

40 percent. They have cut the Air Force from 24 active fighter airwings to only 13. It is time to rebuild national security.

The interesting thing about these massive cuts in force structure, meaning we have about 60 percent of the military that we had when this administration took over, is that generally speaking, one would expect, when we cut a sports organization or we cut a business organization, we would think that when we cut it down in size, the half that one has left, if one cuts it in half, is going to be better prepared, better equipped and better trained than the big operation that one had earlier. That core should be a good, highly-efficient, highly-prepared operating core, whether it is in sports or in business or in the military world.

Well, the sad thing about this cut in our military force structure, cutting the Army from 18 to 10 division, cutting our fighter airwings from 24 to 13, and cutting our Navy from 546 ships to only 316 ships, the tragedy is, the small military we have today after these slashes is not as prepared as the big military that we had during Desert Storm. The chief of staff of the Army has told us that we are now some \$3 billion short on ammunition for the Army. The Marine Corps has told us that they are \$200 million short on ammunition. The Air Force chief of staff has told us that we are roughly 50 percent short on precision munitions. Those are the munitions that we have, where instead of carpet-bombing a bridge, one can fly in and put one precision munition, very, very accurate, on one strut of that bridge and knock the bridge down. It is a highly-efficient way to project American power.

So the Air Force told us they have cut those munitions down to the point where they only have 50 percent of what they need. The Navy has informed us that they only have 50 percent of their requirement for Tomahawk cruise missiles. Those cruise missiles are what we use to go into an area that is heavily defended, where if we send pilots in to drop bombs out of planes, we might lose some of those pilots. So those cruise missiles, those Tomahawks are very valuable; but today we only have 50 percent, according to the Navy, of what we need.

Now, along with that, we see the mission capability rate of our frontline fighter aircraft just dropping off the cliff. Mission capability rate is how many of our aircraft work. If I ask my neighbor, what is your mission capability rate of your cars and he said, a minute and I will tell you, and he went outside and he tried to start them, and he had two cars and only one started, he would come back in and say, it is 50 percent, only one of the two cars starts.

Well, the mission capability rate for our frontline fighters, the F-15E and

the F-16, has dropped into the 70 percent rate. That means that it has dropped about 10 points from the 83 percent-or-so mission capability rate to an average of about 72, 73 percent. That means out of 100 aircraft, 30 of them cannot get off the ground and cannot go do their job. So now there is this shortage of fighter airwings, these 13 fighter airwings we have, are only about 70 percent ready to go. That means we really only have about nine airwings that really are ready to go out and engage the enemy.

So Mr. GORE has not presided over a resurrection of the U.S. military; he has presided over a decline.

Mr. Speaker, I think that help is on the way.

BREAST CANCER DRUGS: INTERNATIONAL PRICE COMPARISON

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

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, by now, most Americans are aware that prescription drug prices are higher in the United States than any other industrialized country; 2, 3, even 4 times higher. It is difficult to believe that drug manufacturers manipulate prices even when a drug is used to treat a life-threatening illness like cancer. Unfortunately, that is exactly what the drug makers are doing.

A study I released yesterday looks at the prices charged for drugs used to treat breast cancer. Mr. Speaker, 8,600 women in Ohio will be diagnosed with breast cancer this year; and 1,900 will die from this disease. In the counties I serve as a Congressman, women with breast cancer pay 2½ times more for the 5 most commonly used breast cancer drugs than women in Canada pay, in France pay, in England pay and in Italy pay. Tamoxifen, the most widely used cancer drug, has the highest-priced differential. A monthly supply of Tamoxifen costs an uninsured woman in my district \$114. In Canada, it costs \$12; in France, it costs \$10.20. We are talking about price differentials in the 850 percent to 1,000 percent range. It is unbelievable and it is unconscionable. A woman diagnosed with breast cancer needs to devote all of her energy to fighting that cancer. The toughest battle should be surviving the cancer, not finding ways to pay for medications. Prescription drug prices are priced unreasonably, unjustifiably, and outrageously high in the United States.

Drug prices are two and three and four times higher here than in other industrialized countries. Why? Because the prescription drug industry can get away with it. We do not negotiate prices because this Republican-led Congress will not do that. We do not demand that drug manufacturers reduce

their prices to reflect the taxpayer-funded portion, almost half, the taxpayer-funded portion of the research and development. Why? Because this Congress will not do that. We do nothing to help the 44 million Americans under 65 and the 11 million over 65 who lack insurance for prescription drugs, again because this Congress has failed to enact Medicare coverage for prescription drugs.

The U.S. is the wealthiest Nation in the world. Our tax dollars finance a significant portion, almost half, of the research and development underlying new prescription drugs. Why do we tolerate congressional inaction? The prescription drug industry has a huge stake in the status quo and spends lavishly to preserve it. They pour money into political campaigns, \$11 million in this year alone, \$9 million of it going to majority Republicans. They pour money into high-pressure lobbying, they pour money into front groups that pose as consumer organizations like Citizens for Better Medicare. They try to scare Americans into believing that if we do not let drug manufacturers charge obscenely high prices, then they will not do research and development anymore; yet drug companies could afford to spend \$13 billion promoting their products last year.

Drug companies' profits outpace those of any other industries by 5 percentage points at least. The drug industry consistently leads other industries in return on investment, return on assets, return on equity. Thanks to huge tax breaks, the drug industries' effective tax rate is 65 percent lower than the average in other U.S. industries. Why? Because this Congress will not do anything about it. It doesn't matter whether we could take steps to make prescription drugs more affordable in this country; the only thing that matters is this country has failed to take steps to do that.

Drug industry lobbying convinced the Republican leadership to weaken a bill that would have allowed Americans to buy larger quantities of prescription drugs from Canada and other countries where drugs are priced lower. Whether we build on the progress of at least some legislation depends on which party controls the White House and which party controls Congress. Republicans and Democrats should be united, Mr. Speaker, in their determination to address the prescription drug issue. Unfortunately, that is not the case. The Republican majority has consistently bucked every attempt to seriously address prescription drug coverage under Medicare and to seriously address prescription drug pricing. I urge my colleagues to check the record. It will bear me out.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot afford to waste another minute, much less another session of Congress pretending to address the prescription drug industry

with watered-down legislation and unworkable Medicare prescription drug proposals. The public should demand policymakers to deliver a strategy that prevents the drug industry from robbing us blind. We should not leave here before the election until this Congress passes prescription drug coverage under Medicare and does something about the outrageously high prices that prescription drug companies charge American citizens.

CONGRESS HAS NOT DONE AMERICA'S BUSINESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I was not planning on talking about this this evening, but I heard what my colleague from Florida (Mr. FOLEY) said about where we are tonight and the possibility of adjournment; and I have to respond to it, because I think it was very unfair to the minority side and to the Democratic side here.

The gentleman from Florida suggested that somehow the Democrats wanted to go home and that the Republicans were the ones that were keeping us here. I find it rather ironic. He talked about the fact that the other body, the other body passed a 2-week continuing resolution so that we could go home for the election and not come back for 2 weeks, and we know who is in the majority, both in the other body as well as in the House of Representatives, and that is the Republicans.

The motion in the other body to adjourn for 2 weeks came from the Republican leadership, not from the Democrats. The same is true here. As Democrats, if the Republican leadership in this House wants to take up that resolution that came up from the other body, I assure my colleagues that most, if not all, Democrats will vote no. We have made it quite clear as Democrats in the House of Representatives that we have no intention of going home, and that we are not in favor of a continuing resolution that would take us out of here for 2 weeks, and any suggestion to the contrary is not based on the facts, because we are not in the majority. How would we possibly be in a position in either House of the Congress to make a decision to adjourn for any period of time when we are not in the majority? It simply makes no sense.

I have to take offense to the fact that somehow he was suggesting that the Democratic leadership wanted to go home. It was the Republican leadership in the other body that brought up the resolution, and if anything is done with that resolution, it will have to be the Republican leadership that brings it up.

There is absolutely no question that the Democrats want to stay here and work, and we have made the point over and over again; and I certainly have myself, along with some of the Members that are joining me here tonight, particularly on the health care issues, that we do not want to go home until we pass HMO reform and the Patients' Bill of Rights, until we pass a Medicare prescription drug benefit plan for our seniors. We have been very critical of the fact that the Republican leadership refuses to bring these major issues and major policy concerns up to be addressed here in the House of Representatives. At the same time, it is abundantly clear that the Republican leadership does not want to even get its basic work done by passing the budget, the appropriations bills. A good percentage, I think 5 or 6, of the appropriation bills are still pending, and every effort on our part to try to resolve those and say that we should be meeting to resolve them continues to be met, but with the other side saying, well, we need more time, or we cannot accept your proposals, or we do not want to meet on common ground.

Mr. Speaker, I wanted to highlight an editorial that was in today's New York Times that talked about how ineffectual this Republican Congress has been. I think, with the concurrence of my colleagues here, maybe I will just, I will put this up for my colleagues and others to see. This was in today's New York Times, and it is entitled, as my colleagues can see, "An Ineffectual Congress." If my colleagues do not believe me and my characterization of the Republican leadership's efforts of basically being ineffectual, well, then just take some sections from this editorial from the New York Times today. I just want to read a few of the parts of it that I think are particularly relevant.

It says, "The 106th Congress, with little to show for its 2 years of existence, has all but vanished from public discourse. In past Presidential campaigns, Congress has at least been an issue, but nobody, least of all the presidential candidates, is talking about this particular Congress and the reason is plain. On almost every matter of importance, gun control, Patients' Bill of Rights, energy deregulation, Social Security, Congress has done little or nothing, failing to produce a record worthy of either celebration or condemnation, nor has it been able to complete even the most basic business, the appropriations bills that keep the government functioning. Three have been vetoed," and it says, "Absent a burst of statesmanship in the next few days, it is possible that Congress will have to come back after Election Day to complete work on the Federal budget."

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I think that is almost certain at this point. The other body has actually left.

But the editorial continues:

"But if Congress has done a lousy job for the public at large, it is doing a fabulous job of feathering its own nest and rewarding commercial interests and favored constituencies with last-minute legislative surprises that neither the public nor most Members of Congress have digested."

Mr. Speaker, I have said over and over again that what the Democrats have been saying on the floor of this House for 2 years is that we want to address these issues that are important to the average person: HMO reform, Medicare prescription drugs, education issues. You name it, we are looking at the concerns that the average person has.

What do we see with the Republican leadership? All they want to do is address concerns of special interests. The reason that they could not agree on a Labor-HHS appropriations bill and had to finally blow up the negotiations the other day was because the Democrats had put in the bill provisions for people, what we call ergonomics, people who have repetitive motions in their work, using their fingers, and what they do on the job and suffer from it, and we wanted to address that worker safety issue.

The Chamber of Commerce came in and said, we do not want that in there, so they blew up the Labor appropriations bill.

The reason we do not have a Patients' Bill of Rights is because the Republicans basically are in the pocket of the HMOs, and they want to do the bidding of the HMOs. They do not want HMO reform.

The reason we do not have a Medicare prescription drug benefit is because the drug companies oppose it and the Republican leadership is in the pocket of the drug companies and has to do their bidding, so they cannot bring up the Medicare prescription drug benefit.

This is laid out abundantly clear. Just another section, if I could, from this New York Times editorial.

It says, and this is the President, it says, "But most of his energy has been spent beating back last-minute riders he does not like. At last count, there were well over 200 special-interest items 'in play.' Originally they were attached to the Commerce-Justice-State spending bill. When the President threatened a veto, they jumped like fleas to the Labor-Health and Human Services bill."

That is what we are having here, special interest riders. The President says, no, we are not going to do that for these special interests, we are here for the people. The Republicans, they just move them from one bill to the next.