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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable MARK BEGICH, a Senator from the State of Alaska.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal Lord God, the fountain of all that blesses us, we thank You for the gift of this new day. These undeserved seconds, minutes, and hours You have graciously given to us provide opportunities to honor You.

As our lawmakers do the challenging legislative labors of this body, may they feel gratitude to You for the privilege of living in these difficult days when faithfulness in service brings even greater glory to Your Name. Let Your kingdom come, and may Your will be done on Earth as it is in heaven. Lord, use our lawmakers to seek Your guidance to do Your will and to fulfill Your sovereign purposes for our time and for all people. Teach them to listen to each other, to respond in respect, esteem, and wisdom, so that laws written here will represent the best in justice and equity for the welfare of our Republic and the world.

We pray in Your sovereign Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable MARK BEGICH 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 ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

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

The assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, September 15, 2010.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable MARK BEGICH, a Senator from the State of Alaska, to perform the duties of the Chair.

DANIEL K. INOUE,
President pro tempore.

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, following any leader remarks, there will be a period of morning business for 1 hour, with Senators during that time allowed to speak for up to 10 minutes each. The Republicans will control the first half of morning business and the majority will control the next half.

Following morning business, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 5297, the small business jobs bill. Yesterday, cloture was invoked on the substitute amendment, and the postcloture debate time will expire around 6:15 tonight. Furthermore, cloture was also filed on the underlying bill. I continue to work with my colleagues. Senator MCCONNELL and I have had a number of conversations on how to terminate this legislation and send it to the House. We hope to be able to complete that soon. When we have something worked out, we will notify Senators.

The Senate will recess from 2:45 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. today to allow for Senators to attend the September 11 remembrance ceremony on the east front center steps of the Capitol.

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. Under the previous order, there will now be a period for the transaction of morning business for 1 hour, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, with the time divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with the Republicans controlling the first half and the majority controlling the final half.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum and ask that the time be charged equally against both sides.

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

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. Mr. 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.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, staff has informed me that our block of time is fully called for, the full 30 minutes. I again call for the calling of the roll for a quorum, and that time will come off the first 30 minutes of the Republicans' time as the first 30 minutes is theirs.

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

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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MILITARY CONSTRUCTION

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I rise to speak in morning business about the military construction issue I spoke about in July. I raised concerns then about the Pentagon's overseas military construction program, particularly in Germany, Korea, and Guam, because, as the ranking member of the Military Construction Subcommittee, I am seeing that we are changing a strategy. Yet we have not had the strategy explained to us. This is the beginning of a huge taxpayer-funded influx of rebuilding overseas in a way that I think is perhaps duplicative and even against the interests that have been shown in our previous strategy. I think it is time to take a pause.

I rise to speak because the GAO has just released a study this week that says we should take a pause. The Military Construction Subcommittee, chaired by Senator JOHNSON—and I respect and appreciate his leadership in this so much—asked the GAO to do a study because we were seeing the Army coming in and asking for what is going to be a commitment for \$1 to \$2 billion to change their headquarters from Heidelberg to Wiesbaden and to add more BCTs than were originally intended to stay in Germany. We looked at this and said: Wait a minute. We are getting ready to duplicate a lot of effort that we have made in bases in America and at a great taxpayer expense. Yet we are not seeing the backup and the strategy proposed to support this kind of taxpayer expense.

Let me start back in the beginning. Prior to the 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review, the Army planned to return the four brigade combat teams stationed in Europe to the United States in fiscal years 2012 and 2013. It would save millions annually in overseas stationing costs. This was in response to the Overseas Basing Commission—that was passed by Congress—to adopt a force projection strategy. The Pentagon is reversing the recent efforts to transform the military and restation tens of thousands of military personnel back on U.S. soil. That is what the Overseas Basing Commission recommended, passed by Congress, supported by Congress, and now we seem to see a change in that strategy but without a projection of what the strategy would be.

What the Overseas Basing Commission found, and the Pentagon originally agreed with, is that training and deployment of forces was determined to be superior in the U.S. bases and certainly more cost efficient. We learned that there were constraints on transferring the members of our military into Iraq because we could not use the airspace of certain European countries, and we could not go on the train through certain European countries. It was costly to get our troops from Germany into Iraq, more costly than it should have been.

In addition, there are training constraints. The Overseas Basing Commis-

sion saw this. Many of us who have looked at bases overseas see that there are training constraints. There are constraints for live artillery training. There are constraints for use of the airspace. In looking at this, it was determined we should bring them home from Germany to train in America to accommodate our families in America and to deploy from America, where we would control the capability to deploy quickly and cost efficiently.

On that basis, we have invested \$14 billion in U.S. bases to accommodate the military and the families who were projected to come to American bases and have the training capabilities they need. Now we are seeing requests for military construction, and it triggered our committee to say: Wait a minute. We are supposed to be pulling out of Germany, but now we are seeing the Army get ready to put \$1 billion to \$4 billion into military construction, to change their headquarters from Heidelberg to Wiesbaden, and duplicate what we have already done in the United States for construction projects in Europe, Korea, and Guam, without demonstrating the cost efficiencies or projected future costs.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator has used 5 minutes.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. I ask unanimous consent for an additional 5 minutes.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection? Hearing no objection, it is so ordered.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. I thank the Senator from Maryland.

Now we are seeing an expensive and duplicative strategy—well, there is not a strategy but request for spending. I am asking for a strategy.

The Government Accountability Office did issue a report this week that says the Army's justification for keeping the forces in Europe was based on a flawed analysis, and it would cost taxpayers up to \$2 billion, from 2012 to 2021, to pay for it. Let me reference a couple things from the report. The GAO found the decision to retain brigades in Europe to require the Army to seek roughly \$176 million annually to support the Bamberg and Swineford communities, again in fiscal year 2013. Those are the communities that would have had Army facilities.

The Army now estimates that not returning two of the four BCTs, brigade combat teams, in Europe to the United States could potentially cost between \$1 billion and \$2 billion between fiscal years 2012 and 2021. It will cost an average of 360 million American dollars per year to retain those units in Europe that were scheduled to be moved to America.

Closing the Heidelberg facility and moving the headquarters to Wiesbaden—the Army estimated that move from Heidelberg to go to Wiesbaden would save hundreds of millions of dollars in 2013. But the GAO found the Army now admits they will need \$150 million annually to support the continuing operation in Heidelberg because of delays.

The GAO goes on to say that the Army has not documented the savings, nor why the move is necessary at that cost. The GAO concludes that with over \$1.3 billion invested since 2004 and another \$1.4 billion in infrastructure investments planned for the Wiesbaden consolidation and the recapitalization of medical facilities and the potential to increase costs, it would cost up to \$2 billion over the next 10 years if all four BCTs were kept in the Europe. The financial stakes are high.

The GAO is recommending in its report that the Secretary of Defense take advantage of a pause before final decisions are made on the Army's European force structure, conduct a comprehensive analysis of alternatives, and have a process that is credible in determining what the costs are and whether those units should be kept in Europe or, as originally planned and as invested in our military bases in America, what it is going to cost.

The GAO has concluded that we need a comprehensive analysis.

It conducted important cost-benefit analyses at the urging of the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Subcommittee, chaired by Senator JOHNSON. The GAO report findings are instructive. I hope the Pentagon will pause and take a fresh look at this military construction program to determine, does it serve our Nation not to move those troops back? We prepared the bases for them. The families, the medical units, are in the United States now. So, please, I am asking the Pentagon to determine if it does serve our best military strategy and our taxpayers to keep those troops in Europe rather than moving them back.

I want to thank Senator JOHNSON for including a provision in the military construction/VA appropriations bill that would restrict the level of spending in overseas construction. Our bill would restrict the use of MILCON funds for Germany until the Department of Defense completes the following: an evaluation of the NATO strategy concept review, the U.S. assessment of its defense posture in Europe, a front-end assessment of DOD's global posture from fiscal year 2012 to 2016 in the program budget review cycle.

I have shared my concerns with the Secretary of Defense. I have asked him, as our committee has asked him, to provide to the Congressional defense committees a comprehensive Army basing strategy for Europe based on these assessments and a projected timeline and a cost estimate of what this will be.

In Korea, it is the same. We need a cost estimate for the decision that the Pentagon has apparently made to put more troops and families into Korea without any accommodation for the new facilities that will be needed for the accompanied families' military transfer into Korea.

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