Unfortunately, there continue to be unmet needs. The Department of Defense Comptroller has just done a study that shows that the military health care system for active-duty and retirees up to age 65 as currently structured is underfunded over the next 6 years by $9 billion.

In addition to taking care of its people, our military has an important role to play in taking care of the environment, Congress needs to make clear that cleaning up after itself is a cost of doing business for our military just as it is for any other polluter. DOD is responsible for environmental clean-up at thousands of what are known as Formerly-Used Defense Sites. At many of these properties, owned by private parties and state, local, and tribal governments, the public may come into contact with residual contamination. The cost of completing this cleanup is estimated at over $7 billion by the Army Corps of Engineers, yet funding in this bill is less than $200 million.

Another danger to communities is unexploded ordnance, old bombs and shells that could kill or injure people who encounter them. The cost of clearing these bombs is estimated at $15 billion by the Defense Science Board. The consistent underfunding of this challenge could begin to be addressed if it had its own line item in the defense budget. I call upon the Administration to create this line item in the request it is preparing now for submission to Congress for FY02 funding.

More than a decade after the Soviet Union collapsed, our investment in national defense has returned to cold-war levels. During the cold war, the United States spent an average of $325 billion in current year dollars on the military. This year's budget resolution gave the Pentagon $310 billion—95 percent of cold-war levels and 52 percent of discretionary spending.

And now Monday's Washington Post has a front-page story stating that, starting now, the Joint Chiefs of Staff plan to submit budget requests that call for additional spending of more than $30 billion a year through most of this decade.

There is no reason to continue our reliance on a cold-war economy. Our massive investments in weapons and bases could be replaced with massive investments in education and health care and the other things that make for viable communities. While we are first in military expenditures among industrialized countries, we are 17th in low-birthweight rates, 21st in eighth-grade math scores and 22nd in infant mortality.

The defense budget is huge, certainly large enough to fund the programs that are needed for the people who serve and have served us and for the environment. Instead, it spends too much on duplicative weapons systems and questionable technologies at a time when we lead the world many times over in military might. We need to get our priorities right.

DEBATE ON DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS

HON. EARL BLUMENAUER
OF OREGON
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Thursday, June 8, 2000

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I voted against the Defense Appropriations bill last night because of its priget tag that is unprecedented in peacetime and unjustified by the threat, and the misplaced priorities within the bill.

Representative DeFAZIO’s amendment was a step in a more rational direction. It would have reduced the next two years’ purchases of F-22 fighter aircraft, as recommended by the General Accounting Office, and redirected the savings to readiness and quality of life accounts.

It was a modest amendment, and it did not cut money from the defense budget. It just spent it on higher-priority issues at a time when the F-22 continues to experience technical problems and we already have the world’s most advanced fighter, the F-15.

The $930 million saved would have been spent instead on items that were not funded at the level requested by the Department of Defense, or were included on the Pentagon’s un-funded “wish list.” Those items include additional funding for troops on food stamps, nuclear threat reduction, bonus payments to sailors on sea duty, facilities maintenance, spare parts, and recruiting.

I want to also speak to the larger issues of the bill. We made some gains this year on the issue of military retirees’ health care. Most important is the bill’s provision of $94 million for a pharmacy benefit for all Medicare-eligible military retirees and eligible family members.

This set an important precedent for us to eventually provide prescription drug coverage to all Medicare recipients. Those who have served in our military are a well-deserving group with which to start.

This bill continues various health care demonstration projects—including Medicare supplementals and the Federal Employee Health Benefits Plan. Another important aspect of military retiree health care included in this bill is the Uniformed Services Family Health Plan. These are locally-run, community-based HMOs that provide military retirees another choice. I look forward to the findings of the independent oversight panel funded in this bill which will present recommendations to Congress on a permanent military health care program for the Medicare-eligible.

The distance number validates whether the aircraft is capable of supersonic cruise. This number has not been established by a number, specifically the number of miles that can be covered while supersonic. Mach 1.8 is never forthcoming because few know the definition of supersonic cruise or are unwilling to reveal it.

The fact that the F-36 flown by General Ryan could not keep up with the F-22 is again an irrelevant speed statement on the relative speed of the two aircraft. The requirements for the F-16 specifically stated that there was no requirement that it fly faster than Mach 1.6, a fact probably unknown to the general. He had been the general that in flying a 40 year old F-104A-19, he could have flown formation with the F-22.

Pragmatic supersonic cruise is the ability to sustain significant supersonic speeds (like 1.6-1.8) for combat relevant distances. For perspective, the original design mission for the Advanced Tactical Fighter, cum F-22 would be 100 mile subsonic cruise out to the Russian border, 400 NM supersonic penetration at 1.6 Mach, consumption of the combat fuel, and a 100 nautical mile return to the border at Mach 1.6, with a 100 NM return to land with normal reserves.

The true measure of supersonic cruise potential of the F-22 is—the penetration supersonic distance that can be flown at 1.6 Mach out and back, with the same 100 nautical mile legs and the same fuel reserved for combat and landing reserves. The supersonic penetration distance is the validation of supersonic cruise. This number has not been established. The supersonic cruise potential of the F-22 remains unknown.

If that number is 50 NM it is a fruitless achievement that the F-104 can easily fulfill using its afterburner. 100 NM penetration can also be accomplished by the F-104A-19. A 200 NM penetration is not a great achievement, 300 NM means the F-22 is a pragmatic supersonic cruise. 400 NM is a dream. The distance number validates whether the F-22 has it, nothing else.

Retention of the wrong definition will forever confuse.

Sincerely,

Col. EVERETT RICCI, O
RANCHO PALOS VERDES, CA

THE F-22 PROGRAM—FACT VERSUS FICTION
(By EVERETT E. RICCI, Col. USAF, Ret.)

THE DREAM

To provide the USAF Air Superiority for the period following 2005.

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