

**Chairwoman:** "The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois, Mr. Quigley."

**Rep. Mike Quigley:** "Thank you, Madam Speaker. Mister Speaker, I rise today because our nation is at a historic crossroads. We are emerging from a deep recession, we face a deficit topping one trillion dollars for the fourth straight year.

"And, while we all agree that we *must* reduce our deficit, the real question is *how*. *How* we decide to reduce our deficit will not only define our budget, it will define who we are as a nation.

"Will we be a nation that cuts vital programs like food stamps and Medicaid in order to not only preserve but grow an outsized defense budget? Or will we choose a middle ground that is balanced, bipartisan, big, and leaves nothing off the table, including defense.

"Sadly, the National Defense Authorization Act before us offers no middle ground and is not bipartisan, it is not balanced - and at a time when we are being asked to cut education, infrastructure and healthcare, this defense bill *increases* spending four billion dollars *over* the President's request.

"Let me be clear: we all want to cut spending.

"In fact, I introduced a bipartisan budget that mirrored the Simpson-Bowles plan and would have reduced the deficit with two-third cuts and one-third revenue. But the key to developing a bipartisan, balanced plan is to put everything on the table, including defense.

"Military spending has more than doubled in the last 10 years, and now comprises close to 20 percent of our overall budget. We spend almost 4 times more on defense than China, and more

than the next ten largest military spenders combined.

"We spend 500 million dollars on military bands alone. But, it's not just about *what* we spend, it's also about *how* we spend.

"Former Secretary of Defense Gates called for billions in cuts, saying "what had been a culture of endless money" at DOD must "become a culture of savings and restraint." Admiral Mike Mullen once called our debt the "greatest threat to our national security."

"The Sustainable Defense Task Force and the Bipartisan Policy Center have also outlined close to a trillion dollars in defense cuts that could still keep us safe. But, this defense budget doesn't reflect the expertise of our military leaders, defense experts, or the American people. It ignores our military leaders by including a new East Coast missile interceptor the Pentagon doesn't want. And it rolls back efforts by DOD to be more energy efficient, because the commanders on the ground know that lives are lost transporting fuel to troops abroad.

"It ignores military experts by funding the deadly V-22 Osprey which is 186 percent over budget, is not safe to fly in extreme heat or excessive sand, has killed 36 service members, and can be replaced with cheaper helicopters. It also ignores experts such as Henry Kissinger, who promote drastically reducing our nuclear stockpile, by including a huge funding increase for nuclear upgrades. Finally, and perhaps more importantly, it ignores the American people who want a smaller military footprint and want our troops home from Afghanistan.

"According to a recent report released at the Stimson Center, the public supports cutting the defense budget by 18 percent. And according to the latest opinion polls, close to 7 in 10 Americans oppose the war in Afghanistan. Yet this defense bill includes language aimed at slowing down the withdrawal of U.S. troops.

"We aren't fighting the Cold War any more, yet this budget continues to invest billions in nuclear weapons and thousands of troops stationed in Europe and Asia. Today our greatest threat is a global network of extremists who find safe-haven in ungoverned spaces across world.

"There have been at least 45 jihadist terrorist attacks plotted against the U.S. since 9/11, and each one of them was foiled not by our mass ground forces in Afghanistan, but through intelligence, policing and citizen engagement.

"According to terrorism expert, Erik Dahl, of the Naval Postgraduate School, "When it comes to domestic attacks and securing the homeland, what works is really good, old-fashioned policing – law enforcement, tips from the public, police informants."

"Our enemy today must be fought with less-costly policing, intelligence gathering, and special operations - not multi-billion dollar tanks and nukes. The real ramification of overspending on defense is not simply that we will have too many unneeded nukes or planes – but that we won't have enough resources to support vital domestic investments such as health care, education, and infrastructure needed to remain a superpower.

"Military power is not simply about spending more than our adversaries. Real military power, argues Kori Schake, a former McCain advisor, is "premised on the solvency of the American government and the vibrancy of the U.S. economy."

"In order to maintain that vibrancy we must get our fiscal house in order, and do so by reexamining our defense spending, and make cuts and reforms where necessary.

"Thank you, and I yield back."