

premiums that might be offered to seniors if plans were offered under their grand plan.

It is a way to shovel more billions into the insurance industry and more billions into the obscenely profitable pharmaceutical industry at the expense of America's seniors, while pretending to address a real concern of America's seniors.

That is outrageous. We take a program that is successful, which the Republicans opposed, Medicare, and add an optional, optional, prescription drug benefit. And then, God forbid, they do not like this part at all, we use the market power of Medicare, with 33 million seniors in it, to bargain down the price of drugs. We use the market. The Democrats use the market.

That is not price controls. The VA is doing that take today. Blue Cross-Blue Shield is using that today. They use their market clout. They drive down the cost of prescription drugs by saying, hey, we have millions of people in our plan. We want a discount.

But they are saying we should not do that. In fact, they are saying we should give subsidies to the pharmaceutical companies. God forbid we should bring down the prices in this country.

The prices on pharmaceuticals are more expensive in the United States than any other country on Earth. That is why Americans go across the border to Canada to buy American manufactured drugs for half the price, why they go across the border to Mexico to buy American manufactured drugs for half the price.

What do they want to do? They want to give a subsidy to the pharmaceutical industry and a subsidy to the insurance industry. That solution is outrageous.

NATIONAL SECURITY AT A LOW EBB

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 19, 1999, the gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. HUNTER. Madam Speaker. In answering my colleague with respect to getting out of town, I think a lot of us, Democrat and Republican, have come to the conclusion that the president will not take "yes" for an answer until it is politically expedient to do so. You can make an agreement in 5 minutes or 5 days or 5 months, and we obviously have great resistance at the White House right now.

Madam Speaker, let me talk about an aspect of this administration which needs addressing in a very short period of time after the new President takes office. Today, national security is at a low ebb. I reflect back on Vice President GORE's new invention that he came up with in the last debate, in which, along with inventing the Inter-

net and various other American inventions, he invented four Army divisions. He stated that when he came in as vice president, the Army had gone down, but that he increased the number of divisions.

Well, in fact in January of 1993, when Vice President GORE took office, there were 14 divisions in the United States Army. A division is a big group. It is a large number of people, a lot of equipment, in some cases upward of 20,000 personnel.

Today, after the Clinton-Gore administration has run down national security, I might say, for 6 years, there are only 10 divisions in the United States Army. So when Vice President GORE came into office, there were 14 divisions. He claims he increased the number of divisions, but today it is down to 10 divisions. So somewhere along the line the vice president has invented four Army divisions, which is not an insignificant thing.

Now, if you look across the array of military equipment shortages and ammunition shortages, a number of things jump out at you. One thing we need to know is that since the vice president and President Clinton took over in 1992, we have cut the military almost in half. We have gone down, as I said, from 14 Army divisions January 1, 1993, to only 10 today, so we have cut the Army by a good 30-35 percent. We have cut the Navy from 546 warships to only 316 warships, so we have cut the Navy in numbers by about 40 percent. We have cut our fighter air wings from 24 fighter air wings to only 13 fighter air wings. So we have cut air power almost in half under this administration.

Now, the interesting aspect of that, and I think the real tragedy of this slashing of national defense, is this: Usually when you cut an organization, whether it is a sports organization or a business organization, when you decrease it, when you cut it back in size, Americans presume that the core that is left after you have made these cuts is going to be well-trained, well-equipped and ready to go. The sad facts are that the small military that is left after Vice President GORE and President Clinton have taken the action to it, the small military that is left, this half a military that is left, is not as ready as the big military that we had that won Desert Storm in the early 1990s.

Let me give you some examples. They are tragic examples. A few weeks ago we had the Chief of Staff of the Army, General Shinseki, testifying to us. He had to report to us that the Army is \$3 billion short of critical ammo supplies. Ammunition. Now, you may not agree with the B-2 bomber, you may not agree with the F-22 fighter. Every American feels that it is good for our troops to have ammunition, because they may need it.

This \$3 billion shortage was not measured against any requirement

that Congress laid on the administration, it was not measured against what the Senate or the House felt we needed in ammunition, it was measured against what the administration itself analyzed that we needed to be able to fight the so-called two regional contingency conflict. That is the kind of conflict where we might get involved in a Desert Storm operation against Saddam Hussein, or we might have a Kosovo operation, and, at the same time, the North Koreans, for example, might take advantage of that and try to come south on the peninsula, so American forces might have to deploy to two different areas of the world. We feel that to be safe and to give our service people the best chance of returning alive, we need to have the equipment, the ammunition and the capability of handling those two conflicts at about the same time, because it could happen. Well, that \$3 billion ammunition shortage that General Shinseki spoke about is with respect to the two MRC contingency.

So let us rebuild national defense. Madam Speaker, I think help is on the way.

PROVIDING HEALTH CARE ASSISTANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 19, 1999, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GREEN) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Madam Speaker, let me follow my colleague. It is interesting though if our armed services are in such bad shape, they have received more funding every year, and it has passed overwhelmingly. In fact, we have a lot of appropriations bills that have not been sent to the President yet, but the Department of Defense was the first one and has had the big plus-up every year compared to other Federal agencies.

Madam Speaker, after sitting here and listening to my colleagues this morning talk about it, I heard that the Department of Education could not be audited. Well, when is the last time the Department of Defense was audited successfully?

Madam Speaker, I think that is a good topic for debate, but this House and this Senate and the President signed the Department of Defense appropriations bill, the first one, and it is there, and it passed overwhelmingly on both sides. So I do not think the United States is going to hell in a handbasket on the Department of Defense, because we make sure we try to provide that funding.

Here we are October 30, and Congress is still in session, and we have heard my colleagues blame the President or blame different folks, Republicans. But it is interesting, because next Tuesday the voters all over the country will go to the polls and make some decisions.