

United Nations, that is more than 8 million tons a year. Plastic bottles, straws, grocery bags, cigarette butts, fishing gear, and abandoned vessels litter the ocean.

Currents and atmospheric winds carry floatable marine debris. These movements trap items in debris accumulation zones, also known as garbage patches. A study published in the journal, *Scientific Reports*, estimated that the Pacific garbage patch is comprised of about 1.8 trillion pieces of debris.

We still don't know how long it takes for plastic to biodegrade. Estimates range from 450 years to never.

Marine debris harms our coastal economies, endangers marine life, destroys important marine habitats, propagates invasive species, and creates hazardous conditions for the maritime industry. Tiny pieces of plastic, fiber, fragments, and microbeads also make their way into marine life, blocking digestive tracts, altering growth and, in some cases, killing animals and marine organisms.

Healthy beaches and waterways are critical to the marine ecosystems that thousands of people rely on to earn a living in Oregon and other coastal communities. After the tsunami hit the coast of Japan in 2011, large materials like docks and boats that carried invasive species ended up on the shores of the Pacific Northwest.

But it is not just tsunami debris that is a problem. According to NOAA, a majority of the debris that covers our beaches come from storm drains and sewers, demonstrating that this is not just a problem resulting from those along our Nation's shorelines.

Marine debris is entirely preventable, but we must support responsible disposal practices and provide coastal communities with the resources they need. The NOAA Marine Debris Program has partnered with Oregon Sea Grant, Oregon State University, Oregon Coast Aquarium, and Lincoln County School District to create a curriculum to teach middle and high school students about the effects of marine debris and to promote stewardship activities.

There has been growing momentum on this issue, as many companies and cities and jurisdictions across this country stop the use of plastic straws and bags.

The ocean is resilient and we can help it heal, but we cannot afford to wait. I urge my colleagues to support this bill to strengthen the Federal response to marine debris.

I want to close, again, by thanking all of the bipartisan sponsors and cosponsors of this legislation, but also, especially, the co-chair of the Oceans Caucus, again, Representative DON YOUNG, for his leadership.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to close. I will take my few seconds that remain then and simply say this is a good piece of legislation. I want to thank the chair of the Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation

Subcommittee for his work on this, and for working across the aisle to solve problems, some very real, serious problems in this legislation.

I yield back the balance of my time. Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

First off, thanks to Mr. GARAMENDI. If there are two more folks in this Congress from opposite sides of the aisle that disagree on some things sometimes, but agree as much as possible and as much as we do on the things that we are working on, I would be surprised. And I would like to just thank him so much for his work and for coming up with great legislation, great ideas, and pushing this forward.

There is an old military saying that if you control the ocean, you control the world. And just as serious of a sense, if you destroy the ocean, you destroy the world. I think that is one reason this bill is so important.

S. 756 promotes action to address the marine debris, catastrophic issues that we face now that will only get worse. It increases maritime vessel safety so you will not have another tragic incident like you had with the *El Faro*. And it establishes a Blue Technology center of expertise so we can help the Coast Guard work smarter and not harder with their limited funds. I urge all Members to support it.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 756, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

EXPRESSING SENSE OF HOUSE THAT THE LACK OF TIMELY AND PREDICTABLE FUNDING UNNECESSARILY UNDERMINES MISSION OF THE UNITED STATES SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND

Ms. CHENEY. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 1009) expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the lack of timely and predictable funding unnecessarily undermines the mission of the United States Special Operations Command and jeopardizes the security of the United States.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 1009

Whereas the ability of the United States Special Operations Command to successfully conduct operations relies on adequate resourcing;

Whereas Special Operations Forces must prepare for a wide array of missions to support and defend the United States in various capacities around the world;

Whereas the training and development of Special Operations Forces takes multiple years and cannot be created overnight;

Whereas the success of the United States Special Operations Command requires close coordination between each branch of the Armed Forces;

Whereas training shortfalls have been identified as posing an unnecessary risk to Special Forces soldiers;

Whereas the lack of full, on-time funding undermines the ability of the United States Special Operations Command to work by, with, and through our partner nations;

Whereas the smaller operating footprint of Special Operations Forces poses unique operational needs not found in conventional forces;

Whereas the deployment cycle of Special Operations Forces requires additional attention and resources be provided for family and support programs before, during, and after deployments; and

Whereas the United States Special Operations Command must maintain a constant level of readiness that is significantly undermined by budget uncertainty: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) finds that not providing the Department of Defense with stable, predictable, and on-time funding unnecessarily jeopardizes the safety and security of the United States;

(2) expresses a sense of gratitude for the incredible sacrifices made by both Special Operators and their families; and

(3) commits to meeting the needs of the United States Special Operations Command as part of its efforts to restore military readiness.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Wyoming (Ms. CHENEY) and the gentleman from California (Mr. GARAMENDI) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Wyoming.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. CHENEY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and insert extraneous material on the resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Wyoming?

There was no objection.

Ms. CHENEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. HUDSON) to discuss his resolution.

Mr. HUDSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of my resolution, H. Res. 1009, which expresses the sense of the House of Representatives that lack of timely and predictable funding unnecessarily undermines the mission of the United States Special Operations Command and jeopardizes the security of the United States.

□ 1500

Mr. Speaker, one of the greatest honors of my life is representing Fort Bragg, the epicenter of the universe and home of the Airborne and Special Operations Forces. The units stationed here represent the best of the best and have a vast footprint.

As our Nation continues to fight terrorism around the world while simultaneously preparing for the threats of near-peer adversaries, our requirements increase and diversify.

For too long, we have asked our military to do more with less. Now, we have made great progress with our fiscal year 2018 and fiscal year 2019 DOD appropriations, but every time we fail to pass a Defense Appropriations bill on time, we do irreparable harm to our Nation's military. This is especially apparent in our special operations community.

The men and women at USSOCOM cannot afford another year of CRs. Their missions require an advanced level of training and preparation as they operate in some of the most austere conditions in the world.

When USSOCOM is not funded on time, training cannot be conducted, essential equipment cannot be ordered, and long-term responsibilities are not met. The effects of 9 years of continuing resolutions have severely undermined our forces and led to a waste of taxpayer dollars as we flood the Department of Defense with cash near the end of the fiscal year and force them to spend it all within a matter of a few months.

We must never underestimate the most important asset our military has, and that is the individual. Green Berets cannot be built overnight. We cannot flip a switch and magically produce Navy SEALs or Air Force combat controllers or Marine Raiders. The elite units of USSOCOM are built over multiple years and cannot be stopped and started.

This resolution would affirm our commitment to stand behind each and every one of these incredible servicemembers and their families.

Make no mistake, when this body chooses not to appropriately fund these warriors, we are putting their lives at greater risk. I refuse to go home and look in the eye of a Gold Star wife of a Green Beret and say: "Sorry, your husband didn't get the training he needed, because we were too busy playing games in Washington." That, Mr. Speaker, is unacceptable.

The time is now for us to come together as a Nation and fund our military. I urge every one of my colleagues to recognize what is at stake and put the needs of our Nation before politics.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank Representative CHENEY for her efforts on these issues, as well as Chairman THORNBERRY and Chairwoman GRANGER for their unwavering support and commitment to our military and our special operators.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I might consume, but I will try to be brief.

Mr. Speaker, we are in total support of this piece of legislation. We think this is a very, very good thing to do, to adequately fund all of our military, whether it is SOCOM or any other part of it. It is essential for our national security.

However, I would like to note that, having served on the Armed Services Committee for the last several years and endured unending discussions about the horrible sequestration issues, which were totally under the control of the majority party to change should they decide to do so, that it is a little incongruous to put forth a resolution that would call for adequate funding for SOCOM, and we should do so.

At the same time, when we have created a trillion-dollar deficit with a piece of legislation that passed last December with no Democratic votes—because we like to think of ourselves as deficit hawks, and we think it is difficult to put this Congress into a situation where we have to choose between the health of seniors who are on Medicare or young children who depend upon the Medicaid program or maybe the education systems.

So this resolution, it is a good thing. It is something we ought to do. Certainly, we ought to support SOCOM. Certainly, we ought to pass appropriations bills on time. Let me commend the House for having done so, and we can always blame the enemy on the other side of the building, the Senate, but the reality is that the Treasury was gutted by a tax bill of which more than 80 percent of the benefit went to the top income earners of America and corporations. And a deficit has been created that will be a trillion dollars next year. That is the period of time in which this resolution calls for full funding for our Special Operations Forces.

So my discussion today is really about the very difficult choices that are going to have to be made because this Congress, without Democratic support, decided that the first choice was the superwealthy and the corporations of America, not the children, not the sick, not those in need of education, not the infrastructure, but rather those who have much already.

Now, I notice that I don't have many colleagues here on our side, although I would assure all the Congress that we are 100 percent in support of our Special Operations Forces, and we look forward to a continuing debate on the choices that must be made.

Mr. Speaker, I urge an "aye" vote, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. CHENEY. Mr. Speaker, I welcome my colleague from California's support for this resolution.

As my colleague knows very well, we have done far more in this body, and, as he mentioned, we have done far more in this body than these resolutions of support. These resolutions of support are crucially important, but we have, in this House, completed our work. We have completed our work on the Defense Appropriations bill.

Last year, the Senate also completed its work, and we were able to take the very first crucially important steps to begin to rebuild our military with the \$700 billion we were able to appropriate for fiscal year 2018.

We have also done our work for this fiscal year, and we will be in a position, hopefully in the next day or so, to be able to pass the National Defense Authorization Act as well for fiscal year 2019.

So we in this House understand how crucially important it is that we get the work done, that we pass this legislation. We need the Senate to do the same.

We also, I think, need to recognize we have fundamental disagreements and disputes about the impact of the tax cuts we passed. In fact, on this side of the aisle, we believe that allowing Americans to keep more of their money is really the secret to getting the kind of economic growth we need to fundamentally deal with the deficit, that the answer is not to raise people's taxes to have more money coming into the Treasury. We need to actually let people keep more of what they have got. We need to let people invest more of their own money.

We have seen jobs come back, and we have seen economic growth come back. We have seen people at all income levels able to keep more money, and they see the difference in their paychecks.

So we are very proud of that, and we do not believe that we should ever be in a situation where we think that somehow we have to choose expensive domestic spending if we want to fund the military.

I agree with my colleague's views on sequestration. Sequestration was extremely damaging. The Budget Control Act is damaging, and we ought to be in a position where we are repealing that as well.

So I am pleased that there will be support for this resolution on behalf of our Special Operations Forces.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to thank very much my friend and colleague from North Carolina for introducing this important bill highlighting the crucial role our special operators play.

Mr. Speaker, they, more than any other segment of our forces, operate in secret and undertake missions that keep us safe and that serve to protect and defend us. We will not ever know most of the stories of the service that they carry out for all of us.

They really are the watchmen on the walls of freedom. They stand guard for all of us day and night, undertaking missions that are incredibly complex, incredibly dangerous. And too often, they pay the ultimate sacrifice, but they are willing to do that for our freedom.

It is crucially important, Mr. Speaker, that we don't in this House and in this Congress continue to force them and all of our men and women in uniform to pay the price for our dysfunction, and that is a price that comes with funding delays and uncertainty.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I urge the adoption of this resolution, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee). The question is

on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Wyoming (Ms. CHENEY) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 1009.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

EXPRESSING SENSE OF HOUSE THAT THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE FACES SIGNIFICANT READINESS CHALLENGES AF- FECTED BY BUDGETARY UNCER- TAINTY

Ms. CHENEY. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 1010) expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the United States Air Force faces significant readiness challenges due to insufficient personnel levels, a shrinking and depleted aircraft fleet, and maintenance deferrals, all of which are affected by budgetary uncertainty and impede the Air Force's ability to meet ongoing and unexpected national security threats, putting United States national security at risk.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 1010

Whereas according to Air Force Chief of Staff General David Goldfein, the United States Air Force is "the smallest we've ever been";

Whereas according to an April 2018 report from the Government Accountability Office, more than a quarter of fighter pilot positions are unfilled;

Whereas the Air Force has just 18,000 of the roughly 20,000 pilots it needs to crew its 5,500 fighters, bombers, airlifters, cargo planes, and rescue helicopters;

Whereas this 10 percent gap in its air crew requirement could, as Secretary of the Air Force Heather Wilson said in November of 2017, "break the force";

Whereas almost ½ of the Air Force's aircraft were not flyable, or mission-capable, at any given time in fiscal year 2017;

Whereas over the last decade, the total number of aircraft in the Air Force has been on a downward slope;

Whereas the total number of aircraft in the Air Force will drop again from fiscal year 2017 to fiscal year 2018;

Whereas the average age of an aircraft, forcewide, increased from 24 years in fiscal year 2010 to 27.6 years in fiscal year 2017; and

Whereas between fiscal years 2013 and 2017, accidents involving all Defense Department warplanes rose nearly 40 percent: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That it is the sense of the House of Representatives that—

(1) the United States Air Force faces significant readiness challenges due to aging aircraft and depleted personnel;

(2) Congress must provide the Air Force regular and sufficient funding to address procurement, maintenance, and staffing shortfalls; and

(3) without this funding, United States national security is at risk.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from

Wyoming (Ms. CHENEY) and the gentleman from California (Mr. GARAMENDI) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Wyoming.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. CHENEY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and insert extraneous material on the resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Wyoming?

There was no objection.

Ms. CHENEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ARRINGTON), my friend and colleague, to discuss his resolution.

Mr. ARRINGTON. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my friend, the gentlewoman from the Cowboy State (Ms. CHENEY), for yielding me time, but mainly for her leadership on this issue to ensure that we as a country and as the leaders of this great Nation fulfill our most important responsibility to provide for a common defense, our constitutional first job, to provide for the common defense, and, I would add, to secure our liberty and the liberty of our posterity, because there is no freedom without liberty. So God bless the gentlewoman, and I thank her for leading the charge here.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to strongly encourage my colleagues to support this resolution, H. Res. 1010, expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the United States Air Force faces tremendous readiness challenges, reflected in a shrinking and dilapidated aircraft fleet, insufficient personnel, and dangerous levels of deferred maintenance, all of which are due, I think, in large part, I would say, to budgetary uncertainty, which impedes the Air Force's ability to meet our national security threats.

Mr. Speaker, there is nothing more important than the safety of the American people and the security of our country. To do this, it is real simple. We have to have a strong military. To do that, we would need to include a strong Air Force.

For the past 70 years, our Air Force has ensured that America's military prowess is unmatched in the skies, protecting our people, our allies, and our interests around the world.

I am honored to have Dyess Air Force Base in my backyard, the largest B-1 bomber base in this country, and I am proud to represent the brave airmen of the 7th Bomb Wing and the 317th Airlift Group, and all those in the Key City and in the Big Country area who support them.

I know that these men and women, along with all of our men and women in the armed services around the world, are doing all they can every day for our Nation's defense, and we as Congress ought to do all we can to support them.

I think it is a moral imperative to ensure that our sons and daughters, that our brothers and sisters who we ask to risk their families, to risk their very lives, I think we should, at a minimum, make sure they have the tools and resources necessary to be safe and successful.

But recently, because of our continued reliance on temporary funding measures known as CRs, or continuing resolutions, and the budget uncertainty and disruption that those create, we have hurt the Air Force's readiness and our combat capabilities.

We have failed, it is hard to believe, for almost 10 years in a row to fund our military on time. Temporary spending measures, coupled with continual defense cuts—I think it is about \$200 billion over the last decade—often delay procurement of important assets. Every contract, whether it is to buy a plane, repair a plane, fuel a plane, or arm a plane, is adversely affected by this funding start and stop.

But I think we could put it another way. This broken funding process, or budget and appropriations process that I have been describing, weakens our defense and plays directly into the hands of our adversaries.

□ 1515

Throughout our Nation's history, our airmen and airwomen have always answered the call of duty. They should not pay the price because Congress has failed to fulfill our duty, which is to fully fund our military and to do it on time. That is going to send the right message to our troops. That will affirm our support for our troops. And I think it sends the right message to our enemies as well, just as importantly.

Congress, though, has continued to fail to do this, and it has caused significant damage to our entire defense community, including the U.S. Air Force.

The Air Force has a 70-year history. This is the smallest and oldest Air Force—the smallest and oldest—we have ever had.

The Heritage Foundation's "2018 Index of U.S. Military Strength" rates our Air Force readiness as being merely marginal. With marginal processes, marginal inputs and resources, you get marginal results.

I think both sides of the aisle, my colleagues and my Democrat colleagues, would agree that our troops deserve better than marginal support. More than a quarter of our fighter pilot positions are unfilled, and there is a 10 percent gap between the pilots that the Air Force has and what they need to crew their aircraft, a gap that the Air Force Secretary Heather Wilson said could "break the force." That is from our Secretary of the Air Force.

Last year, almost one-third of the Air Force's planes were not flyable, and the average age of our aircraft is almost 30 years old.

Here is the worst part: Not only are we compromising our capabilities, but