrial complex and the security industry want. They have captured Obama.

Fortunately, our resolve is shaken.

The ordinary people of the UK and US have begun in sufficient numbers to see through this perpetual war confidence trick; they realise there is nothing in it for them but dead youngsters and high taxes. That is why Obama made a very vague promise—which I believe in its vagueness and caveats to be deliberate deceit—that troops will start to leave in 2011.

Today's promises of 5,000 additional NATO troops are, incidentally, empty rhetoric. I gather from friends in the FCO that firm pledges to date amount to 670.

A well-placed source close to the Taliban in Pakistan tells me that the Afghan Taliban

and their tribal allies have a plan. As the US seeks massively to expand the Afghan forces, they are feeding in large numbers of volunteers. I suspect that while we may see the odd attack on their trainers, the vast majority will get trained, fed, paid and equipped and bide their time before turning en masse. This is nothing new; it is precisely the history of foreign occupations in the region and the purchase of tribal auxiliaries and alliances.

I will also have this article called ''Unocal and the Afghanistan Pipeline'' submitted in the RECORD because he talks about how ''Unocal was not interested in a partnership. The U.S. Government, its affiliated transnational oil and construction companies, and the ruling elite of the West had coveted the same oil and gas transit route for years.

''A trans-Afghanistan pipeline was not simply a business matter, but a key component of a broader geostrategic agenda: total military and economic control of Eurasia.'' This is supposedly described in Zbigniew Brzezinski's book, ''The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and Its Geostrategic Imperatives'' as ''the center of world power.''

''Capturing the region's oil wealth and carving out territory in order to build a network of transit routes was a primary objective of U.S. military interventions throughout the 1990s in the Balkans, the Caucasus, and Caspian Sea.''

[From Centre for Research on Globalisation, March 2002]

UNOCAL AND THE AFGHANISTAN PIPELINE

(By Larry Chin)

CRG's Global Outlook, premiere issue on ''Stop the War'' provides detailed documentation on the war and the ''Post-September 11 Crisis.'' Order/subscribe. Consult Table of Contents

PART ONE OF A TWO-PART SERIES PLAYERS ON A RIGGED GRAND CHESSBOARD: BRIDAS,

After the fall of the Soviet Union, Argentine oil company Bridas, led by its ambitious chairman, Carlos Bulgheroni, became the first company to exploit the oil fields of Turkmenistan and propose a pipeline through neighboring Afghanistan. A powerful US-backed consortium intent on building its own pipeline through the same Afghan corridor would oppose Bridas' project.

THE COVETED TRANS-AFGHAN ROUTE

Upon successfully negotiating leases to explore in Turkmenistan, Bridas was awarded exploration contracts for the Keimar block near the Caspian Sea, and the Yashlar block near the Afghanistan border. By March 1995, Bulgheroni had accords with Turkmenistan and Pakistan granting Bridas construction rights for a pipeline into Afghanistan, pending negotiations with the civil war-torn country.

The following year, after extensive meetings with warlords throughout Afghanistan, Bridas had a 30–year agreement with the Rabbani regime to build and operate an 875–mile gas pipeline across Afghanistan.

Bulgheroni believed that his pipeline would promote peace as well as material wealth in the region. He approached other companies, including Unocal and its then-CEO, Roger Beach, to join an international consortium.

Unocal was not interested in a partnership. The United States government, its affiliated transnational oil and construction companies, and the ruling elite of the West had coveted the same oil and gas transit route for years.

A trans-Afghanistan pipeline was not simply a business matter, but a key component of a broader geo-strategic agenda: total military and economic control of Eurasia (the Middle East and former Soviet Central Asian republics). Zbigniew Brezezinski describes this region in his book ''The Grand Chessboard—American Primacy and Its Geostrategic Imperatives'' as ''the center of world power.'' Capturing the region's oil wealth, and carving out territory in order to build a network of transit routes, was a primary objective of US military interventions throughout the 1990s in the Balkans, the Caucasus and Caspian Sea.

As of 1992, 11 western oil companies controlled more than 50 percent of all oil investments in the Caspian Basin, including Unocal, Amoco, Atlantic Richfield, Chevron, Exxon-Mobil, Pennzoil, Texaco, Phillips and British Petroleum.

In ''Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia'' (a definitive work that is a primary source for this report), Ahmed Rashid wrote, ''US oil companies who had spearheaded the first US forays into the region wanted a greater say in US policy making.''

Business and policy planning groups active in Central Asia, such as the Foreign Oil Companies Group operated with the full support of the US State Department, the National Security Council, the CIA and the Department of Energy and Commerce.

Among the most active operatives for US efforts: Brezezinski (a consultant to Amoco, and architect of the Afghan-Soviet war of the 1970s), Henry Kissinger (advisor to Unocal), and Alexander Haig (a lobbyist for Turkmenistan), and Dick Cheney (Halliburton, US-Azerbaijan Chamber of Commerce).

Unocal's Central Asia envoys consisted of former US defense and intelligence officials. Robert Oakley, the former US ambassador to Pakistan, was a ''counter-terrorism'' specialist for the Reagan administration who armed and trained the mujahadeen during the war against the Soviets in the 1980s. He was an Iran-Contra conspirator charged by Independent Counsel Lawrence Walsh as a key figure involved in arms shipments to Iran.

Richard Armitage, the current Deputy Defense Secretary, was another Iran-Contra player in Unocal's employ. A former Navy SEAL, covert operative in Laos, director with the Carlyle Group, Armitage is allegedly deeply linked to terrorist and criminal networks in the Middle East, and the new independent states of the former Soviet Union (Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgistan).

Armitage was no stranger to pipelines. As a member of the Burma/Myanmar Forum, a group that received major funding from Unocal, Armitage was implicated in a lawsuit filed by Burmese villagers who suffered human rights abuses during the construction of a Unocal pipeline. (Halliburton, under Dick Cheney, performed contract work on the same Burmese project.)

BRIDAS VERSUS THE NEW WORLD ORDER

Much to Bridas' dismay, Unocal went directly to regional leaders with its own proposal. Unocal formed its own competing US-led, Washington-sponsored consortium that included Saudi Arabia's Delta Oil, aligned with Saudi Prince Abdullah and King Fahd. Other partners included Russia's Gazprom and Turkmenistan's state-owned Turkmenrozgas.

John Imle, president of Unocal (and member of the US-Azerbaijan Chamber of Commerce with Armitage, Cheney, Brezezinski and other ubiquitous figures), lobbied Turkmenistan's president Niyazov and prime minister Bhutto of Pakistan, offering a Unocal pipeline following the same route as Bridas.'

Dazzled by the prospect of an alliance with the US, Niyazov asked Bridas to renegotiate its past contract and blocked Bridas' exports from Keimar field. Bridas responded by filing three cases with the International Chamber of Commerce against Turkmenistan for breach of contract. (Bridas won.) Bridas also filed a lawsuit in Texas charging Unocal with civil conspiracy and ''tortuous interference with business relations.'' While its officers were negotiating with Pakistani and Turkmen oil and gas officials, Bridas claimed that Unocal had stolen its idea, and coerced the Turkmen government into blocking Bridas from Keimir field. (The suit was dismissed in 1998 by Judge Brady G. Elliott, a Republican, who claimed that any dispute between Unocal and Bridas was governed by the laws of Turkmenistan and Afghanistan, rather than Texas law.)

In October 1995, with neither company in a winning position, Bulgheroni and Imle accompanied Niyazov to the opening of the UN General Assembly. There, Niyazov awarded Unocal with a contract for a 918-mile natural gas pipeline. Bulgheroni was shocked. At the announcement ceremony, Unocal consultant Henry Kissinger said that the deal looked like ''the triumph of hope over experience.''

Later, Unocal's consortium, CentGas, would secure another contract for a companion 1,050-mile oil pipeline from Dauletabad through Afghanistan that would connect to a tanker loading port in Pakistan on the coast of the Arabian Sea.

Although Unocal had agreements with the governments on either end of the proposed route, Bridas still had the contract with Afghanistan.

The problem was resolved via the CIA and Pakistani ISI-backed Taliban. Following a visit to Kandahar by US Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia Robin Raphael in the fall of 1996, the Taliban entered Kabul and sent the Rabbani government packing.

Bridas' agreement with Rabbani would have to be renegotiated.

WOOING THE TALIBAN

According to Ahmed Rashid, ''Unocal's real influence with the Taliban was that their project carried the possibility of US recognition, which the Taliban were desperately anxious to secure.''

Unocal wasted no time greasing the palms of the Taliban. It offered humanitarian aid to Afghan warlords who would form a council to supervise the pipeline project. It provided a new mobile phone network between Kabul and Kandahar. Unocal also promised to help rebuild Kandahar, and donated $9,000 to the University of Nebraska's Center for Afghan Studies. The US State Department, through its aid organization USAID, contributed significant education funding for Taliban. In the spring of 1996, Unocal executives flew Uzbek leader General Abdul Rashid Dostum to Dallas to discuss pipeline passage through his northern (Northern Alliance-controlled) territories.

Bridas countered by forming an alliance with Ningarcho, a Saudi company closely aligned with Prince Turki el-Faisal, the Saudi intelligence chief. Turki was a mentor to Osama bin Laden, the ally of the Taliban who was publicly feuding with the Saudi royal family. As a gesture for Bridas, Prince Turki provided the Taliban with communications equipment and a fleet of pickup trucks. Now Bridas proposed two consortiums, one to build the Afghanistan portion, and another to take care of both ends of the line.

By November 1996, Bridas claimed that it had an agreement signed by the Taliban and Dostum—trumping Unocal.

The competition between Unocal and Bridas, as described by Rashid, ''began to reflect the competition within the Saudi Royal family.''

In 1997, Taliban officials traveled twice to Washington, D.C. and Buenos Aires to be wined and dined by Unocal and Bridas. No agreements were signed.

It appeared to Unocal that the Taliban was balking. In addition to royalties, the Taliban demanded funding for infrastructure projects, including roads and power plants. The Taliban also announced plans to revive the Afghan National Oil Company, which had been abolished by the Soviet regime in the late 1970s.

Osama bin Laden (who issued his fatwa against the West in 1998) advised the Taliban to sign with Bridas. In addition to offering the Taliban a higher bid, Bridas proposed an open pipeline accessible to warlords and local users. Unocal's pipeline was closed—for export purposes only. Bridas' plan also did not require outside financing, while Unocal's required a loan from the western financial institutions (the World Bank), which in turn would leave Afghanistan vulnerable to demands from western governments.

Bridas' approach to business was more to the Taliban's liking. Where Bulgheroni and Bridas' engineers would take the time to ''sip tea with Afghan tribesmen,'' Unocal's American executives issued top-down edicts from corporate headquarters and the US Embassy (including a demand to open talks with the CIA-backed Northern Alliance).

While seemingly well received within Afghanistan, Bridas' problems with Turkmenistan (which they blamed on Unocal and US interference) had left them cash-strapped and without a supply.

In 1997, they went searching for a major partner with the clout to break the deadlock with Turkmenistan. They found one in Amoco. Bridas sold 60 percent of its Latin American assets to Amoco. Carlos Bulgheroni and his contingent retained the remaining minority 40 percent. Facilitating the merger were other icons of transnational finance, Chase Manhattan (representing Bridas), Morgan Stanley (handling Amoco) and Arthur Andersen (facilitator of post-merger integration). Zbigniew Brezezinski was a consultant for Amoco.

(Amoco would merge with British Petroleum a year later. BP is represented by the law firm of Baker & Botts, whose principal attorney is James Baker, lifelong Bush friend, former secretary of state, and a member of the Carlyle Group.)

Recognizing the significance of the merger, a Pakistani oil company executive hinted, ''If these (Central Asian) countries want a big US company involved, Amoco is far bigger than Unocal.''

CLEARING THE CHESSBOARD AGAIN

By 1998, while the Argentine contingent made slow progress, Unocal faced a number of new problems.

Gazprom pulled out of CentGas when Russia complained about the anti-Russian agenda of the US. This forced Unocal to expand CentGas to include Japanese and South Korean gas companies, while maintaining the dominant share with Delta. Human rights groups began protesting Unocal's dealings with the brutal Taliban. Still riding years of Clinton bashing and scandal mongering, conservative Republicans in the US attacked the Clinton administration's Central Asia policy for its lack of clarity and ''leadership.''

Once again, violence would change the dynamic.

In response to the bombing of US embassies in Nairobi and Tanzania (attributed to bin Laden), President Bill Clinton sent cruise missiles into Afghanistan and Sudan. The administration broke off diplomatic contact with the Taliban, and UN sanctions were imposed.

Unocal withdrew from CentGas, and informed the State Department ''the gas pipeline would not proceed until an internationally recognized government was in place in Afghanistan.'' Although Unocal continued on and off negotiations on the oil pipeline (a separate project), the lack of support from Washington hampered efforts.

Meanwhile, Bridas declared that it would not need to wait for resolution of political issues, and repeated its intention of moving forward with the Afghan gas pipeline project on its own. Pakistan, Turkmenistan and Afghanistan tried to push Saudi Arabia to proceed with CentGas (Delta of Saudi Arabia was now the leader). But war and US-Taliban tension made business impossible.

For the remainder of the Clinton presidency, there would be no official US or UN recognition of Afghanistan. And no progress on the pipeline.

Then George Walker Bush took the White House.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. ROE), the ranking member of the Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigation.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. I thank the gentlewoman for yielding, and I rise in strong opposition to this resolution.

If passed, this would send a terrible message to our troops in harm's way and only serve to boost morale among our enemies who now have to face the reality that they are being tracked night and day.

I served in the Army in 1973 and 1974 in the infantry in Korea. I felt abandoned at that time by my country. I never want a soldier to feel like I felt at that time. I saw what happened in Vietnam when Washington bureaucrats and lawmakers micromanaged the war and prevented commanders from having the resources available which they thought would win. I will never support a plan for this or any other war in which I think we are tying the hands of our brave servicemembers.

In my judgment, the strategy devised by our military leaders and being implemented by our Armed Forces is the correct one. I have always said I will support this military plan so long as we do not set arbitrary dates for withdrawal from the country, which will only set a target date for those who would try to kill our young men and women.

It is important that we do not forget why we are in Afghanistan. We are fighting this war because a previous Afghan regime allowed al Qaeda, the terrorist group responsible for countless attacks around the globe, including the September 11 attacks against the United States, to operate freely within its borders. If the coalition forces leave, the Taliban could regain control of the country and once again provide safe harbors for those who hate America and want to destroy our country.

Winning the war in Afghanistan will also help deter a radical Islamic government from taking over Pakistan, a country with over 15 nuclear weapons. It seems that in recent months, since our surge in force has begun, we have seen Pakistan become more willing to confront the radical elements within its own borders. And while there is much work left to be done, there is no question that our more aggressive strategy against the enemy is having many positive results.

In April of 2009 I participated in a congressional delegation to visit Afghanistan to observe our operations firsthand. I can tell you without hesitation that we have every reason to be proud of our men and women serving in Afghanistan; they're doing a great job. What they need now is support and a clear signal from Washington that the job they are accomplishing is appreciated and in our national interests. By soundly defeating this resolution today, hopefully we will send such a message. And it is my hope and prayer that we never have to enter another war.

Mr. KUCINICH. Madam Speaker, I yield myself 2 minutes.

I would like to speak for a moment about civilian casualties in Afghanistan.

According to the United Nations, airstrikes continue to be a leading cause of civilian casualties. Days into the Marjah military offensive, 12 Afghans died when two rockets fired by NATO forces hit the wrong house. Ten of the 12 Afghans killed were from the same family. U.S. military officials initially apologized for the death of the civilians, but later backtracked, claiming they were insurgents. An Italian aid group working at a hospital just outside of Marjah accused allied forces of blocking dozens of critically wounded citizens from receiving medical attention at the hospital. A February 21 NATO airstrike conducted by U.S. Special Forces helicopters killed over 27 civilians and wounded dozens more after minibuses were hit by helicopters ''patrolling the area hunting for insurgents who had escaped the NATO offensive in the Marjah area,'' over 100 miles outside of Marjah in the southern province of Uruzgan.

□ 1730

The Wall Street Journal cited Afghan and NATO representatives, explaining that the air strike was ordered because it was believed that the minibus carried fresh Taliban fighters who were sent to help those under attack. However, the source of intelligence used to determine that the minibus carried insurgents has not been made known.

Admiral Mike Mullen, Chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, claimed the goal of the Marjah operation was to have no civilian casualties.

I submit for the RECORD a Brookings Institution 2009 report estimate that 10 civilians die for every militant killed in a drone strike.

I submit for the RECORD an article published in The Nation, written by journalist Anand Gopal, titled ''America's Secret Afghan Prisons,'' which reveals the existence of secret detention facilities at Bagram.

The daily night raids and indiscriminate aerial bombings must stop. The alleged torture of Afghans who are accused of supporting the Taliban who are captured in such night raids and the slaughter of innocent civilians in drone attacks only serve to embolden popular support against the United States.

[From the Brookings Institution, Mar. 10, 2010]

DO TARGETED KILLINGS WORK?

(BY DANIEL L. BYMAN)

JULY 14, 2009.—Killing terrorist leaders is difficult, is often ineffective, and can easily backfire. Yet it is one of the United States' few options for managing the threat posed by al Qaeda from its base in tribal Pakistan. By some accounts, U.S. drone activity in Pakistan has killed dozens of lower-ranking and at least 10 mid- and high-ranking leaders from al Qaeda and the Taliban.

Critics correctly find many problems with this program, most of all the number of civilian casualties the strikes have incurred. Sourcing on civilian deaths is weak and the numbers are often exaggerated, but more than 600 civilians are likely to have died from the attacks. That number suggests that for every militant killed, 10 or so civilians also died.

To reduce casualties, superb intelligence is necessary. Operators must know not only where the terrorists are, but also who is with them and who might be within the blast radius. This level of surveillance may often be lacking, and terrorists' deliberate use of children and other civilians as shields make civilian deaths even more likely.

Beyond the humanitarian tragedy incurred, civilian deaths create dangerous political problems. Pakistan's new democratic government is already unpopular for its corruption, favoritism, and poor governance. U.S. strikes that take a civilian toll are a further blow to its legitimacy—and to U.S. efforts to build goodwill there. As counterterrorism expert David Kilcullen put it, ''When we intervene in people's countries to chase small cells of bad guys, we end up alienating the whole country and turning them against us.''

And even when they work, killings are a poor second to arrests. Dead men tell no tales and thus are no help in anticipating the next attack or informing us about broader terrorist activities. So in any country with a functioning government, it is better to work with that government to seize the terrorist than to kill him outright. Arresting al Qaeda personnel in remote parts of Pakistan, however, is almost impossible today; the Pakistani government does not control many of the areas where al Qaeda is based, and a raid to seize terrorists there would probably end in the militants escaping and U.S. and allied casualties in the attempt.

When arrests are impossible, what results is a terrorist haven of the sort present along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border today. Free from the threat of apprehension, terrorists have a space in which to plot, organize, train, and relax—an extremely dangerous prospect. In such a haven, terrorist leaders can recruit hundreds or even thousands of potential fighters and, more importantly, organize them into a dangerous network. They can transform idealistic but incompetent volunteers into a lethal legion of fighters. They can also plan long-term global operations—terrorism ''spectaculars'' like the September 11 attacks, which remain one of al Qaeda's goals.

Killing terrorist operatives is one way to dismantle these havens. Plans are disrupted when individuals die or are wounded, as new people must be recruited and less experienced leaders take over day-to-day operations. Perhaps most importantly, organizations fearing a strike must devote increased attention to their own security because any time they communicate with other cells or issue propaganda, they may be exposing themselves to a targeted attack.

Given the humanitarian and political risks, each strike needs to be carefully weighed, with the value of the target and the potential for innocent deaths factored into the equation. In addition, the broader political consequences must be evaluated; the same death toll can have vastly different political consequences depending on the context. But equally important is the risk of not striking—and inadvertently allowing al Qaeda leaders free reign to plot terrorist mayhem.

We must not pretend the killings are anything but a flawed short-term expedient that at best reduces the al Qaeda threat—but by no means eliminates it. Even as U.S. strikes have increased, Pakistan has suffered staggering levels of terrorism as groups with few or limited links to al Qaeda have joined the fray. Al Qaeda itself can also still carry out attacks, including ones outside Pakistan in Europe and even the United States. Thanks to the drone strikes, they are just harder to pull off. The real answer to halting al Qaeda's activity in Pakistan will be the long-term support of Pakistan's counterinsurgency efforts. While this process unfolds, targeted killings are one of America's few options left.

[From the Nation, Feb. 15, 2010]

AMERICA'S SECRET AFGHAN PRISONS

(By Anand Gopal)

One quiet, wintry night last year in the eastern Afghan town of Khost, a young government employee named Ismatullah simply vanished. He had last been seen in the town's bazaar with a group of friends. Family members scoured Khost's dusty streets for days. Village elders contacted Taliban commanders in the area who were wont to kidnap government workers, but they had never heard of the young man. Even the governor got involved, ordering his police to round up nettlesome criminal gangs that sometimes preyed on young bazaargoers for ransom.

But the hunt turned up nothing. Spring and summer came and went with no sign of Ismatullah. Then one day, long after the police and village elders had abandoned their search, a courier delivered a neat handwritten note on Red Cross stationery to the family. In it, Ismatullah informed them that he was in Bagram, an American prison more than 200 miles away. US forces had picked him up while he was on his way home from the bazaar, the terse letter stated, and he didn't know when he would be freed.

In the past few years Pashtun villagers in Afghanistan's rugged heartland have begun to lose faith in the American project. Many of them can point to the precise moment of this transformation, and it usually took place in the dead of night, when most of the country was fast asleep. In its attempt to stamp out the growing Taliban insurgency and Al Qaeda, the US military has been arresting suspects and sending them to one of a number of secret detention areas on military bases, often on the slightest suspicion and without the knowledge of their families. These night raids have become even more feared and hated in Afghanistan than coalition airstrikes. The raids and detentions, little known or understood outside the Pashtun villages, have been turning Afghans against the very forces many of them greeted as liberators just a few years ago.

ONE DARK NIGHT IN NOVEMBER

November 19, 2009, 3:15 am. A loud blast woke the villagers of a leafy neighborhood outside Ghazni, a city of ancient provenance in the country's south. A team of US soldiers burst through the front gate of the home of Majidullah Qarar, the spokesman for Afghanistan's agriculture minister. Qarar was in Kabul at the time, but his relatives were home, four of them sleeping in the family's one-room guesthouse. One of them, Hamidullah, who sold carrots at the local bazaar, ran toward the door of the guesthouse. He was immediately shot but managed to crawl back inside, leaving a trail of blood behind him. Then Azim, a baker, darted toward his injured cousin. He, too, was shot and crumpled to the floor. The fallen men cried out to the two relatives—both of them children—remaining in the room. But they refused to move, glued to their beds in silent horror.

The foreign soldiers, most of them tattooed and bearded, then went on to the main compound. They threw clothes on the floor, smashed dinner plates and forced open closets. Finally they found the man they were looking for: Habib-ur-Rahman, a computer programmer and government employee. Rahman was responsible for converting Microsoft Windows from English to the local Pashto language so that government offices could use the software. The Afghan translator accompanying the soldiers said they were acting on a tip that Rahman was a member of Al Qaeda.

They took the barefoot Rahman and a cousin to a helicopter some distance away and transported them to a small American base in a neighboring province for interrogation. After two days, US forces released Rahman's cousin. But Rahman has not been seen or heard from since.

''We've called his phone, but it doesn't answer,'' said his cousin Qarar, the agriculture minister's spokesman. Using his powerful connections, Qarar enlisted local police, parliamentarians, the governor and even the agriculture minister himself in the search for his cousin, but they turned up nothing. Government officials who independently investigated the scene in the aftermath of the raid and corroborated the claims of the family also pressed for an answer as to why two of Qarar's family members were killed. American forces issued a statement saying that the dead were ''enemy militants [who] demonstrated hostile intent.''

Weeks after the raid, the family remains bitter. ''Everyone in the area knew we were a family that worked for the government,'' Qarar said. ''Rahman couldn't even leave the city, because if the Taliban caught him in the countryside they would have killed him.''

Beyond the question of Rahman's guilt or innocence, it's how he was taken that has left such a residue of hatred among his family. ''Did they have to kill my cousins? Did they have to destroy our house?'' Qarar asked. ''They knew where Rahman worked. Couldn't they have at least tried to come with a warrant in the daytime? We would have forced Rahman to comply.''

''I used to go on TV and argue that people should support this government and the foreigners,'' he added. ''But I was wrong. Why should anyone do so? I don't care if I get fired for saying it, but that's the truth.''

THE DOGS OF WAR

Night raids are only the first step in the American detention process in Afghanistan.

Suspects are usually sent to one of a series of prisons on US military bases around the country. There are officially nine such jails, called Field Detention Sites in military parlance. They are small holding areas, often just a clutch of cells divided by plywood, and are mainly used for prisoner interrogations.

In the early years of the war, these were but way stations for those en route to Bagram prison, a facility with a notorious reputation for abusive behavior. As a spotlight of international attention fell on Bagram in recent years, wardens there cleaned up their act, and the mistreatment of prisoners began to shift to the little-noticed Field Detention Sites.

Of the twenty-four former detainees interviewed for this article, seventeen claim to have been abused at or en route to these sites. Doctors, government officials and the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission, an independent Afghan body mandated by the Afghan Constitution to investigate abuse allegations, corroborate twelve of these claims.

One of these former detainees is Noor Agha Sher Khan, who used to be a police officer in Gardez, a mud-caked town in the eastern part of the country. According to Sher Khan, American forces detained him in a night raid in 2003 and brought him to a Field Detention Site at a nearby US base. ''They interrogated me the whole night,'' he recalled, ''but I had nothing to tell them.'' Sher Khan worked for a police commander whom US forces had detained on suspicion of having ties to the insurgency. He had occasionally acted as a driver for this commander, which made him suspicious in American eyes.

The interrogators blindfolded him, taped his mouth shut and chained him to the ceiling, he alleges. Occasionally they unleashed a dog, which repeatedly bit him. At one point they removed the blindfold and forced him to kneel on a long wooden bar. ''They tied my hands to a pulley [above] and pushed me back and forth as the bar rolled across my shins. I screamed and screamed.'' They then pushed him to the ground and forced him to swallow twelve bottles of water. ''Two people held my mouth open, and they poured water down my throat until my stomach was full and I became unconscious,'' he said. ''It was as if someone had inflated me.'' After he was roused, he vomited uncontrollably.

This continued for a number of days. Sometimes he was hung upside down from the ceiling, other times he was blindfolded for extended periods. Eventually he was moved to Bagram, where the torture ceased. Four months later he was quietly released, with a letter of apology from US authorities for wrongfully imprisoning him.

An investigation of Sher Khan's case by the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission and an independent doctor found that he had wounds consistent with the abusive treatment he alleges. American forces have declined to comment on the specifics of his case, but a spokesman said that some soldiers involved in detentions in this part of the country had been given unspecified ''administrative punishments.'' He added that ''all detainees are treated humanely,'' except for isolated cases.

THE DISAPPEARED

Some of those taken to the Field Detention Sites are deemed innocuous and never sent to Bagram. Even then, some allege abuse. Such was the case with Hajji Ehsanullah, snatched one winter night in 2008 from his home in the southern province of Zabul. He was taken to a detention site in Khost Province, some 200 miles away. He returned home thirteen days later, his skin scarred by dog bites and with memory difficulties that, according to his doctor, resulted from a blow to the head. American forces had dropped him off at a gas station in Khost after three days of interrogation. It took him ten more days to find his way home.

Others taken to these sites seem to have disappeared entirely. In the hardscrabble villages of the Pashtun south, where rumors grow more abundantly than the most bountiful crop, locals whisper tales of people who were captured and executed. Most have no evidence. But occasionally a body turns up. Such was the case at a detention site on a US military base in Helmand Province, where in 2003 a US military coroner wrote in the autopsy report of a detainee who died in US custody (later made available through the Freedom of Information Act): ''Death caused by the multiple blunt force injuries to the lower torso and legs complicated by rhabdomyolysis (release of toxic byproducts into the system due to destruction of muscle). Manner of death is homicide.''

In the dust-swept province of Khost one day this past December, US forces launched a night raid on the village of Motai, killing six people and capturing nine, according to nearly a dozen local government authorities and witnesses. Two days later, the bodies of two of those detained—plastic cuffs binding their hands—were found more than a mile from the largest US base in the area. A US military spokesman denies any involvement in the deaths and declines to comment on the details of the raid. Local Afghan officials and tribal elders steadfastly maintain that the two were killed while in US custody. American authorities released four other villagers in subsequent days. The fate of the three remaining captives is unknown.

The matter could be cleared up if the US military were less secretive about its detention process. But secrecy has been the order of the day. The nine Field Detention Sites are enveloped in a blanket of official secrecy, but at least the Red Cross and other humanitarian organizations are aware of them. There may, however, be other sites whose existence on the scores of US and Afghan military bases that dot the country have not been disclosed. One example, according to former detainees, is a detention facility at Rish-Khor, an Afghan army base that sits atop a mountain overlooking the capital, Kabul.

One night last year US forces raided Zaiwalat, a tiny village that fits snugly into the mountains of Wardak Province, a few dozen miles west of Kabul, and netted nine locals. They brought the captives to Rish-Khor and interrogated them for three days. ''They kept us in a container,'' recalled Rehmatullah Muhammad, one of the nine. ''It was made of steel. We were handcuffed for three days continuously. We barely slept those days.'' The plain-clothed interrogators accused Muhammad and the others of giving food and shelter to the Taliban. The suspects were then sent to Bagram and released after four months. (A number of former detainees said they were interrogated by plainclothed officials, but they did not know if these officials belonged to the military, the CIA or private contractors.)

Afghan human rights campaigners worry that US forces may be using secret detention sites like the one allegedly at Rish-Khor to carry out interrogations away from prying eyes. The US military, however, denies even having knowledge of the facility.

THE BLACK JAIL

Much less secret is the final stop for most captives: the Bagram Theater Internment Facility. These days ominously dubbed ''Obama's Guantánamo,'' Bagram nonetheless now offers the best conditions for captives during the entire detention process.

Its modern life as a prison began in 2002, when small numbers of detainees from throughout Asia were incarcerated there on the first leg of an odyssey that would eventually bring them to the US detention facility in Guantánamo, Cuba. In later years, however, it became the main destination for those caught within Afghanistan as part of the growing war there. By 2009 the inmate population had swelled to more than 700. Housed in a windowless old Soviet hangar, the prison consists of two rows of serried, cagelike cells bathed continuously in light. Guards walk along a platform that runs across the mesh tops of the pens, an easy position from which to supervise the prisoners below.

Regular, even infamous, abuse in the style of Iraq's Abu Ghraib prison marked Bagram's early years. Abdullah Mujahid, for example, was apprehended in the village of Kar Marchi in the eastern province of Paktia in 2003. Although Mujahid was a Tajik militia commander who had led an armed uprising against the Taliban in their waning days, US forces accused him of having ties to the insurgency. ''In Bagram we were handcuffed, blindfolded and had our feet chained for days,'' he recalled. ''They didn't allow us to sleep at all for thirteen days and nights.'' A guard would strike his legs every time he dozed off. Daily, he could hear the screams of tortured inmates and the unmistakable sound of shackles dragging across the floor.

Then one day a team of soldiers dragged him to an aircraft but refused to tell him where he was going. Eventually he landed at another prison, where the air felt thick and wet. As he walked through the row of cages, inmates began to shout, ''This is Guantánamo! You are in Guantánamo!'' He would learn there that he was accused of leading the Pakistani Islamist group Lashkar-e-Taiba (which in reality was led by another person who had the same name and who died in 2006). The United States eventually released him and returned him to Afghanistan.

Former Bagram detainees allege that they were regularly beaten, subjected to blaring music twenty-four hours a day, prevented from sleeping, stripped naked and forced to assume what interrogators term ''stress positions.'' The nadir came in late 2002, when interrogators beat two inmates to death.

According to former detainees and organizations that work with them, the US Special Forces also run a second secret prison somewhere on Bagram Air Base that the Red Cross still does not have access to. Used primarily for interrogations, it is so feared by prisoners that they have dubbed it the ''Black Jail.''

One day two years ago, US forces came to get Noor Muhammad outside the town of Kajaki in the southern province of Helmand. Muhammad, a physician, was running a clinic that served all comers, including the Taliban. The soldiers raided his clinic and his home, killing five people (including two patients) and detaining both his father and him. The next day villagers found the handcuffed body of Muhammad's father, apparently killed by a gunshot.

The soldiers took Muhammad to the Black Jail. ''It was a tiny, narrow corridor, with lots of cells on both sides and a big steel gate and bright lights,'' he said. ''We didn't know when it was night and when it was day.'' He was held in a windowless concrete room in solitary confinement. Soldiers regularly dragged him by his neck and refused him food and water. They accused him of providing medical care to the insurgents, to which he replied, ''I am a doctor. It's my duty to provide care to every human being who comes to my clinic, whether they are Taliban or from the government.''

Eventually Muhammad was released, but he has since closed his clinic and left his home village. ''I am scared of the Americans and the Taliban,'' he said. ''I'm happy my father is dead, so he doesn't have to experience this hell.''

AFRAID OF THE DARK

In the past two years American officials have moved to reform the main prison at Bagram, if not the Black Jail. Torture has stopped, and prison officials now boast that the typical inmate gains fifteen pounds while in custody. In the early months of this year, officials plan to open a dazzling new prison that will eventually replace Bagram, one with huge, airy cells, the latest medical equipment and rooms for vocational training. The Bagram prison itself will be handed over to the Afghans in the coming year, although the rest of the detention process will remain in US hands.

But human rights advocates say that concerns about the detention process remain. The US Supreme Court ruled in 2008 that inmates at Guantánamo cannot be stripped of their right to habeus corpus, but it stopped short of making the same argument for Bagram (officials say that since it is in the midst of a war zone, US civil rights legislation does not apply). Inmates there do not have access to a lawyer, as they do in Guantánamo. Most say they have no idea why they have been detained. They do now appear before a review panel every six months, which is intended to reassess their detention, but their ability to ask questions about their situation is limited. ''I was only allowed to answer yes or no and not explain anything at my hearing,'' said former detainee Rehmatullah Muhammad.

Nonetheless, the improvement in Bagram's conditions begs the question: can the United States fight a cleaner war? That's what Afghan war commander Gen. Stanley McChrystal promised last summer: fewer civilian casualties, fewer of the feared house raids and a more transparent detention process.

The American troops that operate under NATO command have begun to enforce stricter rules of engagement: they may now officially hold detainees for only ninety-six hours before transferring them to the Afghan authorities or freeing them, and Afghan forces must take the lead in house searches. American soldiers, when questioned, bristle at these restrictions—and have ways of circumventing them. ''Sometimes we detain people, then, when the ninety-six hours are up, we transfer them to the Afghans,'' said one marine who spoke on the condition of anonymity. ''They rough them up a bit for us and then send them back to us for another ninety-six hours. This keeps going until we get what we want.''

A simpler way of dancing around the rules is to call in the Special Operations Forces—the Navy SEALS, Green Berets and others—which are not under NATO command and thus not bound by the stricter rules of engagement. These elite troops are behind most of the night raids and detentions in the search for ''high-value suspects.'' Military officials say in interviews that the new restrictions have not affected the number of raids and detentions at all. The actual change, however, is more subtle: the detention process has shifted almost entirely to areas and actors that can best avoid public scrutiny—small field prisons and Special Operations Forces.

The shift signals a deeper reality of war, say American soldiers: you can't fight guerrillas without invasive raids and detentions, any more than you can fight them without bullets. Seen through the eyes of a US soldier, Afghanistan is a scary place. The men are bearded and turbaned. They pray incessantly. In most of the country, women are barred from leaving the house. Many Afghans own an assault rifle. ''You can't trust anyone,'' said Rodrigo Arias, a marine based in the northeastern province of Kunar. ''I've nearly been killed in ambushes, but the villagers don't tell us anything. But they usually know something.''

An officer who has worked in the Field Detention Sites says that it takes dozens of raids to turn up a useful suspect. ''Sometimes you've got to bust down doors. Sometimes you've got to twist arms. You have to cast a wide net, but when you get the right person, it makes all the difference.''

For Arias, it's a matter of survival. ''I want to go home in one piece. If that means rounding people up, then round them up.'' To question this, he said, is to question whether the war itself is worth fighting. ''That's not my job. The people in Washington can figure that out.''

If night raids and detentions are an unavoidable part of modern counterinsurgency warfare, then so is the resentment they breed. ''We were all happy when the Americans first came. We thought they would bring peace and stability,'' said Rehmatullah Muhammad. ''But now most people in my village want them to leave.'' A year after Muhammad was released, his nephew was detained. Two months later, some other residents of Zaiwalat were seized. It has become a predictable pattern in Muhammad's village: Taliban forces ambush American convoys as they pass through it, and then retreat into the thick fruit orchards nearby. The Americans return at night to pick up suspects. In the past two years, sixteen people have been taken and ten killed in night raids in this single village of about 300, according to villagers. In the same period, they say, the insurgents killed one local and did not take anyone hostage.

The people of Zaiwalat now fear the night raids more than the Taliban. There are nights when Muhammad's children hear the distant thrum of a helicopter and rush into his room. He consoles them but admits he needs solace himself. ''I know I should be too old for it,'' he said, ''but this war has made me afraid of the dark.''

Mr. BERMAN. Madam Speaker, initially, I yield an additional 2 minutes of my time to that of the ranking member. It is to be added onto her time and is to be subtracted from our time.

Now I yield 3 minutes to the chairman of the Asia, the Pacific, and the Global Environment Subcommittee, the delegate from American Samoa, Mr. ENI FALEOMAVAEGA.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. I thank the gentleman, the distinguished chairman of our Committee on Foreign Affairs, for allowing me to say a few words concerning the proposed resolution.

Madam Speaker, despite my reservations about our strategy in Afghanistan, I do want to say that I have the utmost respect for the gentleman from Ohio for bringing this resolution forward for the purpose of having a public debate among our colleagues.

I also want to say that I associate myself with the remarks made earlier by my colleague from Georgia (Mr. KINGSTON) in asking, Why not, why not debate the issue? We should not deprive ourselves of understanding a little more about the situation that we face right now in Afghanistan.

Madam Speaker, after 8 long years in that country for the United States and after 30 years for the Afghan people, I remain skeptical that adding 30,000 U.S. troops and that focusing more on local and provincial levels of government will bring lasting stability and success in Afghanistan. I do, of course, want our new strategy to succeed, and I know that our military and civilian personnel on the ground will give it a supreme effort. They represent the very best this country has to offer.

Yet Afghanistan's history is replete with the failures of outside powers, or countries, in their attempting to take over or to remake the Afghan people—from Alexander the Great, to Genghis Khan, to the United Kingdom, to the Soviet Union, and now even to us.

It is my understanding that by adding 30,000 additional troops to the 68,000 troops that we now have on the ground in Afghanistan, we are adding approximately 100,000 additional troops, with NATO forces, to go after some 27,000 Taliban and a couple of hundred al Qaeda.

By the way, I wanted to ask, Was it the Taliban or the al Qaeda people who attacked us on 9/11? I believe it was al Qaeda, and 15 of the 19 terrorists who attacked us on 9/11 were Saudi Arabs. It's interesting to note that.

Another thing is that, indeed, most objective observers believe it will take a commitment of years, perhaps even decades, by our troops and that it will take hundreds of billions of dollars by our taxpayers for Afghanistan to overcome its divisions and to develop and to maintain a stable, functional government.

When I weigh the likely costs in terms of lives and resources against the potential benefits for U.S. security, I am left wondering whether we are, in fact, on the right track.

As I am not a genius when it comes to military strategy, here is something that I am trying to figure out: the Taliban are Pashtuns, and 12 million Pashtuns live in Afghanistan. They make up almost 50 percent of Afghanistan's population. President Karzai is even a Pashtun. There are an additional 27 million Pashtuns who live on the other side of the border, right on the border between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. BERMAN. I yield the gentleman 1 additional minute.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Is it any wonder we have had such a difficult time locating Osama bin Laden? He has been moving between Pakistan and Afghanistan for all of these years.

Madam Speaker, I do not believe invoking the 1973 War Powers Act to require the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan is appropriate at this time. In September 2001, Congress passed a joint resolution, signed by the President 4 days later, which granted the President the authority to use all necessary and appropriate forces against those whom he determined planned, authorized, committed or aided the September 11 attacks in 2001.

So, whether one agrees with the war in Afghanistan or not, whether one agrees with the administration's new strategy or not, there should be no doubt that House Concurrent Resolution 248, with all due respect to my friend from Ohio, is not the way to force a withdrawal of U.S. troops. Therefore, I urge my colleagues to vote against this proposed resolution.

Mr. KUCINICH. Madam Speaker, I would like to speak about the failure of the counterinsurgency strategy.

The Brookings Institution recently reported that, in terms of raw violence, the situation is at an historic worst level with early 2010 levels of various types of attacks much higher than even last year at this time. Much of that is due to the recent Marjah campaign and, more generally, to the deployment of additional U.S. and Afghan troops to parts of the country where they have not been present before.

The President has called this war a just war. The framing of war as ''just'' is served to legitimize the slaughter of innocent civilians in Iraq and Afghanistan.

A 200-page report by the RAND Corporation is entitled, ''Counterintelligence in Afghanistan Deals a Huge Blow to our Ideas of Counterinsurgency.'' It reads: In many cases, a significant direct intervention by U.S. military forces may undermine popular support and legitimacy. The United States is also unlikely to remain for the duration of most insurgencies. This study's assessment of 90 insurgencies indicates that it takes an average of 14 years to defeat insurgents once an insurgency develops. Occupations fuel insurgencies. In other words, this assessment does not fit into the President's supposed rapid increase and the shaky plan to withdraw by the summer of 2011.

The Brookings report continues: Second, the United States and other international actors need to improve the quality of local governance, especially in rural areas of Afghanistan. Field research in the east and south show that development and reconstruction did not reach most rural areas because of the deteriorating security environment. Even the provincial reconstruction teams, which were specifically designed to assist in the development of reconstruction projects, operate inside pockets in east and south because of security concerns.

NGOs and State agencies, such as USAID and the Canadian International Development Agency, were also not involved in the reconstruction and development in many areas of the south and east.

The irony of this situation is that rural areas which were at most risk from the Taliban, which were unhappy with the slow pace of change, a population with the greatest unhappiness, received little assistance. The counterinsurgency in Afghanistan will be won or lost in the local communities of rural Afghanistan, not in urban centers such as Kabul, says the Brookings Institution.

Now, someone I'm not used to quoting, conservative columnist George Will, wrote in The Washington Post that the counterinsurgency theory concerning the time and level of forces required to protect the population indicates that, nationwide, Afghanistan would need hundreds of thousands of coalition troops, perhaps, for a decade or more. That is inconceivable.

For how long are we willing to dedicate billions of dollars and thousands of lives before we realize that we can't win Afghanistan militarily? Our biggest mistake in the Afghanistan strategy is to think that we can separate the Taliban from the rest of the population. We cannot. The Taliban is a local resistance movement that is part and parcel of an indigenous population. We lost Vietnam because we failed to win the hearts and minds of local populations without providing them with a competent government that provided them with basic security and with a decent living. That message can and should be applied to Afghanistan.

The strategy for winning Afghanistan is simple: Stop killing the people and they will stop killing you.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to my colleague, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. STEARNS), a member of the Veterans' Affairs and Energy and Commerce Committees.

Mr. STEARNS. I thank my distinguished colleague.

My colleagues, this debate is reminiscent of a debate we had 3 years ago, almost to the day, on February 14, 15, and 16.

You will remember, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH), that the debate was that you tried to force us to pull out of Iraq before the job was done. I hope you remember that.

From the moment we got there, many of the folks wanted us to leave. Most remarkable is that these same folks wanted us to leave just before we stabilized Iraq. They were not in favor of the surge. Yet the surge worked. Now they want us to leave Afghanistan in 30 days without giving this new strategy a chance to succeed.

The President of the United States has indicated he wants to stay there for 18 months. Why won't his opponents just allow the President to have the opportunity to fulfill his own commitment which he has made publicly? Are they so up in arms that they would undermine the President, especially in light of the fact they were wrong in Iraq?

We have an opportunity to let General McChrystal apply the successes in Iraq to Afghanistan, which, I might add, are successes my friends on the other side of the aisle opposed, and to possibly win there and to possibly stabilize the country. We need to let the strategy work and achieve the successes like we had in Iraq.

It is ironic that Iraq recently held parliamentary elections. Without the success of the surge and the United States' presence for this short amount of time, Iraq would not have had these elections. Imagine what Iraq would look like if we had listened to the naysayers a few years ago.

Is it possible that this resolution means all the work and sacrifice that occurred would be for naught because these people today want to pull out within 30 days? They opposed our successful strategy in Iraq and oppose it in Afghanistan.

There is no logic in that they want to undercut their President and undercut the troops. They have provided no justification. While no proposal guarantees success, a precipitous withdrawal of U.S. support would guarantee failure.

Mr. KUCINICH. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to another Florida colleague, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. ROONEY), a member of the Armed Services and Judiciary Committees.

Mr. ROONEY. First, I want to acknowledge and thank Congressman JOHN BOCCIERI and Congressman DUNCAN HUNTER for their service in Afghanistan.

Madam Speaker, as a former captain in the Army in the 1st Cavalry Division and as an instructor at West Point, I had the distinct honor of teaching some of the men and women who are now serving in Afghanistan. I heard from them directly about the progress being made and about the need for the continued support of this Congress. It is for that reason that I will vote ''no'' on this resolution.

Withdrawal now would destabilize that area of the world, and it would create a vacuum for terror. Groups like al Qaeda and the Taliban would increasingly gain access to weapons that would cause great damage to our allies and, eventually, to us.

General McChrystal's implementation of President Obama's counterinsurgency strategy is producing dramatic successes, including the capture of key Taliban leaders and the rooting out of Taliban forces.

A withdrawal now undermines what our troops have done. It undermines the winning strategy we are pursuing in Afghanistan, a strategy we all know the United States can achieve. It is for that reason I encourage my colleagues to send a message to our troops and to vote ''no.''

Mr. KUCINICH. Madam Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes, the balance of my time, to the gentleman from California (Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN), the ranking member of the Committee on House Administration and a member of the Homeland Security and Judiciary Committees. I can think of no better person with whom to close the debate on our side.

Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California. I thank the gentlewoman.

Madam Speaker, I join the chairman and ranking member of the committee in opposing this resolution.

Sometimes in public debate, we ask the wrong question or we place ourselves in the wrong context. I am reminded of a headline that I saw not too long ago on a domestic issue. The headline read simply: ''Prison Population Increases Despite Drop in Crime.'' For those of us involved in the criminal justice system, we thought maybe it never dawned on the writer that the crime rate was dropping precisely because we were putting the bad guys in prison.

Similarly today, this resolution sets an arbitrary deadline for troops to leave Afghanistan, and it is a terribly misguided reading of the facts we face today. Our troops are succeeding. No one questions that. Our allies are helping us. Why then would we handicap them today with such a terrible message from our Congress? The message is, despite what you are doing on the ground, despite your successes, we are going to pull you out with an arbitrary date. What could be more demoralizing? What could be more wrong?

Madam Speaker, this resolution, unfortunately, is the wrong question. It sends the wrong message. It is being sent at precisely the wrong time.

I hope that we have a strong vote against this resolution so that our troops will have an unquestioned message of support from us that we recognize what they are doing, that we follow what they are doing, that we support what they are doing, and that we rejoice in their victorious work today and in the days ahead.

□ 1745

Mr. KUCINICH. I yield myself 1 minute.

The more troops we send into Afghanistan, the more support the Taliban gains as resistors of foreign occupation. We say we want to negotiate with the Taliban in the future while, at the same time, conducting air strikes to take out Taliban strongholds across the country.

Just yesterday, The Washington Post published an article about the Zabul province and the pouring in of Taliban fighters following a retreat of U.S. Armed Forces from Zabul in December. If we accept the premise that we can never leave Afghanistan until the Taliban is eradicated, we may be there for a very long time.

The justification for our continued military presence in Afghanistan is that the Taliban, in the past, has provided a safe haven for al Qaeda, or could do so in the future. General Petraeus has already admitted that al Qaeda has little or no presence in Afghanistan.

We have to careful about branding al Qaeda and the Taliban as a single terrorist movement. Al Qaeda is an international organization, and, yes, they are a threat to the United States. The Taliban is only a threat to us as long as we continue our military occupation of Afghanistan.

Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE).

Ms. LEE of California. Madam Speaker, first let me thank the gentleman from Ohio for this very important resolution. Today's debate and discussion on the path forward in Afghanistan and the proper role of Congress in determining the United States' commitment of our country while at war, this debate and discussion is long overdue. So thank you, Congressman KUCINICH, for bringing this to the floor.

Now in our 9th year of war, this body has yet to conduct a full and honest accounting of the benefits, costs, affordability, and strategic importance of the United States military operations in Afghanistan.

In order to understand Afghanistan and where we are today in terms of our commitment, I think it is really useful to point to how we got here. Of course, after the horrific events, the tragic events of 9/11 in 2001, I had to vote against the authorization to use force, this use of force authorization, because I knew that that authorization was a blank check to wage war anywhere, at any time, and for any length.

Almost 9 years later, in reflecting on the rush to war in Afghanistan and the Bush administration's war of choice in Iraq, the sacrifices made by our brave, young men and women in uniform and the cost to our economic and national security, all of these costs are totally immeasurable. Countless innocent civilians have lost their lives in Afghanistan, and just a few weeks ago the number of American troops killed in Afghanistan rose to over 1,000.

Where does this end? Where does it end? We have already given $1 trillion to the Pentagon for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the economic impact of these wars is estimated to be as much as $7 trillion in direct and indirect costs to the United States.

It is our responsibility as Members of Congress to really develop a more effective U.S. foreign policy for the 21st century. After a decade of open-ended wars, I encourage my colleagues to finally stand firm in asserting their constitutional prerogative to determine when the United States enters into war.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, in closing, I would like to build on something that our colleague from California (Mr. HUNTER) had said earlier about the need to fight and defeat the enemy in Afghanistan so that our children or our grandchildren don't have to.

Our men and women in uniform are fighting for their families, for our families, for our Nation, for our future. They embrace their mission. They are honored by the opportunity to serve. They volunteered for it. Let us show our appreciation by voting ''no'' on this damaging resolution before us today.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BERMAN. Madam Speaker, because I have no further requests for time and I understand that the sponsor of this resolution has both the right and the intention of closing, I will yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. KUCINICH. I want to thank Mr. BERMAN and my colleagues for this opportunity to engage in this important debate.

At the current estimated deployment rate, the number of troops in Afghanistan will increase from about 70,000 at the end of 2009 to the stated goal of 100,000 by July of this year. My resolution calls for the withdrawal of all U.S. Armed Forces from Afghanistan no later than December 31 of this year. And it can be done. Unlike Iraq, where we have significant infrastructure built in and around the country to support our presence there, prior to last year, the United States invested very little in permanent infrastructure for U.S. Armed Forces in Afghanistan.

President Obama has called on the logisticians for the U.S. military to triple the amount of troops we have had in the country since the war started. If the administration expects the U.S. military to figure out a way for a rapid increase of troops on the ground, we can figure out how to have a method of rapid withdrawal.

Getting supplies into Afghanistan is one of the biggest obstacles to providing adequate support for troops on the ground. Due to frequent attacks on U.S. convoys traveling to Afghanistan through Pakistan, the U.S. is forced to deliver most of the supplies by air.

Madam Speaker, we have, in the last 3 hours, talked about 1,000 troop casualties; we have talked about a cost of a quarter of a trillion dollars and rising; we have spoken of civilian casualties and about the incredible amount of corruption that is going on in Afghanistan; we have spoken of the role of the pipeline, which is sure to deserve more critical inquiry; and we have talked about the failure of doctrines of counterinsurgency. That strategy doesn't work, and there are logistics of withdrawal that we can pursue.

The question is should the United States' people continue to bear the burden of this war when we have so many problems at home, with 15 million people unemployed, with millions of people losing their homes, with so many people without health care, with so many people not being able to send their children to good schools.

We have to reset our priorities. Our priorities should begin by getting out of Afghanistan, and then we can turn to getting out of Iraq.

Thank you very much for this debate. I urge approval of the resolution.

Mr. STARK. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Con. Res. 248 to bring our troops home from Afghanistan.

Despite the wishes of the people who voted him into office, President Obama is escalating the War in Afghanistan. It's now up to Congress to end the war. This resolution would invoke the War Powers Resolution of 1973, and

remove troops from Afghanistan no later than the end of the year.

This war has no clear objective. We have spent $258 billion on the War in Afghanistan, with billions more to come this year. American soldiers and their families are paying a greater price. Over 1,000 soldiers have died, and over 5,000 have been wounded in action. According to the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, Human Rights Watch, and other humanitarian organizations, tens of thousands of Afghan civilians have been killed.

It is time for Congress to assert its constitutional authority over matters of war and bring our troops home. I urge my colleagues to support this resolution, so that we can focus on diplomacy and infrastructure development that will bring a lasting peace to Afghanistan.

Mr. McMAHON. Madam Speaker, I rise as a supporter of our men and women in uniform who put their lives on the line every single day to strongly oppose H. Con. Res. 248.

Setting aside legitimate procedural objections to H. Con. Res 248, this is the wrong time to withdraw our troops from Afghanistan. Secretary Gates just wrapped up a visit to Afghanistan and our troops have successfully lifted the Taliban flag off of Marja, and are preparing to expand security to other Afghan regions.

We are just beginning to implement General McChrystal's strategy to drive insurgents, terrorists and narco-traffickers out of Afghanistan, where they have comfortably plotted against the U.S. for years. U.S. and International Security Assistance Forces are laying the groundwork for the next push into the Taliban heartland of Kandahar, as we speak. Securing Kandahar will allow us to secure Afghanistan. If we have a peaceful Kandahar, we will have a peaceful Afghanistan.

I support our Commander in Chief in his plan to send an additional 30,000 troops to Afghanistan on December 1, 2009. It is time to give this strategy a chance. This Administration has made the elimination of Al-Qaeda and the stability of Afghanistan a top priority. In addition, many of our coalition partners particulary the United Kingdom, and Canada and Muslim allies like Pakistan, have also stepped up their engagement and cooperation. They are committed to the fight and we should be as well. They know that a stable Afghanistan will bring stability and security to Pakistan and all of South Asia.

Our troops now have the leadership and the vision to complete this mission. Their success militarily is working hand in hand with American and international humanitarian assistance and NGOs which are helping to educate women, clean drinking water and provide healthcare.

Obviously sending Americans to war is our most serious obligation as Members of Congress. But equally serious is our obligation to care for our veterans. In my first year in Congress, working with Members on both sides of the aisle, we have already secured a record amount in mental health funding for our troops and to expand the number of mental health professionals at the DoD. This Administration and Congress is committed to making sure that our Veterans receive the highest quality of care possible both in the field and at home.

Until then, our troops should be proud to help stabilize the region that has fanned the flames of radical hostility and extreme terrorist ideology that led to the horrors of September 11th. Afghanistan should never again be a launching pad for terrorist activities.

We are the United States, and it is our duty to fight for democracy and fight against terror. I urge my colleagues to vote against H. Con. Res. 248 today and give the Afghanistan mission the fighting chance to succeed.

Mr. McDERMOTT. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of Representative KUCINICH's resolution to call our troops home from Afghanistan. When the President announced in December that he wanted 30,000 additional troops sent to Afghanistan, I said that I was unconvinced his plan would work. And now that many of those troops are in place, I'm still not convinced. We recently watched the start of Operation Mushtarak, the largest coordinated offensive since 2001, which is intended to loosen the Taliban's grip in the Southern region of the country. It was originally supposed to take a few weeks, but now estimates say that it may take 12 to 18 months. I think this is a perfect example of the biggest obstacle we face: we are asking troops to fix problems that the military is not capable of solving.

American soldiers have been in Afghanistan for nearly a decade and have been doing a magnificent job of what's been asked of them. But with every passing year, I grow more doubtful that we have the ability to build a stable democracy with the military alone. And I certainly do not believe that committing more troops will bring about the change necessary to stabilize the country, nor do I believe that it will hasten the process.

But that's the course that many continue to advocate, including President Obama. And while I know that the President wants to get out of Afghanistan as fast as possible, I also believe that if we want to help the Afghani people form a stable democracy and functioning economy, we need to help them with even more aid and support, not an increase in troops.

Over the last 30 years, Afghanistan has served as a battlefield in a series of devastating conflicts, first between the Soviet Union and the United States, and then between the United States and the Taliban. We hear a lot about the problems with poppy farming in the region, but we don't hear much about the cause. Before any of these incursions, Afghanistan was considered the orchard capital of central Asia, with nearly 80 percent of the population working on the land. But now it is estimated that more than 60 percent of the orchards and vineyards have been destroyed, which led many Afghanis into poppy production and the drug trade. This is in part due to the fact that the Soviets thought that orchards were too good a place to hide, so they cut them all down.

The kinds of problems that Afghanistan faces are not the kinds of problems the U.S. military or NATO are equipped to solve. That is ultimately up to the Afghani government and its people, and we need to realize that our involvement can only do so much. The sooner we understand that, the sooner we can make a strategically acceptable exit.

I rise today to voice my support for Representative KUCINICH's resolution to invoke the War Powers Act to call all of our troops home from Afghanistan within the next 30 days—or, as the legislation outlines, by the end of the year if 30 days is deemed too dangerous. I refuse to watch as we send soldier after soldier into a battle I do not believe the military can win.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Madam Speaker, the war in Afghanistan has entered its ninth year without clearly defined objectives or an exit strategy. With a deteriorating security situation and no comprehensive political outcome yet in sight, many experts view the war in Afghanistan as open-ended.

The open-ended nature of this conflict is evident in the complexities of defining the enemy. The U.S. invaded Afghanistan shortly after 9/11 because of the Taliban's support and refuge of al-Qaeda. We have had to combat the ever changing Taliban, foreign al Qaeda fighters, and the revolving loyalties of numerous tribal war lords. Furthermore, our close relationship with the Pakistan government has been seriously challenged by the jihadist threat now in Pakistan. We have no clear response to this new threat beyond drone attacks that also have high rates of civilian casualties.

President Bush's disregard for the complexities of Afghanistan and the damage that came from his disregard has severely undermined any prospect of stability and a successful conclusion to this conflict. The unnecessary war in Iraq also diverted critical resources when we needed them the most in Afghanistan. These failures by the Bush Administration encouraged the division of Afghanistan and allowed al Qaeda to move effortlessly into Pakistan.

President Obama's surge strategy in Afghanistan is counterproductive and sends the wrong message. The President sent an additional 17,000 troops in early 2009 and then another 30,000 troops late last year. Beyond nation building, the additional troops have no clear mission and do not resolve the problems in Pakistan.

Much like President Obama's exit strategy in Iraq, we need a clear exit strategy for Afghanistan. The Afghani and Pakistani people need to know our troops are not permanent. Unfortunately, President Obama has doubled down in Afghanistan.

Afghanistan will not become stable until a political consensus is found across ethnic, tribal, religious and party affiliations. The government must be able to provide basic security for its population without the corruption that exists today. These same needs are just as true in Pakistan.

H. Con. Res. 248 is flawed because it offers a blunt directive to bring all the troops home in a short time frame. The resolution also offers an opportunity send a message to the President that his Afghan strategy is failing. My vote in favor of this resolution is a vote against the President's surge strategy in Afghanistan, a vote to demand an exit plan, and a vote to demand a regional diplomatic response to undercut the radicalization of Pakistan.

Mr. HOLT. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Ohio for initiating this needed debate on our policy in Afghanistan. Indeed, I opposed the war in Iraq because I felt it distracted us from finishing the job we had started in Afghanistan—finding and bringing to justice those who attacked us on 9/11. I think we have to acknowledge that the current Administration has accomplished more in less time to address the deteriorating situation in Afghanistan than the previous Administration did during its eight years in power. The capture of Mullah Baradar and the disruption of the Quetta, Pakistan-based Taliban leadership group headed by Mullah Omar—these significant tactical successes are the direct result of

President Obama's current policies, particularly his success in pressuring the government of Pakistan to live up to its obligations to help us root out the remaining Al Qaeda and Afghan Taliban elements at large in Pakistan. That's the good news. The bad news is that every time we take out one of their field commanders, several more rise to take their place. This is the nature of insurgency, it is the nature of the problem that confronts us, and it is not a problem that will be resolved by the continuous, endless use of military force. I came to the floor in December 2009 and posed a series of questions about our policy in this war, and many of those questions remain unanswered. However, several events over the last few months have answered at least one question: Are we fighting on the wrong battlefield?

Congress must push the Administration to think anew about this problem, as this conflict is not confined to Afghanistan and Pakistan. We saw that with the Ft. Hood terrorism incident, and with the near-tragedy on Christmas Day in the skies above Detroit. The ideas that motivated Major Hasan and Mr. Abdulmuttalab are propagated around the world via the mass media and the internet. Going to a training camp in the Pakistani tribal areas is no longer a requirement for a radicalized individual who wants to commit an act of terror.

The extremist ideology that is used to motivate these people itself occupies a safe haven—the internet and the global mass media. Unless and until we confront that reality, we will not prevail in this struggle. That is why we must think anew about how we're approaching this problem. I encourage the President to do that, and I encourage my colleagues to do that.

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, there are few issues of state as weighty as those we discuss today. The decision to engage in military conflict affects us all in innumerable ways. There are the obvious effects on our military men and women who risk their lives abroad, while also giving up many of the small joys associated with sharing life's meaningful moments with family and friends.

Similarly, each of us bears the costs associated with domestic investments sacrificed at home when we decide to instead spend vast sums of money abroad. Each dollar spent in Afghanistan on a Blackwater mercenary is a dollar that could be spent keeping a teacher in the classroom, putting a cop on the beat, or retraining a Detroit steelworker so he or she can compete in the emerging industries that will underpin the global economy.

Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, waging war tests our values as a nation. During these periods of conflict, the eyes of the world, rightly, are trained on our actions abroad. The ability to inflict violence upon large numbers of our fellow human beings demands that the American people be allowed to sit in judgment about what is being done in their name—to determine if the potent weapons at our disposal are wielded in a just manner. The question of whether or not we are living up to this highest of burdens could not be more important and that is why we must debate the War in Afghanistan here on the House Floor today.

While the number of Members who will join my good friend from Ohio and myself in supporting this resolution may be small, this vote will not accurately represent the views of the public at large. A poll commissioned by CNN this January found that a majority of the American people oppose the War in Afghanistan. Apparently, as with many issues in Washington, those who are forced bear the costs of war are the first to recognize a flawed policy, while those who profit from perpetual war do their best to blunt any change in course.

As a co-founder of the Out of Iraq Caucus, I remember that it took some time for official Washington to comprehend the scope of the public's opposition to that war. Thankfully, that caucus eventually grew to bloc of 70 Members and we were able to successfully match the will of the people with the priorities of the Congress. As a result, our troops will pull out of Iraqi cities this summer and leave the country by the end of the year.

I believe that, as with Iraq, the Administration and Congress will, and must, adopt a course in Afghanistan that will benefit both the Afghan and American people. That is why I have founded the "Out of Afghanistan Caucus," which acknowledges that peace and security in Afghanistan will only occur when the United States reorients its commitment to the Afghan government and people by emphasizing indigenous reconciliation and reconstruction strategies, rigorous regional diplomacy, and swift redeployment of the US military.

It is increasingly clear that our military presence in Afghanistan inflames ethnic Pashtuns—many of whom would have nothing to do with the Taliban if they did not view the United States as an existential threat to their distinctive tribal culture and way of life. By picking sides in a 35-year-old civil war, the United States has made the necessary reconciliation between all parties in Afghanistan all but impossible. Similarly, I oppose the constant Predator drone strikes in both Afghanistan and Pakistan, in which one in three casualties is an innocent civilian. This violence will breed enmity, when we really need to be bringing these warring parties together.

I hope that the House votes today in support of this War Powers Privileged Resolution. Regardless of the outcome, I and many others in the Congress will continue to organize against additional troop funding and for Afghan-centric development policies that will speed peaceful and permanent reconciliation. I hope that you will join me as a Member of the Out of Afghanistan Caucus and you will support this historic resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All time for debate has expired.

Pursuant to House Resolution 1146, the previous question is ordered.

The question is on agreeing to the concurrent resolution.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Mr. KUCINICH. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, this 15-minute vote on adoption of House Concurrent Resolution 248 will be followed by 5-minute votes on the motion to suspend the rules on House Concurrent Resolution 249 and House Resolution 1144.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 65, nays 356, not voting 9, as follows:

[Roll No. 98]

YEAS—65

Baldwin
Campbell
Capuano
Chu
Clarke
Clay
Cleaver
Crowley
Davis (IL)
DeFazio
Doyle
Duncan
Edwards (MD)
Ellison
Farr
Filner
Frank (MA)
Grayson
Grijalva
Gutierrez
Hastings (FL)
Jackson (IL)
Jackson Lee (TX)
Johnson (IL)
Johnson, E. B.
Jones
Kagen
Kucinich
Larson (CT)
Lee (CA)
Lewis (GA)
Maffei
Maloney
Markey (MA)
McDermott
McGovern
Michaud
Miller, George
Nadler (NY)
Napolitano
Neal (MA)
Obey
Olver
Paul
Payne
Pingree (ME)
Polis (CO)
Quigley
Rangel
Richardson
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Schakowsky
Serrano
Speier
Stark
Stupak
Tierney
Towns
Tsongas
Velázquez
Waters
Watson
Welch
Woolsey

NAYS—356

Ackerman
Aderholt
Adler (NJ)
Akin
Alexander
Altmire
Andrews
Arcuri
Austria
Baca
Bachmann
Bachus
Baird
Barrow
Bartlett
Barton (TX)
Bean
Becerra
Berkley
Berman
Berry
Biggert
Bilbray
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Bishop (UT)
Blackburn
Blumenauer
Blunt
Boccieri
Boehner
Bonner
Bono Mack
Boozman
Boren
Boswell
Boucher
Boustany
Boyd
Brady (PA)
Brady (TX)
Braley (IA)
Bright
Broun (GA)
Brown (SC)
Brown, Corrine
Brown-Waite, Ginny
Buchanan
Burgess
Burton (IN)
Butterfield
Buyer
Calvert
Cantor
Cao
Capito
Capps
Cardoza
Carnahan
Carney
Carson (IN)
Carter
Cassidy
Castle
Castor (FL)
Chaffetz
Chandler
Childers
Clyburn
Coble
Coffman (CO)
Cohen
Cole
Conaway
Connolly (VA)
Cooper
Costa
Costello
Courtney
Crenshaw
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Dahlkemper
Davis (CA)
Davis (KY)
Davis (TN)
DeGette
Delahunt
DeLauro
Dent
Diaz-Balart, M.
Dicks
Dingell
Doggett
Donnelly (IN)
Dreier
Driehaus
Edwards (TX)
Ehlers
Ellsworth
Emerson
Engel
Eshoo
Etheridge
Fallin
Fattah
Flake
Fleming
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foster
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Fudge
Gallegly
Garamendi
Garrett (NJ)
Gerlach
Giffords
Gingrey (GA)
Gohmert
Gonzalez
Goodlatte
Gordon (TN)
Granger
Graves
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Griffith
Guthrie
Hall (NY)
Hall (TX)
Halvorson
Hare
Harman
Harper
Hastings (WA)
Heinrich
Heller
Hensarling
Herger
Herseth Sandlin
Higgins
Hill
Himes
Hinchey
Hinojosa
Hirono
Hodes
Holden
Holt
Honda
Hoyer
Hunter
Inglis
Inslee
Israel
Issa
Jenkins
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, Sam
Jordan (OH)
Kanjorski
Kaptur
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilpatrick (MI)
Kilroy
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kirk
Kirkpatrick (AZ)
Kissell
Klein (FL)
Kline (MN)
Kosmas
Kratovil
Lamborn
Lance
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Latham
LaTourette
Latta
Lee (NY)
Levin
Lewis (CA)
Linder
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren, Zoe
Lowey
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Luján
Lummis
Lungren, Daniel E.
Lynch
Mack
Manzullo
Marchant
Markey (CO)
Marshall
Matheson
Matsui

McCarthy (CA)
McCarthy (NY)
McCaul
McClintock
McCollum
McCotter
McHenry
McIntyre
McKeon
McMahon
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
Meek (FL)
Meeks (NY)
Melancon
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller (NC)
Miller, Gary
Minnick
Mitchell
Mollohan
Moore (KS)
Moore (WI)
Moran (KS)
Moran (VA)
Murphy (CT)
Murphy (NY)
Murphy, Patrick
Murphy, Tim
Myrick
Neugebauer
Nunes
Nye
Oberstar
Olson
Ortiz
Owens
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor (AZ)
Paulsen
Pence
Perlmutter
Perriello
Peters
Peterson
Petri
Pitts
Platts
Poe (TX)
Pomeroy
Posey
Price (GA)
Price (NC)
Putnam
Radanovich
Rahall
Rehberg
Reichert
Reyes
Rodriguez
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Rooney
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothman (NJ)
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Ryan (WI)
Salazar
Sarbanes
Scalise
Schauer
Schiff
Schmidt
Schock
Schrader
Schwartz
Scott (GA)
Scott (VA)
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Sestak
Shadegg
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuler
Shuster
Simpson
Sires
Skelton
Slaughter
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Snyder
Souder
Space
Spratt
Stearns
Sullivan
Sutton
Tanner
Taylor
Teague
Terry
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiahrt
Tiberi
Titus
Tonko
Turner
Upton
Van Hollen
Visclosky
Walden
Walz
Wamp
Watt
Waxman
Weiner
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Wilson (OH)
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Wolf
Wu
Yarmuth
Young (AK)

NOT VOTING—9

Barrett (SC)
Camp
Conyers
Davis (AL)
Deal (GA)
Diaz-Balart, L.
Hoekstra
Wasserman Schultz
Young (FL)

□ 1822

Messrs. GENE GREEN of Texas, CARSON of Indiana, Mrs. CAPPS, Messrs. BACHUS, COSTELLO, and Mrs. LOWEY changed their vote from ''yea'' to ''nay.''

Mr. CROWLEY changed his vote from ''nay'' to ''yea.''

So the concurrent resolution was not agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Stated against:

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Madam Speaker, on rollcall No. 98, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted "no."

COMMEMORATING THE 45TH ANNIVERSARY OF BLOODY SUNDAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 249, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. COHEN) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 249.

This will be a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 409, nays 0, not voting 21, as follows:

[Roll No. 99]

YEAS—409

Ackerman
Aderholt
Adler (NJ)
Akin
Alexander
Altmire
Andrews
Arcuri
Austria
Baca
Bachmann
Bachus
Baird
Baldwin
Barrow
Bartlett
Barton (TX)
Bean
Becerra
Berkley
Berman
Berry
Biggert
Bilbray
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Bishop (UT)
Blackburn
Blumenauer
Boccieri
Boehner
Bonner
Bono Mack
Boozman
Boren
Boswell
Boucher
Boustany
Boyd
Brady (PA)
Brady (TX)
Braley (IA)
Bright
Broun (GA)
Brown (SC)
Brown, Corrine
Brown-Waite, Ginny
Buchanan
Burgess
Butterfield
Buyer
Calvert
Campbell
Cantor
Cao
Capito
Capps
Capuano
Cardoza
Carnahan
Carney
Carson (IN)
Carter
Cassidy
Castle
Castor (FL)
Chaffetz
Chandler
Childers
Chu
Clarke
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coble
Coffman (CO)
Cohen
Cole
Conaway
Connolly (VA)
Cooper
Costa
Costello
Courtney
Crenshaw
Crowley
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Dahlkemper
Davis (CA)
Davis (IL)
Davis (KY)
Davis (TN)
DeFazio
DeGette
Delahunt
DeLauro
Dent
Diaz-Balart, M.
Dingell
Doggett
Donnelly (IN)
Doyle
Dreier
Driehaus
Duncan
Edwards (MD)
Ehlers
Ellison
Ellsworth
Emerson
Engel
Eshoo
Etheridge
Fallin
Fattah
Filner
Flake
Fleming
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foster
Foxx
Frank (MA)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Fudge
Gallegly
Garamendi
Garrett (NJ)
Gerlach
Giffords
Gingrey (GA)
Gohmert
Gonzalez
Goodlatte
Granger
Graves
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Griffith
Guthrie
Gutierrez
Hall (NY)
Hall (TX)
Halvorson
Hare
Harman
Harper
Hastings (FL)
Hastings (WA)
Heinrich
Heller
Hensarling
Herger
Herseth Sandlin
Higgins
Hill
Himes
Hinchey
Hinojosa
Hirono
Holden
Holt
Honda
Hoyer
Hunter
Inglis
Inslee
Israel
Issa
Jackson (IL)
Jackson Lee (TX)
Jenkins
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (IL)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan (OH)
Kagen
Kanjorski
Kaptur
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilpatrick (MI)
Kilroy
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kirk
Kirkpatrick (AZ)
Kissell
Klein (FL)
Kosmas
Kratovil
Kucinich
Lamborn
Lance
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Latham
Latta
Lee (CA)
Levin
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (GA)
Linder
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren, Zoe
Lowey
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Luján
Lummis
Lungren, Daniel E.
Lynch
Mack
Maffei
Maloney
Manzullo
Marchant
Markey (CO)
Markey (MA)
Marshall
Matheson
Matsui
McCarthy (CA)
McCarthy (NY)
McCaul
McClintock
McCollum
McCotter
McDermott
McGovern
McHenry
McIntyre
McKeon
McMahon
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
Meek (FL)
Meeks (NY)
Melancon
Mica
Michaud
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller (NC)
Miller, Gary
Miller, George
Minnick
Mitchell
Mollohan
Moore (KS)
Moore (WI)
Moran (KS)
Moran (VA)
Murphy (CT)
Murphy (NY)
Murphy, Patrick
Murphy, Tim
Myrick
Nadler (NY)
Napolitano
Neal (MA)
Neugebauer
Nunes
Nye
Oberstar
Obey
Olson
Olver
Ortiz
Owens
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor (AZ)
Paul
Paulsen
Payne
Pence
Perlmutter
Perriello
Peters
Peterson
Petri
Pingree (ME)
Pitts
Platts
Poe (TX)
Pomeroy
Posey
Price (GA)
Price (NC)
Putnam
Quigley
Radanovich
Rahall
Rangel
Rehberg
Reichert
Reyes
Richardson
Rodriguez
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Rooney
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothman (NJ)
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Ryan (WI)
Salazar
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Scalise
Schakowsky
Schauer
Schiff
Schmidt
Schock
Schrader
Schwartz
Scott (GA)
Scott (VA)
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Sestak
Shadegg
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuler
Shuster
Simpson
Sires
Skelton
Slaughter
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Snyder
Souder
Space
Speier
Spratt
Stark
Stearns
Stupak
Sullivan
Sutton
Tanner
Taylor
Teague
Terry
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiahrt
Tiberi
Tierney
Titus
Tonko
Towns
Tsongas
Turner
Upton
Van Hollen
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walden
Walz
Wamp
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Watson
Watt
Waxman
Weiner
Welch
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Wilson (OH)
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Wolf
Woolsey
Wu
Yarmuth
Young (AK)

NOT VOTING—21

Barrett (SC)
Blunt
Burton (IN)
Camp
Conyers
Davis (AL)
Deal (GA)
Diaz-Balart, L.
Dicks
Edwards (TX)
Farr
Gordon (TN)
Grijalva
Hodes
Hoekstra
Kline (MN)
Larson (CT)
LaTourette
Lee (NY)
Polis (CO)
Young (FL)

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. HALVORSON) (during the vote). There are 2 minutes remaining in this vote.

□ 1830

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the concurrent resolution was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Stated for:

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Madam Speaker, on rollcall No. 99, had I been present, I would have voted "yes."

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, on March 10, 2010, I was called away on personal business. I regret that I was not present to vote on H. Res. 1146, H. Res. 1088, H.R. 4621, H. Con. Res. 248, and H. Con. Res. 249.

Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on all votes.