that modernizing the tanker force is a vital national security priority.

While some members and some committees differ on the amount of funding that they believe is required to carry out this program fiscal year 2008, I believe that the Senate can agree that carrying out this program is a vital national security priority. I appreciate my colleagues' support for this amendment.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, is there any objection if we proceed to morning business?

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, there is no objection on this side. We will resume the bill tomorrow morning, I presume, around 10 o'clock.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators allowed to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

Would that be enough, I ask Senator BROWN? Ten minutes? You can ask unanimous consent to extend it.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Ohio.

PRIVATIZATION

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, although we are in morning business, I wish to add some comments to what Senator MIKULSKI said about privatization because what we have seen throughout our Government—whether it is Medicare, the efforts to privatize, which, unfortunately, have been partially successful at privatizing but not so successful in serving the public, serving seniors, and the totally unsuccessful effort to privatize Social Security—what we have seen in public education, what we have seen in the prison system in my State of Ohio, what we seen in several kinds of efforts to privatize have often resulted in more taxpayer dollars being spent, a reduction in service, to be sure, less efficiency, and less accountability.

So her amendment is right on the mark. Her efforts in privatization generally are very important. I thank the senior Senator from Maryland on that.

TRADE POLICY

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, our Nation's haphazard trade policy has done plenty of damage to Ohio's economy, to our workers—from Steubenville to Cambridge, from Portsmouth to Wauseon—to our manufacturers—in Bryan and Cleveland and Akron, and Lorain—and to our small businesses in Dayton, Cincinnati, and Springfield.

Recent news reports of tainted foods and toxic toys reveal another hazard of ill-conceived and unenforced trade rules. They subject American families, American children, to products that can harm them—that in some cases can actually kill them.

Our trade rules encourage unsafe imports. Our gap-ridden food and product inspection system lets those imports into our country. Our lax requirements for importers let those products stay on the shelves. And our foot dragging on requiring country-of-origin labeling leaves consumers in the dark. It is a lethal—all too lethal, all too often—combination.

With a total lack of protections in our trade policy, we do not just import goods from another country, we import the lax safety standards of other countries. If we relax basic health and safety rules to accommodate Bush-style, NAFTA-modeled trade deals, of course, we are going to find lead paint on our toys and toxins in our toothpaste.

Just think of it this way: When we trade with a country, when we buy $288 billion of products from China, for instance—a country that puts little emphasis on safe drinking water, on clean air, on protections for their own workers, on consumer protection, and then they sell those products to the United States, why would they care about products, consumer products, toys that are safe or food products that are safe, when they do not care about that in their own country for their own workers and for their own consumers?

Add to the fact that U.S. companies put tremendous pressure on their Chinese subcontractors to cut the cost of production to cut their own costs, and the Chinese are going to use lead paint because it is cheaper. They are going to cut corners on safety because it is cheaper.

At the same time, the Bush administration has weakened our Food and Drug Administration, Department of Agriculture, and Consumer Product Safety Commission rules, and that is compounded even further because they have cut the number of inspectors. So why should we be surprised when we see toys in our children's bedrooms that are dangerous, or when we see vitamins in our drugstores and food in our grocery stores that are contaminated?

Due to trade agreements, there are now more than 230 countries and more than 200,000 foreign manufacturers exporting FDA-related goods—FDA-regulated goods—to American consumers.

Before NAFTA, we imported 1 million lines of food. Now we import 18 million lines of food. One million lines of food in 1993; today it is 18 million lines of food.

Unfortunately, trade deals put limits on the safety standards we can require for imports and even how much we can inspect imports. I will say that again. We pass a trade agreement with another country. It puts limits on our own safety standards, and it puts limits on how much we can inspect those imports.

Our trade policy should prevent these problems—not bring them on.

Now the President, though, wants new trade agreements with Peru, Panama, South Korea, and Colombia—all based on the same failed trade model that brought us China, that has brought us NAFTA, that has brought us the Central American Free Trade Agreement.

This Chamber will soon consider—maybe even next week—a trade agreement with Peru. Some may wonder why we are entering into new trade agreements right now considering we have had five straight years of record annual trade deficits.

When I first ran for Congress in 1992, on the other side of the Capitol, to be a Member of the House of Representatives, our trade deficit was $38 billion. Today, it exceeds $800 billion. Our trade deficit with China was barely double digits 15 years ago. Today, it exceeds $250 billion.

The NAFTA/CAFTA trade model has driven down wages and working conditions for workers in Marion and Mansfield and Bucyrus and Canton and all across the United States and abroad.

This kind of trade has torn apart families' health care and pension benefits. It undermines our capacity even to produce equipment vital to our national security.

Contrary to promoting stability in Peru and the Andean region, as this trade agreement's supporters would say, these trade agreements are actually more likely to increase poverty and inequality.

This month, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development issued a report warning developing countries—poorer nations that are doing trade agreements with us—to be wary of bilateral and regional free trade deals. The U.N. Report cited the North American Free Trade Agreement as an example of a trade agreement that may have short-term benefits for poor countries but has long-term harm. We know what NAFTA did to Mexico's middle class. We know what NAFTA did to its rural farmers. Well over 1.3 million farmers were displaced since the North American Free Trade Agreement in Mexico.

Let's look at Peru for a moment. Nearly one-third of Peru's population depends on agriculture for its livelihood. The development group Oxfam estimates that 1.7 million Peruvian farmers will be immediately affected by this trade agreement. When those farmers can't get a fair price for wheat or for barley or for corn, they are forced to produce other crops—almost inevitably, including coca. That means more cocaine production, it means more illegal drugs in the United States. We have been there before. We have seen that before. We have seen the rural dislocation in Mexico, after NAFTA, and there is nothing to suggest the Peru trade agreement will be any different.

Scholars, including former World Bank Director Joseph Stiglitz, note that rural upheaval from trade deals means more violence, more U.S. money spent on drug eradication.

An archbishop in Peru said: