



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 114th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 161

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, MARCH 24, 2015

No. 49

House of Representatives

The House met at 9 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Ms. FOXX).

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
March 24, 2015.

I hereby appoint the Honorable VIRGINIA FOXX to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

JOHN A. BOEHNER,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 10 a.m. today.

Accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 1 minute a.m.), the House stood in recess.

☐ 1000

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana) at 10 a.m.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 6, 2015, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 1 hour and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

AFGHANISTAN: THE GRAVEYARD OF EMPIRES

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

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, last week in the House Armed Services Committee, we had a hearing on the budget for fiscal year 2016. Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Martin Dempsey, both testified before the committee, and I have great respect for both of them. I asked them if, after a decade in Afghanistan, keeping troops in Afghanistan for 9 more years would even make a difference.

Last year in his Politico article, "Down the Opium Rathole," Roger Simon argues, "If you spent 13 years pounding money down a rathole with little to show for it, you might wake up one morning and say: 'Hey, I'm going to stop pounding money down this rathole.' . . . Unfortunately, the U.S. Government does not think this way. Even though our combat troops are leaving Afghanistan, our money will continue to flow there, billion after billion."

Mr. Speaker, I submit this Politico article for the RECORD.

[From Politico, Oct. 29, 2014]

DOWN THE OPIUM RATHOLE

(By Roger Simon)

If you spent 13 years pounding money down a rathole with little to show for it, you might wake up one morning and say: "Hey, I'm going to stop pounding money down this rathole."

Unfortunately, the U.S. government does not think this way.

The U.S. government wakes up every morning and says: "The rathole is looking a little empty today. Let's pound a few more billion dollars down there."

And when that rathole is Afghanistan, the billions are essentially without end.

Even though our combat troops are leaving Afghanistan, our money will continue to flow there, billion after billion.

The National Priorities Project says "\$753.3 billion has been allocated for the war in Afghanistan since 2001, including \$89.1 billion in fiscal year 2014."

President Obama hopes to reduce U.S. forces in Afghanistan to just 9,800 troops next year. But the money spigot will not be turned off.

Afghanistan is one of the poorest countries in the world. In Asia, only Bangladesh is poorer. According to the World Food Programme, half the population lives below the poverty line; Afghanistan has one of the highest infant mortality rates in the world; and more than half the children under 5 years old are chronically malnourished.

Yet at one thing Afghanistan succeeds superbly: Afghanistan illegally produces and exports opium, morphine and heroin in such quantities that, according to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Afghanistan is "practically the exclusive supplier of the world's deadliest drug [93% of the global opiates market]. Leaving aside 19th-century China, that had a population at that time 15 times larger than today's Afghanistan, no other country in the world has ever produced narcotics on such a deadly scale."

The United States has spent billions trying to stop this trade, but it has failed utterly. In fact, under U.S. occupation, drug production has increased.

Opiates come from opium poppies, which are planted in profusion in Afghanistan. More than eight years ago, we decided to spray the poppy fields with herbicides, but this was unpopular with the Afghan government, which didn't want its illegal drug profits to stop. And even some counterinsurgency experts feared that killing the opium poppies would drive angry poppy farmers into the arms of the Taliban.

Lots of people get confused between counterinsurgency and counterterrorism, by the way. A military expert once explained it to me this way:

Counterinsurgency is when you try to win the hearts and minds of the people.

Counterterrorism is when you kill the people and then try to win their hearts and minds.

The United States has tried both policies in Afghanistan for years.

☐ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., ☐ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



Printed on recycled paper.

H1851