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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. HOLDING).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
May 14, 2015.

I hereby appoint the Honorable GEORGE HOLDING to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

JOHN A. BOEHNER,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 6, 2015, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 1 hour and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

LOOKING AT THE BIG PICTURE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, as we are dealing with the defense authorization legislation, we should step back and look at the big picture. Are we taking tough stands dealing with escalating personnel costs, procurement issues, excess facilities? Are we honoring the responsibility of the military to clean up after itself? One of the best examples is a failure to deal with the rightsizing of our military facilities.

It is no secret that our nuclear triad, which includes our land-based missiles, nuclear submarines, and bombers, are wildly in excess of anything we need for deterrence.

The Pentagon's 2013 report on nuclear employment strategy declared that "we can ensure the security of the United States and our allies and maintain a strong and credible strategic deterrence while safely pursuing up to a one-third reduction in deployed nuclear weapons from the level established in the New START Treaty."

Other experts, including a commission chaired by former Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General James Cartwright, suggest we could go even lower without jeopardizing security.

Yet we are on a trajectory to spend over a trillion dollars in the decades to come on weapons that are largely irrelevant to the challenges of today: ISIS, 9/11-type attacks, military activities in Iraq and Afghanistan, Russian aggression in the Ukraine.

We should be addressing what is an appropriate level for the nuclear deterrence. But until we face up to the fact that we ought to at least know what we are getting into, one simple step would have been to tell Congress what the longer term costs are going to be.

In the last legislation, I had an amendment that was successfully approved to require the CBO to publish every 2 years a 10-year cost estimate of our nuclear modernization. It has already proven extremely valuable to provide a set of numbers we can compare to the Pentagon's estimates. Unfortunately, more and more of these expenses are being pushed outside the 10-year window.

I had an amendment that would have at least required our being able to have a 25-year cost of modernization, an estimate the Pentagon said they can do and one that we already have for the National Nuclear Security Administration.

One other area that was equally puzzling was the failure to allow a bipartisan, fully offset amendment to upgrade our Air National Guard F-15s. The radar they are using dates to the 1970s. In fact, it went out of production 30 years ago. We had a simple, bipartisan, fully offset amendment to allow the Air Guard to at least get 10 planes modernized on an ongoing basis.

It is frustrating. We are failing to tackle the big issues. We are not even given an opportunity to guarantee Congress knows what the longer term costs are, and we are shortchanging small investments that would make a big difference for our Air National Guard.

I hope we are going to have an opportunity as the legislation moves forward for Congress to do a better job balancing our priorities, meeting the needs of our men and women in uniform, and protecting our long-term budget.

CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF SMITH WILDMAN BROOKHART, III

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. BRIDENSTINE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BRIDENSTINE. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take some time this morning to celebrate the life of a remarkable American, the late Smith Wildman Brookhart, III.

Mr. Brookhart was born on January 22, 1935, and passed away last month. He is survived by his wife of 56 years, Gail Anderson Brookhart; three sons and their wives; and 10 grandchildren. One of Smith's sons, Tom Brookhart, and his wife, Debra Brookhart, are my constituents and good friends in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Let me talk for a moment about Smith Brookhart's life. After graduating from East High School in Duluth, Minnesota, Smith attended Iowa State College in Ames, Iowa, receiving

☐ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., ☐ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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