North Carolina (Mr. JONES) for 5 minutes.

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, today the Republicans held a conference—the Democrats do the same thing during the week, talk about issues—and I had a couple of minutes to remind our Speaker of the House, JOHN BOEHNER, whom I like, think the world of him, that as he was talking about the domestic policies of the President and how many of them seem to be failed policies, I said, well, how about the failed policy in Afghanistan?

I had written the Speaker back in November asking him to please take just a few minutes to talk to a retired marine general who has been my adviser on Afghanistan for 3 years. He agrees with me, the general does, that we're not going to win anything there; we just let our precious resources, our children, go there and lose their legs and lives, for what, we don't know.

I asked the Speaker—we did it in a bipartisan way. In fact, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DUNCAN), who will be speaking shortly after me, we did a bipartisan letter, three Democrats and three Republicans, asking Mr. BOEHNER and also Ms. PELOSI to go read the National Intelligence Estimate on Afghanistan that came out in December.

□ 1020

If they would read it, they would be better informed and better understand those of us who want to get out.

I had emailed the commandant of the Marine Corps who has been my adviser. He is retired now. Right before the burning of the Koran in Afghanistan—what I'm going to share for the record is an email that happened before the burning of the Koran. I quote the general:

> Attempting to find a true military and political answer to the problems in Afghanistan would take decades, not years, and drain our Nation of precious resources—with the most precious being our sons and daughters.

Simply put, the United States cannot solve the Afghan problem, no matter how brave and determined our troops are. We need to bring our people home and prepare for the real danger that is growing in the Pacific.

Mr. Speaker, I read that today in the conference. As you know, Mr. Speaker, we only have 1 minute and a lot of Members want to speak on different subjects. In addition, I did get time to read from a VSO team leader. The VSO team leader happens to be a young marine officer. VSO means village stability operation. This young marine, this team leader, emailed a friend of mine who emailed to me:

> If you ask me if it's worth a single American life to build governance here in Afghanistan, I would have to say no.

Sometimes it is very perplexing to me in terms of just where is the outrage in this country. I've seen so many wounded from my district of Camp Lejeune, of marines and soldiers who have lost legs and arms. I have even seen four young men that have no body parts below their waist. They are living and they will live, but they have nothing below their waist.

I don't know where the Congress is, quite frankly. We're going to be there until 2014 unless we get out sooner. I've got a feeling we'll probably be there a little bit longer than 2015, knowing the way both parties feel about this. There's nothing we're going to change. Karzai half the time doesn't like us; the other half he does. It is all about the $10 billion a month. He wants that money to buy some roads and fur caps and stick some money in foreign countries so when his administration collapses in Afghanistan, he's got some money to fall back on.

Mr. Speaker, I'm just going to take another minute and then I'm going to close.

In Marine Times recently there was an article called: ''TriCare Costs Would Jump in Budget Plan.'' If we forget our veterans of yesterday and our veterans of today, I think God will punish America. These young men and women and now the older veterans are older men and women and did so much for America to make it the greatest Nation in the world because they were willing to sacrifice and give of themselves. But if we're going to continue to borrow money from China to send $10 billion a month to Karzai, $120 billion a year, that to me is a sin, quite frankly.

We need to wake up in this country and figure out if we're going to fix our problems. We should start right here in America and fix our problems before we worry about the world's problems. Seventy-two of our servicepeople have been killed by the trainees in Afghanistan that they were trying to train to be policemen or soldiers. Seventy-two have been shot or killed by the people they were training. Where in the world does that make any sense? It doesn't make any sense. It is time for America to wake up and demand that Congress get our troops out now, not in 2014.

Before I close, as I always do, I ask God to please bless our men and women in uniform. I ask God to please bless the families of our men and women in uniform. I ask God in His loving arms to hold the families who have given a child dying for freedom in Afghanistan and Iraq. I ask God to bless the House and Senate, that we will do what is right in the eyes of God for His people here in the United States of America. I ask God to please bless the President of the United States, that he will do what is right in the eyes of God for God's people here in the United States.

And I close three times: God, please, God, please, God, please continue to bless America.

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
Washington, DC, February 10, 2012.

Hon. JOHN BOEHNER,
Speaker, House of Representatives, U.S. Capitol, Washington, DC.

Hon. NANCY PELOSI,
Democratic Leader, The Capitol, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER AND DEMOCRATIC LEADER: I would like to bring your attention to Lieutenant Colonel Daniel Davis' recent assessment of the situation in Afghanistan that was published in the New York Times on February 6, 2012 (attached). It is vastly different than the one that the U. S. Congress has been receiving from the Obama Administration. Many of us have read the National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) for December 2011 and found it supports Lieutenant Colonel Davis' analysis. We encourage you to read the NIE as well.

Therefore, we think that Lieutenant Davis' analysis merits attention by the relevant committees of jurisdiction in the U. S. House of Representatives and we respectfully request that you encourage the relevant Chairmen to hold hearings as soon as possible and invite Lieutenant Colonel Davis to be a witness. As we withdraw from Afghanistan, it is vital that the Congress hear another perspective from what we have heard for over ten years. Thank you for your careful consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

WALTER B. JONES,
Member of Congress.
JIMMY DUNCAN,
Member Congress.
JIM MCGOVERN,
Member of Congress.
JOHN GARAMENDI,
Member of Congress.
TIMOTHY V. JOHNSON,
Member of Congress.
BARBARA LEE,
Member of Congress.

WOMEN'S HEALTH IN THE TWILIGHT ZONE

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

Ms. MOORE. Mr. Speaker, lately, I along with many other women have felt like we're a mere supporting cast in an episode of ''The Twilight Zone.'' I can just hear the narration of the show saying:

> You're traveling through another dimension, a dimension not only of sight and sound, but of mind. That is the signpost up ahead: Your next stop, the Twilight Zone.

The rhetoric espoused over the last few weeks by many conservatives has me feeling as if I'm in an alternative political universe where men say the most oddly absurd things about what women should be doing with their bodies. In this universe, the House Committee on Government Oversight and Reform holds hearings on women's health and contraception with a panel made up completely of men.

This may seem odd to you folks out there in the real world; but in this alternate reality, it makes perfectly good sense that a bunch of middle-aged men, devoid of ovaries and uteruses, would be experts on women's reproductive health. In this alternate universe, you wouldn't dare ask a woman to testify on women's health and what it means to be a woman. You wouldn't invite them to talk about what it means to be susceptible to pregnancy for approximately 30 years of their lives and how important birth control is to women who wish to prevent unintended pregnancies and to preserve their health. You surely wouldn't ask a woman to testify about how birth control has helped them prevent various

diseases or manage diseases like endometriosis.

While it would be nice to believe we're in the twilight zone, the recent ploys of Republicans against women's health are all frighteningly too real. In reality, this hearing did take place with the House Government Oversight and Reform Committee blocking the testimony of women, women like Georgetown University law student Sandra Fluke, who later testified during a special hearing convened by Democratic Minority Leader NANCY PELOSI of a fellow female student at Georgetown University who had been denied contraception coverage because of the university's Catholic affiliation. Her friend experienced complications stemming from ovarian cysts that could have been treated with birth control. Sadly, due to nontreatment, doctors eventually were forced to remove her ovary.

There are so many stories just like this that need to be told; but, sadly, you won't hear them on Capitol Hill if my Republican colleagues in the majority have anything to do with it. They are too busy silencing women's voices on these very critical issues.

What if there was a hearing held on access to Viagra or vasectomies with a panel of experts being a group of six women? Could you imagine the outrage if women were allowed to legislate what happens to men's bodies? The horror.

Ladies and gentlemen, Mr. Speaker, this twilight zone is real. This attack on women's health is real, but the battle is not over. We cannot and will not allow a few to silence the voices of millions of women across this country. We must continue to stand up for women and their reproductive health.

LEAVE AFGHANISTAN

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

Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I voted to go to war in Afghanistan, but I did not vote for a forever, permanent war that has now lasted almost three times as long as World War II. We should have ended our involvement in Afghanistan many years ago, and many young American lives would have been saved.

The first war against Iraq and Kuwait lasted just 7 months. With the recent killings of four more Americans and with massive anti-American demonstrations being conducted by hundreds of thousands of Afghani citizens, we need to greatly speed up our withdrawal. We need to leave Afghanistan the sooner the better.

We've spent hundreds of billions there over the last decade, a great amount of which has really been just pure foreign aid. We've built schools and medical facilities and helped their farmers. We have trained their police and military and have had thousands of Afghanis on our payroll.

□ 1030

We've had to borrow approximately 41 percent of all of these mega-billions we have spent to help the Afghan people. No country has done nearly as much, Mr. Speaker, for another country in the entire history of the world as we have done for Afghanistan.

Now, the people there have made it very clear that they do not appreciate what we have done for them. In fact, not only are they ungrateful, but they are showing, through their actions, that they have anger or even hatred toward us. We should stop spending all these billions of taxpayer dollars just as soon as we possibly can.

I did not criticize President Obama when he apologized for the burning of the Korans. However, I did not think it was something that rose to the level that required a Presidential apology. Some person or persons made a mistake in burning the Korans. They should have apologized, or the commander of the Air Force base, or perhaps our Ambassador.

However now, where is the apology from the Afghan leadership about the Americans who have been killed or for all of the hatred and anger directed toward our country? Where is the gratitude for all that America and Americans have done for the Afghan people over the last 10 or 11 years?

We have a national debt of over $15 trillion that is headed far higher at a more rapid rate than ever before. It is far past the time that we should have been taking care of our own country and putting our own citizens first.

We need to let the Afghan people run Afghanistan, and we need to stop trying to be everything to everybody all over the world. We simply cannot afford it, and we are jeopardizing the future of ourselves, our children, and our grandchildren if we continue trying to run the whole world.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 31 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

PRAYER

Reverend Adam McHugh, Vitas Hospice Center, Covina, California, offered the following prayer:

Gracious God, we acknowledge and praise You on this day that You have made.

We are reminded that all power and authority ultimately come from You. We do not wield our own power, but we are stewards who have been entrusted with a greater power.

May the work that is done today in the Halls of the powerful be done on behalf of the powerless. Would You open our ears to listen to the needs and the cries of those who are seldom heard. May the strong voices today speak out for the sake of those with no voice.

Would You grant our leaders courage and wisdom to do what is right, and would You pour out on them a spirit of peace, love, kindness, and gentleness.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CONNOLLY) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RESIGNATION AS PARLIAMENTARIAN OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

The SPEAKER laid before the House the following communication:

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, OFFICE OF THE PARLIAMENTARIAN,
Washington, DC, February 28, 2012.

Hon. JOHN A. BOEHNER,
The Speaker, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: As you know, the skill and dedication of the team with whom I serve in the Office of the Parliamentarian and the Office of Compilation of Precedents are unsurpassed. In my judgment they are ready to continue their commitment to excellence in the procedural practice of the House without me. I appreciate your allowing me to lead the office to this juncture. Please now accept my resignation effective March 31, 2012.

I am grateful to you and your predecessors, Mr. Speaker, for supporting the exercise of independent professional judgment by your parliamentarians. It is a credit to the House that its presiding officers shed their partisan cloaks and follow our considered advice.

It has been my honor to serve in the Office of the Parliamentarian for 25 years. To whatever extent I have made good of the opportunity, I credit the steady support of my wife, Nancy Sands Sullivan, and the inspiration of our children, Michael, Margaret, and Matthew.

Sincerely,

JOHN V. SULLIVAN,
Parliamentarian.