It's not surprising that only 65 members of the House of Representatives voted for a resolution that would have called for the end of the war in Afghanistan. Certainly the Democrats in charge we're not going to approve a resolution that would have repudiated their own President's foreign policy so recently after our "glorious victory" in Marjah.

What is surprising is so few Republicans voted for the resolution. Only five were willing do so: Ron Paul, Jimmy Duncan, Walter Jones Jr., the most consistent of the antiwar Republicans, along with **John Campbell of California** and Tim Johnson of Illinois.

Why only five? It can't be because of political pressure. Former GOP Congressman Wayne Gilchrist said that after the 2006 elections, there were between 30-60 party members willing to break ranks and oppose the then Bush II Administration in the House on the war, but a combination of political pressure from the White House and the GOP leadership at the time brought many of those back into the fold. Without a White House to make patronage or political threats at them, or capable leadership to whip them into line, what could possibly hold together Republican support for Obama's war in the Congress?

And make no mistake it is Obama's war. The President campaigned for in 2008 and made the decision in 2009 to increase U.S. troops in Afghanistan and increase military operations and counter-insurgency programs there in much the same way the Nixon Administration took ownership of the Vietnam War with the military moves it made in 1969 and with the invasion of Cambodia in 1970. Indeed, Nixon/Kissinger pursued a bizarre and contradictory policy that on the one hand brought home troops from Vietnam, cut the defense budget, ended the draft and engaged in negotiations with the North Vietnamese, but also increased the tempo of military operations in Southeast Asia and expanded the bombing across the whole of the region in a sort of "fighting retreat" that made him look like the hawk when he was trying to bring about a larger peace settlement between the West and Communist world. Here we have the Obama Administration largely doing the same thing in Afghanistan to both cover a draw down of U.S forces in Iraq and make him look "tough" on foreign policy in order to please the foreign policy establishment and keep the hawks on the left and right quiet .

After 1968, the Democratic Party held a serious debate over foreign policy because the failure of that policy led to the party's division and defeat in the election of that year. Many who dissented against the Cold War consensus that led to Vietnam finally had won a foothold of power within the party with the nomination of George McGovern for President in 1972 (the genesis of neoconservatism). This debate continued for years until the late 1990s when the McGovernites who now ran the party i.e. Bill and Hilary Clinton along with Joe Lieberman, decided they had had enough of non-interventionism and decided to bomb Serbia, couching it in humanitarian internationalism, which will no doubt be a part of the mission of U.S. and NATO troops in Afghanistan as well now that the same crowd (minus Lieberman) is in power again.

Thus, the bulk of support for the Afghanistan resolution is what constitutes what's left of the McGovernite Left in the party, including the bill's sponsor Rep. Dennis Kucinich.

Most Republicans in Congress at the time of the Kosovo War, certainly those in the leadership, had opposed the bombing. They had even opposed the missile attacks the Administration ordered on Iraq, Afghanistan and Sudan had ordered that same year and called them attempts to distract the public from Clinton's personal scandals. Today, GOP House leaders John Boehner, Mike Pence and Eric Cantor have just endorsed Obama's war along with 164 other House Republicans.

Which all but means foreign policy will be absent from the discussion during this election year. All the Republicans have left to argue about is "more of", whether it comes to bombing or torture or an interventionist foreign policy. To a war weary public, these are hardly selling points. The "surge" of military operations in Afghanistan and drone attacks in Pakistan is a sign to most people that the war will continue indefinitely and has bipartisan support to boot. One is in a poor position to criticize the Administration's foreign policy when one basically signs off on it. Not only that, but Obama's decision to keep Bill Gates on as Secretary of Defense helps to keep Republican critics at bay as well, given that a member of said party establishment holds a key position important to a major constituency of the party: the military-industrial complex. By agreeing with Obama on the basic premise of U.S. foreign policy, Republicans simply have nothing to talk about when it comes to that topic. They better hope the economy doesn't improve by November or any talk of taking back Congress will disappear altogether.

What's worse than the politics is the price that policy pays in the eschewing of any debate over foreign policy within the party. Republican plans for the budget, the Ryan Plan for example, sounds nice on paper but is a fantasy so long as the GOP continues to believe that one can have an interventionist foreign policy without paying for it (or have the Chinese pay for it). This is why party leaders are so reluctant to support it. Supply side economics, sadly, has seduced Republicans into thinking that purpose of tax policy is to provide the federal government with large piles of money through economic growth by cutting taxes in order to provide the same level of services, subsidies and military spending, a win-win politically for the GOP. Far from reducing government, GOP economic beliefs have kept government growing and growing while the party tries to deflect the blame to the Democrats (what a neat trick!). The vote on the resolution shows that many Republicans still buy into this strategy even though it was proven a failure in 2006 and 2008.

Once upon a time there was a Republican Party that bragged about ending the Korean War. Once upon a time there was a Republican leader in the Senate that opposed NATO. Once upon

a time there was a Republican President warned us about the dangers of the "military-industrial complex" Once upon a time there was Republican Party Vice-Presidential nominee who talked about "Democrat Wars" in a debate. It may very well be that the GOP has tied itself to the military-industrial complex because many of its members are ex-Democrats (traditionally the most war-like of the two parties) due to "McGovernism", or have its Congressional representation in states or districts heavily dominated by military installations, veterans or military industries. We are lucky there is at least one Republican politician, viable enough as a national figure, who understands that the party's position on foreign policy is hurting it both from a policy and a political standpoint. Hopefully he can at least engage such an internal party debate on foreign policy, otherwise the GOP's attempts to portray itself as fiscally responsible and for less government are doomed to be the mirages that they are right now.