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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. THURMOND).

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Today's prayer will be offered by a guest Chaplain, Father Robert J. Sweeney, National Chaplain of the American Legion, Greenwood Lake, NY.

PRAYER

The guest Chaplain, Father Robert J. Sweeney, National Chaplain of the American Legion, Greenwood Lake, NY, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray:

God of our fathers; throughout the history of this great and glorious Nation, our leaders have turned to You for guidance. On bended knee, from Bunker Hill to Gettysburg, our leaders have called upon Your consoling presence. Help us to realize that our Nation has been consecrated to Your service. Aware of the obligation that goes hand in hand with this responsibility, may we help all those in need.

We acknowledge that we are "one Nation under God." We seek Your righteousness. Stretch forth Your healing wings that we might follow Your example of healing and stretch forth our hands in a generous spirit, as we have heard: "It is more blessed to give than to receive."—Acts 20:35.

Omnipotent Father, be with the women and men of this Senate. Grant unto them Your grace; open their hearts and minds that they may hear the needs of their constituents and respond for the common good of all.

Send Your Spirit upon us and take away our doubts and fears that we might join together, without regard to political affiliations. Bless our Senators. May they be prudent and wise and ever aware of Your presence. May they always advance the cause of peace with justice throughout the world. Amen.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The able senior Senator from New Mexico is recognized.

Mr. DOMENICI. I thank the distinguished President.

SCHEDULE

Mr. DOMENICI. On behalf of the majority leader, I would like to make the following announcement.

This morning, the Senate will begin consideration of S. Con. Res. 20, the budget resolution, with up to 35 hours for debate. Members should expect the next couple of days of session to be longer than usual, with rollcall votes beginning early each morning and continuing late into the evening. The cooperation of all Senators will be necessary in order for the Senate to complete its work prior to the beginning of the Easter recess. Senators who plan to offer amendments to the budget resolution should contact the managers of the bill in order to facilitate a smooth and orderly process during the consideration of the resolution.

I thank colleagues in advance for their cooperation.

Mr. President, yesterday my good friend, the chairman of the Appropriations Committee, asked if he might make a statement this morning that he considers very important, historically. I yield the floor to let him make that statement. I yield him as much time as he desires.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I am grateful to my friend from New Mexico.

10TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE "EXXON VALDEZ" OIL SPILL

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, today is the 10th anniversary of the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill in Alaska.

I want to use this opportunity to reflect on the impact that disaster had on the land and people of my State.

I still remember traveling to Alaska to view the damage caused by the *Exxon Valdez* in Prince William Sound.

Believe me, Mr. President, it is a sight I never want to see again.

At that time, I referred to the huge oil slick battering against the shoreline as "the black blanket of the *Exxon Valdez*."

And while that spill caused serious damage to our wildlife, our environment and our people, that black blanket has had somewhat of a silver lining.

I refer to the Oil Pollution Act of 1990—OPA '90.

Congress and the Department of Defense are currently looking at implementing a "national missile defense system" to protect the United States from incoming ballistic missiles.

I consider OPA '90 to be the "National Oil Spill Defense System" that protects the United States from future oil spills.

OPA '90, as many Senators will recall, was signed into law on August 18, 1990.

It is important to note that OPA '90 has not been significantly revised since 1990—and at present, there has not been any push for comprehensive revisions.

It is a testament to the act itself that it has not needed major revisions.

Some of the provisions of OPA '90 were under consideration prior to 1989, but unfortunately, it took the *Exxon Valdez* spill to bring about a comprehensive approach to our national system of oil spill prevention and response.

Congress enacted OPA '90 only 17 months after the spill—a very short period of time given the scope of the legislation.

That landmark piece of legislation created a new national framework that focuses on both the prevention of spills and the response to spills.

It was written to reduce the chances we will ever have another spill of the magnitude of the *Valdez*—anywhere.

That act, and the actions it mandates, has already vastly improved the response system for lesser spills.

On a national level, OPA '90—

(1) Required the phase-in of double-hull oil tankers—which has begun and will be completed by the year 2015;

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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(2) Required improvements to vessel traffic systems and to vessel communications and warning equipment;

(3) Brought about stringent background checks and manning standards for tank vessels;

(4) Required the United States to seek better international oil spill prevention and response measures;

(5) Clearly defined the liability of tank vessel owners and operators;

(6) Required the creation of a national contingency plan and response system, as well as area contingency and response plans.

These prevention measures are vitally important if we are to ensure the safe transportation of oil in our waters.

As a result of OPA '90 spill response equipment must be pre-positioned in strategic locations all over the country.

By doing this, we greatly increase the response time for a future oil spill, God forbid it ever happens again.

The national and area contingency plans required by OPA '90 are the primary reason the response to oil spills has become so quick.

Unlike when the *Valdez* disaster occurred, if a spill occurs today, it should be literally a matter of minutes before a response plan is executed.

By requiring contingency plans, OPA '90 forces planning for potential spills in a comprehensive manner.

A large part of the credit for the implementation of the new plans should go to the Coast Guard and I have commended it for the tremendous work it has done in the past 10 years in developing the national and area plans.

In addition to the national measures put in place by OPA '90, it contained a number of measures specific to Alaska and Prince William Sound.

The act required the installation of a marker and light on Bligh Reef.

It required tankers in Prince William Sound to be escorted by at least two tugs and to have two local pilots on their bridge.

It required the creation of a vessel traffic system for Prince William Sound—including an alarm system to warn if vessels deviate from the designated navigation routes.

It prevents the *Exxon Valdez* tanker from ever entering Alaska water again—no matter what name it sails under or how many structural improvements it undergoes.

While this provision is largely symbolic, it goes to the heart of how Alaskans feel about the disaster and our state.

We take pride in keeping our environment and wildlife clean and safe, and we expect visitors to our state to do the same.

In addition to the regulatory requirements set forth in OPA '90, the act created two regional citizens' advisory councils.

These councils give Alaskans a voice in the development of oil spill prevention and contingency measures.

Over the past 10 years these councils provided dialogue allowing Alaskans

and the oil industry to work beyond differences in a positive manner.

The main goal of all parties involved is the prevention of further disasters.

That is the only true way to ensure that we never have to clean oil off Alaska beaches again.

I have thanked the many Alaskans who have served on the regional citizens' advisory councils for the improvements they have helped bring into being.

They could have turned their backs on the oil industry, but they deserve a great deal of credit for choosing to work with the industry rather than trying to make a bad situation worse.

OPA '90 also required the creation of the oil spill recovery institute in Cordova.

The institute's mission is to evaluate the long term effects of the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill on the environment and the people and animals of Prince William Sound—and to refine the world's knowledge about arctic and subarctic oil spills.

Incidentally Mr. President, I have been to that institute in Cordova, and I must say that they are doing great things, and I encourage them to keep up the good work.

It took a number of years to secure the funding for the institute, but in 1996 we managed to create a dedicated fund.

For a 10 year period that began in 1996, the Oil Spill Recovery Institute will receive the annual interest from \$22.5 million that is currently on deposit in the Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund.

The Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund was a centerpiece of OPA '90.

The law made "responsible parties" liable for the costs of cleaning up oil spills.

As you know, Mr. President, it is not always possible to obtain clean-up funds from responsible parties in time to adequately respond to spills.

The Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund was created to ensure that funds are available to respond to oil spills in the United States.

This is another area where the Coast Guard deserves credit for its superb efforts in recovering costs from responsible parties.

You will be glad to know that many of the species negatively affected by the oil spill are making a strong comeback.

Mother nature is responding.

I am pleased with the environmental efforts and the progress made in putting new prevention measures in place.

It is my hope that one day my grandchildren will be able to ask me "Grandpa, what's an oil spill?"

I think OPA '90, and the efforts of everyone involved in the oil industry, will help to bring about that wish.

Mr. President, I do not normally come before the Senate to talk about a terrible day, but I come today to talk in the spirit of remembrance. As I said, this is the 10th anniversary of the

Exxon Valdez oilspill in my State. I want to use this opportunity to reflect on the impact that disaster had upon the people of my State and on Prince William Sound.

I remember that was just the beginning of the Easter recess and I had left for vacation with my family when I got that call that told me of this disaster, and I had to fight to get reservations to get back, but I did get back to my State. I flew to Prince William Sound to view the damage that was there. I had talked to my good friend, former Senator Henry Bellmon, Governor of Oklahoma, about that, and asked him if he had any advice. He said find some way to burn it.

I went down to the *Valdez* to see if there was something I might do to encourage that, following that advice. At the time I flew down by helicopter with the Commandant of the Coast Guard, Admiral Yost. We flew over a sickening black blanket on the Nation's largest inland sound. Prince William Sound is a place where I have spent a lot of time, fishing and traveling with friends. It is a beautiful place. Yet that day, that black blanket oozing out of the *Exxon Valdez* left a memory I shall never forget. That spill caused serious damage to our wildlife, to our environment, and to our people. It is hard, today, to remember anything except that great tragedy.

The wind kept spreading that oil. As a matter of fact, I flew up to Alaska with our friend, the oceanographer from the University of Alaska, Mr. Royer, who told me what was going to happen. He predicted correctly that that oil would go out of the Prince William Sound and start down the Aleutian chain. If it went through the pass in the chain, it was going to cause enormous damage to the breeding grounds for Alaska's fisheries.

It was a sad day, and I come today with a feeling of sadness.

In view of all the publicity that has been given to this terrible tragedy, I also want to talk about what I call the silver lining that came as a result of that spill. That silver lining was the Oil Pollution Act of 1990. We call it OPA '90. Congress and the Department of Defense are currently looking at implementing a national missile defense system to protect the United States from incoming ballistic missiles. I consider OPA '90 to be the national oilspill defense system that protects our Nation from future oilspills.

It was as a result of the terrible tragedy in our State that Congress enacted these provisions. As many Senators here will recall, that law was signed on August 18, 1990. It has not been revised since that time. I do not know of any push for any revisions. That is a testament to that act in itself, that it has not needed major revisions in this period.

Some of the provisions of OPA '90 were under consideration prior to that act, but unfortunately, they had no impetus. It took the *Exxon Valdez* disaster to bring about a comprehensive

approach to our national system of oil-spill prevention and response. We enacted that bill just 17 months after the spill, really a very short time, given the scope of the legislation.

This landmark piece of legislation created a new national framework that focuses on both prevention of spills and response to spills. It was written to reduce the chances that we will ever have another spill of the magnitude of the *Valdez* anywhere under the American flag. That act, and the actions it mandates, has already vastly improved the response to lesser spills.

I want to point out some of the things it has done. We have greatly increased the response time—that is, decreased the time it takes—we have increased the ability to respond in time to spills that may take place in our waters. As a result of that act, we have spill response equipment pre-positioned in strategic locations all over the Nation. The national and area contingency plans required by OPA '90 are the primary reasons the response to oilspills has become so quick. Unlike when the *Valdez* disaster occurred, if a spill occurs today, it should literally be a matter of minutes before a plan is put into effect and executed. By requiring contingency plans in advance, OPA '90 forces planning for potential spills in a comprehensive manner.

Mr. President, the main goal of all parties involved in that act was the prevention of future disasters. That is the only true way we can ensure that we will keep the beaches in Alaska and throughout our Nation free of oil.

I have thanked many Alaskans who have served on the regional citizens advisory councils for the improvements they have helped bring into being.

Mr. President, at my request, that act was amended to assure that there would be specific Alaska provisions in it. In addition to the national measures put into place by OPA '90, it contained, at my request, a number of measures specific to Prince William Sound in Alaska. It required the installation of a marker and light on Bligh Reef. It required tankers in Prince William Sound to be escorted by at least two tugs and to have two local pilots on the bridge. It required the creation of a vessel traffic control system for Prince William Sound, including an alarm system to warn if vessels deviated from the routes they had designated at the time they left the pier.

It prevents the *Exxon Valdez* tanker from ever entering Alaskan waters again, no matter what name it sails under or how many structural improvements it undergoes. That provision is largely symbolic, but it goes to the heart of how Alaskans feel about that disaster.

The only true way to ensure that we will never have to clean Alaskan oil off Alaska beaches again is to implement the plans and maintain the systems that OPA '90 requires.

I hope that the Nation will not lose heart, that it will continue to fund the

facilities and the pre-positioned equipment that we require. For a 10-year period that began in 1996, we have created in Alaska an Oilspill Recovery Institute in Cordova. We also have an oil-spill lab with a trust fund created to assure that funds are available to respond to oilspills throughout the United States.

Let me close by saying that I want to report to the Senate that many of the species that were affected by the oil-spill are making a strong comeback. Mother Nature in the sound is responding. The environmental efforts that we have made and the progress we have made with putting into effect the new prevention measures have, in fact, deterred future spills.

It is my hope that one day one of my grandchildren will ask me, Grandpa, what is an oilspill? I believe that we have gone a long way to making oilspills of the magnitude that I saw 10 years ago today a memory. I hope it remains a memory.

Mr. President, I thank my friend for yielding.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. AL-LARD). Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION ON THE BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2000

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will now proceed to consideration of S. Con. Res. 20, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 20) setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal years 2000 through 2009.

The Senate proceeded to consider the concurrent resolution.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico.

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the staff of the Senate Budget Committee, including fellows and detailees named on the list that I send to the desk, be permitted to remain on the Senate floor during consideration of S. Con. Res. 20.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DOMENICI. I ask unanimous consent the list be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the list was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

STAFF LIST: SENATE COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET

MAJORITY STAFF

Amy Call.
Jim Capretta.
Winnie Chang.
Lisa Cieplak.
Allen Cutler.
Larry Dye.
Beth Felder.

Rachel Forward.
Alice Grant.
Jim Hearn.
Bill Hoagland.
Carole McGuire.
Mieko Nakabayashi.
Maureen O'Neill.
Kristin Omberg.
Cheri Reidy.
Brian Riley.
Amy Smith.
Bob Stevenson.
Marc Sumerlin.
Winslow Wheeler.
Sandra Wiseman.
Gary Ziehe.

MINORITY STAFF

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Claudia Arko.
Jim Esquea.
Dan Katz.
Bruce King.
Lisa Konwinski.
Martin Morris.
Jon Rosenwasser.
Paul Seltman.
Jeff Siegel.
Barry Strumpf.
Mitch Warren.

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

Kelly Creighton.
Alex Green.
Sahand Sarshar.
Lamar Staples.
Lynne Seymour.
George Woodall.

Mr. DOMENICI. On behalf of Senator LAUTENBERG, I ask unanimous consent that Sue Nelson and Ted Zegers be granted the privilege of the floor during consideration of the resolution.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, I ask consent the privilege of the floor be granted to the following members of my staff, of the Budget Committee staff on the Republican side: Austin Smythe and Anne Miller.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the presence and use of small electronic calculators be permitted on the floor of the Senate during consideration of the fiscal year 2000 concurrent resolution on the budget.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, I assume we are now on the resolution and time is now running under the 35 hours that remain.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct.

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, I am quite sure my friend Senator LAUTENBERG would concur that we all know, more or less, what the issues are. We have gone through the Budget Committee and most of the major issues have been debated there and amendments offered—some accepted, some failed. I don't think there is really any reason we cannot finish at a reasonable time and take this recess if Senators on both sides cooperate.

I urge that on my side also. There is tentatively, on my side—I know when we talk to them that it is not going to