

During the 1990s, the Pastor was detained thirteen times, often for organizing prayer sessions. Soon after, he turned his home into a place of worship, as well as a community center where farmers could seek assistance in petitioning authorities. Because he did not have the government's permission to worship, his home was seized by the local government, and he was imprisoned for two years.

On August 16, 2010, he was arrested for supposedly trying to overthrow the Vietnamese government, a convenient charge from a government bent on silencing him. For the next two months, his place of detention and his condition of health were kept secret from his family.

Denied legal representation and with diplomats denied access to his trial, Pastor Duong Kim Khai was sentenced to 2–8 years in prison and 3–5 probation. Unfortunately, his wife, who was never able to visit her husband in prison, has since passed away.

Pastor Duong Kim Khai's trial was a sham and his imprisonment is unacceptable. Freedom to worship is a human right, and the Vietnamese government should immediately release him. Furthermore, I call on the State Department to finally recognize Vietnam as a Country of Particular Concern.

And that's just the way it is.

PROTECTING VOLUNTEER FIRE-FIGHTERS AND EMERGENCY RESPONDERS ACT OF 2014

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 4, 2014

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on the Motion to Concur in the Senate Amendment with a House Amendment to H.R. 3979, the Carl Levin and Howard P. "Buck" McKeon National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2015.

This legislation authorizes \$495.5 billion in discretionary spending for the base budget for the Department of Defense and \$17.9 billion in discretionary spending for the defense-related activities of the Department of Energy in Fiscal Year 2015, totaling \$513.4 billion, which is \$31 billion less than authorized in Fiscal Year 2014.

The legislation also authorizes \$63.7 billion in Fiscal 2015 for Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO).

I thank Chairman McKEON and Ranking Member SMITH and the members of the Armed Services Committee for their work on this important legislation.

I especially wish to thank Chairman McKEON for his friendship and his service to the nation as he concludes his long and distinguished tenure as a member of the People's House.

The National Defense Authorization Act's purpose is to address the threats our nation must deal with not just today, but into the future. This makes the work on this bill vital to our national interest and it should reflect our strong commitment to ensure that the men and women of our Armed Services receive the benefits and support that they deserve for their unwavering service to this great nation.

This is the 53rd consecutive National Defense Authorization Act, which speaks to the

long term commitment of the Congress and successive Administrations to provide for the defense of our nation.

The bill encompasses a number of initiatives designed to confront sexual assault in the military, making more efficient the work of protecting America, addresses the mental health needs of men and women in the armed services, and extends economic opportunity to small minority and women owned businesses.

There is much in the legislation before us that I strongly support. For example, the House-Senate agreement:

1. Significantly improves readiness by restoring \$818 million in cuts made by House Republicans to the readiness accounts below what was requested by the President;

2. Supports a 1.0 percent pay raise for the troops for FY 2015, equal to the President's request;

3. Authorizes the awarding of the Purple Heart Medal to those killed domestically as a result of a foreign terrorist attack like the tragedies that occurred at Fort Hood in my home state of Texas;

4. Creates a flexible \$1.3 billion Counter Terrorism Partnership Fund that supports partner nation operations and U.S. Building Partnership Capacity programs to combat terrorism in the Middle East and Africa and bring to heel notorious terrorist organizations such as Boko Haram;

5. The bill also addresses serious health and well-being challenges faced by our men and women in the armed services such as post-traumatic stress disorders by requiring the Department of Defense to report on improvements in the identification and treatment of mental health conditions and traumatic brain injury among members of the Armed Forces, as well as providing a person-to-person mental health assessment for active duty and selected reserve members each year and, through 2018, a person-to-person mental health screening once during each 180-day period in which a member is deployed;

6. Requires the establishment of a Defense Advisory Committee on Investigation, Prosecution, and Defense of Sexual Assault in the Military, eliminates the "good soldier defense," which allows alleged attackers to avoid charges by showcasing a positive military record in court, and builds upon the provisions included in the FY 2012, FY 2013, and FY 2014 Defense Authorization bills that contained dozens of provisions, including stripping commanding officers of the unilateral authority to dismiss a finding by a court martial; prohibiting commanding officers from reducing guilty findings by a court martial to guilty of a lesser offense; and requiring that service members found guilty of sexual offenses, including rape or sexual assault, be dismissed or honorably discharged;

7. Authorizes \$622 million for Israeli Cooperative Missile Defense Programs, which is \$349 million more than the President's request, a total that includes \$350 million for Israel's "Iron Dome" short-range rocket defense system, which is \$175 million more than the President's request;

8. Includes provisions to allow the Department of Defense to reprogram funds to carry out both the Syria train-and-equip program and the Iraq Train and Equip program to combat ISIL; and

9. Creates the National Commission on the Future of the U.S. Army, which will have four

members appointed by the President and four appointed by Congress that is tasked to report back to Congress with recommendations for optimizing Army and National Guard Force Structure by February 1, 2016.

Mr. Speaker, one of the most important lessons we learned from the long war in Iraq is the importance of military readiness which imposes on the Congress the obligation of ensuring that every woman and man sent into battle in defense of our nation must be properly trained and equipped.

This is why I will not forget the troops killed and wounded in Iraq and Afghanistan when their vehicles were attacked by "improvised explosive devices."

To ensure that the Armed Forces of the United States remains the best trained, best equipped fighting force in the world, we must provide them the resources needed to adapt and meet any challenge they may face, from global military conflicts to an Ebola virus outbreak.

I am also pleased that the bill includes authorization for awarding the Purple Heart Medal to those killed or wounded in domestic terrorist attacks, like the attack at Ft. Hood.

The Army National Guard is a critical component of our national defense structure.

The men and women of the National Guard serve our nation as a reserve force in times of military conflict and at home in responding public emergencies natural disasters.

Mr. Speaker, the threat posed by the terrorist organization Boko Haram be addressed before it becomes become a problem of the level of ISIS to our national interests.

For this reason I offered an amendment to the House version of this bill that was adopted as Section 1266, which would have required the Secretary of Defense to report to Congress on the nature and extent of the crimes against humanity committed by Boko Haram in Nigeria.

I am disappointed that Section 1266 of the House bill was not included in the final version of the bill but I am pleased the legislation reauthorizes the Africom command and recognizes the importance of combating terrorist activity on the continent of Africa.

Mr. Speaker, the threat posed by ISIS is serious and real and the President has reached out to Congress to work with him to develop a unified and international response to meet the threat.

For this reason I support the provision in the legislation authorizing \$3.4 billion for sustaining U.S. personnel forward-deployed to the Middle East, providing enablers such as intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance platforms, replenishing munitions expended while conducting airstrikes against ISIL, and financing operations and maintenance costs for air, ground and naval operations to date.

Specifically, I support the provision authorizing the President's \$1.6 billion request to train and equip Iraqi security forces to re-build the capability and capacity of our Iraqi partners in the region so they can sustain the long-term fight to defeat ISIL and provide security and stability to the Iraqi people, so that large numbers of U.S. combat forces are not required.

The \$1.6 billion is being provided to fund a two-year program with robust oversight and notification requirements to support Peshmerga, Sunni tribes, and other forces beyond the traditional Iraqi Security Forces.

The legislation also extends the McKeon Amendment, which I supported, that provides funding to train and equip moderate Syrian forces to combat ISIL.

Mr. Speaker, it is important to emphasize that nothing in the legislation before authorizing the training and equipping of Iraqi and Syrian forces by U.S. advisors to combat ISIL derives from the 2002 Iraq AUMF.

The decision to send American men and women into harm's way is the most consequential decision the Constitution vests in the President and the Congress.

For this reason, the Constitution wisely divides the responsibility of deciding when to use military force to protect the nation and its interests between the President and the Congress, the representatives of the American people.

Mr. Speaker, I remain strongly opposed to the deployment of the U.S. Armed Forces inside the territorial borders of Syria without a vote of Congress explicitly authorizing such action.

Moreover, any vote regarding the authorization to use military force against Syria must be preceded by meaningful, substantive, and thoughtful dialogue and robust debate governed by a rule that affords Members of the House the opportunity to offer and debate amendments.

I must stress that before any vote is held, Members of Congress must be apprised of all facts material to the decision and have access to relevant documentation, classified and otherwise, and afforded the opportunity to meet in small groups and in secure locations with senior members of the Administration's national security team who can answer detailed and pointed questions and provide requested information.

Mr. Speaker, the war in Iraq taught this nation the importance of having accurate and reliable information when deciding whether to use military force and the painful costs in lives and treasure of acting precipitously.

We cannot and dare not repeat that mistake.

That is why it is essential that all Members of Congress have access to the relevant information and the responsible Administration officials before any vote to authorize the use of military force to defeat ISIS is scheduled.

Mr. Speaker, the health and well-being of our men and women in uniform on and off the battlefield is of critical importance.

The House version of the National Defense Authorization Act included an amendment I introduced authorizing an increase of \$10 million in breast cancer research funding and directing the Department of Defense to identify specific genetic and molecular targets and biomarkers for Triple Negative Breast Cancer (TNBC).

I am disappointed that the Jackson Lee Amendment was not included in the final

version of the legislation because my amendment would save lives that may otherwise be lost.

Mr. Speaker, breast cancer has been as brutal on women in the military as combat.

More than 800 women have been wounded in Iraq and Afghanistan, according to the Army Times; 874 military women were diagnosed with breast cancer just between 2000 and 2011, and according to that same study, more are suspected.

The Jackson Lee Amendment, however, provided funding for the additional research that is desperately needed since women are joining the Armed Services in increasing numbers and serving longer, ascending to leadership.

With increased age comes increased risk and incidence of breast cancer.

Not only is breast cancer striking relatively young military women at an alarming rate, but male service members, veterans and their dependents are at risk as well.

With a younger and generally healthier population, those in the military tend to have a lower risk for most cancers than civilians—including significantly lower colorectal, lung and cervical—but breast cancer is a different story.

Military people in general, and in some cases very specifically, are at a significantly greater risk for contracting breast cancer because life in the military can mean exposure to a witch's brew of risk factors directly linked to greater chances of getting breast cancer.

With the expansion of women in the military, it is extremely important that more funding be allocated for research for early detection, treatment, and cure of breast cancer, including TNBC.

I will continue fighting until this objective is achieved.

I strongly support the provisions in the legislation before us intended to combat the epidemic of sexual assaults in the military, including the elimination of the "good soldier defense," which is defined as a consideration of general military character toward the probability of innocence in sexual assault prosecutions.

Houston is home to one of the largest populations of military service members and their families in the nation.

There are over 200,000 veterans of military service who live and work in Houston; more than 13,000 are veterans from the Iraq and Afghanistan.

Although some of a soldier's wounds are invisible to the naked eye they are still wounds that should be properly treated.

Another important component of the legislation that I strongly support is are the provisions designed to increase the number of medical facilities and mental health professionals who are available to serve the active duty personnel and veterans.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, let me express again my appreciation to Chairman McKEON and Ranking Member SMITH for their work in crafting a Defense Authorization bill that

strives to enhance the readiness of our troops, provides for the care of our military personnel and their families, and authorizes the investments needed to keep our nation strong, safe, and respected in the world.

HONORING VICE MAYOR OF THE
RIPON CITY COUNCIL, ELDEN
"RED" NUTT

HON. JEFF DENHAM

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 8, 2014

Mr. DENHAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of the Vice Mayor of the Ripon City Council, Elden "Red" Nutt, who passed away November 21, 2014.

Elden "Red" Nutt was born on May 19, 1937 and raised in Fowler, California. He enlisted in the United States Navy in 1954 and worked as a boiler operator on the USS Hornet (CVA-12).

Red's long history of service to the community of Ripon first started in 1965 when he was hired as a Ripon police officer. Red later became a sergeant in 1972 and was appointed police chief in 1982. He served as chief until retiring in 1991.

Red was appointed to the Ripon planning commission in 2002 and first elected to the city council in 2004, serving stints as vice mayor and mayor. While on the City Council, Red served on various committees and commissions, most notably the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFco) where Red served as Board Chairman.

Notable projects completed during Red's tenure include: Main Street & Stockton Ave. Enhancements, Mistlin Softball Fields, purchase of Ripon's first bus and the start of a fixed route transit service, Stanislaus River Bike Path, Boesch and Lan Parks, City Hall & Police Department expansion, annual fireworks show made possible by community donations, Veterans Museum and memorial wall, and the Police Memorial.

Red's involvement in the community went far beyond his role on the City Council. Red served as the post commander for the American Legion Post 190 in 2004–2005, and again in 2010–2011. Red also served as the president of the Ripon Lions Club, was a two-time past president of the Ripon Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, and auxiliary member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1051. Red also volunteered his time with the Friends of the Library and the Ripon Historical Society, serving as a docent at the Veterans Museum.

Red and his wife Bonnie have been married for 55 years. They have raised three children, John, Debbie, and Diane. They have six grandchildren and one great grandchild. After retirement, Red enjoyed spending time with