Order 13310, blocked the property and interests in property of persons listed in the Annex to that Executive Order, and provided additional criteria for designations of certain other persons.

The order supplements the existing designation criteria set forth in Executive Order 13310, as incorporated in and expanded by Executive Order 13448. The order blocks the property and interests in property in the United States of persons listed in the Annex to the order and provides additional criteria for designations of persons determined by the Secretary of the Treasury, after consultation with the Secretary of State, to be owned or controlled by, directly or indirectly, the Government of Burma or an official or officials of the Government of Burma; to have materially assisted, sponsored, or provided financial, material, logistical, or technical support for, or goods or services in support of, the Government of Burma, the State Peace and Development Council of Burma, the Union Solidarity and Development Association of Burma, any successor entity to any of the foregoing, any senior official of any of the foregoing, or any person whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to Executive Order 13310, Executive Order 13448, or the order; or to be owned or controlled by, or to have acted or purported to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, any person whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to Executive Order 13310, Executive Order 13448, or the order.

The order leaves in place the existing prohibitions on new investment, the exportation or reexportation to Burma of financial services, and the importation of any article that is a product of Burma, which were put into effect in Executive Order 13047 and Executive Order 13310.

The order authorizes the Secretary of the Treasury, after consultation with the Secretary of State, to take such actions, including the promulgation of rules and regulations, and to employ all powers granted to the President by IEEPA and section 4 of the Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act of 2003 as may be necessary to carry out the purposes of the order.

I am enclosing a copy of the Executive Order I have issued.

GEORGE W. BUSH.

THE WHITE HOUSE, *April 30, 2008*.

□ 1545

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

U.S. MILITARY READINESS HANGS BY A THREAD

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

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, in matters of national security, experienced leaders never forget that the unexpected is always just around the corner and that danger is never far away. The Roman orator Cicero immortalized these ideas in his story about the Sword of Damocles.

Damocles, a citizen of the ancient Greek city of Syracuse, wanted to be king for a day. The king agreed to this request, and Damocles feasted and reveled with wine and fine meals. Only after his merrymaking did Damocles discover that a razor-sharp sword, suspended by a single thread, hung over his head all day. Damocles was immediately cured of his desire to rule.

When I consider the challenges confronting the U.S. national security today, I see not one but two swords of Damocles dangling above us. The first danger concerns the strain current operations place on U.S. military readiness, and the second concerns the deterioration of security and stability in Afghanistan.

Military readiness ratings measure how prepared U.S. forces are to perform their assigned combat missions. Unfortunately, but not surprisingly, more than 6 years of war have resulted in serious readiness shortfalls, with our Army and Marine Corps ground forces experiencing the most acute problems. In spite of efforts to fill the gaps in equipment, training and personnel, readiness deficiencies serious enough to cause alarm last year have only continued to expand.

Today, two-thirds of the Army's combat brigades in the United States are not ready for duty. Units in the U.S. are suffering from shortages of personnel, and units are preparing for deployment without having all of their assigned personnel or equipment during training. To fill shortfalls in Army personnel, the Navy and Air Force are supplying over 20,000 troops to conduct ground force tasks such as convoy security and logistics support.

While U.S. military forces are getting by, painfully, and performing today's missions despite readiness shortfalls, we are simply not prepared for the emergence of a new conflict. Experience tells me that we cannot assume another crisis won't come our way. In my 31 years in Congress, the U.S. has been involved in 12 significant military conflicts, none of which were predicted beforehand. Because we can't know with complete certainty what dangers lurk around the corner or when they might strike, we need the insurance policy military readiness provides for America's security.

Our current readiness situation demands a massive investment in time, effort and money to restore our full capability. Of course, devoting the resources required to solve our readiness problems will force us to make painful tradeoffs with some elements of modernization, which is tomorrow's readiness. But with current readiness levels, this is a predicament our Nation cannot avoid. It is simply a cost we must bear.

The second danger I worry about is the deterioration of security and stability in Afghanistan. For too long, the war in Iraq has overshadowed the real war against terrorism in Afghanistan. While the military effort there is actually a qualified success, the political effort at this point is not, and the benefits of economic progress are far too uneven. Too many Afghan citizens do not yet see tangible improvements in their daily lives. The effort in Afghanistan is not really reconstruction, but the creation of a stable, secure, and unified nation which has never existed.

The recent decision to send an additional 3,200 marines to Afghanistan is a necessary and positive step in the right direction, but that alone will not be sufficient. This undertaking is gargantuan and requires a far more significant effort than the United States or our allies have been willing to commit. History will judge us very harshly if our focus and effort in Afghanistan is insufficient to the task. A failure of the mission there would not only damage our security, it would also seriously damage NATO.

So how do we deal with these twin challenges? To start, we must focus our Nation's strategic priorities to find the right balance between the near-term needs and the long-term health of our military. We must address the imbalance in our deployment and use of troops overseas, because our readiness problems cannot be resolved as long as we continue to deploy in excess of 100,000 troops in Iraq. A responsible redeployment of a large percentage of that force is a strategic necessity.

In addition, we must do first things first by focusing on Afghanistan, just as in World War II we focused more of our resources on Germany and the war in Europe until that war was won. Finally, we must substantially increase the use of our soft power, our diplomatic, economic development, and strategic communications efforts in Afghanistan and around the world.

We can and should receive much more help from our allies. Together, the U.S. and the international community must make the war in Afghanistan a top priority and provide the leadership, strategy, and resources necessary to ensure that Al Qaeda and the Taliban are destroyed for good and that Afghanistan never again becomes a safe harbor for terrorists.

To his great credit, Secretary of Defense Gates has been arguing for several of these solutions. The truth is, though, that the U.S. has as much or more to lose in Afghanistan as any other nation, and the same would be true of whatever new conflicts emerge. Until our country is prepared to lead and act decisively, these problems will fester, and the threads holding up those twin swords will stretch ever thinner.

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