

So today, I was honored to be with Frank Buckles at a press conference at the D.C. World War I Memorial on the National Mall.

Since 1918, the men and women who served in World War I have gone without a national memorial to recognize their service to our country, and it is time that this changed. That is why I have introduced the Frank Buckles World War I Memorial Act. This bill would restore the District of Columbia's World War I Memorial and expand it so it serves a location on our mall for all those that served in World War I.

After 90 years of no national recognition, it is time these doughboys were given the thanks that they are due. After all, Mr. Speaker, they were the "fathers of the greatest generation."

When they went off to war in World War I, they sang the song of George M. Cohen, "Over There," and it went something like this:

"Over there. Over there. Tell the world that the Yanks are coming. The Yanks are coming, and we won't be back until it is over, over there."

Mr. Speaker, it is time to honor the lone survivor of World War I and the other doughboys that went to war over there in the forgotten war, World War I, and build them that national monument on the mall.

And that's just the way it is.

THE NEXT ADMINISTRATION MUST ADDRESS NATIONAL SECURITY CHALLENGES

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

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, we need to begin planning now for the issues our country must focus on when the new President takes office.

This will be the first presidential transition to occur during a time of war in many years. In addition, the next administration will face enormous budget pressures and national security challenges that will require sustained spending and the partnership of the Congress. Let me take this opportunity to discuss what I believe will be the top defense challenges for our next President.

First, we must develop a clear strategy to guide national security policy. Since World War II, the United States has been the indispensable Nation. But our Nation's ability to sustain this leadership role is jeopardized because we lack a comprehensive strategy to advance U.S. interests.

The next President must collaborate with Congress and the American people to formulate a new, broadly understood and accepted strategy to advance our national security interests. The next Quadrennial Defense Review of the Department of Defense must translate this strategy into a clear roadmap for organizing the Department and setting priorities in the next 4 years.

Second, we must restore America's credibility in the world. The full range of threats to our national security can only be addressed through the consistent and determined efforts of multiple nations working together. The new President will set the tone, but the U.S. can only lead and help reinvigorate international institutions if other nations believe we are credible, just, and intend our efforts to serve interests beyond our own.

Third, we must refocus our efforts on Afghanistan. The situation in Afghanistan is deteriorating. Violence by the Taliban and al Qaeda is rising. Attacks against the coalition are increasing. And, safe havens in the Afghanistan-Pakistan border region are thriving. The genesis of the 9/11 attack was in Afghanistan, and any future attack on our homeland is likely to originate in Afghanistan or in the border region with Pakistan.

Until our country is prepared to lead and act decisively and persistently, problems in Afghanistan will continue to fester. Our efforts in Iraq have diverted resources and focus away from the war in Afghanistan. We must refocus our efforts, and work with the international community to provide the necessary leadership, strategy, and resources to Afghanistan to ensure success in that mission.

Fourth, we must responsibly redeploy from Iraq. The men and women of our Armed Forces have done a magnificent job in Iraq, but the citizens of both the United States and Iraq agree that it is time for the U.S. military to come home. Our challenge is to manage that redeployment and to ensure that it reduces further strain on our military without jeopardizing the gains made in Iraq.

We must continue to protect U.S. citizens in Iraq, pursue terrorists, and help train and equip the Iraqi Security Forces. U.S. combat forces must be freed up to begin the process of resetting, rebuilding, and also refocusing in Afghanistan. The United States will face new challenges to our security and our interests in the future, and we will need the military units that are in Iraq to be returned to their full capability to effectively address them.

□ 1915

Fifth, we must recruit and retain a high-quality force. Our forces are the most highly trained and educated in the world, but we face serious challenges to maintain the quality of force we have today.

The cost to recruit and retain servicemembers has skyrocketed in recent years. And the tendency of Americans to serve in uniform has significantly declined as fewer young people are exposed to the military experience. Finding men and women who are physically and mentally qualified and willing to serve is an ongoing challenge.

Sixth, we must ensure a high state of readiness for our forces. Our troops have been engaged in combat oper-

ations for nearly 7 years, and it has strained our military to the breaking point. Restoring readiness will take a significant investment of time and money, easily exceeding \$100 million, but it must be done if we are to expect our military to respond ably when we need them. We are already at risk. Either we fix our readiness problems immediately, or else risk emboldening those who would seek to do us harm.

Seven. We must develop a more comprehensive counter-terrorism strategy. With the al Qaeda and affiliated groups still presenting a major threat, the United States must apply "lessons learned" and be open to the advice of our allies. The key is to fight smarter and not necessarily harder by more effectively utilizing a range of tools beyond just the military-led, kinetic approaches to counterterrorism.

The new administration must more aggressively pursue strategic communications strategies, intelligence and policing work, targeted development assistance, and a range of other counterinsurgency and irregular warfare tools.

Eight, we must strike a balance between the near-term fixes and long-term modernization.

Each of the military services will have to address the fundamental imbalances in their current plans to simultaneously modernize and reset equipment, grow the number of ships in our Navy.

Nine, we must reform the interagency process.

And, ten, we must deal with the looming defense health care crisis.

With increasing defense health care costs, difficulties in recruiting and retaining medical professionals, and the overwhelming demand placed on the medical system as it attempts to support thousands of men and women returning from combat, as well as their families, there is a perfect storm brewing, and in the next few years, that storm will be upon us.

These and other national defense challenges will confront our Nation in the months and years ahead, and Congress and the administration must work together on a bipartisan basis to seriously address these issues. The security of the American people is at stake.

H.R. 6662: THE FALLEN HERO COMMEMORATION ACT

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

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, throughout the history of our Nation, members of the United States Armed Forces have selflessly given their lives to secure and protect the freedoms Americans enjoy today.

Today, members of the United States Armed Forces are serving our Nation in Iraq, Afghanistan and many other parts of the world.

Without a loved one serving in our military, it is sometimes possible for Americans to overlook the sacrifices

that have been made and continue to be made by members of the Armed Forces on behalf of our Nation. It is for this reason I have introduced H.R. 6662, the Fallen Hero Commemoration Act. This bill would permit media coverage of military commemoration ceremonies, memorial services conducted by the Armed Forces, and arrival services for members of the Armed Forces who have died on active duty.

Currently, the Department of Defense does not permit arrival ceremonies for, or media coverage of deceased military personnel returning or departing from Ramstein Air Force Base or Dover Air Force Base.

Mr. Speaker, this ban on media coverage has not always been the case. Many of my colleagues in the House will remember that during the Vietnam War, images of arrival ceremonies and the flag-draped caskets of our servicemembers appeared regularly on TV and in newspapers.

In 1985, the media covered a ceremony at Andrews Air Force Base for members of the Armed Forces killed in El Salvador. It was not until 1991, during the Persian Gulf War, that the Department of Defense stopped permitting media coverage of the returns of the remains of fallen servicemembers.

However, in 1996 the media was granted access to Dover Air Force Base to photograph the arrival and transfer ceremony for the remains of Commerce Secretary Ron Brown and 32 other Americans killed when their plane crashed in Croatia. President Clinton was present to receive the flag-draped caskets.

In 1998, the media also photographed an arrival ceremony at Andrews Air Force Base for Americans killed in the bombings of U.S. embassies in Tanzania and Kenya. The Department of Defense restated the ban on media coverage at Dover Air Force Base and Ramstein Air Force Base in 2001.

However, in 2002, the media was permitted to photograph the transfer of flag-draped caskets at Ramstein Air Force Base that carried the remains of four United States servicemembers killed in Afghanistan.

In 2003, the Department of Defense expanded the no media policy to what it is today by stating, and I quote, “There will be no arrival ceremonies for or media coverage of deceased mili-

tary personnel returning or departing from Ramstein Air Force Base or Dover Air Force Base.”

Mr. Speaker, the sacrifice and service of today's fallen heroes is no less significant than the fallen heroes of past wars. By once again permitting access to credentialed members of the media at military ceremonies, arrival ceremonies and memorial services conducted by the Armed Forces, this legislation would honor those who go to war.

When people see a picture of a flag-draped casket, they will stop for just a minute and think a multitude of thoughts. One thought that always goes through my mind is, God bless that soldier. We can never thank them enough for what they have done for our country.

Today, I call upon my colleagues to become cosponsors of H.R. 6662, so that we may properly commemorate the sacrifices made by U.S. servicemembers.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that I might submit for the RECORD a New York Times editorial in support of this legislation which ran in yesterday's paper.

I ask permission, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from North Carolina?

Mr. CONAWAY. I object.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Objection is heard.

Mr. JONES. I will then, Mr. Speaker, continue and close.

Mr. Speaker, I know that this is a short legislative year, but I hope that the Armed Services Committee will soon hold a hearing on what I think is a very important issue, remembering the sacrifices of our fallen heroes.

Mr. Speaker, it's too easy for us not to see the sacrifice. And when anyone is offended by seeing a flag-draped coffin, God help their soul.

I ask God to continue to bless our men and women in uniform and their families, and ask God to continue to bless America.

STATUS REPORT ON CURRENT SPENDING LEVELS OF ON-BUDGET SPENDING AND REVENUES FOR FY 2008 AND FY 2009 AND THE 5-YEAR PERIOD FY 2009 THROUGH FY 2013

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

tleman from South Carolina (Mr. SPRATT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SPRATT. Madam Speaker, I am transmitting a status report on the current levels of on-budget spending and revenues for fiscal years 2008 and 2009 and for the 5-year period of fiscal years 2009 through 2013. This report is necessary to facilitate the application of sections 302 and 311 of the Congressional Budget Act and sections 301 and 302 of S. Con. Res. 70, the Concurrent Resolution on the Budget for Fiscal Year 2009.

The term “current level” refers to the amounts of spending and revenues estimated for each fiscal year based on laws enacted or awaiting the President's signature.

The first table in the report compares the current levels of total budget authority, outlays, and revenues with the aggregate levels set by S. Con. Res. 70. This comparison is needed to enforce section 311(a) of the Budget Act, which establishes a point of order against any measure that would breach the budget resolution's aggregate levels.

The second table compares the current levels of budget authority and outlays for each authorizing committee with the “section 302(a)” allocations made under S. Con. Res. 70 for fiscal years 2008 and 2009 and fiscal years 2009 through 2013. This comparison is needed to enforce section 302(f) of the Budget Act, which establishes a point of order against any measure that would breach the section 302(a) discretionary action allocation of new budget authority for the committee that reported the measure.

The third table compares the current levels of discretionary appropriations for fiscal years 2008 and 2009 with the “section 302(a)” allocation of discretionary budget authority and outlays to the Appropriations Committee. This comparison is needed to enforce section 302(f) of the Budget Act, which establishes a point of order against any measure that would breach section 302(b) suballocations within the Appropriations Committee.

The fourth table gives the current level for fiscal years 2010 and 2011 for accounts identified for advance appropriations under section 302 of S. Con. Res. 70. This list is needed to enforce section 302 of the budget resolution, which establishes a point of order against appropriations bills that include advance appropriations that: (i) are not identified in the joint statement of managers; or (ii) would cause the aggregate amount of such appropriations to exceed the level specified in the resolution.

REPORT TO THE SPEAKER FROM THE COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET—STATUS OF THE FISCAL YEAR 2009 CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET ADOPTED IN SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

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[Reflecting Action Completed as of September 8, 2008—On-budget amounts, in millions of dollars]

	Fiscal year— 2008 ²	Fiscal year— 2009 ^{1,2}	Fiscal years— 2009–2013
Appropriate Level:			
Budget Authority	2,456,188	2,462,544	(³)
Outlays	2,437,784	2,497,322	(³)
Revenues	1,875,401	2,029,653	11,780,263
Current Level:			
Budget Authority	2,455,102	1,504,545	(³)
Outlays	2,435,528	1,907,172	(³)
Revenues	1,878,433	2,086,396	12,131,305
Current Level over (+) / under (–) Appropriate Level:			
Budget Authority	–1,086	–957,999	(³)
Outlays	–2,256	–590,150	(³)
Revenues	3,032	56,743	351,042

¹ Current aggregates do not include spending covered by section 301(b)(1) (overseas deployments and related activities). The section has not been triggered to date in Appropriations action.

² Current aggregates do not include Corps of Engineers emergency spending assumed in the budget resolution, which will not be included in current level due to its emergency designation (section 301(b)(2)).