



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 105th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 143

WASHINGTON, MONDAY, MAY 12, 1997

No. 61

House of Representatives

The House met at 12 noon.

The Chaplain, Rev. James David Ford, D.D., offered the following prayer:

Let us pray using the words of Psalm 40:

Blessed is man who makes the Lord his trust, who does not turn to the proud, to those who go astray after false gods. Thou hast multiplied O Lord my God, Thy wondrous deeds and Thy thoughts toward us; none can compare with Thee. Were I to proclaim and tell all of them, they would be more than can be numbered. But may all who seek Thee rejoice and be glad in Thee; may those who love Thy salvation say continually, "Great is the Lord." Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Missouri [Mr. SKELTON] come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. SKELTON led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

SPECIAL ORDERS

THE FUTURE OF THE U.S. MILITARY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. YOUNG of Florida). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from Missouri [Mr. SKELTON] is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, Gen. George Patton, as vigorous a proponent of advanced military technology as ever served in the U.S. Armed Forces, once said, "Wars may be fought with weapons, but they are won by people."

Today, in the last of three speeches I am making on the future of the U.S. military, I want to talk about the most important resource that the Nation has in protecting its security: Our people, the men and women who serve in the Armed Forces and the civilians who support them.

As I have emphasized in each of my previous speeches, under the Constitution it is Congress' responsibility to ensure that U.S. forces are able to carry out their duties. Article 1, section 8 of the Constitution gives Congress the power to raise and support armies; to provide and maintain a Navy; and to make rules for the Government and regulation of the land and naval forces.

Unfortunately, Congress has not always fulfilled its responsibility to provide for the common defense. Too often in the past, indeed perhaps most often in this century, the United States has been unprepared for the military challenges it has faced. As George C. Marshall lamented in a 1923 speech that I quoted earlier, immediately following a war, Congress and the public remember the terrible price paid by young Americans at the start of a war for which we were unprepared. But very soon thereafter, under the weight of the public debt, the costs of war are forgotten and military strength is allowed to erode.

In earlier speeches, I discussed military strategy and defense budgets. In those statements, I said, first, that the strategy which appears to be emerging from the Quadrennial Defense Review or QDR that is now underway in the Pentagon appears to be correct and appropriately broad and demanding.

I said, second, however, that the resources that the QDR anticipates to be

available appear inadequate to support the strategy. I am concerned especially that the QDR will require reductions in active duty troop levels, and I do not feel that any reductions are warranted in view of the demands on the force. I am even more concerned that this round of force cuts will be followed by a perpetual cycle of budget shortfalls and additional cuts in the future, unless defense budgets grow modestly over time.

Those are critically important issues, in large part because of how they bear on the matters I will discuss today. An ambitious strategy accompanied by inadequate resources is a prescription for placing tremendous strain on the people who serve. As it has been said, all of the money for defense that Congress may provide, all of the weapons that the services may buy, all of the logistics infrastructure that may undergird the force, all of the military doctrine that strategists may pronounce, all of the campaign plans that commanders may devise, all of these things ultimately come down to a single soldier walking on point.

It is also true, as a corollary, that the men and women who serve in the Armed Forces deserve material and moral support sufficient to allow them to do what we ask of them. In peacetime, however, we most often forget the costs of war and neglect to pay the price of peace. Sometimes I worry that this tendency to forget those who wear the uniform is inherent in a democratic society.

The famous British poet Rudyard Kipling wrote a poem entitled "Tommy," about the treatment of soldiers in time of peace. It is written from the point of view of a British infantryman dressed in his red coat who was refused a pint of beer in a public house, and he complains:

"For It's Tommy this, an' Tommy that, an' 'Chuck him out, the brute!' But it's 'Savior of 'is country'

□ 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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When the guns begin to shoot."

Like the British public a century ago, we Americans, too, have loudly cheered the troops coming home from war, only to turn away from these troops when the garlands of victory are no longer fresh. Remember the yellow ribbons that were so prominent during the Persian Gulf crisis in 1990 and 1991? Recall the welcome home parade for our victorious troops? I fear that those moments of pride and glory are no longer in the consciousness of most Americans or of this Congress.

Today, I want to focus our attention on the men and women who serve, but I want to do it with some care. In assessing how we treat our people, I am torn between two strong feelings. On the one hand, I am concerned that the pressures we are putting on servicemembers and on DOD civilians are growing to the breaking point. On the other hand, I do not want to discourage those who are willing to serve either from joining their Armed Forces or from staying in. On the contrary, and all I will say, I hope to encourage those who are willing and able to serve their country.

The fact that we are now at peace and that no single great enemy threatens us does not mean that military service is any less necessary or any less to be valued than in the past. On the contrary, the burden of maintaining the peace lies on the shoulders of those who serve, and it is no less critical a mission than any soldier, sailor, marine, or airman has ever had before.

So though I am going to discuss at length all of the problems that those who serve may encounter, I do not want to dishearten the patriotic people that the mission of defense requires.

Mr. Speaker, one of the things that most impressed me and many others about former Secretary of Defense Perry was his focus on people. When he first became Secretary, one of the things he did most was to travel to military bases around the country, indeed, all around the world, and talk to the servicepeople he met there; management by walking around, he called it.

As a result of this walking around was the persistent emphasis he put on improving the quality of life in the military. For those of us who had known William Perry for many years to be a hardware expert, his focus on people was an unexpected side of his character that was greatly welcomed.

The value of Secretary Perry's focus on people was, above all, the message that it sent to the troops. I can tell the Members that it was noticed throughout the military and did much to prevent an unbridgeable rift from opening between the civilian leaders of the Clinton administration and the men and women in the Armed Forces.

The example of Secretary Perry's focus on people is one that those of us in policymaking positions should take to heart. The U.S. military is a complex human culture, and its human di-

mensions must always be considered in making choices on strategy, budgets, programs, social rules, and regulations, or any other aspect of policy.

In retrospect, therefore, I believe it was a mistake that the Quadrennial Defense Review did not include a separate panel on people. As many of my colleagues are aware, the work of the QDR has been carried out by six panels on strategy, force structure, modernization, readiness, infrastructure, and a late addition, intelligence, with an integration panel linking it all together.

As I have been thinking recently about the issues that the QDR is addressing, so many of them, it seems to me, come down to people. Many people issues are integral to the work of the QDR's six panels. What stresses and strains are put on people by the strategy, given the force structure available to implement it? How does the quality of life in the military affect readiness to carry out missions?

□ 1215

How does military training, education and leadership development affect the military's ability to exploit new technology effectively? How will reductions in the defense infrastructure affect the morale of people in the services and of the civilians who support them?

All of the QDR panels, therefore, will touch on people to some extent, but not as an explicit focus of attention. Moreover, many critically important people issues may not be addressed at all in the QDR. Do the people in the military have a clear sense of the manner in which the jobs they do contribute to the common defense? How are all the changes in the society as a whole affecting the military, changes that include increasing opportunities for women, the growing proportion of two-earner households, the problems of sexual harassment, the dynamics of race relations? Is there, as many fear, a growing gap between the culture of the U.S. military and of that civilian society, and how will this affect public support for national security and the willingness of many people to serve?

The Quadrennial Defense Review will probably not address these questions; and yet, in the end, such matters have as much to do with national security as the size of the budget or the quality of new weapons technology. So in this speech, I want us to focus on the people who protect our national security and to raise some questions which I think need to be considered as Congress evaluates the forthcoming Quadrennial Defense Review.

Above all, Mr. Speaker, I am concerned that if pressures on U.S. military forces do not ease, then the military will begin to lose many of its best and brightest people. Those I have talked to in the services most often cite three reasons why good people leave the force: First, because the operational tempo is too high; second, be-

cause of concerns about their families; and, third, because of uncertainty about the future.

In the remainder of this speech, I will address each of these concerns. Certainly, the most immediate people issue on the agenda is how current demands in the force are affecting the troops. Two years ago, Lt. Gen. Ted Stroup, the Assistant Army Chief of Staff for Personnel, was asked what it was like for soldiers who served in an Army that was then composed of 520,000 active duty personnel. Soldiers, he said, were "stretched and stressed" by all the demands being put on them. He was asked what the effect would be when the numbers dropped to 495,000, as was then planned. He answered, "stretched and stressed all the more."

Recently, however, the Department of Defense has proposed reducing the size of the Army to 475,000, which the Army has resisted. Meanwhile, the actual strength of the Army has eroded to about 490,000, even though the official end-strength target required by current law remains at 495,000. It is widely reported that the QDR will reduce Army end-strength by 15,000 or more. So Army people will be stretched and stressed even more. At what point does all this stretching and stressing reach the breaking point?

Each of the other services has to face the same issues. Recently a senior Navy official testified at length before the Committee on National Security about the difficulty the Navy has had keeping forces on station as much as it had planned. In large part, this is because the Navy, to its credit, rightly tries to limit overseas deployment to 6 months and puts other constraints on the amount of time units may be away from home. In the same testimony, however, the official had to defend the decision to reduce the Navy's end-strength by 11,000 in order to find money for equipment maintenance.

The two issues cannot be separated. As end-strength declines, you can either increase personnel deployment times, which is damaging to your people and which the Navy has correctly refused to do, or you can reduce deployments, which means you are not fully supporting the military strategy.

In the other services, and in the Army especially, the ability to limit deployments is not as great. Requirements for Army personnel are driven by overseas duty tours and by the increasing number of military operations, which are not as easy to limit as the number of ship days on station. As a result, too many people in the Army are being stretched and stressed individually by the demands of military operations.

For those of us who spent any amount of time out talking to people in uniform, this message comes across very loudly. I spent the Thanksgiving weekend last year on a trip to visit United States troops in Aviano, Italy, Bosnia, and Hungary. In Hungary, I spent some time with soldiers from

Missouri, and I recall asking each of them how many military deployments they had been involved in during recent enlistment periods. Several had two deployments, a few had three, and one sergeant had five deployments.

Every time I visit the troops, I hear similar stories. As a result, I have been thinking about the extent of the problem, its causes and its solutions. I am convinced, first of all, that the extent of the problem is not adequately identified by current measures. As I said, the Navy has in place a set of rigid limits on unit deployments abroad. Even in the Navy, however, the pace of deployment for individual personnel is not directly measured and limited. In other services, there is no systematic, effective way to measure the extent of individual deployments. So we really do not know how much stress we are putting on individuals in uniform.

One of the things the QDR should have considered, therefore, is how to measure the strain put on individuals in the uniformed services and means of controlling it. I have recently seen a draft list from the Air Force of some things we should be measuring. It includes:

How many people have temporary duty assignments of less than 90 days a year, 90 to 120 days, or over 120 days a year? If too many people are being deployed away from home on a constant basis, that is a sure sign of an excessive operating tempo.

What is the average duty week for people on their assignments? 40 to 45 hours a week; 45 to 55; or over 55? Some jobs require long hours, but if the trend over the whole force is up over time, that is also a cause for stress.

How many aircraft crews receive waivers of training hour requirements? If the trend is up, then too many people are being asked to do too many other things besides their primary jobs.

How many major exercises are people engaged in, on average, per year?

How many people are delayed in meeting training qualification requirements for position upgrades?

What share of enlisted personnel are pursuing college degrees and what share of officers are pursuing advanced degrees? What share of each disenroll from course work? A decline in the number of people pursuing advanced education is a good measure of stress on the force.

How many people have accrued leave exceeding 60 days?

How many fathers have missed a child's birth due to a temporary duty assignment? How many have been assigned to duty within 30 days of a child's birth?

The list goes on, and I could add to it. I am convinced, just by talking to people, that measures such as these will show a dramatic increase in the tempo of work in all of the services. Unless we get a handle on the degree of strain we are putting on the force, and do some things to control it, then we are heading for real trouble in retaining good people.

What are the causes of such apparent problems? To me, the root cause is a tendency to underestimate how much is required to carry out military operations while still preparing adequately for full scale war. After all, it is the military's main mission to fight and win America's wars. In the past, the military services did not worry very much about the impact that smaller scale military operations would have on the force, first, because the cold war era force was relatively large, so a small deployment was not felt, and, second, because smaller military operations were relatively rare. That is the main reason why measures of stress on the force are inadequate.

Now the force is smaller, and military operations have become more frequent and also, often, of very long duration. One calculation in this year's Army Posture Statement is striking. Over the 40 years from 1950 through 1989, the Army was engaged in 10 deployments. In the 7 years between 1990 and 1996, the Army was engaged in 25 deployments. Meanwhile, the size of the Army has declined by a third and the budget has dropped by 39 percent.

Les Aspin's bottom-up review of 1993 did not come to grips with the impact of a larger number of operations on a smaller force. The bottom-up review simply assumed that a force designed to fight 2 major regional conflicts would be large and diverse enough to handle any number of smaller operations. Only now are the services beginning to understand why such a cold war way of thinking will not do.

The Army, for example, now has a way of assessing the impact of smaller conflicts that begins to explain the stresses. For each unit deployed in an ongoing operation, the Army says, four units are needed in the force. One unit is deployed. Another unit is preparing for deployment. A third unit is coming off deployment and needs time to restore its readiness. And a fourth unit is depleted because some of its troops were drawn on to fill out the unit that is deployed.

Add to this the fact that only a part of the Army is available for deployments, because a portion is undergoing education and skills training, is in transit, or is in support functions and other positions. According to the General Accounting Office, 63 percent of active duty Army troops are deployable at any given time. So out of the 495,000 total, 312,000 troops are available for operations. At the end of 1996, the Army says, 35,800 troops were deployed in operations, mainly in Bosnia. This does not count the number of troops forward deployed in Korea, by the way, who probably ought to be counted as deployed and not simply as forward based. Multiply 35,800 by 4 and the number of troops affected by deployments is 143,200, which is 46 percent of the deployable force. The other 54 percent of the force, of course, is supposed to be training hard to be ready for two major regional wars.

Mr. Speaker, this is what has me so concerned about the impact of further reductions in Army force levels. At any one time, a large part of the Army is either involved in operations or is directly affected by them. Already the Army has to draw people away from their normal assignments in order to fill out units that are being employed. To me, this is especially straining for Army people, because such assignments are not planned and often are for temporary duty of 179 days, without any offsetting benefits. Moreover, the people left in the unit from which people were taken away have to work twice as hard to accomplish the workload, which of course does not decline. Now the plan is to further reduce the overall number of personnel without reducing the number of divisions. If the reductions are made from division strengths, then some specialties will have even lower manning levels. If the reductions are made from support positions, which is presumably the rationale, then the opportunity for Army personnel to serve in slots that are somewhat less subject to uncertainty will decline.

I do not believe that the Defense Department has an accurate level of understanding of the strains that these further reductions will put on the force. I fear that such reductions will break the force. And, this will be a national tragedy.

So how can we resolve these problems? Each of the services has been searching for ways to manage resources to meet the needs, but I am not sure how successful the solutions have been or, if successful from the present, how successful they will remain in the future.

One solution has been to use volunteer reservists to fill out deployed units. The key issue here is when we will reach the limit of reserve availability. Reservists willing and able to volunteer have likely come forward already for one duty tour, and enough may not be available in the future. Involuntary mobilization of reservists would soon cause many of them to quit. In addition, mobilization of reservists is expensive. Reservists receive full active duty pay and benefits when they are on active duty. Because Congress insists on offsetting supplemental funding for military operations with rescissions, such costs have to be absorbed within the overall defense budget.

Another potential solution may be to reduce nondivision support troop levels in order to fill out division slots. But too often we lose sight of the fact that support personnel carry out assignments that are critical to mission effectiveness.

□ 1230

Intelligence, for example, is considered a support function but operations cannot proceed without adequate, timely, usable intelligence. Nor can operations proceed without supplies or

medical care or any other basic services provided through support activities.

I intend to look very critically at the Quadrennial Defense Review to see how attentive the Defense Department has been to the issue of personnel and operating tempos. I believe there is a vast underestimation of the strain that ongoing smaller scale operations put on the force, that means of measuring the strain are inadequate, and that further force reductions may severely aggravate the problems.

The second reason people cite for leaving the force is concern about their families. The U.S. military today is an All-Volunteer Force. Because of this, it is very different from the draft armies of the past. A larger and larger share of the force is composed of people who choose the military as a career, which is a positive trend, because modern, sophisticated weapons and ways of fighting require well-trained, professional people. The professional U.S. military force is the envy of the rest of the world. It sets the standard to which other nations aspire.

As a result of this evolution, the force is, on the whole, older than in the past and, most often, married. Today 64 percent of active duty Army personnel are married and, except for the Marine Corps, the proportion is similar in the other services. The modern American military cannot maintain its high quality, therefore, without adequately taking care of military families. The common phrase now is, "We enlist soldiers, we reenlist families."

Early on in the days of the All-Volunteer Force, we did not do a good job of taking care of families. Military pay levels eroded after the All-Volunteer Force was instituted in 1973. Military housing and other military facilities, following the war in Vietnam, were in awful condition. Social problems that plagued the rest of society, including drug use and racial tensions, also affected the military.

Since the late 1970's, attention to the needs of military families has improved dramatically. Pay raises in 1979 and 1980 and much more attention to family needs in the years since then have had tremendously beneficial effects. The military has led the way in responding to social problems; I say this fully aware of some continued shortcomings. The results have been seen in the quality of people recruited into the Armed Forces and the ability to retain good people with the necessary skills.

I am concerned, however, that the strains on military families are growing and that we are not doing as good a job as we should in protecting families. To be sure, many of the strains on military families are inherent in the nature of military life. Military personnel are necessarily away from home for extended periods of time. Military families move frequently, which makes it difficult for spouses to build careers, and which itself puts a strain on marriages.

These factors make it all the more important that we devote special care and attention to the condition of military families. The most important correction needed is to limit personnel and operating tempos so that military personnel are not away from their families for longer times than necessary.

It is especially important that temporary duty assignments away from home be kept within limits. We also need to ensure that military pay keeps up with pay in the civilian sector. I am concerned that pay levels have eroded over time because of the way we calculate pay raises.

In addition, we need to be careful to preserve some of the benefits which military families rely on. I am disturbed by proposals to eliminate military commissaries and exchanges. Because of the demands of jobs in the military, I believe it is critically important to assist military families in having access to quality child care. Quality health care for military families must be protected. I think it was a mistake to allow impact aid for schools with military bases to decline as it has. Military families care deeply about education for their children, and we need to ensure that the highest quality education is available wherever they are based.

One of the most important initiatives the Defense Department has undertaken recently is the effort to improve military housing. While much military housing is very good, much of it is not. I have seen military housing with broken appliances, cracked walls, warped floors, peeling tile, inadequate heat, stopped up drains, and with very poor responsiveness from maintenance staffs. We have to change this and we have to do it as quickly and efficiently as possible.

I fear that the QDR will suffer from a major gap if it does not address the quality of life of military families.

A third reason people cite for leaving the force is uncertainty about the future. Many military people have been willing to tolerate the stresses that have been placed on the force in recent years because they believe things will get better in the future. If things do not soon get better, however, I am afraid that the best people will throw in the towel and get out of the military.

As I noted in this speech on defense budgets that I made a week ago, we have already gone through a defense drawdown that has reduced active duty force levels by about a third. This drawdown has imposed an immense burden on military personnel. It has meant that people have had to move to new jobs much more frequently than before because of the need to replace the large number of people who were leaving. It has imposed this strain on the military education and training system, and often people have started new jobs without complete training. It has made the military personnel system rather brutally competitive, the

pressure to force people out means that any single mistake will cost a good soldier his or her career.

This has directly affected people's ability to meet their career goals. Officers cannot count on receiving the education they need to advance. The amount of time that officers spend in command assignments, where they really can learn their trade, has declined significantly. Officers used to have 2 years of previous command experience at lower levels before they rose to be battalion commanders. Now they have a year or a year and a half. As a result, we are not adequately seasoning our officers, we are sometimes setting them up for failure, and we are not offering people the command experience for which they joined the force.

All of these changes in the force, together with the high operating tempo, have created a great deal of uncertainty about the future. As a result, unless we stabilize the force, unless we pay attention to training and education, unless we allow good people to progress through the ranks in a predictable, fair way, we will discourage the best people from remaining in the force.

Already we see signs of good people beginning to leave. It would be wrong to attribute the exodus to external factors. Pilots are leaving in large numbers, many say, because the airlines are hiring again. I will acknowledge that may be a factor but not the main one. The best people in the military services will always be confident of opportunities in the civilian sector. The people we want most to keep in the force are precisely the people who can always find lucrative careers on the outside. The issue therefore is not what lures people out but what drives them to leave.

Good people do not sign up for the military as a career because they expect to make a lot of money. They need enough to provide security for their families but they are not going to be lured away by simply higher salaries. If good people are leaving, it is because military service no longer offers them the rewards they expected or because the burdens of service have become too great. If we continue to cut budgets, to reduce force levels, to require people to do more with less, we will drive away the best and the brightest.

Mr. Speaker, these are the problems that I believe may in time lead too many good people to leave the force: High operating tempos, eroding support for families, and uncertainty about the future. There are other people issues that the Quadrennial Defense Review should also be expected to address. One is the very broad issue of civil-military relations. While there are many aspects to the issue, I am concerned especially about a potentially growing gap in culture between those who serve in the military and civilian society.

We ask a great deal of people in the military. Sometimes, I think, we may

expect too much. When we see failures in the military such as evidence of sexual harassment at Aberdeen or in the Tailhook episode, the cultural gap may grow wider unless parties on all sides are careful in their judgments. When issues such as these arise, some within the military react by criticizing civilian society for imposing too much on the military, while some outside conclude that military culture itself is flawed. Both are wrong. Yes, I think there are failures within the military, but I also believe that the military can be counted on to identify and correct its failures. No, I do not think that the military can be exempted from advancing social norms, including requirements for sexual and racial equality, nor do I think that the military is identical to civilian society. Within the Congress, we have a special responsibility to take care of the military personnel from whom we ask so much. We are responsible under our Constitution to make rules for the Government and regulation of the land and naval forces. It is incumbent upon us therefore not to allow the gap between military and civil society to grow into a gulf.

Mr. Speaker, over the past 2 weeks I have delivered three speeches on the future of the U.S. military. In each of these statements, I have called attention to the fact that Congress has often failed in its responsibility to provide for the common defense.

I have said that I fear we are again embarked on a course which will leave our forces ill-prepared for challenges to come. More than that, I have argued that failure to maintain military strength will encourage the evolution of new international threats in the future that otherwise would not arise to challenge our security.

This is a strong message. It is a sincere message. It is one that, I expect, some of my colleagues will find difficult to accept. I have tried to state it carefully and to explain my reasoning and to use good facts and figures to support my conclusions. Sometimes, however, an argument such as this needs something stronger. I am reminded in this regard of a passage in Gen. Douglas MacArthur's autobiography entitled "Reminiscences," in which MacArthur discussed a meeting he had with President Roosevelt in the late 1930's. At the time, MacArthur was Army Chief of Staff, and he was meeting with the President, along with the Secretary of War, to make an appeal for more defense spending.

Secretary Dern, wrote MacArthur, quietly explained the deteriorating international situation and appealed to the President not to economize on the military. Roosevelt, however, was unmoved and reacted to Dern with biting sarcasm. Then MacArthur joined the argument, which became more and more heated. Here is how MacArthur describes what followed:

In my emotional exhaustion, I spoke recklessly and said something to the general ef-

fect that when we lost the next war, and an American boy, lying in the mud with an enemy bayonet through his belly and an enemy foot on his dying throat, spat out his last curse, I wanted the name not to be MacArthur but Roosevelt. The President grew livid. You must not talk that way to the President, he roared. He was, of course, right, and I knew it almost before the words had left my mouth. I said I was sorry and apologized. But I felt my Army career was at an end. I told him he had my resignation as Chief of Staff. As I reached the door his voice came with that cool detachment which so reflected his extraordinary self-control: "Don't be foolish, Douglas; you and the budget must get together on this." Neither the President nor I ever spoke of the meeting, but from that time on he was on our side.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that this Congress will not require an appeal like MacArthur's to remember the lessons of the past, that the price of unpreparedness is paid in war. The price of peace is much less.

Let us, therefore, treasure those Americans who wear the uniform of our country. Let us appreciate them, encourage them, and care for them. For after all, it is they who bear the burdens of defending that precious American virtue: freedom.

MONETARY POLICY OF THE UNITED STATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from Massachusetts [Mr. FRANK] is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. I am encouraged, Mr. Speaker, by articles that appeared in the financial sections of the Washington Post and the New York Times over the past few days and, in particular, by a speech given by Chairman Alan Greenspan to see that we are now having a genuine debate, thoughtful, on the merits, about the monetary policy of the United States.

Chairman Greenspan, to his credit, in a speech he gave on May 8, last Thursday to the business school at NYU, acknowledged that the recent decision by the Federal Open Market Committee to raise interest rates by a quarter percent had generated what he called more than the usual share of attention and criticism.

□ 1245

And he went on to say, I believe the critics deserve a response. I mean quite sincerely to welcome this, because what Chairman Greenspan then proceeded to give was a response, reasoned, on the merits, imputing no ill motives to anyone. I would hope we could continue this debate and I would hope we could continue it in the way in which I think it has been carried on.

This is a serious policy disagreement about very important issues. I regard Alan Greenspan as one of the great public servants of our time, a man who has devoted himself to the difficult, challenging and, from his standpoint, not terribly financially rewarding position of Chairman of the Federal Re-

serve, as he has performed in public positions before.

I disagree with much of what he is doing, but I recognize his motivation as a genuine desire to do best for the economy. And I honor him for his willingness to conduct the debate. Indeed, I wish some of Mr. Greenspan's defenders shared Mr. Greenspan's commitment to a public debate.

One thing I must say I regret, Mr. Speaker, is that we are having this discussion in a somewhat artificial fashion. I and others take the floor of Congress to voice our criticisms of what the Federal Reserve has done. The Democratic leader, the gentleman from Missouri, convened a press conference a few weeks ago in which several Members of this body and the other body spoke out on our views. Letters have gone back and forth.

The one thing we have not had is a forum in which Chairman Greenspan and other members of the Federal Reserve System can speak out, be challenged and questioned and, in some cases, affirmed by Members of Congress; a forum in which people in the organized labor community, the AFL-CIO, and the business community, the Chamber of Commerce and the National Association of Manufacturers, all three of those organizations have differed with Chairman Greenspan, a forum in which they could voice their criticisms or their agreement; others could do that.

This is a situation which cries out for a hearing by the Congress. Unfortunately, the chairman of the House Committee on Banking and Financial Services has told us essentially that he does not share the view that the current debate over whether or not the Federal Reserve ought to continue trying to slow down the economy is a suitable one for the Congress to engage in at this time.

A few weeks ago, joined by the gentleman from New York [Mr. LAFALCE], I sent a letter which was signed by all but one of the Democratic and Independent members of the Committee on Banking and Financial Services, and the one who did not sign at the time has since indicated his agreement with us. So the 26 combined Democratic and Independent members of the Committee on Banking and Financial Services have asked the chairman to have a hearing on this subject.

The Committee on Banking and Financial Services, under the rules of the House, has jurisdiction over the Federal Reserve. We have not proposed legislation at this point. We asked for the kind of debate we have been trying to have, which Chairman Greenspan, to his credit, participated in last May, which, also to his credit, Lorraine Meyer, one of the members of the Board of Governors of the Fed engaged in on April 24.

So rather than them making speeches and us then answering the speeches, nowhere near each other, we asked this be done in a forum, a congressional