

We need missile defense not just because of the capabilities of particular countries, but because of the larger problem: The proliferation of missile technology has created a world in which we can no longer afford to leave ourselves vulnerable to an entire class of weapons. Remaining vulnerable only guarantees that some nation will seize upon this vulnerability and take the United States and our allies by surprise.

The Bush administration's resolve to deploy missile defenses is an essential first step in modernizing our national security assets. Because of the neglect our missile defense program has suffered over the last eight years, we now face a threat against which we will have no defense for several years. Because of decisions made by the previous administration, the only long-range missile defense we have in the near-term will be the ground-based system planned for initial deployment in Alaska. Additional resources must be provided so that other technologies and basing modes can be developed and tested. But now, we must move forward as fast as we can with the technology we have today. We must not prolong our vulnerability by waiting for newer and better technology. Therefore, it is important that the administration immediately begin construction of the NMD radar at Shemya, AK. Construction of the national missile defense radar at Shemya, AK, should begin immediately.

Construction of this radar was to have begun this May, but last September President Clinton postponed the decision to proceed, citing delays with other elements of the system and a lack of progress in convincing Russia to modernize the ABM Treaty to permit NMB deployment. However, construction of the Shemya radar is the so-called "long-lead" item in deployment of the NMD system; it is the step that takes the longest and must begin the soonest. Delaying construction of the NMD radar means delaying deployment of the entire system, and we cannot afford more unnecessary delays in this program.

There is still time to recover from the delays caused by President Clinton's postponement last fall. The radar design is complete, the funds have been appropriated, and any missile defense system we build will have to begin with an X-band radar at Shemya. So we should get on with it.

Beginning construction of the Shemya radar will be a demonstration of the determination of our government to fulfill its first constitutional duty, which is to provide for the security of our Nation. It will send an unmistakable signal to all—friend or potential foe—that the United States will not remain vulnerable any longer to those who threaten us with ballistic missiles.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, before I propound a unanimous consent request,

I want to make some brief comments on the bill that I expect to call up.

HONORING PAUL D. COVERDELL

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, many of us in the Senate still greatly miss our distinguished and honorable colleague from Georgia, Paul Coverdell. There are not many days that go by that I do not think about him when I am working in this Chamber and in my office. We really have been grieving and thinking an awful lot about him over the months since his unfortunate early passing away as a result of his problems last year when he had a cerebral hemorrhage.

He was an extraordinary public servant. We all wanted to find a way to express our sorrow and to appropriately honor him. In that vein, I wanted to make sure we did not just have a rush to judgment of what we might try to do to honor him—doing it in several little ways but never an appropriate way.

After discussion on both sides of the aisle and getting approval of the Democratic leader, I asked four of our colleagues to serve as an informal task force to come up with an appropriate way to honor Senator Coverdell. These four Senators, two from each side of the aisle, were good friends and worked closely with Paul. They had a personal interest in it.

I thank Senator GRAMM of Texas, Senator DEWINE of Ohio, Senator HARRY REID of Nevada, and Senator ZELL MILLER of Georgia for taking the time to think about this, meeting together and coming up with ideas of how to appropriately honor Senator Coverdell.

That is how this bill came into being. A lot of ideas were considered. They were discussed with Senator Coverdell's former staff members, family, particularly his wife, and they came up with the suggestion that is included in this bill.

I thank Senator DASCHLE and Senator REID for being willing to be involved in this process. As a result of their efforts, we now have a bill.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—A BILL HONORING PAUL D. COVERDELL

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of a bill at the desk which honors Senator Paul D. Coverdell by naming the Peace Corps headquarters after our former colleague. I further ask unanimous consent that the bill be read the third time, passed, and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COCHRAN). Is there objection?

Mr. REID. Mr. President, reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator reserves the right to object.

Mr. REID. As the majority leader has indicated, a significant amount of time

has been spent on this matter. I remember as if it was yesterday Senator LOTT coming on the floor and making the announcement. It was a sad day in the history of this Senate, in the history of the State of Georgia, and certainly our country.

Those of us who knew Senator Coverdell know how closely he was associated with the majority leader and how he loved this institution. What the leader has said is very true. I worked with Senator MILLER, Senator GRAMM, and Senator DEWINE to come up with something that is appropriate. We think we have done that.

I do, though, have to object for one of the other Members of the Senate. It is something which is procedural in nature. I am confident we can work this out. I ask that the leader be understanding and that this matter be brought up after we get back from our next recess. I am confident in that period of time we will take care of the kinks. I would rather we do it that way than pass pieces of it.

I talked with Senator GRAMM and Senator MILLER, and we agreed to do it all at once rather than piecemeal.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada objects.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, while I feel the objection is certainly unfortunate, I know that Senator REID wants to find a way to work through the problem that may exist. I will be glad to work with him and Senator MILLER.

Senator MILLER has been very generous with his time and very committed to this process. I talked with him a couple of times—just yesterday—to try to work through this. It is my expectation we will be able to clear this bill and take it up for consideration. It really is noncontroversial, and I believe it should be passed by unanimous consent.

I hope Members who do have a problem, or if there is a procedural problem, will find a way to work through it so we can honor this noble and respected Member. I invite Senator REID and any others to comment on the process, and if they have any remedy they can suggest, I am anxious to hear from them. I know effort is already underway to do that, and I know they will continue.

It will be my intent to file cloture on this matter if it is necessary prior to the recess of the Senate this week. I hope and expect we will not have to do that, but because of the requirements of S. Res. 8, if I have to file cloture, I will have to wait the requisite 12 hours now before filing the cloture on an amendable item, so I will have to begin the process.

Rather than leave it in that vein, I prefer we talk and we work this out and find a way to get it cleared and agreed to tomorrow before we leave for the Presidents Day recess.

Mr. REID. I appreciate the leader's comments. I would appreciate very much the leader not filing cloture. We do not need that or want that on this piece of legislation.

Mr. LOTT. I understand that.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now be in a period for morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

COMMENDING SENATOR COCHRAN

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I commend my colleague, the Presiding Officer, Senator COCHRAN, for the remarks he made a few moments ago on the floor of the Senate with regard to the defense budget, particularly missile defense. He has been very thoughtful in this area. He has been involved for a number of years.

He serves as head of a bipartisan group of Senators who have been to Russia on behalf of the Senate, who have met with representatives from the government, the Duma of Russia, when they have been in the United States.

To put this in a positive way and note that President Bush intends to go forward with it when it is ready to be deployed and that we be prepared to have a serious discussion about it is fine, but I thank him for the way he has been involved in this issue and express my confidence that as we move forward on this very important defense item for our future, I know he will be involved in that.

I feel very good that President Bush and Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld will approach this matter in an appropriate way, with our defense budget funding but also in the way it is handled with our allies. I look forward to working together in the future on this important issue.

I yield the floor.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. President, I am very pleased to join in commemorating African-American History Month and particularly this year's theme, "Creating and Defining the African-American Community: Family, Church, Politics and Culture."

Since 1926, the month of February has served as a time for our citizens to recognize and applaud the vast contributions made by African-Americans to the founding and building of this great Nation. The vision of the noted author and scholar, Dr. Carter G. Woodson, led to this important annual celebration. As we note the theme of this year's Black History Month celebration, it is important to recognize the challenges ahead for African-Americans in a new age.

From early days, the family has been the backbone of the African-American culture in our country. Through a strong and stable family structure, African-Americans found companionship,

love, and an understanding of the suffering endured during oppressive periods in history. The African-American family has served to strengthen and encourage young African-Americans to forge ahead to break barriers and rise to new heights within American culture.

The unemployment rate for African-Americans has fallen from 14.2 percent in 1992 to 8.3 percent in 1999, the lowest annual level on record. The median household income of African-Americans is up 15.1 percent since 1993, from \$22,034 in 1993 to \$25,351 in 1998. Real wages of African-Americans have risen rapidly in the past two years, up about 5.8 percent for men and 6.2 percent for women since 1996.

The African-American poverty rate has dropped from 33.1 percent in 1993 to 26.1 percent in 1998, the lowest level ever recorded and the largest five-year drop in more than twenty-five years. Since 1993, the child poverty rate among African-Americans has dropped from 46.1 percent to 36.7 percent in 1998. While still too large, this represents the largest five-year drop on record. It is critical that we in Congress continue to work to enact legislation that will further strengthen African-American families and enable these rates to continue to decrease at record levels.

Religion, like family, has played a vital role in African-American life in this country, with the Black Church a substantial and enduring presence. Throughout the early period of our Nation's development, African-Americans established their own religious institutions. Although these institutions were not always formally recognized, it should be noted that the African Methodist Episcopal Church was founded in 1787, followed closely by the African Baptist Church in 1788. Throughout our Nation's history, the Black Church has served as both a stabilizing influence and as a catalyst for needed change.

During slavery, the African-American Church was a place of spiritual sanctuary and community. After Blacks were freed, the Church remained a line of defense and comfort against racism. The Black Church served as an agency of social reorientation and reconstruction, providing reinforcement for the values of marriage, family, morality, and spirituality in the face of the corrosive effects of discrimination.

The Black Church became the center for economic cooperation, pooling resources to buy churches, building mutual aid societies which provided social services, purchasing and helping resettle enslaved Africans, and establishing businesses. From its earliest days as an invisible spiritual community, the Black Church supported social change and struggle, providing leaders and leadership at various points in the struggle against racism and discrimination.

The civil rights movement of the 1960s provided the catalyst for African-Americans to move into the political

arena. Three major factors encouraged the beginning of this new movement for civil rights. First, many African-Americans served with honor in World War II, as they had in many wars since the American revolution. However, in this instance, African-American leaders pointed to the records of these veterans to show the injustice of racial discrimination against patriots. Second, more and more African-Americans in the North had made economic gains, increased their education, and registered to vote. Third, the NAACP had attracted many new members and received increased financial support from all citizens.

In addition, a young group of energetic lawyers, including Thurgood Marshall, of Baltimore, Maryland, used the legal system to bring about important changes in the lives of African-Americans, while Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. appealed to the conscience of all citizens. When Congress passed the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, Clarence Mitchell, Jr., of Maryland, played a critical part in steering this legislation through Congress.

African-Americans began to assume more influential roles in the Federal Government as a result of the civil rights movement, a development which benefitted the entire Nation. In 1966, Dr. Robert C. Weaver became the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, the first Black Cabinet Member and Edward Brooke became the first African-American elected to the Senate since reconstruction. In 1967, Thurgood Marshall became the first Black Justice on the Supreme Court. In 1969, Shirley Chisholm of New York became the first Black woman to serve in the U.S. House of Representatives.

Progress continued in the next three decades. In 1976, Patricia Harris became the first Black woman Cabinet Member and in 1977 when Clifford Alexander was confirmed as the first Black Secretary of the Army. In 1989, Douglas Wilder of Virginia became the first elected African-American Governor in the Nation. In 1992, Carol Moseley-Braun became the first African-American female U.S. Senator. In 1993, Ron Brown became the first African-American Secretary of Commerce, Jesse Brown became the first African-American Secretary of the Veterans Administration, and Hazel O'Leary became the first black Secretary of Energy. In 1997, Rodney Slater became the first African-American Secretary of Transportation and Alexis Herman became the first African-American Secretary of Labor. In 2001, Roderick Paige became the first African-American Secretary of Education and General Colin Powell, in addition to being the first African-American Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, became the first U.S. Secretary of State.

African-Americans have played significant roles in influencing and changing American life and culture. Through such fields as arts and entertainment,