

112TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. RES. 331

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the President should immediately reassess the United States mission in Afghanistan and redirect funding to strengthen homeland security, to create jobs, and to reduce the Federal deficit and debt.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 24, 2011

Mr. CLARKE of Michigan (for himself, Mr. CICILLINE, Mr. GUTIERREZ, Mr. NEAL, Mr. WELCH, Ms. LEE of California, and Mr. HONDA) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Armed Services, and in addition to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the President should immediately reassess the United States mission in Afghanistan and redirect funding to strengthen homeland security, to create jobs, and to reduce the Federal deficit and debt.

Whereas on December 1, 2009, President Barack Obama stood before the cadets assembled at West Point's Eisenhower Hall and made a solemn promise to deploy additional members of the United States Armed Forces to Afghanistan only in exchange for a phased withdrawal beginning in the summer of 2011;

Whereas individuals as diverse as former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, Former United States Senator Sam Nunn, and conservative commentator George Will have called for a reassessment of the United States mission in Afghanistan;

Whereas in particular, as former Reagan Administration Assistant Secretary of Defense Bing West has said, the nation-building as a counterinsurgency strategy is a failure and is burning billions of dollars unnecessarily;

Whereas the United States Government is spending vast amounts of money in Afghanistan, the biggest recipient of United States aid, with nearly \$19 billion spent from 2002 to 2010;

Whereas the Department of Defense spends nearly \$10 billion each month for military operations, while the Department of State and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) spend about \$320 million a month in Afghanistan;

Whereas military aid in Afghanistan, through the Afghan Security Forces Fund, is used for training and equipping the Afghan military and police forces;

Whereas President Obama requested \$12.8 billion for this fund in FY12, \$5.7 billion of which is directed to the Afghan National Police;

Whereas this amount is nearly twice as much as is requested for all first responders in the United States;

Whereas USAID's Office of Economic Growth is engaged in nearly \$1 billion of ongoing economic and business development activities in Afghanistan;

Whereas under the President's budget request, the Department of Defense's Commander's Emergency Response

Program (CERP) would receive \$1 billion for economic development projects, much of it without oversight;

Whereas in contrast, the entire Small Business Administration budget request is less than \$1 billion for the United States;

Whereas the United States Government spent approximately \$450 million on roads and power development in Afghanistan in FY10, while shortchanging the need for infrastructure investment at home;

Whereas the American Society of Civil Engineers consistently gives the United States' infrastructure a failing grade, which is unsurprising when infrastructure spending has not increased in real terms in the past 40 years, despite the economy tripling;

Whereas according to a Senate Foreign Relations Committee report, much of the money spent on aid in Afghanistan is not advancing United States goals;

Whereas the staff report notes that aid may even be fueling corruption, instability, and insecurity;

Whereas in a "Case Study", the report notes that the Performance-Based Governors Fund, which is authorized to distribute up to \$100,000 a month in United States funds to individual provincial leaders for use on local expenses and development projects, "may not be 'achievable' or 'sustainable'" because this "tidal wave of funding . . . could hamper the ability of local officials to spend the money wisely.";

Whereas the United States' current commitment to Afghanistan in troops and in dollars is neither proportional to its interest nor sustainable;

Whereas the United States faces a growing budget deficit, which requires cuts in spending and difficult choices in how taxpayer money is allocated;

Whereas State and local officials in the United States have demonstrated a consistent need for funding, and an ability to spend the money that they receive wisely;

Whereas investments in infrastructure are particularly good investments;

Whereas the Department of Transportation estimates that, for every \$1 billion invested in Federal highways, more than \$6.2 billion in economic activity is generated;

Whereas Mark Zandi, chief economist at Moody's Economy.com, has calculated that every dollar of increased infrastructure spending would generate a \$1.59 increase in gross domestic product; and

Whereas cuts in FY11 funding for homeland security grants and proposed cuts for FY12 put local communities at risk, and may result in much greater costs in human lives, community devastation, and first responder safety down the road: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That it is the sense of the House of Rep-
2 resentatives that—

3 (1) the members of the United States Armed
4 Forces have served honorably in Afghanistan and
5 should be commended for their efforts, including the
6 work to successfully bring Osama Bin Laden to jus-
7 tice;

8 (2) President Barack Obama, in consultation
9 with his military, intelligence, and foreign affairs ad-

1 visors, should immediately reassess the mission in
2 Afghanistan, clearly articulate the United States'
3 goals and national interest, and develop a plan to
4 swiftly and safely bring the members of the United
5 States Armed Forces home and reduce United
6 States investments in Afghan nation-building; and

7 (3) savings from this phased withdrawal and re-
8 assessment of civilian assistance in Afghanistan
9 should be redirected to priorities and nation-building
10 in the United States by investing in critical home-
11 land security needs including funding for first re-
12 sponders and by creating jobs and rebuilding the
13 economy through infrastructure redevelopment, sup-
14 port for entrepreneurs, and efforts to reduce the
15 Federal deficit and debt.

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