

ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE EXPECTED TO PASS NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT

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The bill will contain provisions introduced by Rep. Gene Taylor, chairman of the Seapower and Expeditionary Forces Subcommittee, including authorizing funding for the Navy to build four additional ships, bringing the Fiscal Year 2009 total to 12.

"The Navy will now be one step closer to its requirement of a 313-ship fleet," Taylor said. "I am pleased that the committee has agreed to include the authorization of additional ships, along with other provisions that will greatly help our military achieve a more appropriate level of readiness."

The bill includes the following measures:

Continues the priority of military readiness. Our nation's armed forces must be properly resourced to meet today's challenges and to respond to any future threats. The President's budget request did not contain adequate funds to address the significant shortfalls in equipment and maintenance dollars for the armed forces. Accordingly, the bill adds \$800 million for equipment to be used by National Guard and Reserve units, and \$932 million to our Operations and Maintenance accounts to deal with key maintenance needs of the military services.

Provides a 3.9 percent pay increase for those in uniform and prohibits increases in health care fees for military families. The bill will provide a pay raise one-half of one percent above the amount the

President requested in the budget. The bill will also prohibit the Department of Defense from implementing increases in TRICARE health and pharmacy fees for another year.

The provisions in the bill introduced by Rep. Taylor build upon the Navy's request for eight ships by authorizing funding for up to four additional ships - bringing the Fiscal Year 2009 total to as many as 12 ships. With ships having an average 30-year service life, the Navy must build at a rate of 10 ships per year to achieve and maintain a 300-ship fleet.

Rep. Taylor's provisions include:

Ship Procurement. The bill will authorize the construction of 1 Virginia Class Submarine, 2 Littoral Combat Ships, 1 LPD-17 Class Amphibious Ship, 2 Joint High Speed Vessels, and 4 T-AKE Dry Cargo/Ammunition Ships. The bill will also pause the DDG-1000 program, authorize \$400 million in surface combatant advance procurement, and allow the Navy to use the advanced funds toward construction of 2 DDG 51 Aegis-Class Destroyers or a DDG 1000.

Aircraft Procurement. The bill will authorize the same number of planes requested by the Navy and Marine Corps in the services' FY09 budget request. In addition, the bill will authorize \$448 million to accomplish emergent repairs to the wing struts of the P3C Orion Anti-Submarine/Reconnaissance aircraft.

Other Procurement. Along with the Subcommittee on Air and Land Forces, the bill will authorize an additional \$2.6 billion to field Mine Resistant Ambush Protected Vehicles (MRAP) for our troops in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Research, Development, Technology & Evaluation. The bill will authorize \$247 million for development of the Alternate Engine program for the Joint Strike Fighter.

Maritime Provisions. The bill includes authorization of funds for the operation and activities of the U.S. Maritime Administration, \$178 million for the Maritime Security Fleet Program, \$25 million in assistance to small shipyards, and \$30 million for the Title XI Maritime Loan Guarantee Program.

The NDAA is expected to go to the House floor for a vote next week. Rep. Taylor will offer an amendment to the bill that will suggest that some Mine Resistant, Ambush Protected Vehicles be used in training before the troops are deployed.

"I am troubled that some troops arrive in Iraq and Afghanistan without ever having seen an MRAP," Taylor said. "The bedrock of our soldiers' competency is realistic training. If we are truly going to train as we fight, then we must have our troops train with MRAPs."

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