

we go to war, we don't want to be in a fair fight."

Now, Operation Desert Storm in the early 1990s illustrated the awesome air superiority we have. Afghanistan and Iraq clearly illustrate our air superiority. In fact, the United States has had air superiority since the Korean War. However, we have flown a military sortie every day for the past 15 years, and it is starting to take its toll on our equipment.

A Defense Department study recently said that there has been a 10 percent decline in the mission capable rates of our aircraft since Desert Storm in the 1990s. Now, this 10 percent reduction is not because we have maintenance deficiencies or trained personnel deficiencies. It is because we are still flying the same aircraft, this time, though, much older and with hundreds of more flight hours on the same airframe.

In the 1990s, we took a procurement holiday in Congress and wanted to cash in on the so-called "peace dividend," which simply meant in practical terms the defense budget was cut in favor of other Federal spending and the new generation of fighters, the F-22s, the F-35s, were caught in the cross-hairs of that spending practice and shoved to the outside years, which meant we are now starting to fall behind. We were ignoring the leapfrog of technology that is available to our systems. We are now realizing that the F-22 and the F-35 are going to be that which closes gaps and helps us to ensure air dominance for the foreseeable future.

Both the 22 and the 35 employ stealth technology, which provides our warfighters with a critical edge in any conflict, even in low intensity battles like Iraq. Those responsible for planning the air campaign need the protections provided by stealth fighters in protecting other non-stealth aircraft, as well as ground combat.

The flight range of the 22 is three times the combat radius, and the 35 is projected to have more than double the unrefueled combat radius of the fighters they would hope to replace. The avionics would allow them for a longer stand-off, which simply means we, the good guys, can see, detect, and shoot down the bad guys before they recognize we are in the area, which is what we want to have in any type of combat.

These weapons systems we are talking about are incorporating high-tech advances in composite technologies which result in more durable aircraft parts, reduced corrosion, and lessen the needs of maintenance in the future. What we are doing, Mr. Speaker, is planning for the future.

In 2004, we had a program called Cope India, which revealed that pilots outside the United States are certainly capable of achieving very high levels of proficiency. While we don't count India as a likely enemy, this exercise was an eye-opener for the United States in the sense that it demonstrated the United States can no longer take for granted

that it will always be facing an inferior air adversary, even amongst Third World nations.

Fifteen years from now we do not know whether we will be fighting a war of terror or a conventional war. But, as Washington said, we must be prepared for whatever circumstances may be there. Because at the end of the day when we are compelled to take up arms to defend our freedom, we don't want to be in a fair fight. We want our sons and daughters to have the very best capabilities, and we want to prevail.

We must recommit as a Nation to provide the support and the resources to properly field the next generation of fighters, the F-22 and the F-35. We have an oversight responsibility to make sure that these programs are carried out in a responsible manner. We need to work together to ensure that they succeed, because they are one of the most important foundation blocks of our future national defense.

Terrorism does not take a holiday. We cannot. We must look forward to the future, so that 10 and 15 years down the line we will be able to defend ourselves in an appropriate way.

A NEED FOR SELF-MADE LEADERS, NOT DERIVATIVE LEADERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I have been asking myself why the President of the United States really can't get a grip on policies that would help America become energy independent here at home. Last week, as we were looking at rising gasoline prices all across our country, he suggested that we import, import more ethanol.

I thought about that comment and his whole administration's lack of attention to energy independence for our country, and I sort of sat there at my desk and thought, why would the President behave this way? And I thought a lot about how we form our personalities and when we take whatever occupation we get into as adults, why we behave the way we do.

There are some personalities that result from experiences that make you self-made, and then there are those personalities that I call derivative personalities, and their behaviors result from a different set of experiences, so when they get in a job they really can't command and direct, because they have never really done it themselves.

Here is an example. I grew up in a family where our mother made our clothing. We didn't have a lot of money, so we learned how to scrimp, and we learned how to invent and to create. And those are learned skills.

The President grew up in a family that was extraordinarily wealthy. I would guess that they bought most of their clothes. In fact, I can remember when the President, his father, didn't even know how much socks cost in the

store during one of his Presidential races. They always bought everything. They never made. They had enough assets, he inherited enough, that they really didn't have to learn how to be self-made. So he doesn't have a mind that lends itself to creativity necessarily.

We came from a family where we ran our own small business. Our dad made his own products. We made our own sausages, our own meatloafs, our own pickles. Dad had to do everything himself. He had to figure out how to finance his business.

We have a President who inherited his wealth. Everything that he did, he had this soft landing pad. He failed a number of times in businesses that he inherited from his own family, but he never really paid the consequences, because someone was always there to catch him and to refinance him, even in the purchase of the baseball team that he owned, which then he eventually sold and used those dollars to get elected President of the United States. Most American families don't have that kind of landing pad.

In our family, we had to earn our way to go to college, and we had to get good grades, because there was nobody there that was going to save you. Nobody in our family had ever gone to college before. I had to keep good grades to keep a scholarship up for the scholarship I did receive.

But the President's education was paid for by his family. In fact, he was admitted to schools, based on his grades, that most Americans could never get admitted to.

I think what these kinds of experiences do is create a different kind of personality, a personality of people who are self-made and they know how to create, versus a personality that is more derivative and sometimes can't solve problems, and they look to someone else to solve them.

So if we have an energy problem in America, the President would look to somebody else. And he says, well, let's import the ethanol. He doesn't really think about creating a whole new industry here at home and using the Government of the United States to help create that industry.

That is why he has proposed cutting programs. At the same time out of one side of his mouth he talks about energy addiction, but then is trying to use the Government of the United States to create a new energy future for America. He really doesn't know what to do with it when he is in command of it.

It was actually Congress that adopted the first energy title to a farm bill. It didn't come from the administration. And if you look at every single budget that he has offered, he talks about energy independence, and then he cuts the programs that would lead us in that direction.

What America really needs is a new biofuels industry as a complement to other forms of power that we can create. But we need self-made people to

help move America in that direction. Many of our farmers are figuring it out. We need programs to help them finance the development of the new infrastructure and the production facilities that are necessary to green up this industry. They need the President's help to do it so they are not bought out by Big Oil and by companies that really don't want them to bring up this new industry. But the President really doesn't know how to create it. His Secretary of Agriculture isn't doing it.

We could have programs like title IX in USDA funded at \$1 billion. We struggle to even get \$25 million or \$23 million in our committee, which is laughable in terms of a trade deficit in oil of over \$60 billion and counting.

The President's Cabinet members are not energy-focused. The Secretary of Defense said energy isn't his job. He runs the largest instrument in this country that uses fuel, and energy independence isn't his job? He said that to us in committee.

Mr. Speaker, we need people in our country and the Presidency and this Congress who are self-made, not derivative, to lead America to a new independent energy age.

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

(Mr. DREIER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

SENATE HEALTH WEEK

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to speak out of order for 5 minutes.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. GINGREY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to applaud the United States Senate for bringing to the floor this week three critical pieces of health care legislation. Unfortunately, only one of the three still stands a chance to see an actual up-or-down vote on the Senate floor.

The rising cost of health care is an issue the Federal Government can no longer afford to ignore. The Department of Health and Human Services reports the cost of medical liability coverage and defensive medicine alone increases the amount taxpayers must pay for Medicaid, Medicare and other Federal health programs by as much as \$56 billion a year. So much more than the increased cost of malpractice premiums is the astronomical cost of defensive medicine.

Mr. Speaker, the Federal Government is seeing, as is every business and State legislature across America, their budget being crowded out by the skyrocketing costs of health care. We no

longer have the luxury to pretend that this is not a national crisis, and it demands not only our full attention, but our resolve to find real solutions.

Each and every year, the House of Representatives has tackled the tough issue of controlling the cost of health care. In this body, we have passed medical malpractice liability three times in the last 2 years. Each and every time, that piece of legislation has fallen victim to the inaction of the Senate, and each year our health care crisis continues to grow.

When someone we love brings a child into this world, we do not thank a trial lawyer for his hard work. When a family member is admitted to the emergency room after a heart attack, we do not feel relieved that there was a trial lawyer close by. And yet unless we do something soon to fix our medical liability system, we might discover it is far easier to find a lawyer in our community than to find a doctor.

Guaranteeing all Americans access to quality health care should be what drives this debate. Just think: The best medical care in the world goes to waste if there are not doctors in our community to deliver it.

There are many stories, Mr. Speaker, too numerous to tell, of quality physicians hanging up their stethoscopes to pursue other careers. When they are faced with soaring medical malpractice premiums and decreasing reimbursement, the best and the brightest are pursuing other career paths.

Ask your neighborhood physician if they would encourage their children to follow in their footsteps and to become a doctor. All too often you would get a resounding "no."

Unfortunately, there were not enough Senators yesterday who stood on the side of patients. There were not enough Senators yesterday who put quality health care above partisan politics. Once again, sensible medical malpractice reform legislation died in the Senate.

This sensible legislation is based on a proven system that is saving health care in Texas. H.R. 5, the Health Act, common-sense reform legislation for which I was the lead sponsor last year in this House is also based on a successful reform model from the State of California, that was enacted in 1978, called MICRA.

What we know, looking at these precedents is that reform works. Mr. Speaker, look at the medical malpractice premiums in 2003 for OB/GYNs in two different cities. In San Francisco, a city in a reform State, California, an average OB/GYN physician would pay \$40,000 a year for an annual policy. However, an OB/GYN physician practicing in Chicago, Illinois, a non-reform State, would pay an annual premium of \$139,000.

This is not a situation that can be righted overnight, but there are sensible reforms that provide necessary steps to transform the American health care system, and medical mal-

practice reform is certainly one of them.

Mr. Speaker, another good step towards transforming health care is Senate bill 1955, which the Senate is currently debating. The Health Insurance Marketplace Modernization and Affordability Act is legislation that is similar to H.R. 525, the Small Business Health Fairness Act, that we passed in this body. This bill was introduced by Representative SAM JOHNSON, and as I say, it passed the House last year. This legislation will reduce the cost of health benefits for small business and the self-employed by establishing the new national Association Health Plans, or AHPs, as they are known.

AHPs currently exist, but they are severely hampered by the administrative burden and the high cost of having to comply with 50 different sets of State insurance laws and regulations. These barriers have made it virtually impossible to start new plans, and they have forced many of these plans to close, thus greatly limiting the availability of affordable health insurance to small businesses.

Allowing an environment that will permit association or small business health plans to flourish will strengthen our health insurance markets by creating greater competition and more choices of health plans for small business. Greater competition will benefit consumers by driving down premiums and expanding access to coverage.

H.R. 525 is just another example of House Republicans showing the American people they get it done when it comes to healthcare reform. In regards to decreasing the cost of health care, expanding private insurance coverage to all Americans, and increasing the quality of the healthcare delivery system; patients across our country deserve our undivided attention and it's time for the Senate to act, or stand accountable.

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

(Mr. ETHERIDGE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening to celebrate Asian Pacific American Heritage Month.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank a great leader, our colleague, Congressman HONDA, and the Asian Pacific American Caucus, of which I am a very proud member, for organizing later this night a special order to honor the contributions of Asian Pacific Americans.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot help but first recall and remind us of the great leadership of our beloved Congressman Bob