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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 5, 2016, 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.

HONORING LIEUTENANT COLONEL MICHAEL McLAUGHLIN

The SPEAKER. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, earlier this month, my congressional office in Titusville Pennsylvania, participated in a bridge naming service for Lieutenant Colonel Michael McLaughlin of Tionesta, Forest County, located in Pennsylvania's Fifth Congressional District. Thanks to the efforts of State Representative Kathy Rapp, the bridge was renamed the Lt. Col. Michael McLaughlin/AMVETS Post 113 Memorial Bridge.

Lieutenant Colonel Michael McLaughlin was actually born in Germany, but raised in Forest County. He graduated from the West Forest High School in Tionesta, and later attended Clarion University. It was there he became an ROTC cadet, and was commissioned a second lieutenant in 1982.

Starting his military career in the Army Reserves, Lieutenant Colonel McLaughlin went on to earn a master's degree from the University of Pittsburgh, and later became the president of his own company in Mercer, Penn-

sylvania, all while serving in the Pennsylvania Army National Guard. Throughout his service, he was highly honored, earning many ribbons and medals throughout his 26 years of service.

Unfortunately, Lieutenant Colonel Michael McLaughlin was killed in the line of duty on January 5, 2006, in Ramadi, Iraq, as the result of a suicide bomber. He was just 44 years old, and left behind his wife and two daughters.

McLaughlin was honored posthumously with the Purple Heart and the Combat Action Badge. He was the first field grade officer of the Pennsylvania Army National Guard to die in action since World War II.

I was proud to see members of Lieutenant Colonel Michael McLaughlin's community come together to honor him with this bridge naming. It is so fitting that it came in May, the same month as Memorial Day, when we honor the men and women who lost their lives in service to our great Nation.

I am the proud father of an Army soldier. America's servicemen and -women are very important to me. With Memorial Day coming up on Monday, I want to not only recognize the sacrifice of men and women such as Lieutenant Colonel McLaughlin who have given the ultimate sacrifice, but all of the members of our Armed Forces serving across the globe and all of our Nation's veterans.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND NATIONAL SECURITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WESTMORELAND). The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. QUIGLEY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. QUIGLEY. Mr. Speaker, as the world hurdles toward an era where climate change impacts our everyday life, we must recognize the consequences of our inaction.

Secretary Hagel said it best when he stated: "Climate change is a global problem. Its impacts do not respect national borders."

Despite this, we continue to live in a bubble of denial. It is abundantly clear that climate change is rapidly altering the world around us, contributing to higher temperatures, changing seasonal patterns, and driving the loss of species and habitats.

The scientific evidence demonstrating the realities of climate change is vast and ever-growing. Just this week, NASA reported that April 2016 was the warmest April ever recorded. In fact, NASA said there is a "99 percent chance that 2016 will be the hottest year ever recorded."

If this proves to be true, 2016 will beat our previous record holder, 2015. And 2015 beat our previous record holder, 2014. Sensing a trend here?

Earth's changing temperature does not just threaten the existence of plants and animals: climate change also affects our national security at home and abroad. As a Member of the House Intelligence Committee, I am briefed weekly on our most pressing and urgent threats, and it is abundantly clear that climate change is one of those threats.

Climate change is what we consider a threat multiplier, meaning it is exacerbating many of the challenges we confront around the world today, and will produce new challenges for us in the future. As a global power with strategic interests around the world, climate change is immensely important to us because of the impact it has on the regional stability of our allies.

Internationally, climate change is already causing humanitarian disasters and resource scarcity that accelerates instability, contributes to political violence, and undermines weak governments. Examples of these repercussions are being seen around the world today. Climate change-induced drought in the

□ 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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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.