

that arch-terrorist Muammar Qaddafi can claim a victory over the West? Stop targeting al Qaeda in Pakistan and Yemen and elsewhere? Stop deterring China, North Korea, or Iran? Stop patrolling the Persian Gulf through which much of the world's oil flows? Stop fighting cyberattacks emanating from China and Russia? Stop developing missile defenses to protect the American homeland? Stop supporting Mexico and Colombia in their fights against narco-traffickers? Stop holding military exercises with friendly armed forces from Egypt to the Philippines—exercises that allow us to exert soft power at low cost?

Maybe advocates of budget cuts think we should continue performing all, or most, of those missions with less resources. But that's a cop-out. It's a recipe for stinting on training and personnel, thus creating a "hollow force" of the kind that we last saw in the late 1970s.

The reality is that there is no way the armed forces can perform all, or even most, of their current missions with less money. In fact, despite the growing spending of the past decade for contingency operations, the military has already cancelled a number of important procurement programs. These include the Army's Future Combat System and the Air Force's F-22, the best-in-the-world stealth fighter that was canceled just before China unveiled its own stealth fighter.

For the most part, the armed forces remain reliant on weapons systems designed in the 1960s and 1970s and procured in the 1980s: aircraft such as the A-10, F-15, and F-16, helicopters such as the Apache and Black Hawk, warships such as Los Angeles-class submarines and Ticonderoga-class cruisers, and armored vehicles such as Abrams tanks and Bradley Fighting Vehicles. These are all superb weapons, but they are rapidly aging—and are either being overtaken, or soon will be, by competing models produced abroad that are certain to fall into the hands of our enemies.

Moreover, competing powers such as China and Russia are designing weapons such as computer bugs and antisatellite missiles that could render much of our current equipment useless. We will have to develop defenses. And that won't be cheap.

At the same time, the Department of Defense must take care of its people—our most precious asset. There are 1.5 million active-duty military personnel, 750,000 civilian Defense Department employees, and 1.5 million personnel in the Reserves and National Guard. We already spend more on personnel costs (\$157 billion this year) than on weapons procurement (\$151 billion) and the imbalance is likely to grow in future years, thereby making it even harder to increase our power-projection capabilities. Yet Congress rebuffed Gates's attempts to institute modest co-payments for the fiscally unsustainable Tricare medical system. That was deemed too politically sensitive.

This is part of a pattern: Congress finds it difficult or impossible to cut specific defense programs because they all have powerful constituencies. But mandating "top-line" cuts may be politically palatable as part of a budget deal because lawmakers won't have to make tough choices about which programs to eliminate and which areas of the world to leave undefended.

Cutting defense won't solve our budget woes. The "core" defense budget, \$553 billion, is small as a percentage of GDP (3.7 percent) and of the federal budget (15 percent). Nor is it the reason why we are piling up so much debt. To reduce the deficit, lawmakers will have to do something about out-of-control entitlement programs.

If Republicans acquiesce in ruinous cuts to the defense budget, they will cease to be

known as Ronald Reagan's heirs. Instead they will be remembered as the party of William E. Borah, Hamilton Fish III, and Gerald Nye. Remember those GOP giants of the 1930s? They thought a strong defense was unaffordable and unnecessary. But their reputations collapsed on December 7, 1941, when we learned (not for the last time) the price of unreadiness. That is a lesson today's Republicans should remember as they negotiate over the budget.

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#### SHORT-SIGHTEDNESS ON DEFENSE CUTS

(By Jamie M. Fly)

As the debt-limit talks enter their final stages, reports are emerging that significant defense cuts may be part of the negotiated package. President Obama, for his part, already proposed cutting \$400 billion in security spending over 12 years in his April 13 speech on fiscal policy. The White House is now apparently trying not just to lock that proposal in, but possibly convince Republicans to even go beyond it via the debt-limit negotiations.

Now that Secretary of Defense Gates—who had warned of the implications of the \$400 billion in cuts—has left the Pentagon, the White House is increasingly highlighting defense as a potential source of significant savings.

On Wednesday, at his "Twitter Town Hall," Obama said, "the nice thing about the defense budget is it's so big, it's so huge, that a one percent reduction is the equivalent of the education budget. Not—I'm exaggerating, but it's so big that you can make relatively modest changes to defense that end up giving you a lot of head room to fund things like basic research or student loans or things like that."

Obama's statement was very misleading. One percent of the president's proposed defense budget for 2012 equals only a fraction of his \$77.4 billion education budget request—that is, 7.1 percent. Also, the Obama administration has significantly increased education funding (by more than 50 percent), over the course of its three budgets, while defense spending increases have barely matched the rate of inflation.

Indeed, defense has been targeted by the White House Office of Management and Budget each year as the administration compiled its budget requests. It has not been spared the axe by the appropriators on Capitol Hill, who have consistently funded defense at levels less than those requested by the president. In fact, projected defense spending over the next ten years in the current House budget resolution is already \$315 billion less than the amounts the Obama administration projected in its FY2011 request.

All of this is despite the fact that the defense budget is not the source of America's current fiscal woes. Unfortunately, it appears that in the debt-limit talks, both Republicans and Democrats are tempted to avoid the difficult choices posed by significant entitlement reform. Instead, they are contemplating going after defense spending, perhaps assuming there is not a constituency to defend the defense budget at a time when the nation is weary of overseas commitments and many Americans want a renewed focus at home.

This short-sightedness is not a surprise coming from the White House. It is, however, sad to see Republicans heading down this path.

Congressional Republicans should ask themselves whether they want to enter 2012 by surrendering the GOP's traditional credibility on national security. If they endorse Obama's ridiculous \$400 billion in defense cuts—or even worse, agree to deeper cuts—

Republicans risk assisting the president's management of American decline, just as the United States enters a very turbulent and uncertain period.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

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

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

#### VISIT TO THE SENATE BY PARLIAMENTARIANS OF BRITAIN

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, we have a group of British parliamentarians meeting with us. I see the distinguished Republican leader on the floor. Senator COCHRAN and I are leading a delegation to meet with them, and I am about to ask to put the Senate in recess subject to the call of the Chair, which will only be a matter of minutes. I assure my colleagues, so we can bring them on the floor.

I ask unanimous consent that the Senate stand in recess, subject to the call of the Chair.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 12:03 p.m., recessed subject to the call of the Chair and reassembled at 12:13 p.m., when called to order by the Presiding Officer.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MANCHIN). The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, now that we are back in session, I thank my fellow Members, and Senator COCHRAN especially, for their courtesy in letting us go into recess so that we could bring a group of very distinguished British parliamentarians on the floor.

I would note for the Senate that we meet every 2 years, American Senators and British parliamentarians of both the House of Commons and the House of Lords. We will do it once in England, once here. Two years ago we were over there, and this year we are meeting here. Four years ago, as Senator COCHRAN will recall, we met in the State of Vermont. But with changes in the Senate session, we are going to meet here in the Capitol.

I thank you very much for the courtesy.

I yield to the Senator from Mississippi.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi is recognized.

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, it is a distinct honor and pleasure to join Senator LEAHY in welcoming our guests from the United Kingdom to the Senate. This is a tradition we have really enjoyed and benefited from—the close opportunity to talk and discuss issues of mutual interest and concerns—and I think we reflect credit on the good relationship of both of our countries in that process. It is an honor

to join him in welcoming them at this time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

### THE DREAM ACT

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, it was 10 years ago that my office in Chicago, IL, was contacted by a young woman. Theresa Lee, who is Korean by birth, had been part of something known as the Merit Music Program in Chicago. It is an amazing program. A lady in the later years of her life decided to leave some money to a program that would offer to children in the public schools a musical instrument and instruction. Her belief was that many of these students would take up the offer and that learning a musical instrument could be an important part of their future lives.

She was right. The Merit Music Program, at least as of last year, had a 100-percent placement rating of graduates in college. It turned out that giving a musical instrument to a young person and giving them a chance to develop that skill did a lot more than create music. It created self esteem, confidence, and a belief they could do something with their lives, even for many students who were from poor families.

Ten years ago, the Merit Music Program contacted us and told us about a young woman named Theresa Lee who was one of their star pupils. She had learned piano and had graduated to a level of competence they had seldom seen in their program. In fact, she had played in a concert and now, as she graduated from high school, she was accepted at several of the major music schools around the United States, including Julliard. As she filled out the application to go to school, though, she found out she ran into a problem. They asked on the application for the Julliard School of Music what her nationality or citizenship was.

She turned to her mother and said: What do I put down there?

Her mother said: Theresa, when we brought you to this country you were 2 years old, and I never filed any papers. I don't know what your status is in terms of your nationality.

The mother was an American citizen. Her brother and sister were American citizens. But she had never established her citizenship or claim for citizenship.

At the age of 18, she contacted my office and asked: What should I do?

We took a look at the law, and the law was very clear. Under the law of the United States of America, that

young woman who came here at the age of 2 and had not filed any papers had to leave the United States and go to Brazil, which was the last country her parents traveled through on their way to America, and wait 10 years before she could apply to become legal in America. It did not sound fair to me. Two-year-olds do not have much voice in terms of whether they should file papers.

If anybody made a mistake, it was her parents, and they knew it. They could not correct it, though, and the law did not correct it. The law punished her, ultimately sending her back to Korea, a place she could never remember, with a language she did not speak.

So I introduced the DREAM Act, and the DREAM Act said: If you came to America under the circumstance that if you are brought here as a child, if you grew up in this country and graduated from high school, if you had no serious questions about your moral standing in the community, no serious problems with any criminal activity or background, we would give you a chance—just a chance.

The chance was they could either enlist in our military for at least 2 years or they could complete 2 years of college. If they did that, we would allow them to work toward legal status. All along we would be asking the same questions as the years went by: Have you done anything that would suggest to us that you should not be part of the United States of America? That was the DREAM Act. I introduced the bill 10 years ago.

An interesting story, what happened to Theresa. She went on to school at Julliard, and she did become an accomplished concert pianist. She has played a concert at Carnegie Hall. She has now married an American citizen, and she is legal in the United States. So the story had a happy ending. But for many of these young people it has no happy ending. They end up deported at the age of 18 or 19 because their parents did not file papers or could not file papers on their behalf.

That is why I introduced the DREAM Act, to give these young people a chance. Last month I chaired the first Senate hearing on the DREAM Act. There was compelling testimony from a number of witnesses. The Secretary of the Department of Education, Arne Duncan, testified about the talented students who would be eligible under the DREAM Act: the class valedictorians, the star athletes, honor students, and leaders in ROTC. Their options, however, are limited because they are undocumented. Secretary Duncan explained that the DREAM Act would make America a better and stronger country by giving these young people a chance to fulfill their potential.

Dr. Clifford Stanley testified. He is the Under Secretary for Personnel and Readiness from the Department of Defense. He testified that the DREAM

Act would strengthen our national security by giving thousands of highly qualified, well-educated young people a chance to enlist in the Armed Forces.

Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano also testified in favor of the DREAM Act and said this law would strengthen our homeland security by allowing immigration agents to focus their time, attention, and resources on those who clearly are a danger in the United States and should be deported rather than on these young people who had never posed any threat to anyone.

LTC Margaret Stock, who taught immigration law at West Point Military Academy, testified about important restrictions included in the DREAM Act to prevent abuse.

The most compelling testimony came from this young woman, Ola Kaso. Ola Kaso was brought to the United States by her mother from Albania in 1998 when she was 5 years old. Last month she graduated from high school in Warren, MI, with a 4.4 grade point average. She has enrolled in the honors program at the University of Michigan as a premed student.

Ola has so much to contribute to America, but even today she faces deportation back to Albania, a country she barely remembers, a country she left when she was 5 years old.

She spoke for thousands of people just like her, young people who call themselves now the Dreamers. I often come to the floor of the Senate to tell their stories, and today I want to tell you about three others.

This is Tapiwa and Dominique Nkata. Tapiwa is on the left, Dominique is on the right. Their parents, John and Joan Nkata, brought the family to the United States from Malawi, in Africa, in 1990. At the time, Tapiwa was 4 years old and Dominique was only 11 months old.

The Nkatas came here legally, so they had work permits. John, an ordained Christian minister, worked as a Hospice counselor, his wife Joan worked as an accountant. The Nkatas filed papers to stay here permanently. For years their case was stuck in immigration court. Finally, in 2009 John and Joan Nkata were granted legal permanent residency in the United States, but by this time Tapiwa and Dominique were adults and unable to obtain legal status through their parents. Had the court moved more quickly and the decision made while they were still children, there would be no question about their documented status.

Earlier this year these two young women were placed in deportation proceedings. Dominique sent me a letter, and here is what she said about being deported to Malawi:

The looming fear of having everything I know, including part of my family, here in the United States while I am removed to the other side of the world, is crippling.

And Tapiwa wrote a letter and said:

I can't imagine my life in Africa. I am an American. I know this culture and speak this language. I pledge allegiance to this flag.