dependent on imported sources of oil and it affects the national security of this country. What do they propose to do about it? They don't have an answer.

I will talk more on this tomorrow when we have further information on OPEC.

THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business Friday, March 24, 2000, the Federal debt stood at $5,730,876,091,058.27 (Five trillion, seven hundred thirty billion, eight hundred seventy-six million, ninety-one thousand, fifty-eight dollars and twenty-seven cents).

One year ago, March 24, 1999, the Federal debt stood at $5,645,339,000,000 (Five trillion, six hundred forty-five billion, three hundred thirty-nine million).

Five years ago, March 24, 1995, the Federal debt stood at $4,846,988,000,000 (Four trillion, eight hundred forty-six billion, nine hundred eighty-eight million).

Twenty-five years ago, March 24, 1975, the Federal debt stood at $505,328,000,000 (Five hundred five billion, three hundred twenty-eight million) which reflects a debt increase of more than $5 trillion—$5,225,548,091,058.27 (Five trillion, two hundred twenty-five billion, five hundred forty-eight million, ninety-one thousand, fifty-eight dollars and twenty-seven cents) during the past 25 years.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

SEAPOWER

• Mr. CLELAND. Mr. President, over the past several years, our nation's military has become increasingly overcommitted and underfunded—facing problems from recruiting and retention, to cuts in active fleet numbers and a dwindling active duty force. Yet in spite of these problems, the United States' naval power, with it's fleet of nuclear-powered attack submarines, life-saving Coast Guard and Merchant Marine forces, and highly skilled sailors and mariners, is the best in the world. These components are a part of one of the most technologically sophisticated defense systems in the world. In Kings Bay, Georgia, we are fortunate to be home to the greatest submarine base in the nation, Kings Bay Naval Submarine Base. During my visits there, however, I have heard time and again how detrimental the growing gap between commitments and funding has become.

I believe that by appropriating additional funds to our nation's defense system and by supporting efforts to create a larger force structure, we will resolve or at least begin to remedy some of these problems that are facing today's military forces. Since I came to the Senate in 1997, I have supported funding for procurement, research and development, and readiness. In order for the United States to retain it's role as a military super power, we must pay attention to the gaps that exist today and prevent further deterioration in our armed forces. If we do not reverse this trend now, a very high price will be paid tomorrow for our collective lethargy on defense issues and for the massive under-funding of our armed forces.

Mr. President, I now respectfully request that an article from the January, 2000 edition of Seapower magazine be inserted into the RECORD, as I believe it accurately and appropriately outlines the existing gap between our commitments and resources, and effectively argues the case for remedying this situation.

Thank you.

[From Almanac of Seapower, Jan. 2000]

A TALE OF TWO CENTURIES

(By John Fisher)

The old century had come to an end and the United States, its armed services triumphant from victory in a splendid little war over a technologically inferior adversary, as ready to take its rightful place among the major military and economic powers of the world. A former assistant secretary of the Navy, who became a national hero in that war, was soon to become president and use his bully pulpit for, among other things, the building of a Great White Fleet that was the first step in making the United States a naval power ''second to none.''

That former assistant secretary, later president, Theodore Roosevelt, was a shrewd judge of human nature and a life-long student of American history. He knew that most of his fellow Americans had little if any interest in foreign affairs, or in national-security issues in general. Roosevelt himself was a staunch advocate of the seapower principles postulated by Alfred Thayer Mahan, whom he greatly admired. So to remedy the situation he helped found the Navy League of the United States in 1902, contributing significant financial as well as moral support.

There were many, of course, in the Congress and in the media—indeed, in Roosevelt's own cabinet—who were not sure that the Great White Fleet was needed. It cost too much and, despite its fine appearance, would have little if any practical value for a nation unchallenged in its own hemisphere and unlikely ever to send its sons to fight in Europe's wars, much less Asia's. Besides, there might be an occasional colonial war here and there, but the possibility of a direct war between the major powers of Europe was becoming more and more remote with each passing year.

Within less than five years the vision of a lasting peace throughout the world was demolished when the Japanese Navy shocked the world by defeating the Russian Navy in the Battle of Tsushima (27–28 May 1905), sinking eight Russian battleships and seven Russian cruisers. The Japanese fleet, which started the war a year earlier with a surprise attack on Russian ships anchored in Port Arthur, lost three torpedo boats at Tsushima.

Less than a decade later The Great War—''the war to end all wars,'' it was called—started in Europe. The United States remained a nonparticipant until April 1917, but then entered the war in force. U.S. seapower contributed significantly to the eventual Allied success. The joyous Armistice of 11 November 1918, however, was followed by the debacle at Versailles that sowed the seeds of World War II.

Again, America and its allies were not prepared. The United States once again stayed on the sidelines until jolted out of its lethargy by the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor: That put 15 million American men and women in uniform, led to total mobilization of the U.S. economy—and of the mighty U.S. industrial base—and resulted in millions of deaths later on the unconditional surrender of both Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan. The century was less than half over, but it was already the most violent in all human history.

This time around, some lessons were learned—but not very well, and they were not remembered very long. When North Korea invaded South Korea the United States again was unprepared—as it was a generation later in Vietnam. The Cold War cast a nuclear shadow over the entire world for more than four decades, though, and forced the much-needed rebuilding, modernization, and upgrading of America's armed forces.

As the world enters a new century, and new millennium, those forces are the most powerful, most mobile, and most versatile in the world. Moreover, the young Americans in service today are the best-led, best-trained, and best-equipped in this nation's history. But that does not mean that they are capable of carrying out all of the numerous difficult and exceedingly complex missions they have been assigned. The victories of the past are no guarantee of success in future conflicts. And it is not foreordained that the so-called ''American century'' that has now ended will be extended by another uninterrupted period of U.S. economic and military dominance.

Operation Allied Force, the U.S./NATO air war over Kosovo, is a helpful case in point. The precision strikes against Serbian forces, and against the civilian infrastructure of the former Yugoslavia, eventually led to the withdrawal of Serbian troops from Kosovo and the occupation of that battered province by U.S./NATO and Russian peacekeepers. The one-sided ''war'' lasted much longer than originally estimated, though. It did not ''stop the killings'' (of ethnic Albanians), the original purpose of the war. And it left Slobodan Milosevic still in power in Belgrade.

It is perhaps inevitable that political leaders will focus almost exclusively on the ''victories''—however fleeting and however gossamer—that can be claimed. The prudent military commander, though, will focus on the problem areas, the near-defeats and potential disasters, the ''What-ifs'' and the close calls. There were an abundance of all of these in Kosovo last year—just as there were in the war with Iraq in 1990–91.

Logistics is the first and perhaps most important of those problem areas—and the biggest ''What if'' as well. In both conflicts. In the war with Iraq the question was ''What if Saddam Hussein had not stopped with Kuwait but continued into Saudi Arabia and all the way to Riyadh?'' The answer—on this, virtually all military analysts agree—is that the war would have lasted much longer and would have cost much more in both lives and money. As it was, it took the greatest sealift in history before the vastly superior U.S./coalition forces could defeat the previously overrated Iraqi army. That massive sealift—more than 10 million tons of supplies carried halfway around the world—would have been impossible, though, were it not for the fact that, on the receiving end, Saudi Arabia had built a large, modern, and well-protected port infrastructure.

Logistics was not a problem in Kosovo, either—but only because the U.S./NATO air

forces accomplished their mission (belatedly), and ground forces did not have to be brought in. It was a close call, though—more so than is generally realized—and the end result was due more to good fortune than to careful planning. The ports in the area that might have been available to U.S./NATO shipping are few in number, inefficient, extremely limited in their throughput capacity, and vulnerable both to sabotage and to attack by ground forces. Which is exactly why U.S. sealift planners say that a ground war in Kosovo would have been ''a logistics nightmare.''

Nightmares aside, there are other problems, of much greater magnitude, affecting all of the nation's armed forces. All are underfunded. All are overcommitted—usually, in recent years, to humanitarian and peacekeeping missions that, however worthwhile in themselves, detract from operational readiness and from the training required for actual combat missions.

There is more: The U.S. defense structure is the leanest it has been in the post-WWII era. Funding for the acquisition and procurement of ships, aircraft, weapons, and avionics/electronics systems has been cut precipitously in recent years and the result has been a steady decline in the size—and, therefore, responsiveness—of the vital U.S. defense industrial base.

Except for the Marine Corps, all of the services also are suffering from prolonged recruiting and retention problems that, if not resolved, will lead to a ''hollow force'' of the early 21st century similar to that of the late 1970s. There is increasing evidence, anecdotal but mounting, that combat readiness has declined.

Following are some particulars about how the various problem areas enumerated above have affected the nation's sea services—balanced by a report on the current strengths and capabilities, as well as needs, of each service.

Since the end of the Cold War the Navy's active fleet has been cut almost in half, and is now just over 300 ships, the lowest level since the early 1930s. What makes the situation worse is that the administration's future-years defense plan (FYDP) calls for construction of only 6–7 ships per year for the foreseeable future, whereas a building rate of 9–10 ships is needed to meet the minimum requirement of 305 ships postulated by the Quadrennial Defense Review. Independent defense analysts say that a more realistic estimate of Navy fleet requirements would be anywhere from 350 to 400 ships, depending on the scenarios postulated. To maintain a fleet of that size would require a building rate of 10–12 ships per year.

Exacerbating the ship-numbers problem is the fact that, because hundreds of Cold War U.S. air and ground bases overseas have now been closed, and hundreds of thousands of troops have returned to CONUS (the Continental United States), a much heavier share of the collective defense burden is now borne by the Navy's forward-deployed carrier battle groups (CVBGs) and Navy/Marine Corps amphibious ready groups (ARGs). In many areas of the world the CVBGs and ARGs are now the only combat-ready forces immediately available to the national command authorities.

The difficulties imposed on Navy carriers are particularly heavy. The Joint Chiefs of Staff have told Congress that a minimum of 15 active-fleet carriers are needed to maintain a continuous presence in the most likely areas of international crisis—i.e., the Persian Gulf, the Mediterranean, and the Western Pacific (particularly the waters off the Korean Peninsula and, more recently, in the Taiwan Strait between the People's Republic of China on the mainland and the Republic of China on Taiwan). With only 12 carriers now available—11 in the active fleet and one reserve carrier used primarily for training purposes—the Navy has had to adopt a ''gapping'' strategy that leaves one or more of these ''hot spots'' without a carrier for several weeks, or sometimes months, at a time. In today's fast-paced era of naval warfare, the Navy League said last year, the gapping strategy is ''not a prudent risk, as it is sometimes described, but an invitation to conflict.''

The Navy's fleet of nuclear-powered attack submarines (SSNs) is the best in the world, but also undersized to meet all current as well as projected commitments. According to force requirements provided to the Joint Chiefs of Staff by the regional commanders in chief, more than 70 SSNs are needed to meet all of the Navy's worldwide commitments—but there will be only 50 available unless the QDR levels are revised upward. This could pose major risks in areas where land-based enemy aircraft and missiles make it difficult for carriers and other surface ships to operate close to the littorals.

The Navy's SSBN (nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine) force continues to be the dominant and most survivable leg of the U.S. strategic-deterrent ''triad'' of SSBNs, manned bombers, and intercontinental ballistic missiles. There are now 18 Trident SSBNs in the active fleet, but only 14 are likely to be needed in the future. The proposed conversion into an SSGN (nuclear-powered guided-missile submarine) configuration of the four SSBNs now slated for deactivation would add significantly to the Navy's overall power-projection capabilities and compensate to some extent for current deficiencies in surface combatants.

Perhaps the brightest stars in the current fleet inventory are the Aegis guided-missile cruisers and destroyers that played such a key role in the Gulf War and in several lower-scale combat actions since then. The combat-proven effectiveness of the Aegis fleet has made it a strong candidate to serve as the principal building block for the national-missile-defense system favored by Congress and likely to be built in the first decade of the new century.

Navy aircraft and weapon systems also are the best and most technologically sophisticated in the world. Because of the continued underfunding in procurement and acquisition, however, all of these fleet assets have been considerably overworked, a spare parts shortage has developed, and the maintenance workload has increased significantly.

The U.S. Marine Corps has changed commandants, but continues the march—and its proud tradition of always being ''the most ready when the nation is least ready.''

That mandate from Congress is more daunting on the eve of the 21st century than it has been at any previous time since the dark days preceding World War II and the Korean War. In both of those conflicts the Marines suffered a disproportionate number of casualties, particularly in the early months of fighting—primarily because forward-deployed Marine units had to hold the line until the nation (and the other armed forces) could catch up to the Marines in readiness.

Today, all of the nation's armed services are in a reasonable state of readiness. But the operating tempo is the highest it has ever been in peacetime, and most deployments in the past several years have been for humanitarian and peacekeeping assignments rather than for combat missions. Training has suffered, therefore, and there has been a slow but steady degradation of combat readiness—well-documented in hearings before the House Armed Services Committee.

Under former commandant Gen. Charles C. Krulak the USMC's senior leaders developed a cogent and forward-looking plan to field a 21st-century Marine Corps that will be fully combat-ready to meet the assymetric challenges likely in the foreseeable future. It will be up to Gen. James L. Jones Jr., who succeeded Krulak on 1 July 1999, to implement that plan. But significant additional funding will be needed for, among other things:

Maintaining the Corps at its current authorized strength of approximately 172,000 Marines on active duty and in the Reserves;

Modernizing the Corps' Total Force with the aircraft, weapons, rolling stock, electronics and avionics systems, and other supplies and equipment needed to maintain combat superiority on the littoral and inland battlefields of the future;

Building, upgrading, and maintaining a self-sustaining expeditionary tactical aviation force, including the revolutionary V–22 Osprey tiltrotor aircraft, which can operate from aircraft carriers, amphibious assault ships, and/or expeditionary airfields ashore.

Expediting the early development and procurement of: (a) the joint strike fighter, which USMC leaders have told Congress is urgently needed both to maintain a modern tactical aviation force and to replace the obsolescent aircraft now in the Corps' inventory; and (b) advanced amphibious assault vehicles capable of safely and swiftly carrying Marines and their equipment to and over the beaches to positions that in some combat scenarios will be far inland; and

Implementing Corps-sponsored initiatives to develop and field the advanced-capability shallow-water mine countermeasures systems needed to allow future Marine assault forces to maneuver safely through the littorals.

Alone of all the services, the Marine Corps has consistently met its recruiting and retention goals in recent years. Several studies suggest that this is because the Marine Corps keeps a clear focus on its highest priorities—''Making Marines and Winning Battles''—and that young men and women respond more readily to that inspiring challenge than they do to the less lofty appeal of material benefits.

Today's Coast Guard remains Semper Paratus—but just barely, and at a very high price. The U.S. Coast Guard is perhaps the most overworked and underfunded agency in government today, but it carries out—efficiently and at minimum cost to the taxpayer—a multitude of missions that increase almost annually. Several studies suggest that the Coast Guard returns a minimum of four dollars in services for every tax dollar provided to the multimission service in appropriations.

The Coast Guard is also the world's premier lifesaving organization, and in recent years has saved an annual average of more than 5,000 lives—and has assisted many more thousands of people in distress on the seas, on the Great Lakes, and in the nation's inland and coastal waterways.

But lifesaving is only one of the many ''services to taxpayers'' in the USCG portfolio. In recent years the Coast Guard has also, on average: conducted 44,000 law-enforcement boardings, identifying 24,000 violations; seized 76,000 pounds of marijuana and 62,000 pounds of cocaine; investigated 6,200 marine accidents; inspected 23,000 commercial vessels; responded to 12,400 spills of oil or hazardous materials; serviced 55,000 aids to navigation; and interdicted 10,000 illegal migrants.

To carry out all of those missions in the future, however—and several others likely to be added—the Coast Guard needs a major recapitalization of virtually its entire physical plant: ships, aircraft, electronic and sensor systems, and shore facilities. To its credit,

the Coast Guard itself has taken the initiative by developing a so-called IDS (Integrated Deepwater System) plan that, if fully funded, would permit an orderly and cost-effective replacement of cutters, aircraft, and other assets over a period of years. Failure of the executive and legislative branches of government to support and fully fund that plan would cripple the Coast Guard's continued effectiveness—and would cost the American people in numerous ways.

Even today, very few Americans realize how dependent the United States is on the U.S.-flag Merchant Marine for national defense and its continued economic well-being. In times of war or international crises that might lead to war 95 percent or more of the weapons, supplies, and equipment needed by U.S. forces overseas must be carried by ship—usually over thousands of miles of ocean. It would be military folly to rely on foreign-flag shipping to carry that cargo.

Most innovations in the maritime industries in the post-WWII era—e.g., containerization, LASH (lighter aboard ship) vessels, and RO/ROs (roll-on/roll-off ships)—have been of American origin, and the United States is by far the greatest trading nation in the entire world. Literally millions of U.S. jobs, and billions of tax dollars, are generated by the import and export of raw materials and finished products into and out of U.S. ports.

The port infrastructure itself is badly in need of renovation and remodernization, however. Because of short-sighted laissez-faire economic policies, U.S.-flag ships today carry only a minor fraction of America's two-way foreign trade. The result is the loss of thousands of seafaring jobs, significantly reduced U.S. sealift capacity, and a Merchant Marine that is now in extremis.

The creation of the Maritime Security Program was a helpful first step toward recovery, but it will take many years, perhaps decades, before the U.S.-flag fleet can regain its traditional title as ''the vital Fourth Arm'' of national defense.

Additional funding, and a larger force structure, will resolve or at least ameliorate some of the most difficult problems now facing the nation's armed services, not only in procurement and RDT&E (research, development, test, and evaluation) but also in readiness. More and better equipment, combined with a lower operating tempo and higher pay, would in turn have a salutary effect on both recruiting and retention.

There are more intractable problems, though, that all the money in the world will not resolve—and that should be of major concern not only to the nation's armed services and defense decision makers, but to all Americans. The most difficult and most obvious of these problems is the proliferation in recent years of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), and the means to deliver them. There already are a dozen or more nations—several of them extremely hostile to the United States—that already possess (or are close to acquiring) more destructive power than was unleashed by all the armies and navies in the world during World II.

It can be taken for granted that WMDs soon will be available to terrorist groups as well. But what is even more alarming is the near certainty that neither the United States nor the so-called ''global community'' at large will take the probably draconian steps that would be needed to counter this unprecedented threat. Not, that is, until weapons of mass destruction are actually used by terrorists. The only real question here is not ''if,'' but ''when.''

There are other dangers, other problems, other defense issues of transcendent importance that must be attended to at the start of this new century and new millennium. The succession in Russia, for example. In China as well. The mentally unbalanced military adventurism of the leaders of North Korea. The list could go on and on.

Quite possibly the greatest threats to world peace, though, are American complacency and American lethargy. The history of the 20th century shows that, once aroused to action, the American people can and will unite to defeat any enemy, no matter how long it takes or how much it costs. That history also shows, though, that it takes more than education and persuasion to unite the American people. It takes sudden and painful shock.

The problem here is that, in the past, the nation always had time to recuperate from its initial losses, and even from a Pearl Harbor. That may no longer be the case. There is now a bipartisan consensus that the United States should build and deploy a national-mission-defense (NMD) system as soon as ''practicable.'' If that consensus had existed several years ago the need today might not be so urgent. As it is, relatively few Americans realize that the United States is still absolutely vulnerable to enemy missile attacks. Another way of saying it is that not one U.S. missile-defense system has yet been deployed that could shoot down even one incoming enemy missile. That is a sobering thought.

The old axiom says that leadership ''begins at the top.'' But in a democracy that is not entirely true. If the American people demand a certain course of action loud enough and long enough,the elected ''leaders'' in the executive and legislative branches of government almost always will follow. In the field of national defense the American people have demanded very little in recent years, and, with a few notable exceptions, that is exactly what they have been provided.

In his prescient ''Prize Essay'' (The Foundation of Naval Policy) in the April 1934 Naval Institute Proceedings Lt. Wilfred J. Holmes argued persuasively that the size of the fleet (and, by implication, the size and composition of all naval/military forces) should always be consistent with national policy. ''Failure to adjust the size of navies to the needs of external [i.e., national] policy—or, conversely, to adjust external national policy to the strength of the military fleet—has, in the past, frequently led to disaster,'' Holmes said. At the 1922 Limitation of Armaments conference, he noted, the United States ''relinquished naval primacy in the interests of worldwide limitations of armaments.'' Unfortunately, though, ''the retrenchment in [U.S.] naval strength was not followed by retrenchment in the field of national policy.''

The circumstances are not exactly the same today—but they are close enough. The current operating tempo, for all of the nation's armed services, is the highest it has ever been in peacetime. Commitments have been increasing annually, without commensurate increases in funding. Ships, aircraft, and weapon systems are wearing out—and so are our military people. The ''gapping'' of aircraft carriers in areas of potential crisis is an invitation to disaster—and, therefore, represents culpable negligence on the part of America's defense decision makers.

Eventually, a very high price will have to be paid for these many long years of national lethargy, for the massive underfunding of the nation's armed forces, and for the continued mismatch between commitments and resources. When that time comes—sooner is much more likely than later—it may well be the darkest day in this nation's history.

Is there still time to reverse course? Perhaps. But not much time. And the leadership may well have to come not from those who hold high office in Washington, but from the American people themselves.

If they do provide that leadership, there will indeed be another American century. It will not be another century of violence, but of peace.

Peace on earth, for all mankind.●

JOHN MCCAIN, AN AMERICAN HERO

● Mr. CLELAND. Mr. President, I want to take this opportunity to salute my dear friend and colleague, the distinguished Senator from Arizona, JOHN MCCAIN. Although he has suspended his campaign for President, he should nonetheless know that he has scored a great victory in American electoral politics. More so than any other candidate in recent memory, Senator MCCAIN has beaten two of the greatest enemies facing our political system in the twenty-first century—apathy and cynicism. We should all be grateful to him for reminding Americans that ''politics'' is not a dirty word, that campaigns can be about more than 30 second sound bites, and that heroes still exist. We in the Senate should all feel proud to call him one of our own.

I think I and the four other Vietnam veterans in the Senate feel a particular kinship with Senator MCCAIN, for obvious reasons. You do not go through an experience like combat without being profoundly affected. You recognize a change in yourself when you come home, and you recognize it in others when you meet them for the first time. You are brothers. We are brothers. But why did the rest of America respond to Senator MCCAIN so strongly? Why did the ''Straight Talk Express'' appear every night on the evening news? Why did so many people want to see Luke Skywalker emerge out of the Death Star?

I believe it is because JOHN MCCAIN reacts to challenges the way we wish we would ourselves, but fear we might not. He remained in the Hanoi Hilton for seven years with his fellow P.O.W.'s even when he could have left. He fights for campaign finance reform, for strong action to reduce youth smoking, and for curbs in pork barrel spending even when he knows it will make him unpopular with his party. He shoots from the hip. He tells reporters how he really feels. He loves his family.

He is not perfect, but none of us are. He and I disagree on many issues, but we agree on this: that the purpose of politics is to generate hope, that serving our country—as a soldier or a sailor or a Senator—is the greatest honor of a person's life, and that, in the words of Babe Ruth, ''It's hard to beat a person who won't give up.''

Speaking for myself, I am a loyal Democrat who strongly supports the candidacy of AL GORE. But as an American and as a fellow Vietnam veteran, I am proud of the work JOHN has done, and will no doubt continue to do, in restoring the public's faith in their government and the political process.

Mr. President, JOHN MCCAIN is an authentic American hero, and I am proud to serve along side him.●