

The cost of a system to defend against that attack would be minuscule in comparison. In fact, as pointed out, the cost of defending against terrorist attacks employing weapons of mass destruction, or even conventional weapons, far exceeds what we spend on missile defenses.

The missile threat develops faster than does the means to counter it. We are neither spending extravagantly, nor inappropriately. We are seeking to deploy a layered defense that optimizes technologies that have been developed over the past two decades, and that are continuing to evolve.

Opponents of national missile defense are free to continue to oppose the President's plan. That is their right. There is an old saying, though. Everyone is entitled to his or her own opinion; no one is entitled to his or her own facts. Missile defense programs should be discussed with the same respect for context and intellectual honesty that we afford the programs on which the other 98 percent of the defense budget is allocated. Only then, can we make the informed decisions we were sent here to make.

That concludes my remarks on this matter of the cost of national ballistic missile defense. I spoke before on the need for national missile defense, and I will speak in the future on the question of the legal authority of the President to withdraw the United States from the 1972 ABM Treaty.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. COLLINS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Ms. COLLINS. Are we in morning business?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator is correct.

THE MAINE ANNUAL FISHERMAN'S FORUM

Ms. COLLINS. Madam President, last Friday night, I attended the Maine Annual Fisherman's Forum in Rockport, ME. This is a wonderful event that brings leaders from the industry together to talk about problems that the fishing industry is experiencing. We have a wonderful fresh fish dinner and then there is an auction held which annually raises thousands of dollars in scholarship money.

But this year, a shadow was cast over the entire forum. We arrived at the forum only to learn that earlier that day, the National Marine Fisheries Service had unveiled a Draconian response to a Federal lawsuit that had been filed that affects the ground fishing industry. The response proposed by the National Marine Fisheries Service would have a devastating impact on our fishermen in Maine.

The life of a fisherman is already a difficult one. He or she encounters rough weather, and we have suffered devastating losses of life in the fishing industry in Maine. It is a difficult life. They are proud, independent people who ask only that they be given a fair chance to earn a living.

The fishermen of my State have been leaders in pioneering conservation efforts. They understand it is necessary to have some restrictions to preserve the fish stocks for future generations, but when we get into a situation where lawsuits are being filed and Federal regulators respond in a way that is completely indifferent to the needs of the fishing industry, we make the life of Maine's fishermen virtually impossible.

Already we have seen years and years of escalating restrictions that have driven many fishermen out of business, cut the incumbent processors, suppliers, and fish auctions, and strained coastal communities that are the heart of Maine. In fact, 1,200 fishermen have participated in retraining programs, and the Coastal Workforce Board, which runs these programs, estimates that represents only a third of the total number of displaced fishermen.

Since 1995, the ground fishing industry has been limited to only 88 days at sea, a restriction that has been extremely difficult for those in the industry to bear. Nevertheless, they have coped, they have managed to endure, even under the restrictions of only 88 days at sea. Imagine the shock of Maine fishermen when they learned that Federal regulators were proposing to cut in half the number of days they can be at sea.

Furthermore, they have restricted the number of days that can occur during the peak season for fishing. Only 22 of the days can occur during the peak season. This is devastating. Imagine that, our fishermen are being told they can only go to sea for 44 days a year in the Gulf of Maine.

Some Federal regulators in the regulatory community have pointed out that the fishermen would still be allowed to use their full allowance of days during the nonseason months. Those are the months between October and May. Again, I wonder to whom these regulators are talking. Surely they know those months are not practical for a sustained fishing effort. Fishermen encounter low stocks, low prices, and, most of all, hazardous weather.

The restrictions in the proposals put forth by the National Marine Fisheries Service go even further. Each day that a fisherman goes out to sea, no matter how short the trip, even if the fisherman is only out for a few hours, will be counted as a full 24 hours at sea. The proposal also calls for restricted fishing areas.

In short, these restrictions will have a devastating impact on the ground fishing industry in Maine, an industry made up of small, independently owned

businesses, an industry made up of proud, independent men and women. They are already struggling to make a living, given all the other restrictions that have been imposed. The NMFS proposal would now make it virtually impossible for many ground fishermen to survive.

It comes as a particular disappointment to me that Federal regulators did not consult with members of the fishing community when they were confronted with this Federal lawsuit. It is so frustrating that the National Marine Fisheries Service ignored the letter I sent them asking that they bring all the stakeholders to the table to work out a response to this lawsuit. Instead, Federal regulators essentially shut our fishermen out of the process, and that is one reason they came up with such an ill-conceived proposal that does not reflect the reality of earning a living as a fisherman in the State of Maine.

The proposal put forth by Federal regulators is even more surprising because it comes at a time when both scientists and fishermen agree that ground fish stocks are rebounding, that the conservation efforts already underway, that the regulatory restrictions already in place are having a beneficial impact.

Again I stress, our fishermen are in the forefront of conservation efforts. They are keenly aware of the importance of rebuilding the fishing stocks. After all, fewer fish mean fewer activities and fewer opportunities for our fishermen to make a living.

In fact, Maine's fishing industry, working together with marine scientists, have been pioneers in the use of conservation techniques and self-regulation in fishing management, but our efforts to rebuild our ground fish stocks are only useful if a ground fish industry remains. Any effort to rebound ground fish stocks must guarantee the survival not only of the fish but of the fishermen.

When I think of the amount of money that has been squandered in costly lawsuits, it is so unfortunate because those are funds that could have been put into research. Those are funds that could have been used to bring everybody to the table to work out and devise a commonsense solution to the problems of rebuilding the fishing stocks.

Let me give an example of what the impact will be on one fisherman in Maine. I heard from a fisherman named Sam Viola about this issue. Sam is a fisherman from Portland, ME, who owns two 70-foot draggers and fishes for haddock, hake, and cod. His brother is a fisherman, as was Sam's dad. That is typical in Maine. Families, generation after generation, will go to the sea to earn a living.

Sam said that finally, after years of scraping by due to catch restrictions and limits on fishing days per year designed to restore the ground fishery, he

has been able to make a living to support himself and his family. He believes the seas are now teeming with fish. He has seen such a rebound in the stocks, and he is very worried that the latest regulations proposed by the National Marine Fisheries Service will put him and many of his fellow fishermen out of business.

I share the grave concerns of the responsible fishermen such as Sam and those fishermen with whom I talked on Friday night at the annual fisherman's forum. They are good people. They know the sea better than any regulator in Washington, DC. How unfortunate it is, how wrong it is, that Federal fishing regulators did not involve the people who know the Gulf of Maine the best: The fishermen who are out there earning a living.

I am going to be working with my colleagues in both the House and the Senate and particularly with Maine's senior Senator, Ms. OLYMPIA SNOWE, who is the ranking Republican on the subcommittee with jurisdiction over this issue, to develop a plan, to develop an alternative approach that recognizes we can both support our fishermen and have the seas teeming with fish.

It is a false choice to say our fishermen can only go to sea half the number of days that they are now allowed, a restriction that is already extremely difficult for many fishermen and their families to accept. These further restrictions, the new approach proposed by the National Marine Fisheries Service, I fear, will spell the end for many Maine fishermen. It will make it simply impossible for them to earn a living; the restrictions are so onerous, so unreasonable, and so strict.

We need a different approach, and I believe if Federal regulators had only taken the time to involve the experts in the industry, the men and women who are fishing in the Gulf of Maine, we would have come up with a far better approach, an approach that would not only continue the process of rebuilding the fishing stocks in Maine, in the Gulf of Maine, but also would allow our hard-working, proud, and independent fishermen to earn a living.

This is an issue on which I will continue to be working with the Chair and others.

I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CARPER). The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

TEXAS INDEPENDENCE DAY

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, today, as I have done every year I have been in the Senate, I want to especially commemorate the anniversary of Texas

independence. Many know—many do not know—the history of Texas, but I am very proud of the heritage we have. Texas is the only State that came into the Nation as a nation. There was a treaty that was made between the United States and the Republic of Texas for Texas to come into the Union. The freedom the Texans got in 1836 was hard fought and it was a long time coming. They were a part of Mexico. The Mexican Government was becoming more oppressive, and they were taxing the people, they were not giving them religious freedom, and they finally passed a law that said no one could emigrate from the United States into the Texas territory of Mexico.

So the people rebelled. They had to fight for their independence, and one of the most famous battles in the history of our country was the Battle of the Alamo.

I commemorate Texas Independence Day, which is March 2, every year, by reading the letter from William Barret Travis, that has become very famous, as he was holding down the fort at the Alamo. This was at a time when the convention was meeting at Washington-on-the-Brazos to make the formal declaration of independence from Mexico for Texas. My great, great grandfather was one of the delegates to that convention. He represented Nacogdoches, just as Thomas Rusk did.

Thomas Rusk was the first Senator to hold my seat. He and my great, great grandfather, Charles S. Taylor, were very good friends. They were partners, and they were certainly patriots in the fight for freedom for Texas.

It is with that background I would like to read the letter from William Barret Travis, remembering there were 184 Texas rebels in the Alamo at the time. There was a huge army of Santa Ana's out there, and this was the second day of the siege of the Alamo, February 24, 1836.

Fellow citizens and compatriots: I am besieged by a thousand or more of the Mexicans under Santa Ana. I have sustained a continual bombardment and cannonade for 24 hours and have not lost a man. The enemy has demanded a surrender at discretion, otherwise, the garrison are to be put to the sword, if the fort is taken. I have answered the demands with a cannon shot, and our flag still waves proudly from the wall. I shall never surrender or retreat.

Then, I call on you in the name of liberty, of patriotism and of everything dear to the American character, to come to our aid, with all dispatch. The enemy is receiving reinforcements daily and will no doubt increase to three to four thousand in four or five days. If this call is neglected, I am determined to sustain myself as long as possible and die like a soldier who never forgets what is due to his own honor and that of his country—Victory or Death.

William Barret Travis, Lt. Col, Commander.

It turns out there were 3,000 to 6,000 Mexican soldiers. They did take the Alamo, which did not have reinforcements. Gen. Sam Houston decided it would be a waste of manpower to send reinforcements because he thought the

cause was lost. Those 184 men were able to hold off the Mexican Army for days, and that allowed Gen. Sam Houston to gather his forces. The Declaration of Independence was signed on March 2, 1836, and because he was able to marshal the forces after the Alamo and take a stand at San Jacinto, that is where the war was won and the Republic of Texas was formed.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent I be allowed to speak for 10 minutes as in morning business.

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

ELECTION REFORM

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I understand we are going to be going back to a vote pretty soon relative to the issue of antifraud provisions associated with election reform. We all have different views on this issue. I can certainly recognize and support the simplicity of encouraging voters to have a relatively easy method to vote and register. However, Mr. BOND, the Senator from Missouri, has made quite a point of how fraud occurs. I gather we have seen scams, particularly in Missouri, relative to voter fraud, registering dead neighbors and diseased alderman, and in one case a dog that evidently voted several times and the jig was up when the dog was called for jury duty.

A system that allows that much flexibility is a little too flexible. I hope we address reasonable requirements to encourage people to vote but have reasonable identification so we do not have fraudulent activities such as the dog that was called to jury duty.

IRAQ

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I came to the floor last week to talk about Iraq. I indicated that U.S. forces enforcing the no-fly zone since 1992 were fired on for the second time this year. Of course, our forces responded by destroying an Iraqi air defense group north of Baghdad. This is a continuing commitment we have had to enforce a no-fly zone under the U.N. proclamation over Iraq.

The inconsistency is that, on one hand, we are enforcing this no-fly zone; on the other, we are importing oil from Iraq. Even on September 11, when the attack on the Trade Centers occurred, we were importing a little over 1 million barrels of oil a day from Iraq. Today we import some 875,000 barrels. We are enforcing a no-fly zone, putting