

Army helicopter pilots who received high altitude training and deployed helicopter pilots who did not receive such training, including the number of accidents related to power management, using high and low estimates and the number of accidents involving combat and non-combat environments. I expect that this report will make clear the importance of HAATS' critical mission and the need for its having more aircraft.

And this conference report includes a section (section 2827) requiring a report by November 30th of this year analyzing of any potential expansion of the Pinon Canyon Maneuver Site, which is associated with Fort Carson. As a member of the Armed Service Committee and the Colorado delegation, I will be very interested in the information presented in this report.

The conference report provides funds for important projects in Colorado, including \$10 million for work at Buckley Air Force Base, \$4.9 million for construction at Peterson Air Force Base, \$21 million for work at Schriever Air Force Base, and \$26.1 million to be used at Fort Carson.

And, at the national level, it includes many provisions that will improve our overall military readiness and provide for our troops and retirees.

Among other things, it authorizes a 2.2 percent pay raise, effective January 1, 2007, and includes a provision, developed through the leadership of our colleague Representative JOHN SPRATT, to provide targeted pay raises for mid-grade and senior NCOs and warrant officers, effective April 1, 2007. It also expands TRICARE Reserve Select to members of the Selected Reserves, and terminates the current three-tier eligibility program while putting a one-year moratorium on any increases in retail pharmaceutical prices under the TRICARE system.

The conference report also establishes additional financial protections for service members, prohibiting creditors from charging service members and their dependents annual interest rates for loans higher than the legal limit for state residents, or no more than 36 percent in any case.

And, of course, it authorizes a \$70 billion supplemental for operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, including \$23.7 billion to replace and reset equipment lost or damaged in operations.

I opposed President Bush's decision to invade Iraq and my concerns about this poorly managed and badly planned war have been realized. I believe it was a strategic mistake to make nationbuilding in Iraq the centerpiece of our war against Islamic terrorism—a belief that has been strengthened by the April 2006 National Intelligence Estimate entitled "Trends in Global Terrorism: Implication for the United States," portions of which were recently declassified. But now that our troops are there and Iraq is struggling to avoid a slide into civil war, we cannot withdraw them immediately, and we must continue to provide the funds necessary to maintain and re-equip them.

I urge approval of the conference report.

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I reluctantly rise today to oppose the Conference Report for The National Defense Authorization Act, H.R. 5122.

The National Defense Authorization Act is Congress' only opportunity each year to seriously debate the defense policies of our Nation. Yet, when the House debated this legislation in earlier this year, the Republican Majority prevented any debate about the most important national defense issue we face: the war in Iraq. More than 2,700 American service members have lost their lives fighting in Iraq. American taxpayers have paid more than \$400 billion to fund the effort. Yet, despite authorizing an additional \$70 billion for the war, we have had no debate on this floor about our policy or needed strategy changes. This is an unconscionable failure of the House.

The House previously made a mockery of Congress' responsibilities to guide policy by shamefully politicizing Representative JOHN MURTHA's thoughtful proposal for a phased redeployment of American troops in Iraq. Regardless of one's opinion on the best course of action in the war, the failure of Congress to entertain debate or exercise real oversight is a dereliction of our duty.

Just this week, news reports revealed that a National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) written in April comes to the conclusion that the war in Iraq is making America less safe. I have been telling my constituents for months that this war is endangering the lives of our service members, fueling the terrorist insurgency, and failing to make us safer. The NIE confirms this.

On another important subject, Congress is also long overdue for a serious examination of our nuclear weapons policy. Fifteen years after the collapse of the Soviet Union, we behave as if the Cold War never ended, maintaining a stockpile of thousands of nuclear weapons, many on hair-trigger missiles—far more than we need to assure our continued military dominance. It is time we honor the commitment we made when we signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and begin to phase out our nuclear stockpile. This bill fails to make any changes to our nuclear posture and it is my hope that the committee will work with me to get the United States to honor our NPT pledge.

I am also disappointed that this bill authorizes \$9.4 billion for the missile defense programs within the Missile Defense Agency (MDA). Since its inception during the Reagan administration, MDA has spent nearly \$100 billion for missile defense programs that have repeatedly failed flight tests. This money would have been more wisely spent on other national security priorities, such as jamming devices for improvised explosive devices (IEDs), up-arming Humvees, and radiological detection at our ports and borders. One of the craziest ideas I have ever heard is that we should deploy this missile defense system as a way to test it. Simple strategic analysis tells us that a provocative yet permeable defense is destabilizing and weakens the security of all Americans.

This authorization bill fails to address and make needed changes to U.S. policy in any one of these three areas, which is why I oppose this bill.

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to this \$533 billion Defense authorization bill.

But, Mr. Speaker, the bill before us today does have a very important provision in it: language preventing the establishment of permanent military bases in Iraq.

This is an important first step in taking the targets off the backs of our troops in Iraq by showing the world that we have no designs to stay in Iraq permanently.

However, this provision will only apply to funds for FY07. We need to make the policy of the United States not to have permanent military bases in Iraq.

Furthermore, it's unfortunate that this bill is the vehicle for this critical policy.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that our Nation is best defended by funding priorities that make our Nation and world safer.

This bill, I'm sorry to say, does not do that.

Mr. Speaker, what does it say about our priorities when Congress authorizes nearly \$70 billion more for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan without any direction, or exit strategy?

Mr. Speaker, what does it say about our priorities when this bill authorizes a \$10.4 billion for a missile defense program that has consistently failed, will never protect us from terrorists?

What it is says, Mr. Speaker is the priorities of the Bush administration are grossly misplaced. When it comes to making our Nation safe, they are spending almost \$2 billion a week on a war in Iraq, but can't spare a dime for the security of the Port of Oakland, our Nation's fourth largest container port.

That's why, Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to reject this bill and offer Americans a real bill that protects America and truly reflects our nation's security priorities.

Mr. HEFLEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the previous question is ordered on the conference report.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the conference report.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. HEFLEY. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, proceedings will resume on questions previously postponed.

Votes will be taken in the following order: adoption of conference report on H.R. 5441; adoption of conference report on H.R. 5122; and passage of H.R. 4772, in each case by the yeas and nays.

The first electronic vote will be conducted as a 15-minute vote. Remaining electronic votes will be conducted as 5-minute votes.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 5441, DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2007

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The pending business is the question of