

Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Today, the House will debate the Defense Authorization Act for the next fiscal year. While nothing is more important than protecting America while keeping our men and women in uniform safe, the authorization before us today wastes too much of our Nation's precious wealth and represents yet another missed opportunity for badly-needed reform.

H.R. 4310, unfortunately, highlights Congress's inability to make hard choices on defense spending. It opts for an all-of-the-above strategy and puts the funding of an already bloated military budget ahead of any semblance of fiscal responsibilities. If passed, the authorization would represent 57 percent of our total discretionary budget.

It's clear to most people outside Congress that we can no longer separate national security from fiscal responsibility. Congress needs to get that message. Our constituents certainly understand.

Last week, a Stimson Center poll showed that, on average, Americans feel that the defense budget should be reduced by 18 percent next year. Instead, this bill will decrease spending by less than one-half of 1 percent after 13 consecutive years of increase.

While budget hawks and military experts agree we need to cut defense spending, this year's defense authorization provides \$8 billion more than the cap for the defense budget set by the Budget Control Act, which both parties supported and enacted into law to solve last summer's manufactured debt ceiling crisis.

Many supporting the bill will raise a false choice between defending America or rebuilding and renewing America, its infrastructure, and our economy. We can and we must do both. Spending too much for the wrong people to do the wrong things will undermine the very security at home we seek to buy through more military spending. Crumbling bridges and roads, failing schools, and a massive national debt all pose a greater national threat to America's power abroad than right-sized defense spending.

We know how to do this. We have had a cascade of plans, ranging from the Cato Institute to the Bowles-Simpson to progressive think-tanks. All would meet our 21st century need for national defense while keeping promises to future generations here at home.

In addition to ending the war in Afghanistan more quickly, there are many ways to decrease defense spending. Increased efficiency in naval deployment can reduce the need for battleships. We don't need a growing supercarrier fleet. The United States' 11 aircraft carriers add up to more than the rest of the world combined, and many of the countries that have aircraft carriers are our allies.

The current level of investment in our nuclear arsenal with capabilities

that correspond to no real military challenge makes no sense and wastes hundreds of billions of dollars.

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Unfortunately, the Republican leadership either can't or doesn't want to work towards a balanced approach to reduce defense spending. This was illustrated by the response to an amendment I offered in the Budget Committee last week. Instead of making tough choices on defense spending, our Republican colleagues decided to give the Pentagon even more than they asked for and provide them this funding in part by eliminating food stamp benefits for 2 million people, reducing benefits for 44 million more, curtailing Meals on Wheels, and eliminating school lunches for 280,000 children.

The level of spending in today's defense authorization is absurd. But more shocking is what Americans are being forced to give up to continue funding the Pentagon at this level.

Congress needs to show some leadership and ability to make difficult choices. That's why I'm leading, along with Representatives LEE and FRANK, an amendment to cut defense spending for the next fiscal year by the \$8 billion that would align the bill with the level already authorized and written into law last fall.

We can and should go further, but at the very least most should be able to agree that Congress ought to play by the rules we created, not sidestepping them at the expense of struggling families, disadvantaged school children, and our seniors. Unless we are able to fix this bill, I strongly urge my colleagues to vote "no."

EOD TECHNICIANS KILLED IN ACTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. CRAWFORD) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CRAWFORD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the lives of two brave men who died serving their Nation. Explosive ordnance disposal technicians serve the important role of disarming explosive devices (IEDs) in war zones and here at home. As a former EOD tech myself, I know the dangers these soldiers face, and today I honor their ultimate sacrifice.

Naval Lieutenant Christopher Mosko trained for more than a year to become an EOD technician. He was assigned to EOD Mobile Unit 3 for the past 3 years, and during that time, among other missions, he supported humanitarian operations following the earthquake in Haiti. He was killed in an IED blast in Afghanistan on April 26 of this year, directly supporting Navy and Army special operations forces.

Lieutenant Mosko and his wife, Amanda, called San Diego home. Lieutenant Mosko was described by his command as a personable and outstanding leader who went out of his

way to support his men. They also said he was a kind and gentle person who will be greatly missed by the EOD family.

Twenty-five-year-old Marine Sergeant John Huling was killed by gunshot wounds inflicted by a person wearing an Afghan National Army uniform in the Helmand province of Afghanistan. Sergeant Huling enlisted in the Marine Corps in 2006. He deployed to Iraq in 2007 and was on his second combat deployment. As an EOD tech, he was assigned to the 7th Engineer Support Battalion, 1st Marine Logistics Group at Camp Pendleton in California.

Sergeant Huling's mother said: "He was brave and selfless and gave his life for his country so everybody could enjoy the freedom that we live now."

Sergeant Huling is survived by his wife of 2 years, Priscilla; a brother, who is also a marine; and a sister.

Mr. Speaker, Navy Lieutenant Christopher Mosko and Marine Sergeant John Huling are American heroes. Each brave man died in action defending the freedoms so many Americans take for granted.

I did not know these two men, but to many, these men were sons, husbands, brothers and friends. Because they served, America and the world are safer and more free. Their families are in my thoughts and prayers, and I ask that all Americans remember the sacrifice they made.

Explosive ordnance disposal technicians are the first line of defense in the war on terror, protecting our servicemembers from IED threats overseas and in homeland missions. The EOD community deserves the respect and full resources of the Department of Defense to continue their lifesaving mission.

God bless the memory of Lieutenant Mosko and Sergeant Huling, and may God continue to bless the United States of America.

LEGISLATION RELATING TO IRAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH) for 5 minutes.

Mr. KUCINICH. This week, Congress is considering two pieces of legislation relating to Iran. The first undermines a diplomatic solution with Iran and lowers the bar for war. The second authorizes a war of choice against Iran and begins military preparations for it.

With respect to H. Res. 568, which eliminates the most viable alternative to war, the House is expected to vote on this. I would urge Members to read the resolution because section 6 rejects any U.S. policy that would rely on efforts to contain a nuclear weapons capable Iran. Section 7 urges the President to reaffirm the unacceptability of an Iran with a nuclear weapons capability, and opposition to any policy that would rely on containment as an option in response to Iranian enrichment.

This language represents a significant shift in U.S. policy, and would guarantee that talks with Iran currently scheduled for May 23 would fail. Current U.S. policy is that Iran cannot acquire nuclear weapons. Instead, H. Res. 568 draws the red line for military action at Iran achieving a nuclear weapons capability—capability—a nebulous and undefined term that would include a civilian nuclear program.

Indeed, it's likely that a negotiated deal to prevent a nuclear-armed Iran and to prevent war would provide for uranium enrichment for peaceful purposes under the framework of the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons treaty, with strict safeguards and inspections. This language in this bill makes such a negotiated settlement impossible. At the same time, the language lowers the threshold for attacking Iran. Countries with nuclear weapons capability could include many other countries like Japan or Brazil. It is an unrealistic threshold.

An associate of former Secretary of State Colin Powell stated:

This resolution reads like the same sheet of music that got us into the Iraq war.

Now, H.R. 4310, the National Defense Authorization Act, authorizes war against Iran and preparing the military for it. I want to point out how this happens. While H. Res. 568 undermines our diplomatic efforts and lowers the bar for war, H.R. 4310, the NDAA, begins military preparations for war. Members ought to read this. Section 1221 makes military action against Iran a U.S. policy. Section 1222 directs our Armed Forces to prepare for war. Now if you read these sections, you'll see that what I'm saying is true.

Now, under subsection A, it says that Iran may soon attain a nuclear weapons capability, a development that would threaten the United States interests, destabilize the region, encourage nuclear proliferation, and further empower and embolden Iran, and on and on. But the International Atomic Energy Agency, as well as the U.S. and Israeli intelligence, have all agreed that Iran does not currently have a nuclear bomb, is not building a nuclear weapon, and does not have any plans to do so. Both U.S. and Israeli officials also agree that a strike on Iran would only delay their nuclear program and actually encourage them to pursue nuclear weapons.

Sustained diplomatic engagement with Iran is the only way to ensure transparency and to prevent a nuclear-armed Iran. Rejecting or thwarting any inspections-based deal we are currently seeking with Iran, even when analysts are expressing guarded optimism that a near-term deal is achievable, makes preemptive military action against Iran more likely.

Now I just want to cite some provisions right from the bill.

In order to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons, which they're not doing, the United States, in cooperation with its allies, must utilize

all elements of national power, including diplomacy, robust economic sanctions, and credible—get this—“visible preparations for a military option.”

Under section 1222 where they talk about U.S. military preparedness, it talks of pre-positioning sufficient supplies of aircraft, munitions, fuel, and other materials for both air- and sea-based missions. Under subsection B it talks about maintaining sufficient Naval assets in the region—get this—to launch a sustained sea and air campaign against a range of Iranian nuclear and military targets.

Now come on, we're getting ready for war against Iran. Why? I mean, we ought to have a broad debate about this other than just burying this section of a bill in the National Defense Authorization Act. We have plenty of evidence there is no reason to go to war against Iran. We made the mistake in Iraq. Let's not make another one with Iran and set off World War III.

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YUCCA MOUNTAIN

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. BUEKLE). The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. SHIMKUS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. SHIMKUS. Madam Speaker, I've come back to the floor, as I have almost weekly since this Congress, to talk about nuclear waste.

It's kind of unique to follow my friend from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH) because we are a nuclearized country; we do have nuclear weapons. A lot of our nuclear weapons were developed from World War II. And guess where the waste still is from World War II? Still buried in silos under the ground in Hanford, Washington. That's a legacy of 50 years of nuclear waste that we still have yet to address—not including the nuclear waste for fuel, which is what I'm going to talk about today. I'm going to the State of Michigan and the State of Indiana.

Michigan has five nuclear reactors. They're all on the Great Lakes—either Lake Michigan or Lake Superior, I think—and the waste is right next to these Great Lakes. So we want to do a comparison/contrast, as I do every week based upon a region of the country, and compare where the nuclear waste is in Michigan to where it should be, under Federal law—the 1982 Nuclear Waste Policy Act and the adjoining amendments passed in 1987—that says we need to consolidate our high-level nuclear waste and put it in one single repository that is underneath a mountain in a desert, and that place is Yucca Mountain.

So let's compare the two locations. I'm picking the Cook Nuclear Generating Station in Michigan, comparing it to Yucca Mountain. How much nuclear waste do we have at Yucca Mountain? Zero. How much do we have at Cook? We have 1,433 metric tons of uranium—this is of waste—at just one nuclear facility at Cook.

Where is the waste stored? At Yucca, it would be 1,000 feet underground. Where is the nuclear waste stored at Cook? Well, it's stored above ground in pools and in casks. How is it compared to the groundwater issue? Well, at Yucca Mountain it would be 1,000 feet above the water table. As we know, at Cook it's 19 feet above the groundwater table.

Yucca Mountain is 100 miles from the only body of water you can find in a desert, and that's the Colorado River. That's 100 miles away. How far is the nuclear waste at Cook? Well, you can see from the picture it is next to Lake Michigan. So in a comparison/contrast, it's easy to see that Yucca would be a safer place to put high-level nuclear waste than Cook Generating Station in Michigan.

So what have the U.S. Senators done from the surrounding States on this position of, should they have nuclear waste in their State or should they not? Senator COATS is supportive of Yucca Mountain. Senator LUGAR is supportive of Yucca Mountain—I have quotes here that affirm that. Senator LEVIN has voted for Yucca Mountain and supports that. And our friend, my former classmate here in the Chamber—and she is a good friend of mine—DEBBIE STABENOW, has not supported Yucca Mountain.

So part of why I'm coming down to the floor is just to help paint the picture that there is nuclear waste all over this country—104 different reactors, not including our defense waste—and it's stored all over the place. Wouldn't it be better to have a centralized location to put the nuclear waste in? So I've been doing a tally of U.S. Senators, and we finally got over the 50-Senator mark. Because of the Senate rules, you know you have to break the filibuster. That's 60 votes.

It's interesting now, based upon the information, past information—whether gleaned from votes or public statements—we have 54 U.S. Senators who say we ought to have Yucca Mountain as our single repository. We have 19 that we really have no record of a statement or a vote. And then we have 21 that have, either as a former House Member or a public statement, said, no, we don't think Yucca Mountain is a place for nuclear waste to go.

We still have a couple more States to go, and we're hoping that we get to a 60-vote position to make the claim throughout the country that these Senators should really deal with this issue of high-level nuclear waste, not just the spent fuel, but, as we talked about earlier, the defense waste in this country.

This was a promise made to the ratepayers of States that have nuclear power. The government said we're going to charge you extra for your electricity. We will take your money, and we will build a long-range geological repository for nuclear waste, and that's Yucca Mountain.