

**The Honorable Joe Courtney**  
**Remarks During Debate**  
**FY09 Duncan Hunter National Defense Authorization Act (H.R. 5658)**  
**May 21, 2008**

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong support of the Hunter defense authorization bill, whose primary mission under the leadership of Chairman *Skelton* is to restore military readiness to America's Armed Forces. As has been stated earlier this evening, the bill focuses on investing in short-term readiness, with increased commitment and investment to reset the ground troops of this country as well as the National Guard. But as Mr. *Hunter* indicated in his opening remarks, it also looks over the horizon to deal with military readiness issues that are not being addressed and have been neglected for far too long.

One of those is the size of the American Navy. When the Bush administration took office in 2002, the size of America's Navy was 315 ships and submarines. It has declined to 276, and, shockingly, that number is going to in fact accelerate, because we are basically living off a legacy fleet that was built during the Reagan area.

Last year, I was proud to be part of an effort that turned around this decline. We invested \$588 million in advance procurement to the Virginia class submarine program, the most successful shipbuilding program according to both the Navy and outside experts, and this year we continue that effort with Mr. *Hunter's* leadership on a motion at the committee to add to the Seapower Subcommittee's \$300 million advance procurement. His motion, the Hunter-Courtney amendment, added \$422 million, and we are now moving the Navy's shipbuilding schedule to two submarines a year starting in 2010 with this legislation.

The industrial base is ready for this challenge. We know that from again the testimony from both Virginia and Connecticut. My district is the home of Electric Boat, which is, again, one of the most successful shipbuilders in the country in terms of the Virginia class program. The last submarine, the USS New Hampshire, was delivered with 1 million fewer man-hours in terms of production compared to the prior submarine that they built.

This investment which this legislation represents will allow this country to again be ready for long-term challenges. The world is changing, there are new maritime forces that are growing in different parts of the world, and I strongly urge support and passage of the Hunter defense authorization bill.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman who just spoke for his kind remarks.