

optimistic about Africa's future. We know we will make mistakes; we will struggle, and at times we will fall. But we will get up and move forward."

In international affairs, Bongo said U.S.-Gabon relations are "very good," adding, "We would like more progress on the economic front and are working on a trade agreement with the U.S. government."

Acknowledging Gabon's new responsibilities on the U.N. Security Council, Bongo said, "We are going to work very closely with the United States and all the permanent members of the Security Council to make sure that the world is a better place." He had earlier addressed the Security Council, which Gabon chairs for the month of March.

Speaking to the press after her private meeting with the African leader, Secretary Clinton said, "I want to recognize President Bongo's efforts to improve government efficiency, eliminate waste and fight corruption."

"We know, as the president knows, that economic progress depends on responsible governance that rejects corruption, enforces the rule of law, provides good stewardship of natural resources and delivers results that help to change people's lives for the better."

"We stand ready to support Gabon as it further strengthens its democratic institutions and processes," Clinton said.

The secretary added, "We are very supportive of Gabon's efforts to diversify its economy, widen the circle of prosperity and create new opportunities for its people. Gabon is participating in the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative and taking other steps that will give confidence both to international investors but, more importantly, to the people of the country."

Speaking two days before the State Department issues its annual human rights report, Clinton said: "I also want to applaud the leadership that Gabon has shown in combating human trafficking. We have forged new partnerships with the Justice Department, and Gabon is moving toward ratifying the U.N. protocol. This is one more example of the reform-minded leadership that President Bongo is bringing to his country."

"We've come a long way," Bongo responded. "We've gone through a democratic process, and now we are moving forward. Good governance, [the] fight against corruption, diversity [in] our economy and our partners. This is what we're doing."

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2011

SPEECH OF

HON. CAROLYN MCCARTHY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 27, 2010

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 5136) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2011 for military activities of the Department of Defense, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes:

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York. Mr. Chair, I rise in support of H.R. 5136, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2011.

Each year, Congress acts to authorize national defense spending. Matters of defense spending have been one of my highest priorities throughout my time in Congress. Especially during times of war, we, in Congress, have the utmost obligation to ensure our service men and women have the adequate re-

sources they need to serve both honorably and safely. Moreover, we must remember our retired and wounded service men and women and ensure that they receive the benefits and care respectful of their heroic sacrifices.

There are many provisions of this \$567 billion authorization to be proud of. This bill strengthens four pivotal national objectives including, but not limited to, counterterrorism efforts, missile defense, nuclear nonproliferation, and benefits and care to our nation's service members and their families.

Some provisions that particularly stand out are the funding authorizations that support the President's agenda in Afghanistan. This bill takes steps to address prior shortfalls of our efforts in Afghanistan under the Bush Administration. Specifically, the bill outlines resources that will give U.S. commanders in the field the tools they need for success, as well as the means to forge meaningful strategic partnerships with neighboring nations so as to both facilitate victory and a swift and safe return for our brave service men and women. The bill also furthers the President's efforts to secure the nuclear arsenals across the globe. If Cold War politics have taught the world one thing, it is that nuclear proliferation could lead to dangerous situations. H.R. 5136 makes significant strides in aligning our defense policy with 21st century challenges, including facilitating a mobile missile defense system and regulation of nuclear arms. I believe Congress must do all that it can to ensure that the development of nuclear technologies is globally regulated and transparent. This bill, in funding key programs like the Department of Energy's Global Threat Reduction Initiative and Department of Defense's Cooperative Threat Reduction Program, takes important steps to ensuring that weapons grade nuclear materials do not end up into the hands of terrorists and dangerous states.

I am proud to speak to the funds authorized for the benefits and care of our military servicemembers and their families. A nation with the best military in the world should provide the best care in the world. Among its many provisions, H.R. 5136 provides a 1.9% pay raise to our troops, increases imminent danger pay, and expands college loan repayment benefits. Furthermore, the bill includes a "pre-separation" counseling program to help provide discharged servicemembers and their spouses with financial and job assistance. Especially in these tough economic times, it is important to promote financial literacy efforts across the board so as to better educate and inform average Americans of their financial and professional options.

Finally, I am extremely encouraged by language included in the final Defense Authorization bill that recognizes the harmful implications of poor nutrition as it pertains to national security. As Chairwoman of the Healthy Families and Communities Subcommittee, I have been very active in efforts to increase access to child nutrition programs. It is important that Congress recognize the vast impact proper child nutrition has on our nation. H.R. 5136 includes a sense of Congress that hunger and obesity are impairing military recruitment and must be properly addressed. I am proud to lead efforts to improve access to important initiatives like direct certification systems, and the national school lunch and summer food services programs. The language in this bill regarding obesity underscores the vast and

grave consequences an unhealthy nation can have.

Again, Mr. Chair, I support the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2011. I commend both Chairman IKE SKELTON and Ranking Member HOWARD MCKEON for their hard work in putting together a tremendous piece of legislation that, in my opinion, adequately supports our active and retired service men and women.

RECOGNIZING THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AMERICANS IN WARTIME IN PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY, VA

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 28, 2010

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I rise to recognize the National Museum of Americans in Wartime (the American Wartime Museum), which will break ground later this year in Prince William County, Va. This museum is being built to honor all Americans who have served or presently serve our country in any branch of the United States military from World War I forward.

It will tell the stories and recognize the contributions and sacrifices of the brave men and women who dedicated themselves to defending and preserving our Nation's freedoms through their service in the U.S. Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard, the Reserves and the National Guard.

The museum will offer a unique interactive history of major conflicts from the 20th and 21st centuries and focus on educating young Americans about wartime experiences and the sacrifices made by those Americans who "answered the call" in service of our nation.

The American Wartime Museum is the culmination of a partnership between private and government entities. The Museum will be built on a 70 acre site that has been generously donated by the Hylton family of Prince William County. It will feature a large collection of vintage and modern operational military vehicles, some of which will be used for demonstrations and reenactments. There will be large outdoors "Landscapes of War" with authentic replicas of battle scenes. Visitors will be able to hear, touch and experience military vehicles, aircraft and naval vessels. The planned National Veterans Visitor Center will offer special services and activities for veterans including opportunities for military reunions and the ability to record oral histories for future generations of Americans. Visiting the Museum will be truly interactive and will not only educate but actually provide a very realistic sense of the experiences of those who have served in uniform.

This project enjoys broad, bipartisan support from the Prince William Board of County Supervisors, the Commonwealth of Virginia and the United States Congress. George Mason University is a key partner in this endeavor, which will provide new academic and research opportunities for students, historians and the public. The leadership team of the museum includes Craig Stewart, President and CEO; Allan Cors, Chairman of the Board of Trustees; former Virginia Governor and U.S. Senator Chuck Robb; a Medal of Honor recipient