

the Granada Relocation Center National Historic Site Act of 2007; and a Ronald Reagan U.S. Capitol Artistic Tribute Resolution.

Mr. President, this agenda of 15 bills represents many hours of work with Colorado citizens, officials, interested parties, and stakeholders. It is a set of fairly controversy-free proposals that will solve problems and offer solutions.

I intend to return to this floor with a second round of legislative proposals, proposals that I am now working on with colleagues, State officials, and Colorado stakeholders. Other measures I plan to address this session include Good Samaritan mine cleanups, bark beetle eradication legislation, Rocky Mt. National Park Wilderness, National ID theft/Social Security number protection, renewable energy tax credits, reverse mortgages, the need for public health veterinarians, oil shale royalties, and manufactured housing reform.

I look forward to working with my colleagues on getting these bills through the legislative process and being able to tell Coloradans that we in Washington are engaged on their behalf.

(The remarks of Mr. ALLARD pertaining to the submission of S. Con. Res. 1 are located in today's RECORD under "Submission of Concurrent and Senate Resolutions.")

(The remarks of Mr. ALLARD pertaining to the introduction of S. 124, S. 125, S. 126, S. 127, S. 128, S. 129, S. 130, S. 131, S. 132, S. 134, S. 135, S. 136, S. 168, and S. 169 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. OBAMA). Without objection, it is so ordered.

A NEW BEGINNING

Mr. SALAZAR. Mr. President, first let me congratulate the Presiding Officer for having assumed that position today for the first time. This Senator has a long-time admiration for the Senator from Illinois, for the great work he has done, and for his contributions to this body.

Let me also say that I come here today to congratulate both our majority leader, Senator REID, for his leadership, and Senator MCCONNELL for his leadership as the minority leader, and for them having brought the Members of this body together to start a new beginning, which is based on a sense that we as America will do better by working together, and that the politics of division of the past are politics that we will be able to transcend and move for-

ward with a positive and strong agenda that will make our country and the world a stronger and safer place.

I also congratulate Senator REID and the leadership for the 10 bills introduced here today. I believe those bills create a good framework for issues that urgently need to be addressed by the Congress and by this President. I am hopeful that in the days and weeks and months ahead we will, in fact, be the kind of Senate and Congress that gets results on these important initiatives.

I don't want to comment on all 10 pieces of legislation today, but I will make reference to a couple of them. First, with respect to energy, I think all of us in this body recognize that it is time for us to embrace a true ethic of energy independence. For a long time, we have given rhetoric to the issue of energy and our overdependence on oil from the Middle East and other places. I think today Republicans and Democrats, conservatives and progressives, have come together to say we know what the answer is to this. It is not as difficult as other areas we have to deal with, such as health care. The national renewable energy lab in my home State will tell us all if we put our minds together, we can produce 30 to 40 percent of our energy from renewable energy sources. We can use the new technologies that are out there to get to energy independence.

The only thing lacking, really, has been the will of the leadership of America to move forward to get us to that energy independence. In my view, it is important that we do so, first, because our national security is dependent upon our being energy independent. We ought not to be in a position where the national sovereignty and security of this Nation is held hostage to the whims of the Middle East and those who happen to have oil wealth under their sands.

Secondly, it is important for the economic security of our country that we move forward with energy independence. As we move forward, we will find economic opportunity, including economic opportunity for rural America, to help us grow our way to energy independence.

Finally, we will be able to deal with the environmental security issues that are very much at stake in this energy debate.

I want to comment on the importance of education and the College Affordability Act, which has been presented today by Senator REID. For many of us who know the promise of America, we know that promise of America has come about through the educational opportunities we receive. For many of us in this Chamber, including Senator MURRAY, who spoke a few minutes ago—she talked about the promise of America delivered through the educational opportunities which she had. Even though she was one of seven children and had a father who had multiple sclerosis, she achieved

the highest level of the American dream because that educational opportunity was given to her. I and others have gone through similar circumstances. In my own case, in Colorado, my father and mother never had an opportunity to get a college degree. We were poor, raised in a place that didn't have electricity and a telephone. Yet the promise of America and the promise of education was something that was constantly talked about to us by our parents. I often remember my father going around the table at our ranch and making sure all eight of his children were doing their homework because he knew that education would allow them to seek horizons and get to places he had not been able to reach. Over time, all eight of his children became first-generation college graduates.

Today, I stand here as a Senator from that family, born in that place. Without education, I would not be here, and those in my family would not have had the opportunities they have had. It has been the leaders in the Senate, including people such as former Senator Claiborne Pell from Rhode Island, who stood for the proposition that that educational opportunity should be afforded to all Americans, no matter what your background, no matter your economic condition; that you should be allowed to have an educational opportunity in America, because there was a recognition that with educational opportunity, anything is possible for a child in America.

So that piece of legislation Senator REID introduced today is something I hope we can embrace electively as a Senate moving forward in a comprehensive way.

Finally, let me make a quick remark on the issue of immigration reform. We spent a lot of time on immigration here in the Senate. A few months ago, we were successful in passing a bipartisan compromise to move forward. I am hopeful that as we look at the months ahead, we will be able to work with President Bush and our Democratic and Republican colleagues to fashion a comprehensive immigration reform package that will deliver an effective immigration law for our country.

In my view, that immigration reform package has to have three principles at its center. First, we have to secure our borders. I believe the legislation introduced today will, in fact, help us make sure our borders are secure. We as a sovereign Nation have to make sure we are securing our borders.

Secondly, we need to enforce our laws within our country. For far too long we have looked the other way and the laws of immigration in our country simply have not been enforced. The measure we passed last year put together the pieces to allow us to enforce our immigration laws.

Finally, from both a human and a moral and economic perspective, we need to find ways of bringing the 12

million people who now live in the shadows of America out into the sunlight of America. Those people are here working today, as they have been for many years. Their reality has in fact been recognized but somehow ignored. We need to find a way to make sure that we bring those people from the shadows into the sunlight, and the only way we will be able to do that is with a comprehensive immigration reform package that we pushed forward last year and, hopefully, we will have another opportunity to push forward in the manner of the bill introduced today by Senator REID.

I very much look forward to working with my colleagues, both Democrats and Republicans, in this body as we address the major issues facing our Nation and our world.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma is recognized.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be recognized for such time as I may consume.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is recognized.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I have a couple of concerns here. One is a driving concern. After having served on the House Armed Services Committee before and for the last 12 years on the Senate Armed Services Committee, I am deeply distressed that we did not get our MilCon Appropriations bill passed. I don't think a lot of people realize how significant it is that we get it passed for this fiscal year, 2007.

The partisan issues that some people are trying to tie up on the floor are nowhere near as important as this issue, and I am talking about some of the other bills. It is true that we need to have the DC appropriations bill, but it is not life-threatening and certainly not going to result in the loss of lives of our fighting troops. Labor-HHS is important but not as important as this bill. Commerce-State-Justice—a lot of those items can be put into a CR. I would have no problem with a continuing resolution. But as far as this bill is concerned, if we don't do it now, there are a lot of items in conjunction with our BRAC process that are not going to happen and have to happen and are life-threatening to our troops.

I compliment Senator HUTCHISON, who was chairman of the Subcommittee on Military Construction. She tried so hard in the last 2 days of the last session to get this bill through. Quite frankly, it wasn't really a problem in the Senate as much as it was in the other body. We tried very hard. We talked with a number of people and were unable to get that bill done.

Over the past few years, the military has sought to reshape itself out of a Cold War footing into a modern, more modular force. It has tried to reconsti-

tute its equipment, while at the same time fighting a war in Iraq and Afghanistan. It has been forced to come to Congress for supplementals to meet just the bare minimum requirements of fighting the war and rebuilding the military as is so necessary.

So we have stretched them every way we can. We have cut into almost every program, essential initiatives such as the Future Combat System. That is a recognition, after the 1990s, when we let our modernization slide and a lot of our military needs, to bring us up so that when we send our kids into battle, we send them with the very best of equipment. If we look at some of our ground equipment, such as our artillery pieces, it is World War II technology. It is the old Paladin where they actually have to swab the breech after every shot.

The Future Combat System came up, and there was a recognition that we should have an army, a ground force that is faster, more agile, more transportable, more modern than it is today. Every week that goes by that we don't get this done, it is causing the Future Combat System—there are about 19 elements of it—to move to the right and delay this from taking place.

The fiscal year 2007 Military Construction appropriations bill was not passed into law. The continuing resolution, as currently enacted, does not allow the Department of Defense to proceed with over \$17 billion in new construction and BRAC projects authorized by Congress in the 2007 authorization bill.

Let me mention what will happen if we don't do this. There are so many things having to do with the BRAC process. I opposed the last BRAC round. We went ahead and had it, and I think that is probably the last we will have for a long period of time. It has a deadline of 2011. If we don't get this bill passed—by the way, I have introduced S. 113. We have a number of cosponsors. Most of the Republican members of the Senate Armed Services Committee are on it.

The 1st Armored Division will have to stay in Germany if we don't get this passed. If that happens, we are not going to be able to have the two modular combat brigade teams we so critically need on the front lines. We are talking about the war that is taking place right now and why we need to get this MILCON appropriations bill passed.

The Army National Guard and Reserve lack \$1.1 billion to construct and replace aviation support facilities. They cannot function without these facilities. The postponement of construction of 250 new homes at the naval base in Guam and the Marine Corps logistics base in Barstow, CA, are just some of the housing needs that will not be able to be continued. Of course, they will cost more money the longer we put them off.

We opened up some serious shortfalls in our UHF—that is, ultra high fre-

quency—satellite communications capabilities. Two of the \$6.5 million mobile user objective systems ground control tracking stations were slated for Hawaii and Sigonella, Italy. Without the stations, the already-funded satellites—we have the satellites ready to go—cannot launch until we get this bill passed.

We went through months of agonizing discomfort in deciding what are we going to do with the F-22, C-17, C-5, C-9, and C-40 in terms of the new locations. That has all been determined. It has been outlined in BRAC, but we can't do it until we have the hangars to take care of them, to get them into the new areas.

What we are talking about are items that directly affect the warfighting effort. The Predator, for example, has the tactical air control program that should be supporting the Army brigade combat teams.

I think we all know our ground forces have to have support, either close air support or artillery support on the ground. We can't do the close air support if we don't have the appropriations bill passed.

The Predator mission—a lot of people are not aware of this; they think of it as being intelligence-gathering agencies and a communications system targeting and retargeting on the ground. While that is very important and it has to be done, a lot of people don't realize the Predator also has the capability of firing a rocket. So we need to have that program. We cannot have it unless we get this bill passed.

The military is going to lose a lot if we don't get this bill passed. When we look at the military construction that is going on in the continental United States and we see the community support—in my State of Oklahoma, we have five major military installations. They are located near major cities. Vance Air Force Base is at Enid, OK. Then we have Altus, Lawton, McAlester, Oklahoma City, and Midwest City. We have always done well in our BRAC process because we have greater community support than most other installations. But when you have a community that has made a commitment toward MILCON predicated on the assumption that we are going to pass our Military Construction appropriations bill and then we don't do it, they could very well renege on their commitment for housing, hospitalization, and childcare. It is far more significant than most people realize. If we don't pass the needed funding, the results will be very serious.

I have in front of me a letter signed by Army Secretary Harvey and General Schoomaker:

The potential negative effects on operational readiness cannot be overemphasized; the Army's ability to prosecute the Global War on Terrorism and to prepare for future conflicts would be severely hampered.

Another letter from Navy Secretary Donald Winter and Marine Corps Commandant GEN James T. Conway and ADM Michael G. Mullen: