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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable MICHAEL D. CRAPO, a Senator from the State of Idaho.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Lloyd John Ogilvie, offered the following prayer:

Almighty God, thank You for this moment of quiet in which we can reaffirm who we are, whose we are, and why we are here. Once again, we commit ourselves to You as the sovereign Lord of our lives and of our Nation. Our ultimate goal is to please and serve You. You have called us to be servant leaders who glorify You in seeking to know and do Your will in the unfolding vision for America.

We spread out before You the specific decisions that must be made today. We claim Your presence all through the day. Guide the Senators' thinking and their speaking. May their convictions be based on undeniable truth which has been refined by You. Bless them as they work together to find the best solutions for the problems before our Nation. Help them to draw on the supernatural resources of Your Spirit. Give them divine wisdom, penetrating discernment, and indomitable courage.

When the day draws to a close, may our deepest joy be that we received Your best for us and worked together for what is best for our Nation. In the name of our Lord and Savior. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CRAPO) led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF THE ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. THURMOND).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, July 22, 1999.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, section 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable MICHAEL D. CRAPO, a Senator from the State of Idaho, to perform the duties of the Chair.

STROM THURMOND,
President pro tempore.

Mr. CRAPO thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Georgia, Mr. COVERDELL, is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. COVERDELL. Mr. President, today the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 10:30 a.m. Following morning business, the Senate will resume debate on the Commerce-State-Justice appropriations bill with 1 hour of debate on the Gregg amendment regarding the crime reduction trust fund. Further amendments to the bill will be offered, debated, and voted on throughout the day today. Therefore, Senators should be prepared to vote during the day and into the evening. The majority leader would like to reiterate that there will be no break in action on the bill.

I thank my colleagues for their attention.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. There will now be a period for the transaction of morning business not to extend beyond the hour of 10:30 a.m. with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 5 minutes each. Under the previous order, the Senator from Georgia, Mr. COVERDELL, is recognized for up to 10 minutes.

The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. COVERDELL. Mr. President, you have already enumerated we have now entered into a period of morning business for up to an hour. I believe I have been recognized for up to 10 minutes.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. That is correct.

F–22 FUNDING

Mr. COVERDELL. Mr. President, the F–22 has become a matter of great interest and controversy over the last several days because the House Appropriations Defense Subcommittee voted to bring a pause to the program; it took $1.8 billion out of it and redistributed it to other priorities. The problem is, if I might just take a moment to characterize it, nobody had any knowledge of the potential of this act—not the Defense Department, not the Air Force, not the contractors, not any parties who have been involved in development of the aircraft.

To step back for a moment, the decision as to this highly advanced weapons system and the decision to commit the Nation to its development is well over a decade old. The actual development of the aircraft began in 1991. We have now as a nation invested $20 billion in the development of this system; two of these unbelievable instruments of warfare are being tested in the air, and there is movement now to production of the first fighters.

My point is that after responsible commitments are made through three administrations and we have invested everything in its preparation and now

we are ready to harvest that decision, the only words that come to mind are, it is bizarre that out of the blue, with no hearings, no reflection, this decision just drops like a lead brick into the middle of all these circumstances.

I am going to read the letter written by Secretary Cohen on July 15 to Congressman BILL YOUNG, chairman of the Appropriations Committee. I think it begins to encapsulate the shock of what has happened. He says:

I was dismayed to learn about House Appropriations Defense Subcommittee's mark last Monday that cut $1.8 billion in procurement funding for the F–22 aircraft. The Department of Defense cannot accept this decision. This decision, if enacted, would for all practical purposes kill the F–22 program, the cornerstone of our nation's global air power in the 21st century.

For fifty years, every American soldier has gone to war confident that the United States had air superiority. Canceling the F–22 means we cannot guarantee air superiority in future conflicts. It would also have a significant impact on the viability of the Joint Strike Fighter Program. The F–22 will enable the Joint Strike Fighter to carry out its primary strike mission. The Joint Strike Fighter was not designed for the air superiority mission, and redesigning it to do so will dramatically increase the cost. An upgraded F–15 will not provide this dominance and will cost essentially the same as the F–22 program.

It goes on to say:

I know the difficult budget environment the Congress has to deal with these days. I support your efforts to give our nation the best possible defense at an affordable cost. However, I believe the nation's defense requires the F–22. The proposed cut jeopardizes our future warfighting capability and will place our forces at higher risk.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the letter from Secretary Cohen be printed in the RECORD.

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

THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE,
Washington, DC, July 15, 1999.

Hon. C.W. BILL YOUNG,
Chairman, Committee on Appropriations, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: I was dismayed to learn about the House Appropriations Defense Subcommittee's mark last Monday that cut $1.8 billion in procurement funding for the F–22 aircraft. The Department of Defense cannot accept this decision. This decision, if enacted would for all practical purposes kill the F–22 program, the cornerstone of our nation's global air power in the 21st century.

For fifty years every American soldier has gone to war confident that the Unties States had air superiority. Canceling the F–22 means we cannot guarantee air superiority in future conflicts. It would also have a significant impact on the viability of the Joint Strike Fighter program The F–22 will enable the Joint Strike Fighter to carry out its primary strike mission. The JSF was not designed for the air superiority mission, and redesigning it to do so will dramatically increase the cost. An upgraded F–15 will not provide this dominance and will cost essentially the same as the F–22 program.

I know the difficult budget environment the Congress has to deal with these days. I support your efforts to give our nation the best possible defense at an affordable cost. However, I believe the nation's defense requires the F–22. The proposed cut jeopardizes our future warfighting capability and will place our forces at higher risk.

I pledge my strongest effort to ensure the program will be delivered within the cost caps that we've agreed to with the Congress. I am confident the Department has the proper management controls to ensure the success of the F–22 program. As always, I would be pleased to discuss these matters with you at any time. But I must tell you that I cannot accept a defense bill that kills this cornerstone program.

Sincerely,

BILL COHEN.

Mr. COVERDELL. Mr. President, an article appeared on July 21 in the Marietta Daily Journal which further illuminates the nature of the Secretary's letter. It says:

Defense Secretary William Cohen criticized a House panel Tuesday—

This is the point I want to make—

for not consulting with the Pentagon before voting to suspend development of the Air Force's F–22 stealth fighter jet.

''Neither I nor anyone in this building—or anyone in the Air Force—was aware of the effort underway on the part of the committee,'' Cohen told reporters during a photo-taking session [at the Department of Defense].

This underscores the point I was making that something of this magnitude, something of the sophistication of this system, something that we have invested $20 billion in, something that we have spent almost two decades getting ready to launch, is not managed in this manner. It is bizarre that you would find yourself at this point, and suddenly a subcommittee decides to overturn almost two decades of thought and preparation and planning.

As I said a moment ago, we have invested about $20 billion in this system up to this point. If you were to carry out and carry through to the end what the subcommittee has done—and it reappropriated $1.8 billion—we would lose another $6.5 billion. This House Appropriations Committee action would deteriorate and jeopardize the program and violate current contractual agreements between the Air Force and the contractor.

One Pentagon source told Defense Daily yesterday:

The $1.8 billion cut would result in $6.5 billion in total growth, $5.3 billion in production costs and $1.2 billion in engineering and manufacturing development costs.

In other words, you would not be saving $1.8 billion; you would have to bleed out another $6.5 billion. So by this time we would have $26, $27 billion in this weapons system—almost two decades—but no fighters.

Anytime you develop a system of that magnitude, there have been issues that surround it. But they have all been managed. Extensive congressional oversight has been very significant over the development of the aircraft. Its problems have been dealt with and managed. As I said, we are at the point of actually inheriting this unique fighter.

There was an article in the Washington Post this morning by Richard Hallion. I will read a couple paragraphs.

There was some irony in the House Appropriations Committee's canceling production funding last week for the Air Force's next generation fighter—the Lockheed-Martin F–22 Raptor. The action came only weeks after America's military forces proved—for the third time since 1990—that exploiting dominant aerospace power is the irreplaceable keystone of our post-Cold War strategy for successful quick-response crisis intervention.

I believe everybody at this point, after the Persian Gulf, after Iraq and Kosovo, is looking anew at traditional war strategy. Who would have ever thought you could have flown the thousands of sorties that were involved in Kosovo with no combat casualties?

No issue has been more misunderstood than the F–22. The plane links radar-evading stealth with the ability to cruise at supersonic speeds and to exploit and display data from various sources to better inform the pilot about threats and opportunities.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. COVERDELL. Mr. President, I think the other Senators are here for their prearranged time, so I will not go on. I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from North Dakota is recognized.

Mr. DORGAN. I yield myself such time as I consume under the 30 minutes allocated to this side.

TAX CUTS

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, we now turn to another agenda in the Senate. By direction of the majority party, we turn to the subject of tax cuts. It is a corner that we have navigated before in this Congress. I was thinking that it might be useful to have had Daniel Webster in this Chamber to say to Members, as he said many years ago: ''Necessity compels me to speak the truth rather than pleasing things. I should indeed like to please you, but I prefer to save you, whatever be your attitude toward me.''

It certainly must be pleasing to say to constituents that we would like to give tax breaks as far as the eye can see, upwards of a half a trillion, three-quarters of a trillion, and some say $1 trillion. What a wonderful thing.

This country is doing quite well. Its economy is moving ahead with significant health. Unemployment is way down. Inflation is way down. There are a lot of things in this country to be thankful for.

Part of the reason to be thankful for that is, in 1993, some of us in Congress had the vision to steer this country to a different course. If we remember, in 1993, we were facing a $290 billion Federal deficit—$290 billion. The economists told us that for the rest of the decade we would have anemic economic growth and deficits.

We passed a piece of legislation in this Congress. I voted for it. I was proud to do so. When people said: We're