

FLOYD D. SPENCE NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2001

SPEECH OF

HON. MARSHALL "MARK" SANFORD

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 7, 2000

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 4205) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2001 for military activities of the Department of Defense and for military construction, to prescribe military personnel strengths for fiscal year 2001, and for other purposes.

Mr. SANFORD. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in support of a strong national defense, but in reluctant opposition to the FY 2001 Department of Defense Appropriations Act (H.R. 4576). A strong defense is not simply a function of how much we spend, but also of how intelligently we spend it. Depending on who's counting, the United States spends as much on defense as the next six or seven highest countries combined. The 281 billion that the United States spent on defense in 1998 was more than all of our NATO allies combined and accounted for more than a third of all world military spending. Yet today, our military faces serious problems in training, recruiting, retention, and readiness.

One reason for this situation is the lack of a coherent national strategy. Our men and women in uniform have been dispatched across the globe in operations that are not in the national interest. This wears out our soldiers and equipment, and leaves the military less prepared to defend real national interests. The common lament I hear is that we are "spreading ourselves too thin". The lion's share of responsibility for this problem lies with the Administration.

But we're spreading ourselves too thin in the defense budget process as well, and responsibility for that falls on Congress. Congress continues to spend critical defense dollars on items that the Pentagon does not want or need.

For example:

1. F-15 aircraft—The Air Force requested no funds for additional F-15 aircraft, but the House passed \$400 million for 5 addition F-15E's. The Air Force has difficulty getting spare parts for the planes it already has. Building more unrequested planes only aggravates that problem.

2. Cold Weather Equipment—Congress added \$24 million for Gore-Tex cold weather gear that the Pentagon did not request, at the request of a Congressman whose constituents manufacture the gear. With the recruiting problems the military has, it has difficulty getting enough soldiers just to fill out the gear it already has.

3. Wolverine Heavy Assault Bridge—The Army requested no funds for the Wolverine heavy assault bridge. In fact, although the Army received \$82 million for the Wolverine for FY 2000, it did not intend to spend it on the bridge. H.R. 4576 commands the Army to spend the \$82 million on the Wolverine, as well as an additional \$15 million. In short, Congress is forcing the Army to spend \$97 million on a bridge that it doesn't need.

4. Medical Research—The Administration requested \$16.5 million for medical research

in the defense bill. The Appropriations Committee reported out \$252.2 million in H.R. 4576, including: \$6 million for laser vision correction research, \$3.7 million for nutrition research, \$10 million for ovarian cancer research, \$15 million for HIV research, \$3 million for chronic fatigue research, and \$7 million for alcoholism research.

Now, some of these programs may be valid, but they are non-defense items. We have a Labor/Health and Human Services Appropriations bill that is more suitable for these programs. Hiding these items within H.R. 4576 is unfair to our taxpayers.

In addition, H.R. 4576 skirted two important issues with profound budget and readiness implications:

Base Realignment and Closure Commission—H.R. 4576 does not include funding for two new BRAC rounds, despite the fact that the Pentagon has estimated it has an excess base capacity of 23%. CBO estimates that two new BRAC rounds would save the Defense Department \$4.7 billion by 2010, and that after completion in 2012, DOD could realize recurring savings of about \$4 billion per year. Congress' inaction means that the Pentagon must continue to waste billions of taxpayer dollars maintaining obsolete bases.

Aircraft—H.R. 4576 includes billions for research, development and procurement of three different fighter planes (the Navy's F-18 E/F, The Air Force F-22, and the Navy & Air Force Joint Strike Fighter) when there is not a strong consensus that all three fighters are necessary. Some defense experts say the military needs the F-18 & F-22. Some say it needs the JSF instead. Congress' answer is simply to fund all of the fighter planes in question. Now, Congress is forging ahead with funding the production of 10 F-22 Aircraft when there are indications that the program is not ready for production. In doing so, Congress takes away from aircraft (specifically bombers and unmanned aerial aircraft [UAVs]) that, while less glamorous, are a more pressing need for the military.

I agree that the Congress should fund a military that is second to none. And H.R. 4576 does include several important items I support, like funding for domestic terrorism response, more decent enlisted pay, and missile defense. But it is also weighed down with too many items that are unnecessary for, and in fact, counterproductive to, our national defense. Therefore, I reluctantly oppose the bill.

HONORING STEPHEN CHEN OF THE TAIWAN ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL REPRESENTATIVE OFFICE [TECRO]

HON. BENJAMIN A. GILMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 9, 2000

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, today I express our deepest appreciation to Representative Stephen Chen of the Taiwan Economic and Cultural Representative Office [TECRO] for his service as his country's senior diplomat here in Washington since 1997. Stephen has served the people of Taiwan with distinction for over 47 years as a member of Taiwan's diplomatic corps. He has served abroad in the Philippines, Brazil, Argentina, Bolivia and as

Vice Foreign Minister and Deputy Secretary General to President Lee in Taiwan. Stephen has been a staunch supporter of bilateral relations between the United States and Taiwan and has earned the respect and friendship of many Members of Congress. I invite my colleagues to join in wishing Stephen and his family best wishes on the occasion of his return to Taiwan and his retirement.

TRIBUTE TO ANGELICA MILTON

HON. SAXBY CHAMBLISS

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 9, 2000

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. Speaker, today I am pleased to honor Angelica Milton of Folkston, GA. Anglica was named a National Award Winner for honor roll. This prestigious award is offered to fewer than 10% of American high school students. Angelica was selected by her teachers and school staff members for her excellent academic performance, interest and aptitude, leadership qualities, responsibility, enthusiasm, motivation to learn and improve, citizenship, attitude and cooperative spirit, and dependability.

Angelica is an exceptional young lady, who exemplifies the qualities of a true leader, and I am proud to recognize her as an outstanding citizen of my district.

RECOGNIZING THE CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION AND POSTAL SERVICE EFFORTS IN PROMOTING CONSUMER AWARENESS OF UNSAFE PRODUCTS

HON. CARRIE P. MEEK

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 9, 2000

Mrs. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, defective products can have devastating effects on American lives. One of the strongest safeguards we have in protecting the safety and health of our citizens is the Consumer Product Safety Commission. The CPSC is working with manufacturers and retailers to keep harmful or dangerous products off of store shelves and away from Americans.

The U.S. Postal Service has made an innovative attempt at remedying this problem by giving defective products more exposure in its offices. Over 33,000 post offices nationwide are displaying posters containing color pictures of products recalled by the CPSC. Since almost 7 million people visit those post offices everyday to mail letters and ship packages, this should be highly effective in disseminating to consumers the names of those products that have been recalled by the CPSC.

I would like to share with my colleagues an editorial that recently appeared in the Ft. Lauderdale Sun Sentinel regarding this issue. I applaud the CPSC and the Postal Service for their initiative in protecting the public.

[From the Sun-Sentinel, Apr. 24, 2000]

PRODUCT RECALLS—POSTERS IN POST OFFICES WILL HELP

The U.S. Postal Service, which for years has been helping to get defective product off