

FROM CONGRESSIONAL RECORD
OCTOBER 22, 2009

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I did not sign the conference report on this legislation. I did not do it for a number of the same reasons articulated by the Senator from Arizona.

There are some good provisions in this bill. It does increase the size of our military, the Army, Marines, Air Force, and the Navy. Specifically, it authorizes 30,000 new additional Army troops through fiscal years 2011 and 2012 but provides no funding, which means the Army is going to have to take it out of its hide somewhere else. This concerns me.

It does provide a pay raise. That is good. It improves TRICARE eligibility. It adds eight congressionally appointed members to the independent panel that will consider the Quadrennial Defense Review. That was a program of Senator *Thune's*. It does do that. That is good.

It provides \$350 million to train and equip. Train and equip has been one of my favorite programs for a long period. It is one that we are getting the most out of right now. I am pleased that is in there. It also adds some funding for the new AFRICOM, African Command. It used to be divided into three different commands--the European command, the Pacific command and Central Command--but now it is in one. However, even though AFRICOM is good, and General Ward is doing a great job, it was not adequately funded in terms of resources. Now it is much better. We have extra funding in there.

Having said that, I would have to say that on modernization and the things I have been trying to do since I have been serving in this body and on the Armed Services Committee, military modernization has been kicked down the road. It seems all we ever do around here is take care of what is on fire at any given time.

President Obama said, in his February 2009 speech to a joint session, that he would push for removal of Cold War era equipment we do not need. I agree with that statement. That is not what this legislation does though. We are still using the Bradley fighting vehicle and the M1 Abrams tank, both developed in the 1970s and 1980s. The Army's Paladin howitzer was developed in the 1950s back when I was in the Army. We do have the Paladin Integrated Management, P.I.M., program to upgrade it but, nonetheless, there is no current modernization plan to replace that cannon. It terminates the C-17 program. Fortunately, we were able to get some things in Defense appropriations to correct that and add funding for additional C-17s. It terminates the F-22 program. I can remember when that program was first introduced. We were going to have some 900 aircraft. As it turned out, that was dropped down to 750 and has now been reduced to purchasing only the 187 aircraft already produced. Let's keep in mind that the F-22 is the only fifth-generation

fighter we have, and other countries--China and Russia--are cranking theirs out now.

I think the worst part of this, though, was what they did to our missile defense system. The chart is complicated but it shows that during the boost phase, we have two capabilities--the airborne laser and the kinetic energy interceptor. Those were, for all practical purposes, terminated with this bill. That is the easiest and earliest phase to knock down an incoming missile, if you can get it during the boost phase. It cut down the number of missile interceptors in Alaska and California from 40 to 33. But to me the worst part is--and we have talked about this on the floor over and over--it eliminated our ground-based interceptor capability that was ongoing in Poland and the Czech Republic. I was there when this European plan was first being discussed. I talked to the Polish Parliament as well as the Czech Parliament to encourage them to let us have that capability. I remember a member of the Parliament asked me: Are you sure that if we do this and take a controversial position in allowing an interceptor capability to take place, that America won't back down? I said: I am absolutely certain we won't. Obviously, we did back down. I am very much concerned about that. I wish there were time to go into it. There is not.

I will say this: We are pretty well protected with our capability, even though they decreased the number of interceptor missiles in Alaska and California in this legislation. But the interceptor missiles based in Alaska and California are intended to protect against missile threats from the west of the United States from Asia. Something coming from the East is a different situation. We needed this added capability and protection. I know the administration says that we already have the capability of knocking down a short and medium-range hostile missiles with our PATRIOT missiles, our THAAD system and our SM-3. The problem with that is, those systems do not adequately address the long-range missile threats from nations like Iran. Our intelligence says Iran is going to have a long-range missile capability by around 2015. If we had stayed with our program to have this capability in Poland and the Czech Republic in advance of that, we would have the capability of knocking down an ICBM coming toward the United States.

As it is now, we will not have until around 2020. If our intelligence estimate is right, that means we have a 5-year period, between 2015 and 2020, where we are pretty much naked on the east coast and Europe against long-range missile threats.

Let me ask, because I know there is another Senator who wants part of this time, how much time remains on our side?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is 11 1/2 minutes.

Mr. INHOFE. I am very much concerned about some of the other things that have been approached in this legislation. One is the lack of testing capability for our existing stockpile of nuclear capability.

I am concerned about the additional money, some \$560 million, to continue development and procurement of the alternate engine for the F-35 Joint Strike

Fighter. We debated this over and over again. The end result would be, if this continues in the way it is right now, it would eventually knock us down by about 50 F-35 aircraft. This is something that should not take place.

While this authorization bill does prohibit the Gitmo detainees coming into the United States, it does allow for detainees to be transferred into the United States 45 days after the President has submitted a plan to Congress. It does not say that Congress has to approve the plan, just that they must submit the plan to Congress. Anytime I look at what has happened and the capability we have there at Gitmo-- and to think we would shut it down for no reason I have ever been able to determine--that is concerning.

The last thing I would mention is, if we look at our responsibility of defending America, we are down now to a very small percentage of GDP compared to where we have been in the past. During the gulf war, our defense spending was 4.6 percent. It was 6 percent during the buildup of the Reagan years. If this trend continues on the road we are on now, it would be at 3 percent of GDP by 2019.

I would only remind you, Mr. President, we went through this same thing back at the beginning of the Clinton administration. As this chart shows, this line right here is a baseline. The Clinton budget is the red line down there. So we are talking about a degradation of some \$412 billion in that period of time.

On the heels of that--I remember so well the jubilant cries that: The cold war is over. We don't need a strong defense anymore. I see that same sentiment coming on the horizon. I am very much concerned about that.

For that reason, I will be opposing the vote we will be facing in a short period of time. There still is time to send this back to conference and get some of those things taken care of. I would encourage our colleagues to give us the opportunity to do that.

I yield the floor.