DISCUSSION OF ISSUES AFFECTING NATIONAL SECURITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. WELDON) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise to take out this 60-minute special order as we today completed in the Committee on National Security the markup of the 1999 defense authorization bill, the authorization bill that lays out the funding framework for defense spending for the next fiscal year. I will be joined tonight by many of the most distinguished Members of this body as we discuss issues affecting national security in this country and the difficult problem that we are facing. The people of America unfortunately have a misconception. That misconception is in fact that we are spending so much more money today on defense than we have in the past.

Mr. Speaker, just a couple of simple comparisons, if we compare today defense spending to what it was in the 1960s. I pick that time because we were at relative peace. It was after Korea and before Vietnam. John Kennedy was the President. In the 1960s we were spending each year 52 cents of every Federal tax dollar brought to Washington on national defense, 9 percent of our country's gross national product. In this year's defense bill, we are spending 15 cents of the Federal tax dollar on national security, 2.9 percent of our gross national product. In fact, the defense budget is the only area of spending that the White House and the Congress have cut for 13 consecutive years, cut in very dramatic ways. Those have been bipartisan cuts, some of which I have supported, some of which I have concerns with. But while the defense spending in this country has gone down in terms of overall spending authority at the Federal level, we must understand some very important facts, Mr. Speaker.

In the 1960s, we had a draft. Young people were taken out of high school. They served their country for 2 years. They were paid far less than the minimum wage. Today we have an all-volunteer military. No one is drafted. Our young people are well-paid, many are married, they have advanced college degrees, we have housing costs, education costs, health care costs. So quality of life becomes a major part of what we spend our defense dollar on. So today, Mr. Speaker, a much larger portion of that relatively smaller amount of money compared to the 1960s goes for the quality of life of our troops.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, the fastest growing part of defense spending today is environmental mitigation. We are spending $12 billion this year to clean up both nuclear materials as well as materials that are nonnuclear. That is all coming out of our defense budget. On top of all of that, Mr. Speaker, deployments of our troops in this decade are at an all-time high. In fact, in the past 6 and 7 years we have deployed our troops 25 times at home and abroad. That compares to the previous 40 years where our troops were only deployed a total of 10 times. None of those 25 deployments in this decade, Mr. Speaker, were budgeted for. None of them were planned for. So the cost of all those deployments has had to be eaten out of our defense budget, further cutting the available dollars that we have to modernize, to put into new technology.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, the Secretary of Defense has given us a number of $15 billion in contingency costs that we have taken out of DOD spending in the past 6 years to pay for those deployments around the world. Bosnia alone by the end of the next fiscal year will have cost us $9.42 billion. All of that money has come out of the defense budget.

Because of all of those reasons, Mr. Speaker, we are facing a crisis, a crisis in being able to provide the kinds of equipment, readiness and support that our troops need to do the job on behalf of this country. Tonight I invite our colleagues to join with me as we dedicate the next hour to focusing on these difficult issues of how we spend our defense dollar.

To start off that discussion, I would like to yield at this time to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. SPENCE), the distinguished chairman of the Committee on National Security, who is in fact a leader working in a bipartisan way with our colleagues on the other side and has been a tireless advocate for the defense needs of this country.

Mr. SPENCE. Mr. Speaker, as the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. WELDON) indicated, as chairman of the Committee on National Security, that committee charged under the Constitution with providing our country with the proper defense, I feel duty bound to report to the Congress and to the American people the status of our national security.

Tonight, and in other sessions to follow, some of my colleagues and myself, members of the Committee on National Security, in a bipartisan manner, will endeavor to call attention to the various threats confronting our country and our ability to defend against these threats.

Mr. Speaker, I have served in Congress for 28 years. I have seen Presidents, Secretaries of Defense, Chairmen of Joint Chiefs of Staff, Senators, and Congressmen come and go. I have seen hot wars, cold wars, contingency operations, budget wars, a hollow military, buildups and builddowns, I have seen all of it. But despite all of this and despite the end of the Cold War, I have never been more concerned about the national security of our country than I am tonight.

I realize that is a strange statement to make, since we are no longer at war. But during the Cold War, the threat was obvious to people. You could see the threat. But since the end of the Cold War, people are unaware of the many serious threats and how unprepared we are to deal with them properly. Many people ask in this day and time, where is the threat? They say the threat is not imminent.

My answer would be to look at today's papers. Look around you. Take your pick. Iran, Iraq, Syria, Libya, China, North Korea, Russia in turmoil, Islamic fundamentalism, terrorism. Take your pick. It is like the former Director of the CIA said, with the end of the Cold War, it is like we have slain a dragon and found the jungles filled with very poisonous snakes of various kinds.

Let me list a few of them for you. ICBMs, intercontinental ballistic missiles with nuclear warheads. Any country which possesses these weapons is a threat to our security. Even though we have an ABM treaty with the Soviet Union, that country does not exist any longer. That is no defense against ICBMs from Russia. What if we had just an accidental launch of an intercontinental ballistic missile? Even if one were launched against this country, contrary to what most people think, we could not defend against that one missile coming into this country killing literally millions upon millions of people, and we are defenseless. You are defenseless against that one accidentally launched missile.

□ 1915

How about China? China has ICBMs targeted on us. We do not have any ABM treaty with China.

You have not got to be a superpower in this day and time to wage the horrors of mass destruction warfare on the rest of the world. You can be a rogue Nation or a terrorist group for that matter; you can put together weapons of mass destruction in laboratories in low-tech, inexpensive ways; you can marry them up with cruise missiles which can be bought across borders; you can launch these cruise missiles from various platforms of various kinds at least, extending the range of these types of missiles to bring everyone within the range of these weapons of mass destruction carried by cruise missiles.

We also have shorter-range ballistic missiles, and we do not have an effective theater missile defense to defend against these types of missiles.

One of the most hideous kinds of weapons of mass destruction I can conceive of is something called anthrax, a bag of which can be released in the winds over, say, Washington, D.C., killing hundreds of thousands of people before we can inoculate, and we have no defense against that terrible thing. Can you visualize trying to defend against that type of a weapon?

And we have something called, our scientists are concerned about, something called the EMP effect, electromagnetic pulse effect. If a terrorist

group or someone were to destroy, were to detonate a nuclear weapon up above the United States, without killing anyone, it could shut down all the electrical systems that are not hardened in the United States. Can you imagine what that would do to all of our systems, electronics and defense systems, automobiles even, and all the rest if everything was shut down and we were defenseless from that explosion, without killing anyone?

All these threats exist today and many more, too. These threats are right here today, tonight. And we do not have the defense, a proper defense against these things as we stand here talking about it.

Why?

Because we have made the same mistakes we have made after every war. We cut back too much, too fast, too deep, and we have done to our military what no foreign power has been able to do before.

Many American lives were lost in World War II because we had allowed our forces to be cut back so much after World War I. And then after World War II, we destroyed and cut back the biggest and best military the world has ever known. In a few short years, no intelligence agency ever predicted something called Korea, and again we were unprotected. I call these things that are happening the ''end between'' war syndrome, and we are going through that right now.

Mr. Speaker, allow me to list a few facts to bear out what I am talking about. As Mr. WELDON said, the administration's request for the fiscal year 1999 defense budget represents the 14th consecutive year of real decline in defense spending. Also, defense spending under the balanced budget agreement falls more than $54 billion short over the next 5 years of keeping pace even with record low inflation.

Again, today's military forces are 32 percent smaller than 10 years ago. In the past decade alone, we have closed over 900 bases around the world and about 97 bases here in this country at home. Our aircraft are being cannibalized. The Army, which conducted 10 operational events outside of normal training and alliance commitments during the 31-year period of 1960 to 1991, has conducted 26 operational events in 7 years since 1991. The Marine Corps, which undertook 15 continuous operations between 1982 and 1989, has conducted 62 since the fall of the Berlin Wall. Training and readiness accounts are being readied to pay for these contingency operations, the smaller forces being asked to do more with less.

And one very telling item, I think: Still, after all the cutbacks we have experienced and the identified readiness shortfalls that we have, our national military strategy provides that we are supposed to be able to fight two nearly simultaneous major regional contingencies at the same time, or near the same time, something like an Iran or Iraq and a North Korea. Many people believe we do not have the force now, since we have cut back so much just since Desert Storm, to even do one of those major regional contingencies.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, in today's edition of the European Stars and Stripes, there was an article entitled ''Cohen Takes Aim At Readiness, Leaders Fear Return to the Hollow Force,'' and in it General Wesley Clark, who heads the United States European Command and is in charge of our troops in Bosnia, was quoted as saying back-to-back peacekeeping or humanitarian operations like the kind we have experienced since 1994 hinder the ability of combat units to maintain their readiness for high-intensity operations.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to include in the RECORD the text of the entire article I was pointing out:

[From the European Stars & Stripes, May 5, 1998]

COHEN TAKES AIM AT READINESS—LEADERS FEAR RETURN TO HOLLOW FORCE DAYS

(By Jon R. Anderson)

WASHINGTON.—Defense Secretary William Cohen is gathering his top brass over concerns about dwindling readiness.

On April 23, Cohen started what will become a series of meetings on readiness issues with Joint Chiefs Chairman Gen. Henry H. Shelton, along with the four service chiefs and a handful of other senior leaders.

One senior Pentagon official said the ''tank sessions,'' as such high-level gatherings are called, are designed to address Cohen's concerns that readiness reporting is not as accurate or predictive as it needs to be.

''There's a lot of anecdotal evidence out there that readiness is slipping. What the secretary is trying to do is get to the bottom of it all and see if we really have a problem,'' the official said.

The look at readiness began as Congress considered a supplemental budget bill designed to cover $2 billion in unexpected costs for operations in the Middle East and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Congress passed the bill and President Clinton signed it amid warnings from Pentagon officials that training and all nonessential operations would grind to a virtual standstill without the funding.

But it's no secret things are already tight throughout all corners of the military.

Defense spending is at its lowest level in recent memory, and while forces have been cut considerably, much of the remaining funds have been fenced for weapons modernization efforts. That means little is left over for things like training and maintenance.

Everyone from top regional commanders to pilots, platoon leaders and ship drivers out at sea are raising the specter of a return to the hollow force days of the 1970s. Indeed, stories in the press and reports within the military itself suggest cracks are already beginning to show.

A March 20 report from the General Accounting Office, the investigative arm of Congress, said that half of the Army's 10 divisions were suffering from significant manpower shortages.

In 1st Armored Division's 1st Brigade, for example, only 16 out of 116 tanks had full crews and were qualified for combat, the GAO reported. In 1st Infantry Division, two brigades were short almost half of the infantrymen needed to man Bradley fighting vehicles.

During the latest flair in tensions with Iraq, ships deploying to the Persian Gulf were struggling with manpower shortages of their own. The nuclear-powered aircraft carrier George Washington, for example, which is supposed to be manned by as many 6,000 sailors, was staffed with only 4,500. That's 1,000 fewer than it had on its last cruise to the region just two years ago.

All four services are having trouble keeping their aviators from leaving. Despite bonus increases and other incentives, pilots still are leaving in droves.

''The lessons learned about a hollow military after World War I, World War II, the Korean conflict and Vietnam must not be ignored now,'' the head of the U.S. European Command, Gen. Wesley K. Clark, told the Senate on March 3.

Funding shortfalls, for example, have caused ''significant shortages'' in spare parts for the F–15E squadrons in Europe, he said. So much, in fact, that the ''get-well date is not until May of 1999.''

Clark also warned Congress that ''back-to-back peacekeeping or humanitarian operations of the kind we have experienced since 1994 hinder the ability of combat units to maintain their readiness for high-intensity combat operations.''

The Pentagon is trying to gauge the severity of the problem.

''We're trying to find out what our threshold of pain is. And make sure we're not anesthetized to it,'' said another top official privy to the content of Cohen's meetings.

At the same time, he said, there is a sense that perhaps some of the military's top leadership may be reluctant to be forthcoming with bad news on readiness.

''No one wants to look like the kid who cried wolf. It's a matter of what point do you say 'I'm concerned' without appearing like you're maneuvering for additional resources.''

Another problem, he added, was that ''military people are can-do people—they'll make do with what they've got and do whatever it takes to get the job done.''

That attitude, he said, is both a virtue and an Achilles' heel. ''It really is a strength, but on the other hand, if you don't fix what might just be a small problem early enough, it will just become a real big problem later on.''

In that vein, Cohen and Shelton want to see if better management tools can be put in place to provide top commanders with a way to gauge readiness issues before they become a problem.

Currently, the Defense Department uses two systems to monitor readiness.

The Joint Monthly Readiness Review, or ''Jammer'' in military-speak, is designed to assess how actual forces on the ground in the various regional commands would be distributed if two wars were to break out in different parts of the world. The scenarios alternate each month between a clash with Iraq starting first, followed shortly by combat in Korea, or the reverse, with Korea flaring up first.

The second readiness gauge is the Status of Readiness and Training System, also called SORTS, which tracks how individual units are manned, how much maintenance needs to be done on vehicles and gear, and how training is going.

While both systems provide a good ''here and now'' perspective, they lack the ability to identify trends.

''There is some frustration that Jammer and SORTS don't give us everything we need,'' said Navy Capt. Steve Petrepaoli, spokesman for Shelton. ''What we want is a way to identify problems before they happen.''

For example, he said, Jammer ''captured the problems with pilot and infantry shortages, but we got it as it was happening, not ahead of the curve.''

Officials say the biggest problem has been managing the readiness levels in units that are not on the first-to-fight roster.

War plans call for some units to be ready to fight at a moment's notice. Those are mostly forward-deployed forces and units in the United States on call for rapid deployment. It's those units that have priority for manning along with training and maintenance funds.

Mr. Speaker, we have already instituted many reforms designed to save funds to allow us to do the things we need to do to have the world's best military and properly defend this country. On broad defense reforms, the national security and this Houses's track record speaks for itself. The committee has pursued forms of various kinds on multiple fronts. We have instituted acquisition reforms, including acquisition work force reductions. We have instituted support services reforms. We have privatized nonessential military jobs, and last year the House passed a Defense Reform Act with 400 votes.

In spite of all these things and against a backdrop of 14 consecutive years of real decline on the defense spending, and confronted with billions of dollars in readiness, quality of life, and modernization shortfalls, we need to do more things. Therefore, in the context of the first Federal budget with a surplus in 3 decades, and also in view of today's strong economy, I am calling on the powers that be, the leadership on both sides of the aisle, the President, to renegotiate the defense caps put on defense on the balanced budget agreement.

We have to provide for the common defense. That is our government's first and most important responsibility. We stand ready to work with anyone to ensure that America maintains the military befitting our Nation's superpower status.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to close with a passage from scripture; this means a lot to me. We have heard before the quote from Isaiah that calls upon people to beat your swords into plow shares and your spears into pruning hooks. But in Joel 3:9 we hear these words: Wake up the mighty men, beat your plow shares into swords and your pruning hooks into spears.

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. Thank you very much for that eloquent statement and for your tireless leadership on behalf of the men and women who serve this country. We deeply appreciate that.

Mr. Speaker, continuing on with this special order, national security has been a bipartisan issue in this body, and we have had many outstanding Members from the other side who have been key leaders in our efforts to provide additional resources for the security of our country and for the support of our men and women.

In fact, over the past 3 years in a bipartisan effort, we have plused-up funding over the President's request for defense by $10 billion, $6 billion, and $9 billion respectively, and one of those champions from the other side who has been at the forefront consistently on these issues and continues that role today as the ranking member of the House Committee on National Security is our good friend, our colleague, and a great American, IKE SKELTON. Congressman, I yield to you.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my friend and my colleague from Pennsylvania taking out this special order, for in my opinion it is one of the most important special orders in which we will participate. So I compliment the gentleman for his foresight in doing this.

Mr. Speaker, in your eye, come with me this past January and helicopter with me with three other Members of Congress from the base camp near Skopje, Macedonia, out to one of the far outposts of Americans keeping watch to see that the potential enemies or potential encroachers will not come into that sad and unhappy country. And come with me as we shake hands with those soldiers after they do their formal inspection of arms for me as the chairman of the small delegation, and stand there while I talk to this young Springfield, Missouri, soldier on what he is doing; see the pride in his eyes; talk to him about how well he likes what he is doing, how he enjoys the Army and the challenges. And yet he is thinking of the folks back home and his family. He is there for 6 months, it is going to be a long 6 months for him, but yet he is doing what he intended to do when he joined the Army.

Now a few months earlier, come with me, Mr. Speaker, and see a United States aircraft carrier as it prepares to leave for 6 months in the Mediterranean, in the Adriatic, then the Persian Gulf. See those families, those young sailors, men and women, climbing aboard that aircraft carrier giving that 3-year-old son a hug. See them wave as the ship is towed out into the harbor by those tugs, and know that those young families that are waving goodbye to the loved ones will not see them for 6 months, and yet you can see pride not only in the sailors that are leaving but in the men and women and the children who are waving farewell.

That is who I wish to speak about tonight, the young men, the young women in all colors of American uniforms, the fine people that they are. And I can say without any hesitation to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. WELDON) that they are the finest that we have ever had, and yet the ironic and sad situation in which we find ourselves is that we are not able to support them as they should be.

That is sad. That is real sad because they are quality young people, and they are doing their job for America.

We have serious problems overseas. The question is asked, where is the enemy? The enemy, my colleagues, is instability. We are the only superpower in this world. We are the ones whose presence, whose leadership, has brought peace and stability, some places more than others, but we are looked to for that military leadership. And we cannot do it in the future unless we keep that young soldier from Springfield or those young sailors aboard that aircraft carrier happy, challenged, and that we take care of their families.

Oh, we talk about a number of pieces of hardware, and they are important. We talk about modernization; that is very important.

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I speak about those young people today that need the support of the people in this Congress.

Recently I sent a letter, with all of the ranking Democrats and Republicans, regarding this very issue: the need for increased spending for our national security. It is no light thing; it is no small thing. If we could only have a predictable percentage of the gross national product, this committee on which I serve, this Congress in which I serve, and the administration which executes what we order here could have some stability, some planning capability. The young people who are in would know that they have a future, that they might want to stay for 20, 25 or 30 years without the fear of reduction in force. These are the things of which I speak.

Mr. Speaker, why is there a problem today? I am convinced there is a problem today because there is a gap, sadly, Mr. Speaker, a growing gap, between civilian America and military America. When the draft was in force, nearly every family had some experience with someone wearing a uniform.

Well, the draft ended, as my colleagues know, back in 1973, as it should have, because we went to an all-volunteer force, and it works. It works extremely well. Quality young people, quality leaders, excellent military education, really proud of them.

Yet, because of the fewer and fewer young people coming from fewer and fewer families across our country, those who normally in the olden days would write their Member of Congress to please look after little Johnny because he is on a submarine in the Pacific; please look after Lucy, my daughter, as she serves at Lackland Air Force Base; please look after my Marine son who is a guard in an embassy in what used to be the old Soviet sphere; we do not get that support, we do not get those letters, because there are fewer and fewer American families that have that experience. I know their heart is with the young people in uniform, but out of sight, out of mind.

There are fewer people to write us, and we in this Chamber are creatures of those we represent in whose shoes we stand, and if they are not contacting us because there are not that many that have families that are serving in uniform, consequently, it is off our screen as well as theirs. It is this gap between civilian America and military America that concerns me.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we have to do something. I will do my best. I know the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. WELDON) is doing his best. And I compliment our chairman, the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. SPENCE) for his efforts. Others will speak on this issue. I know the gentleman from Hawaii (Mr. ABERCROMBIE) will join in this matter. I thank the gentleman for bringing this to the attention of the American people.

One last thing, Mr. Speaker. I do not want, and I will repeat, I do not want this discussion tonight, as serious as it is and the fact that it should convince people across our country of the need for additional resources to take care of the young people and to take care of our national security, but I do not want this to dampen the spirits of the young people who are in uniform. I say to them, Mr. Speaker, we need them; we need them now more than ever. We need them not just in numbers, but we need their quality.

So wherever we are, whether we are a Member of Congress, whether they are neighbors of ours back in Missouri, or wherever we are from, let us say a good word to the young person that is wearing the uniform; let us tell them we are proud of them, stay the course, because sooner or later they will be called upon to defend the American flag and the American interests.

Again, I thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. WELDON).

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for those eloquent words and for his leadership on national security issues in this Congress. The gentleman is an example of an outstanding member dedicated, as is our chairman, to the issue of providing for the support of our troops at home and abroad.

Mr. Speaker, our special order tonight goes from Pennsylvania to South Carolina to Missouri to Texas. I would now yield to our distinguished member of the Committee on National Security from the great State of Texas, who has been a champion and a leader on issues involving one of the most troublesome situations in the world, and that is the security of nuclear material, nuclear fissile material, especially those materials that are in the former Soviet states.

So, with that, I would yield to our good friend and colleague, an outstanding member of the committee, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. THORNBERRY).

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from Pennsylvania (Mr. WELDON) for yielding and for his leadership in keeping our defense at the forefront of the issues we should be talking about in this body.

I thought that the chairman's comments outlining some of the threats we face, and the ranking member's comments emphasizing the importance of people in our military, which are our key asset, were very powerful. I believe, Mr. Speaker, that the first function of this Federal Government is to provide for the defense of the people, and that that job is getting harder and not easier.

We face some enormous challenges, and one of the challenges is we have to transform our military structures and the organizations and cultures and doctrines to meet the challenges that we face in the future, many of which our chairman has outlined. That is a tough job. We also have to make sure that we have the resources necessary in order to keep the American people safe.

Mr. Speaker, I want to go from the broad issues that have been discussed so far to just talk about a little piece of it and how this budgetary constraint is affecting even a small piece, but an important piece of our defense efforts, and that is our nuclear weapons program which is not within the Department of Defense, but within the Department of Energy, yet it is part of the overall defense budget.

Mr. Speaker, I do not think anyone will contest that our nuclear deterrence was absolutely essential and probably the key to winning the Cold War during our struggle with the Soviet Union, and it is still important in deterring others around the world who may wish us ill. As nuclear capability spreads to more and more countries, as our chairman mentioned; as chemical and biological capabilities spread around the world to more and more countries, and other terrorist-like organizations; as the capability to take those horrible weapons and deliver them very quickly with missiles, as that technology spreads, nuclear weapons continue to be the umbrella under which the rest of our defense efforts will fall.

We build our nuclear weapons to last about 20 years. They are fast approaching the end of their design life. They age and change just like other machines do, but they age and change in ways that we do not fully understand. Yet, while all of this aging and changing is going on, we have decided that we are not going to test nuclear weapons anymore. We are going to have to find other ways to make sure they work, to make sure they are safe, to make sure the people who work around them are safe; and that represents an enormous challenge.

Some people have said it is kind of like we have a fleet of cars out there on the parking lot through all the weather and the change that goes on in the conditions year after year, and we can x-ray them and inspect them, but we cannot ever turn them on, we cannot ever turn the key. They have to be in as good shape though that if we do ever need to turn on the key, we can instantly spring out at 100 miles an hour. That is just one way of looking at the enormous challenge we face.

The way we decided to do that is, as I mentioned, not to test, but through a program called stockpile stewardship. That involves our computer capability. It involves testing components, little pieces of the nuclear weapons; it involves new diagnostic machines to x-ray and look at them in various ways to see what is happening on the inside; and all of that has to go on while we are losing the people who built the weapons to begin with as they age and dwindle and leave, many of them leave, the nuclear weapons complex.

Mr. Speaker, the bottom line to all of this is that we face an enormous technological challenge. A number of scientists whom I visited with recently say the only thing this country has ever attempted this difficult is the original Manhattan Project and trying to land a man on the moon. It is that tough technologically and scientifically to make sure these things are safe and reliable without testing.

But it is also expensive. These machines are expensive. It is expensive to conduct these tests. It is expensive to keep the right, knowledgeable scientific talent available there, working on these problems. And while we are doing all that, we have the regular maintenance and upkeep and other things that go along with the nuclear weapons stockpile that have to go along as well.

Now, to do all that, we have received testimony that it takes at least $5 billion a year, and yet the President's request this year was $4.5 billion, and it is tough to come up with that amount. And this job is only going to get tougher as the years go by and these weapons age and we lose more of the people, it is going to be even more expensive. Yet, if we miscalculate slightly, if we shave off a little bit here and a little bit there, and a problem develops, that problem will have enormous consequences for the future of our security, for others' reliance upon our nuclear umbrella. For the safety of the people who work with and around these nuclear weapons, it has tremendous consequences.

That is just a small example of some of the importance, some of the effects that not putting the right resources into these programs can have for our children's future and our children's security. All of the strategic systems upon which our victory in the Cold War was based are aging and becoming more difficult to maintain, and really we are not doing anything in the foreseeable future to replace them at all. We are going to have to put in the spare parts just to keep them going.

It is an enormous challenge. It will require the best minds that we have, but it will also require the dollars necessary to keep this effort going. I think that in a way, the nuclear weapons challenge, even though it is less than 2 percent of the whole defense budget, is an example of the kinds of challenges we face throughout the defense budget and an example of the dangers that my more senior colleagues have talked about so far.

So I thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. WELDON), for yielding and giving me the opportunity to contribute.

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I thank our colleague, an outstanding member of the Committee on National Security, for his leadership, especially in the area of nuclear material, control and security, and our stockpile stewardship.

One of the items that our distinguished colleague did not mention, which is also of great concern both to him and to us, is the security of the Russian nuclear stockpile. It was last year, Mr. Speaker, in May, when I led a delegation to Moscow and we sat in the office of General Alexsander Lebed, who was at one time a key defense advisor to Boris Yeltsin. General Lebed was talking to us about his concerns relative to the security of the Russian nuclear forces, as well as the Russian military in general; and he told us some real horror stories. One of the ones that was really picked up by our national media was that when General Lebed reported to Boris Yeltsin, one of his responsibilities was to account for 132 suitcase-sized nuclear bombs, nuclear devices called Small Atomic Demolition Devices, SADDMs, that both the U.S. and Russia had built at one time, but we destroyed all of ours in the arms control process, he was charged by Yeltsin to account for the 132 devices that Russia built.

And he said, Members of Congress, I could only find 48. And we said, what do you mean, General Lebed? How could you only come up with 48 of the 132? After all, these are devices that have a capacity of one kiloton, which is one-tenth of the capacity of Hiroshima; it could wipe out the entire inner-city area. He said, that is it. We do not know the status of the others.

I came back to Washington and with my colleagues we debriefed the intelligence community. They said, Mr. Congressman, we have no idea about the whereabouts of these devices. Initially, the Russian Government denied they ever existed in the fall of last year, and finally in December, the defense minister, former general of the Soviet command staff, the strategic staff, General Sergeyev, told me in a meeting in Moscow, yes, Mr. Congressman, we built these devices, yes, we have not destroyed them all, but by the year 2000 we will have destroyed them.

The point is, Mr. Speaker, we are just not sure whether or not one of these devices could or has gotten into the wrong hands, and we must understand that even though we would perceive Russia to be all that more stable, one could easily make the case that Russia is more destabilized today than at any point in time in the last 50 years.

□ 1945

And unfortunately, that instability comes while they still maintain a nuclear arsenal that can hit our country and still maintain these kinds of small demolition devices that in the wrong hands could wreak havoc on any American city. That is the kind of concern that we have to address with a very limited and increasingly smaller defense budget.

Mr. Speaker, joining us in this effort is the gentleman from the great State of Hawaii (Mr. ABERCROMBIE) and someone who has become a champion on security issues and a strong advocate and very knowledgeable Member on missile defense and the implications of that.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania for yielding to me. I am delighted to have the opportunity to be here with my colleagues on the Committee on National Security, most particularly with the chairman of our Subcommittee on Military Research and Development, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. WELDON).

As the gentleman has indicated, our efforts here on the committee and the subcommittees which makes it up are of a bipartisan nature. It has been my honor and privilege over the years to serve under Mr. Aspin and Mr. Dellums and now the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. SPENCE). During that time, I think that we have grown in our respect for one another and certainly I want to acknowledge the commitment that has been made by all of the Members, regardless of their party and background, to the security interests of this Nation.

Mr. Speaker, there is a popular fashion in political circles these days with respect to the idea of limited service in the Congress. That, I suppose, has its place in the discussions that ensue throughout the Nation as to how we can best serve our country and our national interests. But I can assure my colleagues that with respect to our national security interests and the defense interests of this country, what is required is a commitment and a dedication of years, I might even say decades standing, in order to be able to provide the broadest possible umbrella of knowledge and perspective as we come to these very crucial decisions by our Nation as we enter the next century.

Mr. Speaker, I dare say, not speaking for Chairman SPENCE by any stretch of the imagination, that in his 28 years of service here to the Nation and service to our committee, that even today he feels there is much to be learned, much that we have to share with one another in order to come to a proper perspective. And why? The reason is that we do in fact have 435 votes in this House, 218 votes to make a majority. Those who say that votes do not count, those who say that this is just business as usual, those who denigrate the Congress of the United States, let alone the House, and more particularly those who do not understand that when it comes to the security interests of this Nation, that we have to have knowledgeable, dedicated people who are on a nonpartisan basis going to pursue what those interests are and how to achieve them. If we do not have that understanding, then we are doing a disservice to this Nation.

Now, for the record, I would like to indicate that the Committee on National Security approximates, I would say, approximately 10 percent of the House of Representatives and I think represents a very broad perspective, probably reflecting the ideological and philosophical commitments of the House of Representatives as a whole.

In that context what we have is individuals assigned to committees who then make it their business to immerse themselves into the business of that committee. I am going to focus this evening just particularly on the subcommittee on which I am privileged to serve under the chairmanship of the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. WELDON). That is the Subcommittee on Military Research and Development.

Now, on the surface it sounds pretty simple. We do the research and then we develop from that research. But let me just read a summary of today's action that was taken in committee, a summary of the bill language: Navy mine countermeasures program management; future aircraft carrier transition technologies; the manufacturing technology program; national missile defense policy; limitation on the funding of medium extended air defense systems, the MEAD system that the gentleman referred to; funding for the cooperative ballistic missile defense programs; the counterproliferation support; and the ballistic missile program elements.

Mr. Speaker, I can say these things and they roll off of my tongue and my colleagues are familiar with what they mean. But the implications of this are stunning in terms of the dollar value and, of course, in terms of the strategic value associated with the national interests of this Nation and in fact the security interests of the world.

The gentleman from Pennsylvania, who I would venture to say, I think without contradiction, is the leading exponent and expert, certainly congressional expert, with respect to missile defense, someone who I might say is always prepared, would agree that unless and until we are prepared just in one context that I will mention alone, unless we are prepared to deal with missile testing as well as training associated with the weapons systems that we are acquiring, the weapons systems we are researching, the weapons systems we are developing, unless we are prepared to deal with the missile testing element in that, we will not be prepared to move forward in meeting our strategic national interests. We will be unprepared.

Now, it sounds strange. How can we possibly not be prepared with billions of dollars at stake, with years and years of research, with all kinds of development capabilities, major corporations, in fact international corporations the size of which will almost beggar the imagination of the ordinary citizen contemplating them, how could we not possibly be prepared? The reason is that the technology involved

just in the recitation of some of the program elements that I have just outlined, the technology involved is so expensive, the technology involved is so complicated and detailed, the sophistication, Mr. Speaker, is almost beyond comprehension.

I just recently visited the Comanche helicopter development facility in Florida, and asked just to have a briefing, Mr. Speaker, on the capacity of the helicopter not to have information intercepted, on being able to have the communications system, a highly sophisticated system, not be compromised in any way. This is very, very important, Mr. Speaker, because if we do not have this, if there is not a clear understanding of what the technology is and how we can protect the communications interests associated with the Comanche helicopter, it becomes available to those who could do us harm or wish us ill in the future.

Mr. Speaker, we have to deal with questions of technology transfer. As the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. WELDON) and the gentleman from South Carolina (Chairman SPENCE) know, I am, shall we say, an adamant opponent of the transfer of technology for profit's sake, presumed profit's sake, maybe individual dollar profits for some corporations and individuals, but certainly not for the profit of the interests of the United States. I oppose that.

Mr. Speaker, the dollars that have been spent and the time and the energy and the intellectual input that has gone into just the communication system of the Comanche helicopter system is such that a full appreciation for the work of the committee I think would follow from any honest person's evaluation of what we are trying to accomplish.

So as we contemplate research and development, I think that we have to take into account, Mr. Speaker, how are we going to do the funding? How are we going to achieve this?

What is happening right now, and if the gentleman from Pennsylvania would care to engage in a bit of dialogue with me on it at this point, I think can elucidate this a little and illustrate it. Mr. Speaker, I realize the time is short so I will try to make this a summation.

In my service on the committee, in trying to deal with issues, for example, like missile testing, the assumption I think of most Americans is that there is an adequate missile defense right now to meet any challenge that might come to the United States. But the fact are that those systems do not yet exist?

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. The gentleman is absolutely correct.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. And in order to accomplish this we will have to have a testing and training range. Now, in this instance I happen to be familiar with it because it involves the Pacific Missile Testing Range in Hawaii in the Pacific. The necessity is, is it not, to upgrade these facilities to prepare us for the missile testing that will take place within the context of a Navy and Army and an Air Force which will have next-generation capabilities, not yet in existence but in process of coming on line now?

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. Absolutely.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. And in this context, in order to provide for this we have to understand, there will be a significant change in the very context within which we will have an Armed Forces. For example, there will be ships in the near future, this is not something that is put off into Star Trek time or some imaginary world of science fiction, but right now we are developing ships, are we not, that will drastically reduce the personnel that will be on those ships, but drastically increase the amount of sophisticated technology necessary to bring these ships on line and into service.

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. Absolutely.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Mr. Speaker, in that context, then, I think the gentleman would agree that we have to find a funding mechanism that will not, as the gentleman indicated, cannibalize one program at the expense of another. I am sure he would agree with that. I also think he would agree that what we face right now, perhaps even more importantly, reflecting back on the comments of the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON), if we fail to find ways to fund adequately our procurement, our research, our development, our weapons systems and our acquisition of those systems, if we fail that we will hurt readiness. We will hurt the capacity of the individuals and the groups who make up our Armed Services to be able to prepare themselves for the contingencies that they might face, and that in fact is where we find ourselves today.

So I want to conclude, Mr. Speaker, thanking the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Chairman WELDON) and the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. SPENCE) for the opportunity to participate with them and indicate as a member of the Subcommittee on Military Installations and Facilities and the Subcommittee on Military Research and Development, that I recognize fully the necessity of finding the proper funding mechanism and the proper funding balance in order to provide a defense that we can say with full confidence to the American people we will be able to provide for the security interests of this Nation.

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I thank the distinguished gentleman from Hawaii (Mr. ABERCROMBIE) for those very pertinent remarks and I would just highlight before I introduce the gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER) that the gentleman from Hawaii cites the need for robust missile defense programs and testing. The largest loss of military life in this decade was when 28 young Americans were killed in Desert Storm by a low-complexity Scud missile that we could not defend against.

And in January 1995, for those who say we do not need national missile defense, Russia was forewarned of a weather rocket launch by Norway. When that day came for that rocket launch by Norway, the Russian intelligence is so decimated that they misread that as a deliberate launch by American nuclear powered submarine. They put their full offensive system on alert and activated the black boxes controlled by the three top Russian leaders. That gave them 15 minutes to either deactivate or allow to continue an all-out nuclear response against the U.S.

With 7 minutes left, Mr. Speaker, President Yeltsin overruled General Kalashnikov and that response was called off.

That is not a Steven Spielberg movie script. That is what happened in January 1995 that almost brought us to the brink of nuclear war because Russian misread a Norwegian weather rocket that they had been forewarned of.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce the gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER), my good friend and the chairman of the Subcommittee on Military Procurement, a tireless advocate for this Nation's military.

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Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend for yielding the time. Let me ask the Speaker how much time we have left in the special order, because I know the chairman of the Subcommittee on Military Personnel wants to talk as well?

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BLUNT). There are 8 minutes left.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, let me know, I am sure my friends will time me and let me know when we have divided that time equally, and I will then yield back so Mr. BUYER can speak.

Let me just start by thanking my friend for bringing this special order together and the chairman for giving us an historic backdrop with all of the wars that he has seen and the police actions and Presidents coming and going, Secretaries of Defense coming and going, and seeing the backdrop in which we find ourselves right now with this trough of military spending. When I say trough, I mean we are spending $100 billion less in real money than we were spending in the 1980s for national security.

I want to expand a little bit on the statement that was made by my friend, the gentleman from Hawaii (Mr. ABERCROMBIE). We had a focus group in my area in San Diego recently. That is where we sit behind the screen, and we get to see what our constituents really think of us. I think that is quite a lesson also.

But we also get to see what they think about very serious issues. And we are asked that question. The question was asked of our constituents, who are

very sophisticated people, do we have a missile defense? Most of them thought we did.

When the moderator said, what is the defense, one of them said, well, I think we scramble the jets. Of course, a jet cannot take down an intercontinental ballistic missile. Another one said, I think we hit them with cruise missiles. Of course, that does not work, because a cruise missile goes exceedingly slow. It is like throwing a rock at a 30.6 bullet.

One other said, I thought Ronald Reagan took care of that. They really did. They thought that his announcements in the 1980s took care of the problem. So the facts are, when the Secretary of Defense was before us, I asked him that lead-off question, can we stop today a single, as Chairman SPENCE said, a single ballistic missile coming into an American city? The answer is no, not one.

Let me just say for the sake of our listeners what the State of defense is today with respect to force structure. Since 1991, we have cut defenses in this way: We have gone from 18 Army divisions to only 10. We have gone from 24 fighter airwings to only 13. So we have cut our air power almost in half.

We have cut our Navy from 546 to 333 ships. So we have cut our Navy by almost 40 percent. We went from 18 divisions to 10. So today we have 10 Army divisions. That is exactly the number of Army divisions we had in 1950 when we felt, like a lot of experts have said today in the administration, that there is no chance of America being involved in a war in the near future because we are the high-tech Nation. We have all these things that nobody will mess with and realizes that we have the ability to do a lot of high-tech things to our adversaries that they cannot respond against.

That was the same theory that prevailed in 1950, in June of 1950 when North Korea swept across the line. We had the atom bomb, so we thought nobody would mess with us. North Korea attacked, almost drove us into the ocean. We threw the 25th Infantry Division into the Osan pass. It was annihilated. General Dean, the commander of the 25th Infantry Division, was captured. And the United States was almost driven into the sea. We barely held what is known as the Pusan perimeter at the south end of that peninsula.

Later, the Communist Chinese come across the line, so they did not respect the atom bomb either. Even though we had the high-tech, we had a heck of a fight on our hands, and we lost 50,000 Americans because we were not prepared.

So I would just conclude by saying I thank you for this special order tonight. We are approximately 72 percent less in modernization funding then we were a few years ago. It is our job to get on with the job of rebuilding America's defenses. I thank my friend for the time.

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I thank our gentleman and the distinguished chairman of the Committee on Military Procurement. I yield to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BUYER) and then I will yield to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAPPAS).

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding to me.

Mr. Speaker, I rise here as the chairman of the Subcommittee on Military Personnel, and I also witnessed a lot of strain on military readiness.

Last year, the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. SPENCE) released a report on military readiness, which I believe sounded an alarm on the strain of the Armed Forces today. Following his lead, the Subcommittee on Military Personnel held a field hearing at Ft. Riley, Kansas in March to look at the readiness of our late deploying Army divisions.

In addition, we asked the GAO to look into these divisions, and here is what we found. The 10th division, only 138 of 162 infantry squads were fully or minimally manned. At the 2nd and 3rd brigades, the 25th division, 52 out of 162 infantry squads were minimally filled.

At the 1st brigade of the 1st division, only 56 percent of the authorized infantry soldiers for its Bradley fighting vehicles were assigned. At the 4th infantry division, 13 of 54 squads in the engineer brigade had no personnel assigned or had fewer personnel assigned than required.

At the hearing, we heard concerns from a variety of army officers and staff NCOs. The company of the 3rd brigade of the 4th infantry division said, ''We are in danger of becoming an Army of privates,'' as senior NCOs were taken from the line units to fill critical billets in recruiting and drill instructor duty. And peacekeeping missions, we are left with NCOs who do not have senior status leading these squads.

Also, the sergeant major of the 1st brigade, 1st infantry division, stated that ''Our shortfall in assigned noncommissioned officers does negatively impact readiness.''

We found approximately 330 NCOs are missing out of the brigades of the follow-on divisions. That is very, very serious if we are called upon to use them in a wartime scenario.

Mr. Speaker, I have a GAO report from which I took information, and I would ask unanimous consent to place that into the RECORD.

The report referred to is as follows:

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEES ON READINESS AND MILITARY PERSONNEL, COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MILITARY READINESS—OBSERVATIONS ON PERSONNEL READINESS IN LATER DEPLOYING ARMY DIVISIONS

(Statement of Mark E. Gebicke, Director, Military Operations and Capabilities Issues, National Security and International Affairs Division)

Mr. Chairmen and Members of the Subcommittees:

I am pleased to be here to discuss our preliminary finding from our ongoing evaluation of personnel readiness in the Army's five later-deploying divisions. These divisions constitute almost half of the Army's active combat forces and, according to Army officials, are critical to the success of specific war plans and the national military strategy.

This morning, I would first like to summarize our preliminary observations regarding personnel readiness in the later-deploying divisions. Then, I would like to describe in more detail the (1) extent of personnel shortages in the divisions and the extent to which these shortages are reflected in readiness reports, (2) key factors contributing to personnel shortages and the impact such shortages have on readiness, (3) Army's plans for correcting such shortages should these divisions be called upon to deploy, and (4) issues to be considered in dealing with personnel shortages. Unless otherwise indicated, the information provided reflects what we found at the time of our visits to the later-deploying divisions during the period August 1997 through January 1998.

SUMMARY

In the aggregate, the Army's five later-deploying divisions had an average of 93 percent of their personnel on board at the time of our visits. However, aggregate data does not fully reflect the extent of shortages of combat troops, technical specialists, experienced officers, and noncommissioned officers (NCO) that exist in those divisions.

The readiness reporting system that contains the aggregate data on these divisions does not fully disclose the impact of personnel shortages on the ability of the divisions' units to accomplish critical wartime tasks. As a result, there is a disconnect between the reported readiness of these forces in formal readiness reports and the actual readiness that we observed on our visits. These disconnects exist because the unit readiness reporting system does not consider some information that has a significant impact on a unit's readiness, such as operating tempo, personnel shortfalls in key positions, and crew and squad staffing.

The Army's priority in assigning personnel to these divisions, Army-wide shortages of personnel, frequent deployments to peacekeeping missions, and the assignment of soldiers to other tasks outside of their specialty are the primary reasons for personnel shortfalls.

The impact of personnel shortages on training and readiness is exacerbated by the extent to which personnel are being used for work outside their specialties or units. According to commanders in all the divisions, the collective impact of understaffing squads and crews, transferring to other jobs the NCOs from the crews and squads they are responsible for training, and assigning personnel to other units as fillers for exercises and operations have degraded their capability and readiness.

If the Army had to deploy these divisions for a high-intensity conflict, these divisions would fill their units with Individual Ready Reserve Soldiers,[1] retired servicemembers, and newly recruited soldiers. However, the Army's plan for providing these personnel includes assumptions that have not been validated, and there may not be enough trained personnel to fully staff or fill later-deploying divisions within their scheduled deployment times.

Solutions, if any, to these problems will depend upon how the Army plans to use these divisions in the future.

Before I continue, I want to provide you with additional background about the Army's divisions.

Footnotes at end of article.

BACKGROUND

Today's Army faces an enormous challenge to balance risks and resources in order to meet its many missions. Since 1990, active Army ranks have been reduced from 770,000 to 495,000 personnel, a reduction of about 36 percent. Simultaneously, world events have dictated that forces be trained and ready to respond to potential high-intensity missions in areas such as Korea and the Persian Gulf while conducting peace enhancement operations around the world.

The Army currently has 10 active combat divisions compared to the 18 it had at the start of Operation Desert Storm in 1991. Four of the 10 divisions are considered contingency divisions and would be the first to deploy in the event of a major theater war. These units are the 82nd Airborne, 101st Air Assault, 3rd Infantry, and 1st Cavalry divisions. The 2nd Infantry Division, while not a contingency force division, is already deployed in Korea.

The remaining five divisions, which are the focus of my testimony, are expected to deploy in the event of a second simultaneous or nearly simultaneous major theater contingency or as reinforcements for a larger-than-expected first contingency. These units are the 1st Armor, 1st Infantry, 4th Infantry, 10th Infantry, and 25th Infantry divisions. Also, these divisions have been assigned the bulk of the recent peacekeeping missions in Bosnia and Haiti, and the 4th Infantry division over the last 2 years has been conducting the Army's advanced war-fighting experiment.

Appendix I provides a list of the Army's current active divisions and the locations of each division's associated brigades.

PERSONNEL SHORTAGES ARE SIGNIFICANT IN LATER-DEPLOYING DIVISIONS

In the aggregate, the Army's later-deploying divisions were assigned 66,053, or 93 percent, of their 70,665 authorized personnel at the beginning of fiscal year 1998. However, aggregate numbers do not adequately reflect the condition that exists within individual battalions, companies, and platoons of these divisions. This is because excess personnel exist in some grades, ranks, and skills, while shortages exist in others. For example, while the 1st Armor Division was staffed at 94 percent in the aggregate, its combat support and service support specialties were filled at below 85 percent, and captains and majors were filled at 73 percent.

In addition, a portion of each later-deploying division exists only on paper because all authorized personnel have not been assigned. All these divisions contain some squads, crews, and platoons in which no personnel or a minimum number of personnel are assigned. Assigning a minimum number of personnel to a crew means having fewer personnel than needed to fully accomplish wartime missions; for example, having five soldiers per infantry squad rather than nine, tank crews with three soldiers instead of four, or artillery crews with six soldiers rather than nine. We found significant personnel shortfalls in all the later-deploying divisions. For example:

At the 10th Infantry Division, only 138 of 162 infantry squads were fully or minimally filled, and 36 of the filled squads were unqualified.

At the 2nd and 3rd brigades of the 25th Infantry Division, 52 of 162 infantry squads were minimally filled or had no personnel assigned.

At the 1st Brigade of the 1st Infantry Division, only 56 percent of the authorized infantry soldiers for its Bradley Fighting Vehicles were assigned, and in the 2nd Brigade, 21 of 48 infantry squads had no personnel assigned.

At the 3rd Brigade of the 1st Armor Division, only 16 of 116 M1A1 tanks had full crews and were qualified, and in one of the Brigade's two armor battalions, 14 of 58 tanks had no crewmembers assigned because the personnel were deployed to Bosnia. In addition, at the Division's engineer brigade in Germany, 11 of 24 bridge teams had no personnel assigned.

At the 4th Infantry Division, 13 of 54 squads in the engineer brigade had no personnel assigned or had fewer personnel assigned than required.

The significance of personnel shortfalls in later-deploying divisions cannot be adequately captured solely in terms of overall numbers. The rank, grade, and experience of the personnel assigned must also be considered. For example, captains and majors are in short supply Army-wide due to drawdown initiatives undertaken in recent years. The five later-deploying divisions had only 91 percent and 78 percent of the captains and majors authorized, respectively, but 138 percent of the lieutenants authorized. The result is that unit commanders must fill leadership positions in many units with less-experienced officers than Army doctrine requires. For example, in the 1st Brigade of the 1st Infantry Division, 65 percent of the key staff positions designated to be filled by captains were actually filled by lieutenants or captains that were not graduates of the Advanced Course. We found that three of the five battalion maintenance officers, four of the six battalion supply officers, and three of the four battalion signal officers were lieutenants rather than captains. While this situation represents an excellent opportunity for the junior officers, it also represents a situation in which critical support functions are being guided by officers without the required training or experience.

There is also a significant shortage of NCOs in the later-deploying divisions. Again, within the 1st Brigade, 226, or 17 percent of the 1,450, total NCO authorizations, were not filled at the time of our visit. As was the case in all the divisions, a significant shortage was at the first-line supervisor, sergeant E–5, level. At the beginning of fiscal year 1998, the five later-deploying divisions were short nearly 1,900 of the total 25,357 NCOs authorized, and as of February 15, 1998, this shortage had grown to almost 2,200.

CURRENT READINESS REPORTS DO NOT FULLY DISCLOSE PERSONNEL SHORTFALLS

In recent years, in reports and testimony before the Congress, we discussed the Status of Resources and Training System (SORTS), which is used to measure readiness, and reported on the need for improvements. SORTS data for units in the later-deploying divisions have often reflected a high readiness level for personnel because the system uses aggregate statistics to assess personnel readiness. For example, a unit that is short 20 percent of all authorized personnel in the aggregate could still report the ability to undertake most of its wartime mission, even though up to 25 percent of the key leaders and personnel with critical skills may not be assigned. Using aggregate data to reflect personnel readiness masks the underlying personnel problems I have discussed today, such as shortages by skill level, rank or grade. Compounding these problems are high levels of personnel turnover, incomplete squads and crews, and frequent deployments, none of which are part of the readiness calculation criteria. Yet, when considered collectively, these factors create situations in which commanders may have difficulty developing unit cohesion, accomplishing training objectives, and maintaining readiness.

Judging by our analysis of selected commanders' comments submitted with their SORTS reports and other available data, the problems I have just noted are real. However, some commanders apparently do not consider them serious enough to warrant a downgrade in the reported readiness rating. For example, at one engineer battalion, the commander told us his unit had lost the ability to provide sustained engineer support to the division. His assessment appeared reasonable, since company-and battalion level training for the past 4 months had been cancelled due to the deployment of battalion leaders and personnel to operations in Bosnia. As a result of this deployment, elements of the battalion left behind had only 33 to 55 percent of its positions filled. The commander of this battalion, however, reported an overall readiness assessment of C–2, which was based in part on a personnel level that was over 80 percent in the aggregate. The commander also reported that he would be able to achieve a C–1 status in only 20 training days. This does not seem realistic, given the shortages we noted. We found similar disconnects between readiness conditions as reported in SORTS and actual unit conditions at other armor, infantry, and support units.

MANY FACTORS HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO PERSONNEL SHORTFALLS IN LATER DEPLOYING DIVISIONS

Many factors have contributed to shortfalls of personnel in the Army's later-deploying divisions, including (1) the Army's priority for assigning personnel to units, commands and agencies; (2) Army-wide shortages of some types of personnel; (3) peacekeeping operations; and (4) the assignment of soldiers to joint and other Army command, recruiting, and base management functions.

Later-deploying Divisions Receive Low Priority for Staffing

The Army uses a tiered system to allocate personnel and other resources to its units. The Army gives top priority to staffing DOD agencies; major commands such as the Central Command, the European Command, and the Pacific Command; the National Training Center; and the Army Rangers and Special Forces Groups. These entities receive 98 to 100 percent of the personnel authorized for each grade and each military occupational specialty. The 2nd Infantry Division, which is deployed in Korea, and the four contingency divisions are second in priority. Although each receives 98 to 100 percent of its aggregate authorized personnel, the total personnel assigned are not required to be evenly distributed among grades or military specialties. The remaining five later-deploying divisions receive a proportionate share of the remaining forces. Unlike priority one and two forces, the later-deploying units have no minimum personnel level.

Army-wide Shortages of Personnel Have Contributed to Shortfalls

Army-wide shortages of personnel add to the shortfalls of later-deploying divisions. For example, in fiscal year 1997, the Army's enlistment goal for infantrymen was 16,142. However, only about 11,300 of those needed were enlisted, which increased the existing shortage of infantry soldiers by an additional 4,800 soldiers. As of February 15, 1998, Army-wide shortages existed for 28 Army specialties. Many positions in squads and crews are left unfilled or minimally filled because personnel are diverted to work in key positions where they are needed more.

Also, because of shortages of experienced and branch-qualified officers, the Army has instituted an Officer Distribution Plan, which distributes a ''fair share'' of officers by grade and specialty among the combat divisions. While this plan has helped spread the shortages across all the divisions, we noted significant shortages of officers in certain specialties at the later-deploying divisions.

Peacekeeping Operations Have Exacerbated Shortfalls

Since 1995, when peacekeeping operations began in Bosnia-Herzegovina, there has been a sustained increase in operations for three of the later-deploying divisions: the 1st Armor Division, the 1st Infantry Division, and the 10th Infantry Division. For example, in fiscal year 1997, the 1st Armor Division was directed 89 times to provide personnel for operations other than war and contingency operations, training exercises, and for other assignments from higher commands. More than 3,200 personnel were deployed a total of nearly 195,000 days for the assignments, 89 percent of which were for operations in Bosnia. Similarly, the average soldier in the 1st Infantry Division was deployed 254 days in fiscal year 1997, primarily in support of peacekeeping operations.

Even though the 1st Armor and 1st Infantry Divisions have had 90 percent or more of their total authorized personnel assigned since they began operations in Bosnia, many combat support and service support specialties were substantially understrength, and only three-fourths of field grade officers were in place. As a result, the divisions took personnel from nondeploying units to fill the deploying units with the needed number and type of personnel. As a result, the commanders of nondeploying units have squads and crews with no, or a minimal number of, personnel.

Other Assignments of Soldiers Have Created More Shortfalls of Personnel

Unit commanders have had to shuffle personnel among positions to compensate for shortages. For example, they assign soldiers that exist in the largest numbers—infantry, armor, and artillery—to work in maintenance, supply, and personnel administration due to personnel shortages in these technical specialties; assign soldiers to fill personnel shortages at a higher headquarters or to accomplish a mission for higher headquarters; and assign soldiers to temporary work such as driving buses, serving as lifeguards, and managing training ranges—vacancies in some cases which have resulted from civilian reductions on base.

At the time of our visit, the 1st Brigade of the 1st Infantry Division had 372, or 87 percent, of its 428 authorized dismount infantry. However, 51 of these 372 soldiers were assigned to duties outside their specialties to fill critical technical shortages, command-directed positions, and administrative and base management activities. These reassignments lowered the actual number of soldiers available for training to 75 percent daily.

In Germany, at the 2nd Brigade of the 1st Infantry Division, 21 of 48 infantry squads had no personnel assigned due to shortages. From the remaining 27 squads that were minimally filled, the equivalent of another five squads of the Brigade's soldiers were working in maintenance, supply, and administrative specialties to compensate for personnel shortages in those specialties. The end result is that the brigade only had 22 infantry squads with 7 soldiers each rather than 48 squads with 9 soldiers each.

ARMY OFFICIALS BELIEVE READINESS AND TRAINING HAVE BEEN DEGRADED

According to Army officials, the reduction of essential training, along with the cumulative impact of the shortages I just outlined, has resulted in an erosion of readiness due to the cumulative impact of the shortages I just outlined. Readiness in the divisions responsible for peacekeeping operations in Bosnia has been especially affected because the challenges imposed by personnel shortages are compounded by frequent deployments. Universally, division officials told us that the shortage of NCOs in the later-deploying divisions is the biggest detriment to overall readiness because crews, squads, and sections are led by lower-level personnel rather than by trained and experienced sergeants. Such a situation impedes effective training because these replacement personnel become responsible for training soldiers in critical skills they themselves may not have been trained to accomplish. At one division, concern was expressed about the potential for a serious training accident because tanks, artillery, and fighting vehicles were being commanded by soldiers without the experience needed to safely coordinate the weapon systems they command.

According to Army officials, the rotation of units to Bosnia has also degraded the training and readiness of the divisions providing the personnel. For example, to deploy an 800-soldier task force last year, the Commander of the 3rd Brigade Combat Team had to reassign 63 soldiers within the brigade to serve in infantry squads of the deploying unit, strip nondeploying infantry and armor units of maintenance personnel, and reassign NCOs and support personnel to the task force from throughout the brigade. These actions were detrimental to the readiness of the nondeploying units. For example, gunnery exercises for two armor battalions had to be canceled and 43 of 116 tank crews became unqualified on the weapon system, the number of combat systems out of commission increased, and contractors were hired to perform maintenance.

According to 1st Armor and 1st Infantry division officials, this situation has reduced their divisions' readiness to the point of not being prepared to execute wartime missions without extensive training and additional personnel.

RETIREES, INDIVIDUAL READY RESERVISTS, AND NEW RECRUITS WOULD BE USED TO FILL SHORTFALLS

If the later-deploying divisions are required to deploy to a second major theater contingency, the Army plans to fill personnel shortfalls with retired servicemembers, members of the Individual Ready Reserve, and newly trained recruits. The number of personnel to fill the later deploying divisions could be extensive, since (1) personnel from later deploying divisions would be transferred to fill any shortages in the contingency units that are first to deploy and (2) these divisions are already short of required personnel.

The Army's plan for providing personnel under a scenario involving two major theater contingencies includes unvalidated assumptions. For example, the plan assumes that the Army's training base will be able to quadruple its output on short notice and that all reserve component units will deploy as scheduled. Army officials told us that based on past deployments, not all the assumptions in their plans will be realized, and there may not be sufficient trained personnel to fully man later-deploying divisions within their scheduled deployment times. Finally, if retired personnel or Individual Ready Reserve members are assigned to a unit, training and crew cohesion may not occur prior to deployment because Army officials expect some units to receive personnel just before deployment.

SOLUTIONS DEPEND ON EXPECTATIONS FOR LATER-DEPLOYING FORCES

Finding solutions to the personnel problems I have discussed today will not be easy, given the Army's many missions and reduced personnel. While I have described serious shortfalls of personnel in each of later-deploying divisions, this condition is not necessarily new. What is new is the increased operating tempo, largely brought about because of peacekeeping operations, which has exacerbated the personnel shortfalls in these divisions. However, before any solutions can be discussed, the Army should determine whether it wants to continue to accept the current condition of its active force today, that is, five fully combat-ready divisions and five less than fully combat-capable divisions.

The Army has started a number of initiatives that ultimately may help alleviate some of the personnel shortfalls I have described. These initiatives include targeted recruiting goals for infantry and maintenance positions; the advanced war-fighting experiment, which may reduce the number of personnel required for a division through the use of technology; and better integration of active and reserve forces. Efforts to streamline institutional forces[4] may also yield personnel that could be used to fill vacancies such as these noted in my testimony.

If such efforts do not yield sufficient personnel or solutions to deal with the shortages we have noted in this testimony, we believe it is important that the Army, at a minimum, review its current plans for rectifying these shortfalls in the event of a second major theater war. In particular, if the Army expects to deploy fully combat-capable divisions for such a war, it should review the viability of alleviating shortfalls predominately with reservists from the Individual Ready Reserve.

This concludes my testimony. I will be happy to answer any questions you may have at this time.

FOOTNOTES

[1] The Individual Ready Reserve is comprised of officers and enlisted soldiers with prior military service who are completing their 8-year military service obligation or who are not assigned to units. The majority of these personnel have no annual training requirements.

[2] Three of the 18 divisions were composed of 2 active brigades and 1 reserve component brigade. Today, the 10 divisions are composed of all active duty units.

[3] The system assigns each unit a readiness rating from C–1 to C–5. A C–1 unit can undertake the full wartime mission for which it is organized and designed; a C–2 unit can undertake the bulk of its wartime mission; a C–3 unit can undertake major portions of its wartime mission; C–4 and C–5 units are at lower levels of readiness. Each commander reporting readiness may use his/her professional judgment to either upgrade or downgrade the calculated overall C-rating by one level but must provide a written justification in the form of ''commander's comments.''

[4] The Army's institutional force provides generally nondeployable support to the Army infrastructure, including training, doctrine development, base operations, supply, and maintenance.

APPENDIX I

ACTIVE ARMY DIVISIONS

Contingency Divisions

1st Cavalry Division—headquarters and three brigades at Fort Hood, TX.

3d Infantry Division—headquarters and two brigades at Fort Steward, GA, one brigade at Fort Benning, GA.

82d Airborne Division—headquarters and three brigades at Fort Bragg, NC.

101st Airborne Division—headquarters and three brigades at Fort Campbell, KY.

Forward Stationed Division

2d Infantry Division—headquarters and two brigades in Korea, one brigade at Fort Lewis, WA.

Later Deploying Divisions

1st Infantry Division—headquarters and two brigades in Germany, one brigade at Fort Riley, KS.

1st Armored Division—headquarters and two brigades in Germany, one brigade at Fort Riley, KS.

4th Infantry Division—headquarters and two brigades at Fort Hood, TX, one brigade at Fort Carson, CO.

10th Mountain Division—headquarters and two brigades at Fort Drum, NY.

25th Infantry Division—headquarters and two brigades at Schofield Barracks, HI, one brigade at Fort Lewis, WA.

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I yield the last 2 minutes of the special order to our friend, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAPPAS).

Mr. PAPPAS. Mr. Speaker, I take my job as a Member of Congress very seriously. No responsibility is more important than Congress' role to provide for the Senate defense. This responsibility, before all others, is why we are here. Yet, today, we face threats. Our troops face threats. Our allies face threats. Our interests face threats.

The May 1, 1998 Washington Times reported that China has at least 13 intercontinental ballistic missiles aimed at American soil. We cannot defend against an attack because we cannot afford national missile defense. Our troops in Korea and elsewhere have missiles of mass destruction with chemical and biological weapons aimed at them. We cannot protect them either. It is not just missiles.

New technology poses new threats. For example, computer hackers in a rogue nation can break into our computers and cripple our military communications systems.

Mr. REYES. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues for arranging this special order today to focus on the plight of the Department of Defense (DoD) and its ever declining budget. This is the 14th straight year that DoD funding has decreased. Readiness is suffering because DoD does not have enough funds to train its soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Marines. Readiness is suffering because military personnel are leaving the force because they are away from their families too often and when they are home, their quality of life is declining. If the force is not ready, it cannot protect this nation.

Bedsies readiness concerns, the force also cannot protect the nation if its equipment is not the best in the world. The planned budgets do not provide sufficiently to upgrade the military's equipment. How can we send these young men and women to battle without the best equipment?

The Army in particular is suffering greatly under the current and future budget plans. The Army is doing much more with much less. Since the end of the Cold War, the size of the force has shrunk by 300,000. At the same time, however, Army deployments have increased by 300%. Sixty percent of the forces committed to the multiple operations across the world is Army. Even so, the Army receives less than one fourth of DoD's funding. The Army simply does not have the funding necessary to complete all of the missions being required of it.

Due to insufficient budgets planned for the future, the Army is being forced to make cuts that are unacceptable and it is being forced to make these cuts in ways that do not make sense. Just today, I was in a meeting concerning civilian cuts to Army training posts. We were told that cuts have to be made because—bottom line—the budget is too low. At the same time, the Army is looking at ways to privatize some of its activities. The Army is supposed to study which jobs can be outsourced and maintain the personnel for the jobs which cannot be outsourced. Due to budgetary constraints, however, the Army is cutting in a haphazard manner—losing many of those civilians who really may be essential to Army activities.

The vast decline in the national security budget is requiring these cuts to be made in ways that do not make sense. We are eating our seed corn. The average age of a DoD civilian is now close to 50 years old. Within five years, it would seem that all those with experience and knowledge will make it to retirement and leave. This will leave our defense department without individuals with any institutional knowledge.

I urge the President and my colleagues in Congress to increase the defense budget. As a Vietnam veteran, I understand the need for quality equipment. I understand the need for high morale in soldiers. As a former civil servant, I understand the importance of civil servants to running an agency and the need for high morale among their ranks to operate well. If the defense budget is not increased in the outyears, the military's equipment will be insufficient and the personnel—both uniformed and civilian—will continue to be demoralized. And—we will no longer be able to claim to be the best and strongest military in the world.

Without our strong military, we would not be the country that we are today. Remember that we could actually have lost several wars this century and we could all be speaking German.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the subject of my special order.

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

There was no objection.

RWANDAN GENOCIDE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentlewoman from Georgia (Ms. MCKINNEY) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Ms. McKINNEY. Mr. Speaker, during World War II, the world stood by and watched as innocent men, women, and children were exterminated for no other reason than their ethnicity. The world said never again.

Well, 50 years later in Rwanda, the world stood by and watched as innocent men, women, and children were exterminated for no other reason than their ethnicity. Knowing that a genocide was about to occur, the world turned away or said this is not my problem. During the genocide, many said this is bad, but they did not act. After the genocide, the world offered reasons and apologies for its inaction.

Mr. Speaker, the world forgot the promise it made right after World War II. Indeed, the promise of ''never again'' was left tragically unfulfilled. In 1994, close to 1 million people were killed in a planned and systematic genocide.

Today the Subcommittee on International Operations and Human Rights of the Committee on International Relations held an important hearing to begin answering some important questions. How could the world tolerate such violence? Who is responsible? Why did the international community fail to respond? How can we stop the continuing cycle of violence in the Great Lakes region?

I would like to thank the chairman of the subcommittee, my good friend, the gentleman from New Jersey, (Mr. SMITH) for his courage and compassion for addressing this important issue. I think it is important that people understand the history of the relationship between the indigenous peoples of Rwanda.

Prior to the 20th century colonialism, Rwandan Hutus and Tutsis were identified, not by their ethnicity, but by their economic status. For example a Tutsi was considered a wealthy and prominent person in the community, while Hutus were often poor. However, if a Tutsi were to lose his or her wealth, they would then be considered a Hutu. Similarly, a Hutu who had climbed an economic ladder would then be considered a Tutsi. Thus, a distinction was not based on ethnicity but by standing in the community.

However, after centuries of living together in relative peace, Rwandan Hutus and Tutsis were taught to fear and mistrust one another because of disparaging treatment at the hands of Belgian colonialists.

The Belgians treated Tutsis as an upper class, providing them with an education and important government positions, while relegating the majority Hutu population to agricultural work and manual labor. Furthermore, the Belgians began requiring Hutus and Tutsis to carry identification cards, further creating an atmosphere of fear and hatred.

The strong animosity created by the colonialists was maintained after independence as extremist Hutu leaders sought to strike back at Tutsis by removing them from all positions of power and refraining from punishing those who committed acts of violence against Tutsi civilians.

The ethnic cleansing of Tutsis in the early 1960s led to an exile population that was spread across Uganda, Zaire, Burundi, and Tanzania. Persecution and expulsion of minority Tutsis and moderate Hutus continued throughout the 1980s and early 1990s until the tragic events unfolded that led to the 1994 genocide.

I provide this history, Mr. Speaker, to enlighten those who find it convenient to attribute the Rwandan genocide to the irrational, quote, ''tribal hatred and bloodthirstiness of Africans.'' Rather, what subsequent investigations have revealed is that the killings