

But I think once we start going down to that feed route, we are going to get a lot of other groups now chiming in saying: What about us? What about us? How come dairy is being taken care of? What about poultry? What about beef? What about the others that are experiencing the same type of cost increases? And then you are really talking about blowing the lid off of some of these other programs.

But all that I and others who are in support of this motion to instruct are asking is for the members of the committee to defend their work, defend the programs that passed the House last year, defend the funding level that came out of the House last year because of the vital importance that these programs have, not only to the individual land producers, but to the resources that are so precious to all of us in this country.

Now we see disturbing trends; because of the high commodity prices, great pressure to bring more highly erodible sensitive land back into production. And there will be adverse consequences from that, unless we can maintain a viable incentive based system with these conservation programs to deal with that additional pressure that producers are facing throughout the Nation.

I think there is a better way of dealing with the abuses that my friend from Pennsylvania highlighted under the conservation program. Certainly we can do more oversight and get more information with regards to whether individuals are milking the system. No one is in support of that. We want to clamp down on it. But let's work with USDA and NRCS and those agencies in charge of implementing it, rather than calling for a blanket payment limitation cap with crucial conservation funding. Because, again, I am afraid that without these incentives in place, I don't care how wealthy you are, there won't be much incentive for you to engage in these type of programs, which just doesn't benefit the landowner but the community and the watershed area and the wildlife at large. So we need to be careful what road we are going to go down.

And, hopefully, this isn't just a response to some of us who have been asking for meaningful payment limitations and means testing under the commodity program just to get back at those who have been very supportive of conservation funding.

I think there are reasonable means tests we can apply to the commodity title. The fact that LDP and counter-cyclical payments aren't going up today I think is a good thing. That means farm income is up and commodity prices are up.

Back home in Wisconsin, in the agriculture district that I represent, farmers for years have come up to me and said: You know, I'm not a big fan of these subsidy programs, but I just wish the market would give us a decent price so we wouldn't have to rely on

them. Well, that day has come. Now today I have got producers in corn and soybean coming up to me and saying: RON, why are we still receiving these direct subsidy payments when we are getting such a good price in the marketplace? And they are right. Farmers know how these programs are working.

I think we can be a little bolder and more courageous in the reforms that some of us have been advocating, find those savings, so we can deal with conservation, nutrition, world development, speciality crops, and having a good energy title to this farm bill, too. This can happen, and it can happen in a way that the President feels comfortable in signing. And that will truly be a good bipartisan day then in the United States Congress. I encourage my friends to support this motion to instruct the conferees.

Mr. REICHERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Kind motion to instruct conferees and the need for increased conservation funding in the farm bill.

Our farmers are eager to share in the cost of protecting our environment, but currently two out of three farmers are turned away by the USDA due to insufficient funding when they apply to participate in conservation programs. As a result, we continue to lose thousands of acres of valuable farmland, grasslands, wetlands, and private forest lands. We also fall further behind schedule in our efforts to clean up rivers, lakes and streams.

We cannot and should not ask farmers to choose between their bottom line and smart, sensible preservation of the land they protect. The House-passed version of the farm bill contained a landmark increase of \$5.7 billion in authorized conservation funding. This money supports programs that protect our most sensitive and ecologically important lands, keeps soil and nutrient pollution out of our rivers, lakes and streams, and safeguards wetlands.

Since the conference committee is weighing various priorities as they try to bring the farm bill process to a close, it is important they know that Members of this House feel that conservation should be at the top of the priority list and that we maintain what the House has already passed.

I strongly encourage my colleagues to support this motion and to support the inclusion of the necessary conservation funding in this farm bill.

Mr. KIND. I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the previous question is ordered on the motion to instruct.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion to instruct offered by the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. KIND).

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the yeas appeared to have it.

Mr. KIND. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

APPOINTMENT OF HON. STENY HOYER AND HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN TO ACT AS SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE TO SIGN ENROLLED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS THROUGH MAY 5, 2008

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CUELLAR) laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,

May 1, 2008.

I hereby appoint the Honorable STENY H. HOYER and the Honorable CHRIS VAN HOLLEN to act as Speaker pro tempore to sign enrolled bills and joint resolutions through May 5, 2008.

NANCY PELOSI,

Speaker of the House of Representatives.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the appointment is approved.

There was no objection.

BLOCKING PROPERTY AND PROHIBITING CERTAIN TRANSACTIONS RELATED TO BURMA—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES (H. DOC. NO. 110-107)

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following message from the President of the United States; which was read and, together with the accompanying papers, without objection, referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs and ordered to be printed:

To the Congress of the United States:

Pursuant to the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701 et seq.) (IEEPA), I hereby report that I have issued an Executive Order (the "order") that takes additional steps with respect to the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13047 of May 20, 1997, and expanded in Executive Order 13448 of October 18, 2007.

In 1997, the United States put in place a prohibition on new investment in Burma in response to the Government of Burma's large scale repression of the democratic opposition in that country. On July 28, 2003, those sanctions were expanded by steps taken in Executive Order 13310, which contained prohibitions implementing sections 3 and 4 of the Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act of 2003 (Public Law 108-61) (the "Act") and supplemented that Act with additional restrictions. On October 18, 2007, I determined that the Government of Burma's continued repression of the democratic opposition in Burma, manifested at the time in the violent response to peaceful demonstrations, the commission of human rights abuses related to political repression, and engagement in public corruption, including by diverting or misusing Burmese public assets or by misusing public authority, warranted an expansion of the then-existing sanctions. Executive Order 13448, issued on that date, incorporated existing designation criteria set forth in Executive

Order 13310, blocked the property and interests in property of persons listed in the Annex to that Executive Order, and provided additional criteria for designations of certain other persons.

The order supplements the existing designation criteria set forth in Executive Order 13310, as incorporated in and expanded by Executive Order 13448. The order blocks the property and interests in property in the United States of persons listed in the Annex to the order and provides additional criteria for designations of persons determined by the Secretary of the Treasury, after consultation with the Secretary of State, to be owned or controlled by, directly or indirectly, the Government of Burma or an official or officials of the Government of Burma; to have materially assisted, sponsored, or provided financial, material, logistical, or technical support for, or goods or services in support of, the Government of Burma, the State Peace and Development Council of Burma, the Union Solidarity and Development Association of Burma, any successor entity to any of the foregoing, any senior official of any of the foregoing, or any person whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to Executive Order 13310, Executive Order 13448, or the order; or to be owned or controlled by, or to have acted or purported to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, any person whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to Executive Order 13310, Executive Order 13448, or the order.

The order leaves in place the existing prohibitions on new investment, the exportation or reexportation to Burma of financial services, and the importation of any article that is a product of Burma, which were put into effect in Executive Order 13047 and Executive Order 13310.

The order authorizes the Secretary of the Treasury, after consultation with the Secretary of State, to take such actions, including the promulgation of rules and regulations, and to employ all powers granted to the President by IEEPA and section 4 of the Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act of 2003 as may be necessary to carry out the purposes of the order.

I am enclosing a copy of the Executive Order I have issued.

GEORGE W. BUSH.
THE WHITE HOUSE, April 30, 2008.

□ 1545

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

U.S. MILITARY READINESS HANGS BY A THREAD

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gen-

tleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, in matters of national security, experienced leaders never forget that the unexpected is always just around the corner and that danger is never far away. The Roman orator Cicero immortalized these ideas in his story about the Sword of Damocles.

Damocles, a citizen of the ancient Greek city of Syracuse, wanted to be king for a day. The king agreed to this request, and Damocles feasted and reveled with wine and fine meals. Only after his merrymaking did Damocles discover that a razor-sharp sword, suspended by a single thread, hung over his head all day. Damocles was immediately cured of his desire to rule.

When I consider the challenges confronting the U.S. national security today, I see not one but two swords of Damocles dangling above us. The first danger concerns the strain current operations place on U.S. military readiness, and the second concerns the deterioration of security and stability in Afghanistan.

Military readiness ratings measure how prepared U.S. forces are to perform their assigned combat missions. Unfortunately, but not surprisingly, more than 6 years of war have resulted in serious readiness shortfalls, with our Army and Marine Corps ground forces experiencing the most acute problems. In spite of efforts to fill the gaps in equipment, training and personnel, readiness deficiencies serious enough to cause alarm last year have only continued to expand.

Today, two-thirds of the Army's combat brigades in the United States are not ready for duty. Units in the U.S. are suffering from shortages of personnel, and units are preparing for deployment without having all of their assigned personnel or equipment during training. To fill shortfalls in Army personnel, the Navy and Air Force are supplying over 20,000 troops to conduct ground force tasks such as convoy security and logistics support.

While U.S. military forces are getting by, painfully, and performing today's missions despite readiness shortfalls, we are simply not prepared for the emergence of a new conflict. Experience tells me that we cannot assume another crisis won't come our way. In my 31 years in Congress, the U.S. has been involved in 12 significant military conflicts, none of which were predicted beforehand. Because we can't know with complete certainty what dangers lurk around the corner or when they might strike, we need the insurance policy military readiness provides for America's security.

Our current readiness situation demands a massive investment in time, effort and money to restore our full capability. Of course, devoting the resources required to solve our readiness problems will force us to make painful tradeoffs with some elements of modernization, which is tomorrow's readi-

ness. But with current readiness levels, this is a predicament our Nation cannot avoid. It is simply a cost we must bear.

The second danger I worry about is the deterioration of security and stability in Afghanistan. For too long, the war in Iraq has overshadowed the real war against terrorism in Afghanistan. While the military effort there is actually a qualified success, the political effort at this point is not, and the benefits of economic progress are far too uneven. Too many Afghan citizens do not yet see tangible improvements in their daily lives. The effort in Afghanistan is not really reconstruction, but the creation of a stable, secure, and unified nation which has never existed.

The recent decision to send an additional 3,200 marines to Afghanistan is a necessary and positive step in the right direction, but that alone will not be sufficient. This undertaking is gargantuan and requires a far more significant effort than the United States or our allies have been willing to commit. History will judge us very harshly if our focus and effort in Afghanistan is insufficient to the task. A failure of the mission there would not only damage our security, it would also seriously damage NATO.

So how do we deal with these twin challenges? To start, we must focus our Nation's strategic priorities to find the right balance between the near-term needs and the long-term health of our military. We must address the imbalance in our deployment and use of troops overseas, because our readiness problems cannot be resolved as long as we continue to deploy in excess of 100,000 troops in Iraq. A responsible redeployment of a large percentage of that force is a strategic necessity.

In addition, we must do first things first by focusing on Afghanistan, just as in World War II we focused more of our resources on Germany and the war in Europe until that war was won. Finally, we must substantially increase the use of our soft power, our diplomatic, economic development, and strategic communications efforts in Afghanistan and around the world.

We can and should receive much more help from our allies. Together, the U.S. and the international community must make the war in Afghanistan a top priority and provide the leadership, strategy, and resources necessary to ensure that Al Qaeda and the Taliban are destroyed for good and that Afghanistan never again becomes a safe harbor for terrorists.

To his great credit, Secretary of Defense Gates has been arguing for several of these solutions. The truth is, though, that the U.S. has as much or more to lose in Afghanistan as any other nation, and the same would be true of whatever new conflicts emerge. Until our country is prepared to lead and act decisively, these problems will fester, and the threads holding up those twin swords will stretch ever thinner.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) is recognized for 5 minutes.