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House of Representatives

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

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
May 19, 2015.

I hereby appoint the Honorable MIKE BOST 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 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.

WASTE, FRAUD, AND ABUSE IN AFGHANISTAN

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

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, last week, The Washington Post ran a story titled, "Defense Firm that Employed Drunk, High Contractors in Afghanistan May Have Wasted \$135 Million in Taxpayer Dollars," by Colby Itkowitz. Colby writes:

"The defense contractor investigated in 2012 after cellphone videos surfaced of its employees drunk and high on drugs in Afghanistan may have mis-

used almost \$135 million of U.S. taxpayer money, an audit finds."

The Hill further reported that: "The company also did not comply with Federal procurement law, the audit found."

Mr. Speaker, I have been coming down to this floor for weeks to highlight the waste, fraud, and abuse in Afghanistan, which John Sopko, the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, has reported is worse now than ever.

The National Defense Authorization Act, which the House passed last week, authorized \$42 billion for Afghanistan, which is one of the reasons I did not vote for the bill.

Why do we continue to spend billions of American taxpayer dollars in Afghanistan when infrastructure all over the United States is rapidly deteriorating? This past weekend, CBS' "60 Minutes" ran a segment on America's failing infrastructure and reported that 70,000 bridges in the United States have been deemed structurally deficient, according to the Federal Government. That is one bridge out of every nine. My constituents in eastern North Carolina continually experience frustration and concern over the Bonner Bridge, which is falling apart. This further highlights the waste and the failed policy in Afghanistan.

I know some Members of Congress will be upset that I am calling attention to the reckless spending in Afghanistan the NDAA authorized, but then why doesn't Congress stop sending billions of dollars to a failed state where young American men and women are being wounded and killed? Mr. Speaker, this includes the father of these two little girls who are on a poster beside me. Their names are Eden and Stephanie Balduf. Their daddy, Sergeant Kevin Balduf, was shot and killed in Afghanistan 2 years ago by the Afghan he was training.

Mr. Speaker, it just gets worse and worse. Those wasted billions of dollars

should be allocated to fix American bridges and roads from falling apart and endangering American citizens. It is the right thing to do.

Mr. Speaker, let me remind the American people that, last year, the Obama administration signed a 10-year bilateral security agreement with Afghanistan strapping us with 10 more years of waste, fraud, and abuse; 10 more years of billions of dollars being wasted; 10 more years of young Americans being killed and wounded while the infrastructure in America is collapsing; 10 more years of veterans worrying about their benefits. There are so many needs here in America, so many needs that are not being met because we are wasting money overseas in Afghanistan.

Mr. Speaker, Congress should debate and vote to stop the madness in Afghanistan on behalf of our soldiers and our men and women in uniform, their families, and the taxpayers of America.

Mr. Speaker, it has been said many times that Afghanistan is a graveyard of empires. I hope there is a headstone for America because that is where we are heading, to the graveyard in Afghanistan.

TRANSPORTATION FUNDING

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, after a rocky start this Congress, we have seen some signs of progress.

Earlier this session, the House leadership allowed the process to work when all Democrats joined many Republicans to rescue Homeland Security from the potential disastrous shutdown by cutting off funds.

Later, a decade-long struggle on the Medicare sustainable growth rate, the so-called doc fix, moved forward. An impasse that had lasted for years was

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.



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