

acknowledged, not only by Members of the Congress, but also, for the first time in four years, by the President himself.

Now that the President has admitted that there is a shortfall in funding for national security, the services themselves are coming forward and testifying, as they did today, and telling us what the problem is. They now feel that they are not circumventing their commander-in-chief if they lay their cards on the table before Congress. And let me tell you, Mr. Speaker, I was pretty shocked by the numbers and the situations that were described today by the Army, the Navy, the Marine Corps and the Air Force, and I want to share those numbers and those shortfalls with you.

First I want to point your attention to what is known as mission capable rates. Mission capable rates mean when we have an aircraft carrier off the shores of the Middle East and we have planes on that carrier. We make an analysis as to whether or not its planes can fly out, hit their targets and return safely to the carrier. That is a pretty important part of our power projection with the U.S. Navy.

Our mission capable rate, that means the ability of the airplane to fly off the carrier, wheels up, move that two or three or four hundred miles to its target, drop its ordnance and come back, that rate has gone down from 69 percent in 1993 to 61 percent today.

With the Air Force, the mission capable rate of their aircraft has gone down from 83.4 percent in 1991 to 74 percent today. That means 25 percent of their aircraft are not mission capable. They cannot do their job.

With the Marines, we have gone down from 77 percent in 1995 to only 61 percent mission capable rate today.

Mr. Speaker, the Navy and the Marine Corps and the Army also talked about other aspects of their equipment that are now in shortfall. You know we had a 600 ship Navy a few years ago under president Ronald Reagan. With the dissolution of the Soviet Union, we decided we could bring that Navy down some. But this president, President Clinton, is building ships at such a slow rate that we are building to a 200 ship Navy. We are going from a 600 ship Navy to a 200 ship Navy, and we cannot accomplish our responsibilities around the world with a fleet that small.

With respect to ammunition, the service chiefs told us that our ammunition shortfall now is 1.7 billion for the Army and 193 million for the United States Marine Corps. Ammunition is pretty basic, and we do not have what we need.

With respect to equipment, this CH-46 helicopter is right now the mainstay for the United States Marine Corps until they get the V-22. That aircraft, which has had a number of crashes in the last several years, is over 40 years old. Their attack vehicle, their amphibious vehicle that they ride out of the ships on and go right up on the

beaches when they have to make a front-on assault, that vehicle is an average of 26 years old.

With respect to personnel, the United States Air Force is going to be 700 pilots short this year and the United States Navy is going to be 18,000 sailors short this year. The U.S. Marine Corps aviators are having a separation rate, that means the rate where they come in and tell their unit I am leaving; I could reenlist, but I am leaving; I am going to go into private enterprise. I may be a pilot for an airline, I am leaving. Only 42 percent of them separated in 1995. Most of them stayed on with the Marine Corps. Today, 92 percent of our pilots are leaving. They are getting out of Dodge. They are going into the private sector. That leaves us short.

So, Mr. Speaker, I will continue over the next several weeks to talk a little bit more about the shortages we have in defense, and lastly I will talk a little bit about what we are going to have to do in terms of putting resources into defense to rebuild our military.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Dakota (Mr. POMEROY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. POMEROY addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

SECURING SOCIAL SECURITY BEFORE CUTTING TAXES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I think it is important that we did several things today, and I do want to comment on one of the earlier speaker's assessment of the pending tax bill, for, as I was saying earlier in debate, we all understand the value of giving relief to working men and women.

Interestingly enough, the substitute tax relief bill that the Democrats are proposing does that very thing. But it has one singular common sense provision: It recognizes that Social Security is a Contract with America. It is a trust. It is a fund that we are committed to securing. You cannot secure a trust fund if you raid it.

So the one difference I have with my colleagues is I am prepared to vote for tax relief, after we have secured Social Security, after we have been told by the Social Security trustees, "You have fixed Social Security for those who are receiving it now, for those who receive it 10 years from now, and those who may receive it way into the next century."

So I hope my colleagues will consider the reasonableness of legislation that does not spend dollars we do not have, and waits in fact a year from now when we can truly confirm that we have fixed Social Security.

Today we did something else, Mr. Speaker, and I would like to just comment briefly on the fast-track legislation, because most of us agree that trade, which creates jobs, has to be a bipartisan approach or has to have a bipartisan approach.

The one thing that is attractive to Americans when you speak of trade is jobs. It is opportunities for small businesses. It is the ability to sell one's wares and ideas internationally and be assured to get a good dollar and fair compensation for that.

I have been on record supporting the African Growth and Opportunity Act which passed the House this past summer, giving opportunity to small businesses, providing dollars for infrastructure support, opening up Africa to the many opportunities or many business opportunities for both Americans and Africans to work together.

I have supported the Caribbean Basin Initiative, which works with our Caribbean friends, again establishing opportunities for our business opportunity, to work free of barriers.

At the same time, this legislation was brought to the floor of the House in a bad manner and at a bad time. For example, we are facing financial crises around the world, but the Republicans have not seen fit to fund the International Monetary Fund. Why? Because that is not popular.

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That sounds off negative connotations. I would simply argue that seeing governments collapse or financial systems collapse, when we have the opportunity to work with the IMF, is irresponsible.

Yet, we bring a trade bill that is not collaborative, does not work with Members on both sides of the aisle, does not work with business and working Americans to discuss issues dealing with the environment and dealing with the question of working conditions.

Last year when we were talking about this issue, I offered an amendment to work on the question of difficulties in Texas along the border. Let me read it, Mr. Speaker, my amendment, called "Review of conditions along United States-Mexican border".

The President shall establish a task force to review conditions along the United States-Mexican border relating to housing, labor, the environment, and other relevant issues, as they relate to United States companies that are located along the border.

The task force should determine the ways in which partnerships made up of public and private entities can improve conditions along the border. The President shall report to Congress not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this act on the results of the review under subsection A.

My understanding is, without a call to my office, this was put into the present bill. The tragedy is that the bill failed because we did not have collaboration. We had politics. In fact, Members of the other party were quoted as saying, "We want to see who will get on the line and vote for fast