

Middle East and Africa is leading to conflicts over food and water, escalating longstanding regional and ethnic tensions into violent clashes. Rising sea levels are putting people and food supplies in vulnerable coastal regions at risk, threatening to displace countless people.

The increasing scarcity of resources in regions across the globe is stressing governments that are trying to provide basic needs for their citizens. In already volatile regions of the world, these are highly dangerous conditions that can enable terrorist activity and exacerbate refugee crises. As these threats around the world continue to multiply due to climate change, the U.S. is forced to extend our limited resources in humanitarian aid and military security to more locations in an effort to keep the peace, protect our interests and allies, and avoid major conflicts.

It is not just the wonky scientists and policymakers that are sounding the alarm. The Department of Defense declared that the threat of climate change will affect the Pentagon's ability to defend the Nation and poses immediate risk to U.S. national security. The CIA and the Department of State have already identified climate change as a national security challenge, yet Congress continues to refuse to act on this issue.

We are already experiencing the impacts of climate change from superstorms in the U.S. to devastating droughts in the Middle East. As climate change continues to strain economies and societies across the world, it will only create additional resource burdens and impact the way our military executes its missions, forcing our military to spend more on crisis prevention, humanitarian assistance, and government stabilization.

This is why we have to act now. It is time for my colleagues to realize that the debate is over and that now is the time to deal with the very real consequences of climate change. As President Obama said: "To make collective decisions on behalf of a common good, we have to use our heads. We have to agree that facts and evidence matter. And we got to hold our leaders and ourselves accountable . . ."

While we can't reverse climate change, we can work with our partners around the world to slow the process, assist in adaptation, and protect our national security interests. The health and security of future generations depends on our actions today.

WASTE, FRAUD, AND ABUSE OF AMERICAN RESOURCES IN AFGHANISTAN NEEDS TO STOP

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

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, I am again on the floor—I don't know how many times I have been on the floor—to talk

about the waste, fraud, and abuse in Afghanistan. It just keeps going on and on.

Last week there was a great article—I don't think it was really great, but a very disturbing article—in The Washington Post, and the title was "Afghanistan Paid 11,000 Militants to Lay Down Their Arms. Now the Money Has Run Out." It was the American taxpayer who paid the militants to stop fighting and killing Americans.

Somewhere along the way this doesn't make a whole lot of sense to me. We, the American taxpayers, have been paying fringe Taliban fighters not to fight for years. The article explained that there is little accountability of how that money is spent and where. We do not even know if paying fringe Taliban fighters not to fight is working. Further, committed Taliban fighters get money from other sources and still get money from the American taxpayer, and they are there to kill Americans. Somewhere along the way this just makes no sense at all.

Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD my letter to Speaker RYAN about the great work of John Sopko, Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, April 14, 2016.

Hon. PAUL D. RYAN,
Speaker of the House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER, During the Easter District Work Period, I read an Associated Press article about your support for numerous spending cuts to the FY 2017 budget in order to secure additional votes. While I support such efforts, it remains difficult for me to comprehend why congressional leadership continues to support the waste, fraud, and abuse in Afghanistan.

After over 14 years, and over \$800 billion dollars, the waste is more obvious today than ever before. I have enclosed two articles for your review that detail the severity of the situation. First is a USA Today story regarding Mr. John Sopko's testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee that details the mysterious case of "Schrodinger's goats," in which \$6 million was spent on nine male goats meant to start a cashmere industry in Afghanistan, and whose status as dead or alive cannot be confirmed. Second is an NBC story, "12 Ways Your Tax Dollars Were Squandered in Afghanistan" which, unfortunately, is only a small sample of the waste.

Surprisingly, many in the Republican Party question why the American public is so frustrated with our leadership. A cursory look at the multitude of reports of the wasted billions of dollars in Afghanistan should easily rationalize the American people's frustration. Adding Afghanistan spending to the chopping block will go a long way toward gaining the support of the American people and restoring fiscal sanity to Washington, DC. Nothing is changing in Afghanistan—it continues to be the graveyard of empires and with a growing debt surpassing \$19 trillion, I believe that America is heading for the graveyard.

Mr. Speaker, I also encourage you to personally meet with Mr. John Sopko, the Special Inspector General of Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR). The valuable work of SIGAR has uncovered billions of dollars of waste, fraud, and abuse in Afghanistan, which we must stop.

Thank you for your continued leadership and consideration of this request. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

WALTER B. JONES,
Member of Congress.

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, in the letter to Mr. RYAN, I ask him, the Speaker of the House, if he would find 45 minutes in the very busy schedule that he has to meet with John Sopko. I have been in meetings, both formal and informal, with John Sopko, and other Members of Congress have, and his group, known as SIGAR, have given full reports every year for the past few years to talk about the failure of our policy in Afghanistan. I don't know why we in Congress continue to fund Afghanistan. It is nothing but a waste of life and money, and it needs to stop.

Mr. Speaker, it is true now that we have fewer Americans killed in Afghanistan, but they still are being killed and wounded. I have a poster beside me that I have carried down to my district in North Carolina, as well as here in the House. For every one American that dies, I write a letter to the family. I have sent over 11,000 letters to families in this country. I started this when we had the war in Iraq, on which I failed to vote my conscience. I bought the misinformation from the Bush administration, and I voted to send our troops to Iraq.

This picture is of a little girl standing there with her hand holding her mother's hand, with her finger in her mouth kind of wondering why her daddy is in a flag-draped coffin. This will continue to go on. There will be families across this Nation until we pull out of Afghanistan. Let Afghanistan take care of its own problems. We cannot buy friendship in Afghanistan.

I close with this, Mr. Speaker. It was said many, many years ago about Afghanistan that Afghanistan is the graveyard of empires. With our \$19 trillion debt, there will soon be a headstone in Afghanistan that says: "USA." It is time to get out of Afghanistan.

OLDER AMERICANS MONTH AND SENIOR HUNGER

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

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, as we celebrate the contributions of our seniors during Older Americans Month this month, I rise to draw attention to an issue that often goes overlooked in our communities, and that is the terrible problem of hunger among aging adults.

Food insecurity among seniors has doubled since 2001, and is expected to increase significantly as the baby boomer generation ages. Today, food insecurity impacts 5 million seniors across the country, forcing them to make impossible decisions between food, medical care, home heating, and other necessities.