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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mrs. HARTZLER).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
October 5, 2011.

I hereby appoint the Honorable VICKY HARTZLER to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

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

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 5, 2011, 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 each, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

AFGHANISTAN

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

Mr. JONES. Madam Speaker, I think you will note today that from both sides, the Democratic side and Republican side, there will be those of us who come to the floor to speak about bringing our troops home from Afghanistan. Friday of this week will be 10 years since we committed our troops to Afghanistan.

I would like to quote from Andrew Bacevich, in an article 2 years ago, and the title, "To Die for a Mystique":

"To apply to the Long War, the plaintive query that General David Petraeus once posed with regard to Iraq—'Tell me how this ends'—the answer is clear: No one has the foggiest idea. War has become like the changing phases of the moon. It's part of everyday existence. For American soldiers there is no end in sight."

Madam Speaker, that also applies to Afghanistan. Ten years later, so many have died, so many have been wounded.

I say to the House with humility and regret that I have signed over 10,400 letters to the immediate and extended families of the fallen from both Iraq and Afghanistan. Obviously, the majority of letters now are to the families of those who have been killed in Afghanistan.

Poll after poll has shown that the American people in large percentages want our troops home now. This number of people continues to grow as the number of dead and wounded increases.

Madam Speaker, beside me is a poster of a young Army couple where the husband has lost both legs and an arm. How many more have to give their lives, their minds, and their bodies for a corrupt Afghan leader named Karzai?

I encourage the people of this country to put pressure on Congress, especially the Republican leadership, by calling their Members of Congress and telling them to bring our troops home before the 2015 deadline.

Why do I say 2015? I will quote Secretary Gates as he appeared before the Armed Services Committee in February of this year.

Secretary Gates: "That is why we believe that beginning in fiscal year 2015, the United States can, with minimal risk, begin reducing Army active duty end strength by 27,000 and the Marine Corps by somewhere between 15,000 and 20,000. These projections assume that the number of troops in Afghanistan would be significantly reduced by the end of 2014"—by the end of 2014—"in ac-

cordance with President Obama's strategy."

Madam Speaker, the problem there is that 2014 becomes 2015, 2015 becomes 2016. How many more have to die? How many more have to lose legs and arms and try to live the rest of their lives in that kind of situation?

Madam Speaker, I learned just recently that the Chinese are in Afghanistan buying copper, and this soldier told me that his unit was notified that the Chinese needed protection. How crazy is crazy? And our young men and women are over there walking the roads of Afghanistan.

American people, join those of us in Congress in both parties. Let's bring them home now, not 2015.

Madam Speaker, as I always close on the floor and I will close again today, 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 please bless the House and Senate that we will do what is right in the eyes of God for His people. And I will ask God to give wisdom, strength, and courage to President Obama that he will do what is right in the eyes of God for God's people.

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

TEN YEARS OF WAR IN AFGHANISTAN: THE COSTS ARE TOO HIGH

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

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, on Sunday, newspapers across the country reported that the total number of U.S. military deaths in Afghanistan since 2001 is 1,780. This tally may be slightly

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



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incomplete because of lags in reporting.

One thousand seven hundred and eighty servicemen and women, Madam Speaker. Husbands and fathers, wives and mothers, sons and daughters, brothers and sisters—holes created in families and communities that can never be filled, losses that will be felt for a generation or more.

Saturday began a new fiscal year, Madam Speaker, fiscal year 2012. According to the Congressional Research Service, the estimated war funding for Iraq and Afghanistan since 2001 through fiscal year 2011 is \$1.283 trillion; \$443 billion of that has been spent in Afghanistan.

For fiscal year 2012, which began on Saturday, we will spend another \$113.7 billion in Afghanistan. By this time next year, our total spending in Afghanistan will be \$557.1 billion, or over half a trillion dollars.

And when I say “spend,” Madam Speaker, I really mean “borrow,” because from day one of the Afghanistan war—and the Iraq war, for that matter—we have not paid for these wars. We have borrowed nearly every single penny of that money, put it on the national credit card, let it rack up over a quarter of our cumulative deficit, helped explode our debt year after year for a decade.

There has only been one other time in the history of the United States that a war was financed entirely through borrowing, Madam Speaker, without raising taxes, and that was when the colonies borrowed from France during the Revolutionary War.

I know lots of Members in this House believe in the Tea Party, but that’s just stupid economics.

Even if we were to leave Afghanistan and Iraq tomorrow, our war debt will continue for decades. Future bills will include such things as caring for our military veterans and providing them the benefits they have earned through their services. It will require replacing military equipment, rebuilding our Armed Forces and paying interest on the trillions we have borrowed for these wars. These costs are significant.

Madam Speaker, this Friday, October 7, marks the 10th anniversary of U.S. military operations in Afghanistan. Ten years, Madam Speaker. Ten years of support for a corrupt government. Ten years of sacrificing our brave uniformed men and women. Ten years of borrowing money we never had.

This war is no longer about going after al Qaeda, which I voted to do. Osama bin Laden is dead. Instead, we’re now bogged down in a seemingly endless occupation in support of a corrupt, incompetent Karzai government. This is not what I voted for.

And the human and financial costs of the war in Afghanistan go on and on and on, not just on the battlefields of Afghanistan, but in veterans hospitals and counseling clinics around the country. Another \$8.4 billion to care for our veterans wounded in both body and soul.

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We continue to struggle with soaring posttraumatic stress and suicide rates among our soldiers and our veterans. Their impacts are devastating on families, friends, colleagues, and military buddies.

It is hard to explain how we could borrow and spend so freely, so casually, while our men and women bled in the plains and mountains of Afghanistan, but now we have to face the consequences of that lack of accountability, that lack of responsible governance.

When the supercommittee makes its decisions on how to handle the deficit and the debt, I say ending the wars as rapidly as possible must be the first item on the table. I also say that, from this point forward, the wars must be paid for. No more emergency funding. No more overseas contingency funds that get a free pass from responsible budgeting. I believe President Obama has to bring this to the negotiations, and the House and Senate members of the supercommittee have to step up to the plate and end these wars. End these wars now. They have undermined our economy, and they have undermined our security.

Ten years into the Afghanistan war, the violence shows no signs of abating; the Karzai government shows little interest in cleaning up corruption; and no one is interested in the kind of region-wide negotiations required to bring stability and security to all parties.

So I say enough is enough. Get out of Afghanistan. The costs in blood and treasure have been too high. Ten years is more than enough. After 10 years, it’s time to come home.

THE IMPACT OF REGULATIONS ON BUSINESS

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

Mr. BONNER. Madam Speaker, while long-term unemployment is now worse than at any time since the Great Depression and while Americans in growing numbers are becoming more and more concerned about the direction their country is heading, the one thing that is uniting Americans is the realization that their Federal Government is unnecessarily getting in the way of job creators, of both small and large businesses alike, by tying the hands of employers with bureaucratic redtape and over-the-top, unnecessary and often duplicative regulation.

A recent Tarrance Group survey found that three-quarters of the American people believe that businesses and consumers are overregulated. Another two-thirds believe that regulations have increased over the past few years. Americans, understandably so, are concerned that regulations will create a hindrance to job creation, and most believe that new regulation will either

bring more job losses or increased prices.

Madam Speaker, the American people have good reason to be concerned. From higher taxes on workers and businesses to the greater intrusion by the Federal Government into personal health care decisions, there has been plenty of evidence that this administration wants to grow the size and reach and scope of government in ways that we have never before seen in the history of America. At any time, the heavy hand of Big Government regulation is bad news for jobs, but during the middle of the worst recession since the Great Depression, it defies common sense for government to place even more roadblocks in front of struggling businesses.

While largely unseen by the public and, more times than not, not even debated here on the floor of Congress, Federal regulations directly impact jobs and job creation. A Small Business Administration report released just last September, in September of 2010, noted that Federal regulations cost businesses \$1.7 trillion each year and that small businesses, in particular, bear a disproportionate share of these costs, averaging over \$10,000 for each employee.

Along America’s gulf coast, we have recently experienced the direct impact of Federal Government overreach in the oil production industry. The administration’s de facto moratorium on new oil drilling has cost our region of the country tens of thousands of jobs—some say as few as 30,000, others as many as 70,000 jobs that have been lost—at a time when the gulf coast is still struggling to recover from the worst manmade disaster in American history.

Just last week, I visited several large and small manufacturers in south Alabama, in Alabama’s First Congressional District, that are doing their very best to turn a profit under the mantle of increased Federal regulation.

In one case, a small manufacturer with 28 employees related how they cannot expand their production due to new Federal regulations. In fact, they are now being forced to downsize. Incredibly, when EPA visits companies to perform audits, oftentimes they take away whole file drawers or cabinets full of records. The small business owners pay taxes on company profits from their personal income taxes, and they have to keep a consultant on retainer just to stay in compliance with all of the regulations. A medium-sized manufacturer we visited last week told me—and they’ve got plants in other States as well, not just in Alabama—that the new proposed regulations that they are looking at would cost their company alone over \$100 million in new regulation.

During his jobs speech to Congress, in this very Chamber just last month, the President admitted that government regulations on businesses serve to dampen job creation. He even suggested that he would be willing to work