

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES—Monday, June 26, 2000

The House met at 12:30 p.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. KUYKENDALL).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
June 26, 2000.

I hereby appoint the Honorable STEVEN T. KUYKENDALL to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING HOUR DEBATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 19, 1999, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to not to exceed 30 minutes, and each Member, except the majority leader, the minority leader, or the minority whip, limited to not to exceed 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. STEARNS) for 5 minutes.

UNITED STATES AIR FORCE IN KOSOVO

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, last month the May 15 edition of Newsweek ran an article regarding Kosovo and the damage assessment data that was gathered by NATO and the United States Air Force. While some of the accusations in the article raised concerns on both sides of the issue, I believe, Mr. Speaker, it misses the point, and, that is, the outstanding job accomplished by our men and women of the United States Air Force.

What many fail to realize is that the Air Force was practically engaged in a major theater war. Thirty-eight thousand sorties were flown during the 78-day operation with two aircraft lost to enemy fire. At the beginning of Operation Allied Force, the average number of sorties flown per day was 200. That number increased to 1,000 by the end of that conflict. Furthermore, the United States expended over 23,315 munitions with the United States Air Force accounting for 91 percent of that amount. That in itself, Mr. Speaker, is a logistics success story.

Over 20,000 Air Force personnel were deployed in Operation Allied Force. The operation also included 13 percent of Air Force fighter aircraft, 16 percent of bombers and 28 percent of tanker aircraft. At the same time, United States Air Force equipment and personnel were deployed to Northern Watch in Iraq, Southwest Asia, Central and South America, and various Pacific operations. In fact, Mr. Speaker, we have over 260,000 military personnel in over 100 countries. Our military has been deployed more times during this administration than the entire Cold War period.

I am concerned that the Newsweek article chose not to highlight the major effort in which the United States Air Force engaged over those 78 days, but the outstanding performance continued after hostilities ceased as Air Force officials delved into an in-depth analysis of the warfare data.

This article in Newsweek dated May 15, this year, attempts to persuade the reader that NATO, the Pentagon and United States Air Force officials purposely misstated the number of tanks, artillery and armored personnel carriers destroyed in Operation Allied Force. However, the author based his assertions on a so-called suppressed report. In reality, his information was likely provided by way of an initial ground survey conducted by NATO itself.

This initial survey documented actual on-site findings of damaged or destroyed equipment. But let me emphasize a point here. This survey was conducted after 78 days of aerial combat operations where the battlefield, of course, can drastically change from day to day. Furthermore, it is common practice for any army to remove as much as possible of its equipment and damage from the battlefield as soon as possible.

Let me emphasize that this data project was conducted by NATO itself, with the support of the United States Air Force. Obviously since the Air Force conducted most of the offensive operations, its involvement was crucial to gathering accurate data. The project was also designed as an assessment of weapons targeting, their impact and effectiveness, and, of course, not just counting armor damage.

The data released by NATO was the result of a thorough methodology composed of ground survey, mission reports, cockpit videos, satellite and other imagery and, of course, intelligence reports. This data also had to

factor in decoy use, multiple strikes on a target, and, of course, unconfirmed strikes. As a result, the data released was in fact more conservative than initial battle damage assessments. That is precisely the point of this in-depth analysis, to get an accurate picture of what happened so you can learn and adapt for future conflicts.

The Newsweek article does raise a few questions, but if one looks at the entire picture of this operation, that person will see the Herculean effort shouldered by the United States Air Force. In the end, the Serbs retreated. The Air Force mission was accomplished, which, of course, is the real message for all Americans, that the Air Force did its job and did it well.

We can be proud of these men and women and their commitment to serve their country and fight for a people whom they did not know. I commend the United States Air Force, and all the other armed services in support of Operation Allied Force.

IN OPPOSITION TO H.R. 4680, REPUBLICAN PRESCRIPTION DRUG BENEFIT BILL

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

Mr. BENTSEN. Mr. Speaker, later this week the Republican leadership will bring to the floor a bill purporting to be a new prescription drug benefit for America's senior citizens. In reality, it is a bill which is fatally flawed, providing a political fig leaf for Republicans while providing false hope to the senior citizens we all represent who are feeling increasingly pinched by ever rising prescription drug costs.

Mr. Speaker, the Republican bill fails both in its structure and its scope, and it as well as any plausible alternative as proposed by Democrats is subject to an artificial monetary constraint imposed by the Republicans in their budget resolution which is both disingenuous and hypocritical.

In their desire to do anything but create a real prescription drug benefit under Medicare, the Republicans' Rx proposal creates a Rube Goldberg structure that involves subsidizing insurance companies to do what they do not want to do while creating a new government bureaucracy in Medicare. The Republican plan is modeled after the Medicare Choice structure of enticing private insurers to take over the

☐ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., ☐ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in **this typeface** indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.