This debate has taken on the characteristics of ancestor

worship, and I understand it. I know it's hard for individuals to let

go of the Cold War, to let go of an era where foreign policy was

characterized by this bitter rivalry between the United States and the

Soviet Union. The reality: We won. It's over. We didn't just win. It

was basically a world where there's unipower now. It's us.

The Chinese only have 40 to 50 nuclear missiles. The Russians have

already dramatically reduced their weapons. The likelihood of a nuclear

war between the United States and Russia is negative zero. And yet

there are Members that don't want to see any reductions in our nuclear

weapons force, notwithstanding the fact that those extra expenditures

then would have to come out of other budgets, including the budget for

the National Institutes of Health to find a cure for cancer or

Alzheimer's or Parkinson's. And so we have this curious disconnect

between the reality of the world that we live in today and the

understandable but erroneous commitment that many Members on the other

side have to a relic of a Cold War-era rivalry that no longer can

withstand fiscal scrutiny.

So let's just take this debate about whether or not the United States

is vulnerable.

Each one of our submarine-based nuclear weapons systems have 96

independently targetable warheads onboard. That is: each one of our sub

commanders can destroy the 96 biggest cities in China; each one of our

sub commanders can destroy the 96 biggest cities in Russia; each sub

commander, with their first nuclear weapon, could destroy Tehran; each

sub commander could destroy Pyongyang and still have 95 independently

targetable nuclear weapons onboard that one submarine, much less every

other submarine that we have out there.

And so to have an amendment that says, after New START was agreed to

between Russia and the United States, after the Air Force and the Navy

signed off on New START, to have Members of the House proposing that

notwithstanding that agreement that was reached that does enhance

American national security by reducing the likelihood that there would

be a conflict between the United States and Russia, as low as that

likelihood is, that we have this micromanagement that comes in of our

military.

But it's more than that. Let's admit it. It's all about jobs. You're

thinking about the defense bill as a jobs bill, and I understand that.

But whenever we're talking about the defense bill, those jobs that are

created should relate in some way to American national security. And

what the Air Force and the Navy are saying is that they do not believe

they need more nuclear weapons. In fact, they can agree to and have

already accepted the reduction in nuclear weapons that is in the New

START Treaty.

And so I understand from a jobs perspective why you want to lock in

jobs that may have been created a generation ago in the height of the

Cold War, but we have to redeploy for the 21st century not only

militarily, but also into what strengthens us domestically in terms of

medical research and educational programs.

So I can't really understand why we're even debating this issue.

There is a treaty between our two countries. Our military has signed

off. Our military says it actually enhances our security.

And I agree with the gentleman from Washington State: This is an area

where we should actually give some respect to the United States Senate

that ratified the treaty, to each one of your Joint Chiefs that signed

off on it, and not allow a jobs bill to trump our national security;

and that if you can find programs that actually enhance our security

and you want to spend the money on it, let's debate that. But this is

an area that is already resolved.

I urge a ``no'' vote on the Berg amendment, and I yield back the

balance of my time.