

the panel uncovered what they believed were fundamental structural and organizational flaws with the Federal Government's space sector. Such flaws include major management problems, poor communication among and between involved agencies, a lack of proper oversight and direction, a lack of expert professional personnel, and a host of others. The panel also recognized a scary reality—space technology is rapidly proliferating to all corners of the Earth, and America is not keeping up with its space competitors. This proliferation, combined with our space industry bogged down by aging legacy space projects that take vital resources away from newer, more modern projects, has taken its toll on our competitive edge with China and other emerging nations.

Although some of these and other deficiencies were recognized and exposed by the 2001 Space Commission, drastic measures to adequately deal with the problems uncovered were not proposed and undertaken. This panel, however, took an alternate route and recommended bold proposals to redirect and radically improve our national space agenda. The panel recommends, and again I agree, that America needs a top-to-bottom overhaul to restore the vitality of our space programs and regain and sustain the competitive advantages afforded the United States by our preeminence in space. In no uncertain terms, the panel outlined a bold new vision for the future of America's role in space. It laid out four suggestions of significant substance to restructure our approach to space and realign our defense, intelligence, and commercial priorities as they relate to space.

First, it calls for the President to create and implement a truly national space strategy. The President should announce to the American people that he is updating and modernizing America's space program immediately and elevating its priority status to the top tier of the national agenda.

The panel recommends the President reestablish the National Space Council in the Executive Office of the President, under the leadership of the National Security Advisor, to implement the new strategy and coordinate its activities with the Department of Defense, the intelligence community, NASA, and other responsible agencies. This will provide one of the President's top advisers with the power to assign responsibilities, set priorities, and break through the barriers to cooperation that have stymied progress on key space programs in the past.

Second, the panel believes that no one is really in charge of the national space agenda. They discovered that in the midst of so much bureaucracy and competing authorities, regrettably there has been no one at the helm. This needs to change.

The authorities and responsibilities for all Government space programs are spread widely throughout the Pentagon

and within various intelligence agencies. Therefore, the panel recommends the creation of a National Security Space Authority that will be responsible to the Secretary of Defense and the Director of National Intelligence. The proposed arrangement is needed to remedy the ruinous deficiencies in the current system, including the frequent inability to reconcile budget priorities and the common failure to ensure that innovative acquisition program requirements are affordable and integrated across military and intelligence space domains.

Third, the panel recommends to strip the National Reconnaissance Office and the Air Force Space and Missile Systems Center of their status as traditional, independent entities and incorporate their personnel and functions, as well as the functions of other parts of the Air Force Space Command, into a single National Security Space Organization. Under unified leadership, this organization could allow all the space experts to work more effectively together. The panel recommends this path because it most effectively utilizes the scarce talent available to achieve our Nation's goals in space. Under this type of organizational structure, the Government's space management team can focus on installing best engineering and acquisition practices, including early systems engineering and cost estimating. I am not sure I agree yet with this recommendation, but I think it does warrant serious consideration by the Congress.

It is true that the continual problem of space acquisition program delays, cost overruns, and cancellations has drained resources and caused America to rely heavily on satellite constellations that have matured beyond their original design lives. This is simply unacceptable, and I think the panel is correct when they say that small modifications to the status quo, which have been proposed time and again in the past, are not enough. A new and innovative organizational structure is a good idea, but the details of the panel's third recommendation need to be vetted before I can lend my full support.

Finally, the panel suggests that the intelligence community and each of the military branches adopt and execute strategies for identifying, selecting, educating, training, and managing a sufficient number of Government experts and professionals to support the country's space acquisition obligations. The careers of these space acquisition and technical professionals should be designed and administered so that they can provide continuity for the execution of long-term projects, while remaining eligible and competitive for career advancement.

It is unrealistic to expect that we can modernize our space strategy and succeed in developing complex space systems without enough technically capable and sufficiently experienced Government scientists, engineers, and acquisition experts that are immersed in

the space arena and assigned to see projects through to completion. These types of professionals are critical to the success of our future endeavors in space.

Throughout my time in the Congress I have fully supported science-related education. This support includes space, defense, and national security studies as well. For example, I have supported funding requests for the Center for Space and Defense Studies at the U.S. Air Force Academy. The mission of this center is to build and define space policy studies curriculum for the undergraduate cadets. I have long supported the Center for Geosciences and Atmospheric Research at my alma mater, Colorado State University. This center is a national resource for the Department of Defense in the areas of atmospheric and hydrologic research, which are both critical to our national security.

America needs more engineers, physicists, rocket scientists, mathematicians, and the like. We need them now and in the coming decades more than we ever have in the past. The future of our national security and defense capabilities rests with our ability to recruit, train, and equip more and more Americans with the critical knowledge and know-how of the hard sciences. The first step is making this type of education a top national priority, and it is my hope that America's future leaders will do so.

Mr. President, I appreciate all four and fully support three of the panel's suggestions for the improvement of our national space strategy. In my opinion, if we fail to act on these recommendations, we face the possibility that our preeminence in space will erode to the point at which we will no longer enjoy a significant competitive national security advantage in an all-important global arena.

Along with the American people, I am indebted to the panel for their hard and thoughtful work on this study. Their discoveries and suggestions for improvement are invaluable. It is my hope that the next Congress and the next administration will take a serious look at this study and craft an aggressive and coherent strategy for America's future presence in space.

COLORADO DRUG INVESTIGATORS ASSOCIATION

Mr. ALLARD. Mr. President, throughout the past 3 years the Colorado Drug Investigators Association, DIA, has united peace officers and other professionals who share a common interest in illegal and illicit drug enforcement. Through the leadership of State president Ernest Martinez, State vice president, Jerry Peters, regional vice presidents David Arcady, Rick Needham, Brian Roman, Rob Pride, Kevin Hathaway, at-large members Janelle Crain, Mechele Berge, Sandra Evans, Rick Millwright, Gary Graham, Kelly Horton, Jim Welton, Francis

Gonzales, and Ron Hollingshead, the Colorado Drug Investigators Association continues to unite into one organization all Colorado peace officers and individuals committed to protecting the State from all drug-related crime. This organization provides comprehensive counternarcotics training for all members in all aspects of drug enforcement and continues to educate and recommend legislation favorable to effective drug enforcement in Colorado. It recognizes the critical importance of information exchange and actively facilitates this communication between members of the association on the movements of drug violators and new and innovative techniques used by either the criminals or law enforcement.

In addition, the Colorado Drug Investigators Association, through cultural, legislative, political, fraternal, educational, charitable, welfare and social activities, fosters an atmosphere of cooperation and information sharing among all law enforcement in Colorado, private industry and the public. I believe the CDIA represents a valuable tool in the fight against drug-related crime and express my appreciation to all association members for their commitment to the safety and security for the citizens of Colorado.

LABOR DAY

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, Labor Day is our opportunity to celebrate the millions of American workers who have given, and continue to give, so much of themselves to make our Nation great. I am happy to have had the opportunity to celebrate this Labor Day in Racine, WV, with many old friends. Today, on the holiday especially devoted to the social and economic achievements of the American workforce. I would like to thank all of the miners, teachers, nurses, service technicians, firefighters, police, repairmen, and all those who dedicate their lives to making their communities and their country a better place. As summer is winding down and children are preparing to go back to school, we should all take a moment to appreciate what working Americans do for us.

Honest, hard-working people, with the core American values of faith and family, are what make West Virginia such a wonderful place to live and call home. Miners work long shifts, miles under the ground, often in tight spaces with frigid water up to their knees, to get the coal that provides 50 percent of our Nation's electricity. Yet people rarely think of that when they flip on the light switch. Teachers spend much of their own personal time preparing lesson plans and finding creative ways to teach our next generation. They always go above and beyond the call of duty for their students. Those in public service work day in and day out to get Social Security checks processed and in the mail on time, to manage tax returns, or to deliver basic health services to our citizens. I applaud each and every one of these Americans.

I am glad Congress succeeded, finally, this year in raising the minimum wage to \$6.55, to help our working families. Increasing the minimum wage so it is a living wage is something I have advocated since 1998, and now all of our workers will get the increase they need and deserve to help make ends meet in this struggling economy. This Labor Day I am especially aware of the need to change the direction of our country and that has to start with turning around our economy. It is unfair for hard-working Americans to have to deal with stagnant wages and rising costs for gas, food, and health care with no help. The minimum wage will continue to rise until it reaches \$7.25 in 2009.

These workers are the heart and soul of West Virginia. Opportunities do not come easily to them. They work hard every day to get the things they need for their families—gas, school supplies, and maybe new sneakers or a pair of jeans for the next school year. Before the rise of unions, we did not enjoy a 40-hour work week, the benefits of Social Security, or the right to organize. But West Virginians always fought for the American dream. They have a high regard for quality and strive for excellence in everything that they do. In an unfortunate Forbes survey, West Virginia was listed as one of the least desirable states in which to do business. But that is only because some companies do not yet know the men and women that make up West Virginia's workforce; they do not realize that West Virginia's future and potential is about more than just coal. They do not see the small business owners, the nurses and doctors, the educators, the entrepreneurs, the manufacturers, and artists who keep our State moving and make it so special. They must not have heard that companies from all over the world such as DuPont, Union Carbide, and Phone Poulenc have put plants in West Virginia and tapped into our dedicated work force. Northrop Grumman, MPL Corporation, Orrick, Herrington, and Sutcliffe, that's the real West Virginia—with a bright future fueled by all its abundant resources, the most precious of which are the men and women of our workforce. Our Toyota plant is the fastest growing plant in the history of Toyota Motor Company. It has been named the plant with the most productive workers in all of North America 5 years in a row. This is a testament to West Virginia employees' unmatched work ethic.

As we celebrate Labor Day, we need to remember that it is the commitment and diligence of our workers that makes us great. We as West Virginians are fighters, always have been, always will be, but even fighters need a day off. West Virginians have earned a day of rest.

TRIBUTE TO BRENDAN O'CONNOR

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, as we continue to debate national strategy

and the way ahead in Iraq and Afghanistan, there is one thing that is not debatable, and that is the courage and valor of our troops. Today, I wish to honor one of those brave troops, MSgt Brendan O'Connor, a medic in the Special Forces of the U.S. Army.

Master Sergeant O'Connor distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in action during a fierce battle in Kandahar Province, Afghanistan, when his small detachment engaged an estimated 200 Taliban fighters on June 24, 2006. For his heroism, Master Sergeant O'Connor, who held the rank of sergeant first class at the time of the battle, was honored with the Nation's second highest award for valor, the Distinguished Service Cross.

After awarding the Distinguished Service Cross to Brendan, ADM Eric Olson, the head of U.S. Special Operations Command, hailed the contributions of the Army's Special Forces and said, "Master Sergeant Brendan O'Connor exemplifies the spirit of these warriors."

Leading a quick reaction force during a mission against Taliban leaders, Master Sergeant O'Connor and his team found themselves outnumbered and surrounded by hundreds of Taliban fighters in one of the most hotly contested areas of Afghanistan. After calmly maneuvering his force through enemy Taliban positions, Master Sergeant O'Connor crawled over 150 yards alone through enemy machine-gun fire across an open field to rescue two wounded comrades. Rallying and motivating his severely outnumbered team throughout a day-long battle, he saved the lives of 21 soldiers and prevented his detachment's destruction while inflicting heavy casualties on the enemy.

The heroism of Brendan O'Connor and his team in Afghanistan received national media attention on the CBS News program "60 Minutes," which aired a segment on April 20 of this year, "Ambush in Afghanistan."

Brendan O'Connor comes from a long and distinguished family history of military service to our Nation, with deep roots in the U.S. Army and at West Point. Brendan's father, LTC Mortimer O'Connor, who graduated from West Point in 1953, was killed in action in Vietnam in 1968 while leading men into battle as commander of the 1st Battalion, 2nd Infantry, in the famed "Big Red One," the oldest continuously serving division in the U.S. Army.

A true "warrior-poet", Mort O'Connor was not only decorated several times for valor on the battlefield, but taught English at West Point and earned a graduate degree in English literature from the University of Pennsylvania. A remembrance of Mort O'Connor in a March 1978 West Point Alumni publication recalled his spirit on the athletic fields as a young cadet:

When victorious he would exultantly claim to be descended from ancient Irish warrior kings. And it may be true, for he had in him a wild romanticism, a tragic lilt of heart, which only the Irish have.