

maintained. Or, they may be forced into battle ill-equipped, undertrained and outnumbered.

Even in the wake of the extraordinary job our Armed Forces have done in Afghanistan, most Americans don't realize that our nation's military is far smaller than it was during Desert Storm. What happened during the eight years before President Bush took office was one of the fastest and most shocking unilateral disarmaments in American history. And now as September 11th has demonstrated, we are increasingly vulnerable in a world filled with terrorists and potential aggressors. Consider a few startling facts:

- we are losing pilots faster than we can train them;
- the cannibalization of our most critical aircraft, including the F-14, F-15, F-117, F/A-18 and B1B, is increasing at a truly alarming rate;
- thousands of military personnel are on Food Stamps;
- the Army's strength has been reduced by 10 divisions and 630,000 men since 1989 and overall our forces have been cut in half;
- the Air Force is projected to be 2,000 pilots short for fiscal year 2002;
- five of ten Army divisions are critically short of key leaders like Captains and NCOs.

In short, our Armed Forces have been robbed of hardware, training and incentives, and as a result, there has been a massive exodus of highly skilled individuals from our military.

This shocking disarmament has occurred for two reasons. First, for eight years the Clinton Administration consistently under-funded our nation's defense requirements. And second, Congress is not spending our defense dollars where they are most needed. Billions upon billions of tax dollars continue to be spent not to increase defense readiness, but on low-priority, pork-barrel projects.

But before I tell you more, let me tell you a little about why I am so passionate about rebuilding our defenses. I graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy and went on to serve as a naval aviator. I was shot down over Hanoi in 1967 and spent five-and-a-half years as a prisoner of war. After 22 years of service, I retired as a Captain in 1981. I have been honored to receive the Silver Star, Bronze Star, Legion of Merit, Purple Heart and the Distinguished Flying Cross.

My experience strongly indicates that current defense spending is not enough and too much of it is being terribly wasted. To understand the type of problem we face, just look at the Air Force's fleet of C-130 airlifters. If you're not familiar with the C-130, it is a propeller-driven aircraft that is often used to drop paratroopers and can deliver troops, weapons and ammunition near the front lines in a conflict.

Over a 21-year period through 1999, the Air Force requested just five of these \$50 million airplanes. However, they got 262 of them because they are built in the home districts of some of Congress' most influential members. And it's not just the expenditure of billions of tax dollars on unneeded C-130's. A \$1.5 billion ship was just funded that the Navy doesn't need or want. It was built in the state of one of the most powerful United States Senators.

The current Defense Budget includes more than \$700 million in unauthorized TRANSPORTATION projects, including \$100 million in "miscellaneous appropriations" to the Federal Highway Administration, \$29.5 million for the Woodrow Wilson Bridge connecting Maryland and Virginia, \$5 million for interstate maintenance in Renton/Port Quendall, Washington and \$300,000 to widen US 61 in Woodville, Mississippi. The most outrageous is the \$12 million for shipbuilding loan guarantees at the same time the government is bailing out American Classic Voyages Co. - a leisure travel operation - to the tune of \$250 million.

I could go on and on with examples of outrageous pork-barrel waste in our Defense Budget that