think the underlying bill is a very good rule.

My friend from Florida talked several times about the deficit. I am concerned about the deficit too. But I think you have to put this into some sort of a historical perspective. Right after the war, Second World War, the percentage of the deficit as it related to GDP was extremely high. I think it was well in excess of 10 or maybe even 15 percent.

This year, according to CBO, the deficit as a percentage of GDP is 2.6 percent. To put that into perspective, during the 1980s it was in excess of 5 percent before the economy started to grow.

If we maintain this policy, and we certainly have a responsibility in this body to control the spending, not only discretionary spending, but mandatory spending, which we did last year in our budget resolution, and which we want to do again this year with our budget resolution, if we stay the course on that, the percentage of debt, as opposed to GDP, will be down to less than 2 percent. I think that is a trend in the right direction.

Mr. Speaker, I think this, as I mentioned, is a good rule. The underlying bill is a good rule.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The previous question was ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CONAWAY). The question is on the resolution.

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

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. 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.

□ 1215

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. COLE of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks on House Resolution 806.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. JINDAL). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Oklahoma?

There was no objection.

## PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 5122, NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2007

Mr. COLE of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 806 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 806

*Resolved*, That at any time after the adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 5122) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2007 for military activities of the Department of Defense, to prescribe military personnel strengths for fiscal year 2007, and for other purposes. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Armed Services. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. It shall be in order to consider as an original bill for the purpose of amendment under the five-minute rule the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Armed Services now printed in the bill. The committee amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be considered as read. All points of order against the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute are waived. Notwithstanding clause 11 of rule XVIII, no amendment to the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be in order except those printed in the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution. Each such amendment may be offered only in the order printed in the report, may be offered only by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question in the House or in the Committee of the Whole. All points of order against such amendments are waived. After disposition of the amendments printed in the report of the Committee on Rules, the Committee of the Whole shall rise without motion. No further consideration of the bill shall be in order except pursuant to a subsequent order of the House.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. COLE) is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. COLE of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MATSUI), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday the Rules Committee met and reported a rule for consideration of the House report for H.R. 5122, the Fiscal Year 2007 National Defense Authorization Act.

Mr. Speaker, the rule is a structured rule. It provides 1 hour of general debate equally divided and controlled between the chairman and the ranking minority member of the Committee on Armed Services. It waives all points of order against consideration of the bill.

Additionally, it provides that the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Armed Services now printed in the bill shall be considered as an original bill for the purpose of amendment and shall be considered as read.

It waives all points of order against the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Armed Services and makes in order only those amendments printed in the Rules Committee report accompanying the resolution.

Furthermore, it provides that the amendments printed in the report accompanying the resolution may be offered only in the order printed in the report, may be offered only by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report, equally divided and controlled by the proponent and opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question in the House or in the Committee of the Whole.

The rule waives all points of order against the amendments printed in the Rules Committee report, and the rule provides that after disposition of the amendments printed in the Rules Committee report, the Committee of the Whole shall rise without motion and no further consideration of the bill shall be in order except by a subsequent order of the House.

Mr. Speaker, today I rise in support of the rule for H.R. 5122 and the underlying legislation. This important legislation takes a number of dramatic steps to better the lives of our servicemen and women, increase our defense capabilities, and more aggressively conduct operations in the generational global war on terror that is now under way. It is a bill that fundamentally addresses many of the transformative challenges for the future and provides many of the interim steps to meet those challenges.

Mr. Speaker, as a member on leave from the House Armed Services Committee and a member of the Rules Committee, I firmly believe that this legislation takes the appropriate and necessary steps to better secure America's security and more successfully prosecute the war which we were drawn into on September 11, 2001.

To fully appreciate the significance of H.R. 5122, one most understand the four long-term challenges that we face in the 21st century security environment. Briefly put, these challenges are, first, responding to the dramatic procurement holiday we took in the 1990s; second, responding to the operational demands for the transformation of our forces; third, responding to the operational and strategic demands for increased end strength; fourth, shaping our military for a generational war, the global war on terror.

Mr. Speaker, these challenges are not options. They are requirements that the Armed Services Committee must address on a continuing basis. I am happy to report that there is a bipartisan agreement that the committee has done precisely that in H.R. 5122.

The gentleman from California, Chairman HUNTER, and the gentleman from Missouri, Ranking Member SKELTON, have worked in a good, bipartisan

way to bring forward a legislative package that we may all be proud of. Now it is important that we collectively, as the House, support our deployed servicemen and women by supporting the underlying legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I firmly believe that this legislation responds in a dramatic way to all the long-term challenges that we face. Being specific, the underlying legislation increases the procurement accounts by approximately $9 billion over fiscal year 2006 and effectively replenishes several historically underfunded accounts.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation also takes dramatic steps forward in transforming the nature and the structure of our operational forces by funding the Brigade Combat Team conversions for the Army, addressing the needs of the Navy's future shipbuilding program and increasing the end strength of the Army by 30,000 soldiers and 5,000 Marines to the Marine Corps to better support the war on terror.

Moreover, Mr. Speaker, the underlying legislation takes dramatic steps to better ensure our long-term success in the global war on terror. Specifically, this legislation includes a $50 billion allocation of supplemental funding to support ongoing war-related costs and procurement of replacement equipment.

It significantly increases personnel protection efforts with respect to improvised explosive devices and authorizes support for shipyards to maintain the long-term operational success and stability of the shipping industry critical to all of our services.

Also, the underlying legislation supports troop morale and welfare by ensuring a 2.7 percent pay raise and blocks the Department of Defense's proposed TRICARE Prime and TRICARE Standard fee increases and zeroes out copayments for generic and formulary mail order prescriptions for military beneficiaries.

Mr. Speaker, over the next 2 days, we will hear arguments in favor of specific amendments that do not relate to our four long-term challenges, nor do they address the subject matter of the underlying legislation in any real way.

We will also hear arguments attacking the executive and our progress in the war on terror. Those discussions are appropriate, but they do not really relate to the purpose of this legislation.

I would caution those who would like to politicize the defense authorization bill that this legislation is absolutely essential to our servicemen and women deployed overseas in a wartime deployment. The operational situation will not change through continuing attacks on the choices that we collectively as the House have made in the past.

Our focus should be to advance our Nation's and our servicemen and women's interest by providing them with the tools they require to be successful. The underlying legislation does just that.

Mr. Speaker, additionally, some Members may want to engage in debate that is essentially tangential to the issue at hand. What we must remember is that this bill is a finely crafted piece of legislation that attempts to bridge the policy and political divide to do what is best for our servicemen and women.

Fundamentally this legislation moves us in the proper direction. No bill is perfect. However, this bill is a very good piece of legislation that increases our security, assists in prosecuting our global war on terror, protects our troops and enhances the lives of our servicemen and women.

Mr. Speaker, to that end I urge support for the rule and the underlying bill.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Oklahoma for yielding me this time, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Ms. MATSUI asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, the resolution we are now considering allows for general debate of the fiscal year 2007 defense authorization bill and also makes in order a limited number of amendments.

The annual defense authorization is one of the most critical bills Congress considers. It serves two roles. First, for national security, it is a blueprint to ensure our military has the resources and tools to meet any threat from abroad.

Second, and just as important, this bill provides for the men and women standing on the front lines of our Nation's defense. These men and women work tirelessly to protect this country. It gives me great pride to support the most professional and dedicated military in the world.

For all that we ask of them, these individuals, be they members of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Reserves or National Guard, ask very little of us in return. What they ask is that we provide the equipment they need to get the job done, provide for them and provide for their family.

So, Mr. Speaker, it is with these two key points in mind, our national security and our duty to our troops, that many of us were dismayed by several of the President's proposals for the Defense Department.

Our National Guard is an important source of strength for this country, both overseas and here at home. Whether they are risking their lives in combat or overseas or bringing order to a stressful situation after a natural disaster, it is clear that our National Guard is worthy of our strong support. The twin challenges we faced this year with Iraq and Hurricane Katrina could not have made this point more clearly.

I would like to thank the committee for preserving our Guard strength despite the President's recommendation to Congress to reduce the strength of the Army and National Guard by 17,100 and the Air Guard by 5,000.

From California alone, about 9,100 of our National Guard soldiers have been called to active duty. Almost 3,800 are still deployed, and another 2,300 are expected to be called up. Among those who recently returned after an 18-month tour are 350 soldiers from the 1–184 and 174 members of the 2668th Transportation Company. Both groups are from my hometown of Sacramento. Weakening the Guard in this manner only serves to weaken our security.

The strains of our current force strengths are already evident: In Iraq, too many Guard and Reserve have borne a heavy burden, some with multiple tours of duty. At home, we must have a strong responsive Guard if we are to be prepared for future natural disasters. Louisiana, facing one of the Nation's worst natural disasters, found its response efforts further hamstrung when one-third of its National Guard was serving in Iraq.

I also appreciate the committee's decision to include $300 million for equipment for the National Guard. This is a strong acknowledgment of the very real impact the war in Iraq is having on the Guard, and it is a strong signal that to be prepared in the future current preparedness is essential.

At a time when we are relying so heavily on our Armed Forces, there was also an attempt to urge Congress to allow an increase in premiums and fees for the military's health care plan TRICARE. Thankfully, this bill contains no such ideas, and I applaud the committee's decision to work in a bipartisan fashion to meet the needs of our troops. However, I am deeply concerned about one recommendation made that the committee did accept. This proposal would result in increases in TRICARE prescription drug copays.

□ 1230

If passed without further amendment, this legislation would double copays for generic drugs, and raises the costs of name-brand drugs 75 percent.

This potential increase in copays could be devastating to a young family. It is not enough to exempt mail orders from this hike. Our troops should have a guarantee that as they are serving on the front lines, their families back home are not presented with impossible choices because of financial hardship.

I mentioned the 2668th Transportation Company having recently returned from Iraq. During their deployment, I was privileged to sit down with the family members of these soldiers. They conveyed to me that for their family, the last thing the spouse serving overseas should be worrying about is whether their family is provided for.

The esteemed ranking member on the committee, Mr. SKELTON, proposed an amendment in committee which would have blocked these large copay increases. Unfortunately, it was narrowly defeated, by just two votes. I

hope that the Rules Committee allows the Skelton amendment as part of a second rule on the floor tomorrow. Such an important change should be debated in the most open manner possible on the House floor.

I would also like to highlight an additional Democratic amendment that has not yet been made in order from Mr. ISRAEL. Today's military manual currently includes complete guidelines for the role of military chaplains, who play a critical role in the spiritual lives and health of our troops. Despite this, the underlying bill usurps that local control with language that the rear admiral in charge of Navy chaplains says will ''degrade military chaplains use and effectiveness to the crew and commanding officer.''

Mr. Speaker, I will include the letter from the Department of Navy for the RECORD.

If the language cannot be removed from the bill, the House should at least allow debate on Mr. ISRAEL's amendment. The language should be corrected so that it more closely mirrors current military manuals. I hope this amendment is made in order before we finish the bill.

As I conclude, I would like to commend the committee for their decision to authorize funds for the costs of the first 6 months of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan in fiscal year 2007. This provision will allow Congress to resume its important oversight responsibility. Its inclusion is also an opportunity for this institution to discuss one of the largest issues facing this Nation, the war in Iraq. While we may all not agree, it is our duty as Members of Congress to discuss and debate our Iraq policy, as I know Ranking Member SKELTON has urged. I hope we may have more opportunity soon. With that in mind, this bill is an important first step.

Mr. Speaker, I include for the RECORD the letter from Rear Admiral Iasiello, Chief of Navy Chaplains.

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY,
*Washington, DC, May 9, 2006.*

Hon. STEVE ISRAEL,
*House of Representatives,*
*Washington, DC.*

DEAR MR. ISRAEL: In response to your inquiry regarding the Department of the Navy's position on Section 590 of H.R. 5122, the Department has concerns with the proposed language. It is the Department's position that the proposed section will lead to confusion, compromise, and loss of credibility of religious ministry and chaplains services for the men and women of the sea services.

The chaplain's role in the Navy is as naval officer, counselor and religious advisor. The chaplain is assigned to commands to help commanding officers administer their religious ministries program. The chaplain is a representative of his or her faith group and provides or facilitates for the religious needs of all members of the command. For this reason, it is essential that the chaplain possess the trust and respect of all the crew, not simply the members of his or her own faith group. The proposed language will alter this historic relationship and responsibility of chaplain's to their commanding officer and their crew.

Primarily I have three concerns with the proposed language:

The language ignores and negates the primary duties of the chaplain to support the religious needs of the entire crew and to be a faithful representative of the chaplains endorsing faith group. Current practice carefully balances establishment of religion with free exercise of the chaplain and crew's religion, by providing almost unlimited opportunity for the chaplain to pray according to his conscience and faith and providing safeguards where he or she cannot be forced to violate their conscience in all matters regarding religious ministry. It also ensures a commanding officer can balance religious needs and provide a non-coercive, non-denominational spiritual presence during command functions.

The proposed wording will compromise religious ministry for Sailors and Marines. By allowing chaplains to lead prayers in nearly all situations, potentially independent of the endorsing faith group and legitimate concerns of the command and crew, chaplains will be independent agents operating outside the military command structure. Commanders, who must ensure good order and discipline in their commands, will have no choice but to limit chaplain access to the crew to preserve such good order, discipline and morale. Commanders will have no choice but to limit chaplain access to the crew in order to ensure good order and discipline.

The proposed section will also lead to a loss of credibility for religious ministry and chaplains services to all military members. The U.S. military has always recognized that those given the high privilege of serving as chaplain do so with an obligation to meet the needs of all members of the command regardless of religious preference. It has made chaplains part of the command structure with recognized credibility. The proposed language opens opportunity to drive wedges into the Chaplain Corps due to the emphasis it puts on each chaplain doing that which is right in his or her own eyes. It also offers chaplains a role outside of the command structure, by offering him or her prerogative outside what the command needs for good order, discipline and morale.

This proposed legislation will, in the end, marginalize chaplains and degrade their use and effectiveness to the crew and the commanding officer.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important issue and I appreciate the support you provide the fine men and women of the Department of the Navy.

Sincerely,

L.V. IASIELLO,
*Rear Admiral, CRC, U.S. Navy*
*Chief of Navy Chaplains.*

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. COLE of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentlewoman for her recognition of the National Guard. I share her admiration and appreciation for that splendid service. I certainly appreciate her remarks and the bipartisan way in which we arrived at a common agreement on end strength, and also appreciate her praise for the committee's strong bipartisan work on TRICARE, while recognizing she would prefer to go a little bit further. But I think we certainly went much further in both those areas than the original administration proposal.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. GINGREY).

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my strong support for this rule and the underlying legislation, H.R. 5122. I would like to commend Chairman HUNTER, Ranking Member SKELTON, my colleague on both the Rules Committee and the House Armed Services Committee, Mr. COLE, and thank him for this time; and all of the Members of the Armed Services Committee for their hard work on this legislation in support of our soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines who are bravely defending us at home and abroad.

Mr. Speaker, this bill does a remarkable job covering a wide scope of issues that are vitally important to our armed services, both active and Reserve components. It clearly meets the immediate needs of the warfighter. From a 2.7 percent across-the-board pay raise to an additional $50 billion to prosecute the war on terror, this legislation addresses the most pressing needs of our troops in a very trying time for America.

H.R. 5122 also recognizes the perils of cutting force numbers at a time when our troops are stretched thin by increasing both active duty personnel and National Guard end strength.

For our deployed soldiers, this legislation authorizes additional funding for their force protection and needs and support of Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan and Operation Iraqi Freedom, to include up-armored Humvees, Humvee IED protection kits and gunner protection kits, and, perhaps most importantly, improvised explosive device jammers and state-of-the-art body armor to protect our brave men and women from roadside bombs.

Speaking on behalf of my district, Mr. Speaker, I am so grateful for the hard work of the House Armed Services Committee this year in authorizing funding for 20 F–22 Raptors, as well as conditionally approving the multiyear contract. Authorizing funding for the procurement of C–130Js and for the modernization of the C–5 will go a long way toward providing stability for our forces and ensuring that America maintains a modern airlift capability for the foreseeable future.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I am especially appreciative for the efforts of Chairman HUNTER and subcommittee Chairman MCHUGH in listening to my concerns and addressing the needs of the families of our fallen soldiers.

Mr. Speaker, a brave young man from my district who heroically gave his life for our country, Sergeant Paul Saylor, from Bremen, Georgia, his family was not able to view his remains for a final time when his body was returned. With the help of Chairman HUNTER and Chairman MCHUGH, H.R. 5122 includes a provision requiring the Department of Defense to train health care professionals on the best practices for the preservation of remains following field combat death. With this provision, we are taking steps to ensure that we can honor the remains of

our fallen heroes with the dignity and respect they and their families deserve.

Mr. Speaker, again, I would like to thank the chairman and the ranking member of the committee for their hard work, as well as my colleague, Mr. COLE. H.R. 5122 is a strong bill. We can be proud of it, and it deserves the unanimous support of this House.

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. CAPPS).

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to urge my colleagues on the Rules Committee to make in order my amendment to save Santa Rosa Island in the second rule. Santa Rosa Island is part of the Channel Islands National Park located in my district. This bill kicks the public off the island, which the public bought for $30 million in 1986.

The bill prohibits the Park Service from carrying out a court-ordered settlement to phase out and shut down the privately run, extremely lucrative trophy hunting operation on Santa Rosa Island, as ordered, by 2011 and requiring removal by that date of non-native deer and elk. This ridiculous provision has no place in a Defense bill. There have been no hearings, the Pentagon hasn't requested it, and the Park Service strongly opposes it.

Under this provision, the former owners of the island, who were already paid $30 million, will continue this money-making trophy hunting operation indefinitely. Since hunting basically closes the island to the public for 5 months a year, taxpayers will keep getting shortchanged.

In addition, the Park Service's plans to expand visitor services will be halted and the huge non-native herds will continue to threaten several endangered species on the island.

It remains unclear why this provision was even in the bill. The chairman has said it was to increase access to the island for veterans. But veterans can visit today, and the park superintendent has offered to work out any accessibility problems, if they are identified.

There is also a fuss about how this will protect the deer and elk from extermination. Nonsense. These privately owned animals are presently required to be removed from the island, not killed. And since when was an effort to keep hunting animals a strategy for protecting animal rights?

I have here a letter from many groups opposing this provision, including the Humane Society, which I will include as part of the RECORD.

Mr. Speaker, this provision is a travesty. It is an affront to all taxpaying Americans. That is why I hope the Rules Committee will make my amendment in order for the second rule. It will give us an opportunity for debate and the ability to strike this shameless provision and let all American taxpayers, including veterans, enjoy their own national park.

Mr. Speaker, I include the letter from the various groups opposing this provision for the RECORD:

MAY 10, 2006.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: On behalf of the millions of members represented by our organizations, we write to express our strong opposition to Section 1036 of the FY 2007 Defense Authorization Bill put forth by Representative Duncan Hunter concerning Santa Rosa Island, part ofthe Channel Islands National Park.

Section 1036 would counteract restoration efforts at the national park, as well as decrease public access to the park. The proposal represents a severe threat to the recovery and survival of 3 subspecies of the island fox that are each listed as endangered under the federal Endangered Species Act. This unique fox species is found nowhere else in the world and only 32 wild foxes currently exist on Santa Rosa Island. The proposal would undermine the immense amount of time and resources that have been spent to address the recovery needs of this species on the island.

The provision would close off a portion of the island to the public, and undermine a court ordered settlement that calls for the phase out of hunting on the island over the next five years. The current court settlement regarding hunting on Santa Rosa Island requires that Vail & Vickers Inc., which owned the island since 1902 and sold it to the National Park Service in 1986 for about $30 million, phase out deer and elk hunting by 2011. The hunting currently prohibits full public access to the park as portions open to hunting are closed to the public. Maintaining populations of non-native species for the expressed purpose of hunting is contrary to the intended purpose of the island as a national park.

In short, Section 1036 of the FY Defense Authorization Bill would undermine the ongoing and successful work to restore the island, including the recovery ofthe federally endangered Channel Island fox, and greatly reduce the accessibility and ultimate value of the Channel Islands National Park.

The National Park Service is strongly opposed to this provision and the Defense Department has not requested it. We strongly urge you to oppose this unnecessary provision that will harm both restoration and public access on one of our nation's crown jewels, the Channel Islands National Park.

Sincerely,

Kieran Suckling, Policy Director, Center for Biological Diversity; Mary Beth Beetham, Director of Legislative Affairs, Defenders of Wildlife; Liz Godfrey, Program Director, Endangered Species Coalition; Dr. C. Mark Rockwell, D.C., Vice President, Conservation Northern California Council Federation of Fly Fishers; Nancy Perry, Vice President, Government Affairs, Humane Society of the United States; David K. Garcelon, President Institute for Wildlife Studies; Karen Steur, Vice President, Government Affairs, National Environmental Trust; Blake Selzer, Legislative Director, National Parks Conservation Association; Emily Roberson, Ph.D., Director, Native Plant Conservation Campaign; Karen Wayland, Legislative Director, Natural Resources Defense Council; and Sara Barth, California/Nevada Regional Director, The Wilderness Society.

Mr. COLE of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER), the distinguished chairman of the House Armed Services Committee.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about this great bill, because it is an important bill for America.

Let me just lead by following my good colleague from California, Mrs. CAPPS, with the statement about Santa Rosa Island, which is a very small part of this bill. It is important that the gentlewoman knows that there was virtually one sentence in our Defense bill with respect to Santa Rosa Island. It doesn't prohibit anybody from enjoying the park or the transfer from taking place or the court-ordered operation or transfer from the private entity to the public entity to take place. It only says one thing: Don't exterminate the deer and elk that are on that island.

The court-ordered plan is to exterminate them, and a number of disabled veterans, if you would read the letter from the Paralyzed Veterans of America, would like to keep that population of deer and elk on the island after it comes over to government ownership. I think that is wise also, because the chronic wasting disease and brain disease in deer and elk is sweeping the western United States right now, and that herd that we have offshore on Santa Rosa Island could be a vital restocking resource if, in fact, we have chronic wasting disease rise to a pandemic proportion in the West.

It is a little, protected group of animals there. This is not any big deal in terms of stopping anybody from using that huge island. It just says, don't exterminate all the deer and elk, and the court order says to shoot the last of them from helicopters. We agreed with the Paralyzed Veterans of America that it would be nice to have a small herd there where veterans, disabled, paralyzed and others, could enjoy that resource.

Let me talk about this bill a little bit, because this is a tremendous bill and it has been put together on a bipartisan basis. I want to thank Mr. SKELTON for all the great work he did. I want to thank the Rules Committee.

This bill provides for the protection of our soldiers in theater, in the shooting wars we are engaged in right now in Afghanistan and Iraq and the global war against terror, and it also looks over the horizon and provides for new equipment, new trucks, tanks, ships, planes and new technology to protect our country.

On the force protection side especially, we put in over $100 million in additional money for jamming devices to handle roadside bombs. We put in new and improved armor. Our laboratories and the private sector are developing new technology all the time. We have new and improved armor, both in platforms and in body armor, that we are bringing to the field to try to give our troops more and more ballistic protection and protection from fragments. So we truly have a troop protection package in this bill that is going to be very important for everyone who cares about folks in uniform.

We also have some long-range proposals in this bill. For example, we think it is important to keep some of the stealth aircraft around for a while longer than the administration thought. Those great stealth aircraft, like the F–117s that did only a couple of percent of the missions in the first gulf operation, yet knocked out over 20 percent of the targets, that combination of stealth and precision munitions is a very, very important capability for the United States and we don't want to retire those birds too early.

We also feel that in this bill retiring our B–52 force to the degree that is recommended by the Air Force is not providing as much insurance as we need for deep strike capability, the capability to deliver precision munitions at great distances. So we have moved to protect more of those bombers from being retired. We think that is important, to keep them in place until we bring on the new bomber program.

We have a great package in here for people. I just thank my colleagues, Mr. COLE and Mr. GINGREY, who did such great work on this bill, and the Rules Committee and Mr. HASTINGS and all the others who really care about national security.

Thank you, gentleman, for the great work that you did, because we have in this bill expansion of medical benefits for our National Guard personnel and for their families.

We have lots of resources in this bill for quality of life, for housing. We have a 2.7 percent pay raise, which now means that we are a little bit under, and I heard this from Mr. GINGREY the other day and Mrs. MILLER, we have provided now in the last 5 years now right at a 30 percent increase in pay for the 2.5 million people that wear the uniform of the United States.

□ 1245

Almost 30 percent. So we have been caring about the troops at the same time we are looking at the warfighting missions that we know are going to come to this country in the future.

So I want to thank all of the members of the Rules Committee for their hard work on this very important bill, and we hope to be able to get it up and down in the next 2 days and truly serve the people who serve America.

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to my friend, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GENE GREEN).

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate both our ranking member and the Chair of the committee for the bill that they put together. This is a fair reauthorization bill.

Mr. Speaker, I do have some concern, though, that the bill does not do enough to address equipment shortages from our Reserve and National Guard units returning from Iraq and Afghanistan. Many of these units are forced to leave their equipment in the theater when they return home, and this has resulted in some Reserve and National Guard units having less than one-third of the equipment they had prior to being deployed.

Conservative estimates state that it would cost nearly $20 billion for National Guard and Reserves to re-equip to pre-Iraq war levels due to the extensive wear and the extreme conditions and loss of equipment in the theater.

Many areas of the gulf coast are prone to flooding, and with hurricane season less than a month away we need to make certain that the Guard and Reserve have the resources and the equipment necessary to response to natural disasters.

In June 2001, just days into the hurricane season, Tropical Storm Allison caused extensive flooding and damage in our congressional district, and the National Guard and Reserves were instrumental in providing assistance and rescue in high water.

We saw again last year when Katrina and Rita hit the gulf coast how important our Reserve and National Guard units are to natural disaster response. Congress needs to ensure that the equipment necessary to perform these duties is available if similar strikes occur.

Mr. Speaker, we must ensure not only that our troops have the necessary equipment to fight overseas, but that troops serving here at home have the equipment to protect Americans and respond to natural disasters.

Mr. COLE of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO).

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my friend and colleague on the Rules Committee, Mr. COLE from Oklahoma, for granting me the time to speak.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the rule and the underlying legislation. This is a fair rule providing for general debate and consideration of the amendments made in order.

The underlying legislation is one of the most important measures we consider each year. I congratulate the chairman and the ranking member of that committee for their good, hard work. The National Defense Authorization Act is a statement of our support for the troops, the various missions our military are carrying out, and support for the men and women serving in the military once they return from their service.

I have traveled to Iraq and Afghanistan on several occasions and have incredible memories from the discussions I have had with the young men and women serving in our Armed Forces. They are patriotic, capable and determined to complete the mission of spreading democracy throughout the Middle East. We are very proud of them and we must continue to provide them with the necessary equipment to continue this mission.

I am very proud of those West Virginians who serve in the Guard and Reserves who have repeatedly, over time, shown their commitment to our country.

First and foremost, we need to ensure that our troops are properly protected. I am especially pleased that this year's authorization includes additional funding for force protection needs in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, including state-of-the-art body armor for our troops and increased armor and better technology to protect our Humvees from the IEDs.

This legislation also provides for a 2.7 percent pay increase for members of the Armed Forces. While no monetary amount will ever cover the debt of gratitude owed them, this pay raise will help the members of our Armed Forces and their families with their everyday needs.

And finally, and very important to my constituency as well, this authorization blocks the Department of Defense proposed fee increases retirees must pay under the TRICARE standard health program and zeroes out copays for generic and formulary mail order prescriptions.

Mr. Speaker, we must continue to honor the commitment made to provide quality affordable health care to our young men and women serving in the military.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support this rule and the underlying legislation.

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE).

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentlewoman for yielding, also for her leadership on the Rules Committee and on so many issues that we are addressing in this body.

Mr. Speaker, let me just say once again I rise in opposition to this misguided $513 billion defense authorization bill.

I ask you, Mr. Speaker, what does it say really about our national security priorities when this bill authorizes a $9.1 billion missile defense program that has consistently failed, will never protect us from terrorists, and continues to siphon funds from other critical security priorities that keep nuclear materials out of the hands of terrorists and protect our ports from terrorist attacks?

What does it say about our priorities when billions of taxpayer dollars are channeled to military contractors with little accountability or oversight for combating waste, fraud and abuse? What does it say when we have another bill that authorizes Cold War era weapons systems?

Mr. Speaker, what does it say about our priorities when Congress once again authorizes nearly $50 billion more for the unnecessary war in Iraq without any accountability, direction or a way out? Every additional day our troops remain in Iraq is an extra day that they feel the insurgency in terms of the attacks. That is why I joined with my friend and colleague, Mr. ALLEN from Maine, in offering an amendment to clearly put Congress on record stating that it is the policy of

the United States not to have permanent military bases in Iraq.

This would take the target off of our troops' backs. Unfortunately this amendment was rejected, along with dozens of others which would have made this bill better. Yes, as the daughter of an Army officer, career Army officer, who consistently has supported our brave troops, I believe in a strong national defense, but this bill provides authorization for too many wasteful programs that fuel military contractors, does nothing to eliminate the waste, fraud and abuse at the Pentagon, and does very little, if you ask me, to put money into 21st century era national security needs that we need at this point rather than building in the continuation of Cold War era weapons systems.

Mr. COLE of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I want to point out simply for the record that this bill was reported out of committee by a 60–1 margin, a very strong bipartisan indication of support and appreciation for the main points in the bill.

As to the point on missile defense, I think the activities in Iran and certainly North Korea indicate that we would be prudent to think about developing missile defense. So I am very pleased with the bipartisan nature of this legislation. Frankly, I suspect most Members will vote for it in the end.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Michigan (Mrs. MILLER).

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me time. I thank all of the members of the Rules Committee for bringing the rule to the floor today.

As a member of the House Armed Services Committee, Mr. Speaker, I am extremely proud of the bill that we have brought to the floor here today, and I certainly want to congratulate and thank Chairman DUNCAN HUNTER as well for his outstanding leadership and his dedication to a strong national defense and particularly to our troops.

Mr. Speaker, one of the most important parts of this bill, I think, is that we do recognize that the most important asset in our entire arsenal is really not our incredible weapons or vehicles or ships, it is the men and women who bravely wear the uniform. That is why this bill has put such a strong focus once again on supporting our troops.

The bill will provide for an across-the-board increase of 2.7 percent in the base pay for our troops, as has been mentioned numerous times already. It blocks increases in fees for those who are enrolled in TRICARE prime and standard.

It also allows full TRICARE coverage for select Reserve personnel. It provides enhanced pharmacy services for nearly every military beneficiary. In addition, we forcefully attack the persistent problem of improvised explosive devices, or IEDs as they are commonly called, which have caused so many terrible problems for our troops.

The enemy knows that they cannot defeat our forces on the battlefield, so they are resorting to planting bombs along the roadside. This bill authorizes over $100 million for radio signal jamming devices to prevent the detonation of IEDs.

It also provides for another $100 million for 10 or more surveillance aircraft to patrol those areas where the IED activity is most deadly, and we must do certainly more to protect our troops from IEDs so that we can limit the amount, the number of casualties in battle. But in addition we need to learn better really how to defeat these terrible weapons, because, guess what, they could soon be finding their way to our streets here within our own borders in America.

The American people and our troops can rest assured that we understand the problem of IEDs, and with this bill, again, we are taking very forceful action to defeat them.

When we take the oath of office, we swear to uphold the Constitution of the United States, whose preamble actually requires for us to provide for the national defense. This bill not only allows us to live up to our constitutional responsibilities to provide for that defense, it ensures that our Armed Forces will remain the best trained, the best equipped and the most lethal fighting force the world has ever known.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the rule and the underlying bill.

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2½ minutes to the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. SNYDER).

Mr. SNYDER. Mr. Speaker, I was eating my lunch downstairs, and as a member of the committee I voted for this bill in committee, as did Mr. SKELTON, and I support the bill.

However, Mr. HUNTER's discussion of the provision about Channel Islands National Park, Santa Rosa Island, I thought was incomplete and gave an inaccurate picture of what the situation is. I agree with Mrs. CAPPS. This is a provision, section 1036(c) of the bill, that should never be in the defense bill. You read the one sentence. It has nothing to do with veterans. There is not the word ''veterans'' or ''military'' anywhere in the provision. This should have been a provision that was considered by the Resources Committee.

Having said that, this is the background on this situation. In 1902 a private family owned and took control of the Channel Islands. In 1986 they sold it to the National Park Service as part of the Channel Islands National Park for about $30 million and had an agreement that they could be on the island managing their own private herd of elk and deer for some period of time.

In the late 1990s there was litigation brought by the National Parks and Conservation Association, and a settlement was reached between the National Park Service, the family that owns the deer and the elk, and the National Parks and Conservation Association. Everyone agreed to this settlement that has been going on now for the last decade, that by December 31, 2011, there would be no more hunting on this island because the island is shut down, about 90 percent of it, 4 to 5 months of the year.

But here is the key point. Number one, this is a privately owned herd. It is the same as if Mr. COLE or Mr. SKELTON had a herd of cows. This herd of deer and elk is owned not by the government, not by the National Park Service, this herd is owned by a private group. It is not the government's business to decide what to do.

Second, there is not a plan, as was described by the Armed Services Committee chairman, to exterminate the herd. Here is what the plan is. And several months ago I talked to a member of the family. They love this herd. They have professionally managed this herd for years. They have trophy hunts on the island. Their intent is to move this herd off the island and find a place, they do not know where yet, I do not think, but to move it off of the island.

According to the settlement that was reached, it is what I call the Wiley Rogue provision, if there are a few animals that are left that the company is having trouble, that own it, they are having trouble trapping those animals, the National Park Service has agreed to share in half of the expense of getting those last few animals, including perhaps, perhaps, if necessary, the hiring of professional hunters or helicopters or something to get them. There is not a plan to exterminate this private herd. This is a privately owned herd. It is not up to the government to exterminate it. This provision is only to help this private company get these last few animals. That is only if necessary. This provision should not have been in the defense bill.

Mr. COLE of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlemen from Rhode Island (Mr. LANGEVIN).

(Mr. LANGEVIN asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding me time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the rule and H.R. 5122. I thank Chairman HUNTER and Ranking Member SKELTON for their exceptionally hard work on this bill.

□ 1300

This bill helps our men and women serving in the Armed Forces and makes investments to keep our military strong in the future.

Now, I supported this measure in the House Armed Services Committee because it contains a number of provisions to assist our service members and

their families, as well as military retirees. It includes a 2.7 percent pay increase for military personnel. This is higher than what the DOD requested, and much-needed increases to end-strength numbers.

It blocks a controversial DOD recommendation as well to increase TRICARE fees and deductibles for military retirees and also extends TRICARE eligibility for reservists, two issues that have been very important to my constituents.

I thank the committee leadership for their efforts to accomplish all of these important goals.

Now, I am particularly pleased that H.R. 5122 addresses the current crisis in our submarine industrial base. Mr. Speaker, our Navy right now has no plans to develop a replacement for the *Virginia* class which I believe threatens to cause our design and engineering base to disappear. Now, if we lose design capability, we will do irreparable harm to our shipbuilding industry.

The bill also includes $400 million to expedite the construction schedule for the *Virginia* class so that we can start building two submarines per year as early as 2009. This is critically important. The submarines current shipbuilding plan would have our submarine fleet drop to dangerously low levels and this bill clearly states that we cannot allow that to happen.

I commend the chairman and ranking member for all those provisions. That is the good news.

The bad news, however, I remain troubled by provisions regarding fee increases for certain prescription drugs under the TRICARE program as well as controversial language regarding religious expression by military chaplains. I hope that we will be able to consider amendments tomorrow to address these topics.

But overall, however, the underlying bill addresses many urgent needs of our military, and I encourage my colleagues to support it.

Mr. COLE of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman from Rhode Island's bipartisan remarks about the legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume to close.

Mr. Speaker, the bipartisan collaboration between Chairman HUNTER and Ranking Member SKELTON has yielded a thoughtful, balanced defense authorization bill that seeks to meet our current and future defense needs. They should be commended for their hard work. However, there are still areas within this bill that can be improved. As we move to floor consideration, we have an opportunity to make this bipartisan bill even better.

Still pending before the Rules Committee are more than 90 amendments covering a host of critical issues. This includes Ranking Member SKELTON's proposal on TRICARE prescription drug copays and Mr. ISRAEL's correction to the guidelines for military chaplains.

Other amendments not yet allowed on the floor concern our Nation's Iraq policy, abuses of military contracting, and boosts to our critical nonproliferation initiatives.

It is my hope that when the Rules Committee reports out the second and final rule today these amendments will be made in order. Allowing these amendments to be debated on the floor will continue the committee's bipartisan precedent, something this body would benefit from, as well as show the issues addressed in this legislation, so critical to our Nation's well-being, the respect they deserve.

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

Mr. COLE of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

In closing, I want to take this opportunity to remind our Members that this rule and the underlying legislation is not about us or our interests. It is fundamentally about the long-term interests of our Nation, the security and stability of our military, and the welfare of our deployed servicemen and women.

Mr. Speaker, no generation undertakes a war lightly. Certainly, the World War I and World War II generations and the Cold War generations did not do so, and it is clear that historically there is always dissent. That is good and it is American. However, the previous generations understood that if they were not firm in their commitment, unwavering in their support for the troops and sure in their convictions, America would be the worse for future generations.

Mr. Speaker, we face the very same challenges as these previous generations. Today is the day that we must support our forces to secure the peace for our progeny and to spread freedom around the globe.

Mr. Speaker, we are very fortunate at this particular moment in our history to have men like Chairman HUNTER and Ranking Member IKE SKELTON heading and cooperating so closely on this very important committee, one in which whatever our differences may be, we come together as Americans to support those Americans who defend our freedom and who put themselves in harm's way for our benefit.

Mr. Speaker, I would encourage my colleagues to support the rule and the underlying legislation. It is critical for America, for the cause of freedom, and for the success of the brave men and women who proudly wear the uniform of the United States.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The previous question was ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. JINDAL). The question is on the resolution.

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

Ms. MATSUI. 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.

## ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, proceedings will resume on questions previously postponed.

Votes will be taken in the following order:

H.R. 5143, by the yeas and nays;

H. Res. 805, by the yeas and nays;

H. Res. 806, by the yeas and nays.

The first electronic vote will be conducted as a 15-minute vote. Remaining electronic votes will be conducted as 5-minute votes.

## H-PRIZE ACT OF 2006

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The pending business is the question of suspending the rules and passing the bill, H.R. 5143, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. INGLIS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5143, as amended, on which the yeas and nays are ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 416, nays 6, answered ''present'' 1, not voting 9, as follows:

[Roll No. 131]

YEAS—416

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Abercrombie | Boren | Clyburn |
| Ackerman | Boswell | Coble |
| Aderholt | Boucher | Cole (OK) |
| Akin | Boustany | Conaway |
| Alexander | Boyd | Conyers |
| Allen | Bradley (NH) | Cooper |
| Andrews | Brady (PA) | Costa |
| Baca | Brady (TX) | Costello |
| Bachus | Brown (OH) | Cramer |
| Baird | Brown (SC) | Crenshaw |
| Baker | Brown, Corrine | Crowley |
| Baldwin | Brown-Waite, Ginny | Cubin |
| Barrett (SC) | Burgess | Cuellar |
| Barrow | Burton (IN) | Culberson |
| Bartlett (MD) | Butterfield | Cummings |
| Barton (TX) | Buyer | Davis (AL) |
| Bass | Calvert | Davis (CA) |
| Bean | Camp (MI) | Davis (FL) |
| Beauprez | Campbell (CA) | Davis (IL) |
| Becerra | Cannon | Davis (KY) |
| Berkley | Cantor | Davis (TN) |
| Berman | Capito | Davis, Jo Ann |
| Berry | Capps | Davis, Tom |
| Bilirakis | Capuano | Deal (GA) |
| Bishop (GA) | Cardin | DeFazio |
| Bishop (NY) | Carnahan | DeGette |
| Bishop (UT) | Carson | Delahunt |
| Blackburn | Carter | DeLauro |
| Blumenauer | Case | DeLay |
| Blunt | Castle | Dent |
| Boehlert | Chabot | Diaz-Balart, L. |
| Boehner | Chandler | Diaz-Balart, M. |
| Bonilla | Chocola | Dicks |
| Bonner | Clay | Dingell |
| Bono | Cleaver | Doggett |
| Boozman | | Doolittle |