

Understandably, U.S. policies towards Sri Lanka have focused on accountability for what happened during the last phases of the civil war as well as on steps toward reconciliation efforts that seek inclusion of former terrorist enemies into the democratic process. While these aspects are very important and deserving of support, I believe there is the opportunity to engage in a wider approach at the same time that takes into account economic and geostrategic considerations. Maybe a wider approach would have a positive influence overall.

I have expressed these points recently in correspondence to Secretary Kerry, urging him to undertake at the Department of State a review of our current policies towards Sri Lanka to ensure that we not only encourage continued reconciliation that includes political transparency especially in the upcoming election in the north but also recognize Sri Lanka's potential to be a strong financial and national security ally in the future.

Secretary Kerry has replied agreeing with me that promising economic growth is occurring in Sri Lanka after years of terrorist insurgency, and that this country can play a significant geopolitical role in U.S. strategic security interests in South Asia and the Indian Ocean. The State Department, however, points out that Sri Lanka still needs to achieve "meaningful reconciliation between the Sinhala majority and Tamil and Muslim minorities."

I take the State Department at its word, and believe the upcoming September 7 Provincial Council elections in the north can be a meaningful act of reconciliation between the Sinhala majority and Tamil Muslim minorities. And if they are deemed to be conducted in a free and fair manner, I will renew my request to Secretary Kerry to reassess our current policies towards Sri Lanka.

TRIBUTE TO ROBERT MARTIN, TUSKEGEE AIRMAN

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I would like to take a moment to recognize the remarkable service of Robert Martin, who has spent his life overcoming racial barriers and giving back to his country through extraordinary military and public service.

Born and raised in Dubuque, IA, Mr. Martin, in his youth and throughout his life, demonstrated an exceptional commitment to academics, athletics, and community service. He participated in Boy Scouts despite threats and backlash from fellow scouts' parents. He was also ultimately inducted into the Dubuque Senior High School Athletic Hall of Fame. He graduated from Iowa State University earning a degree in electrical engineering and obtained a pilot's license.

Mr. Martin, while still in college, applied to join the U.S. Army Air Corps and was accepted after he was drafted into service. He began his military ca-

reer in Fort Dodge, but was transferred to Tuskegee, AL, to train in the Army's Black pilot program, where he received the rank of commissioned second lieutenant and specialized in operating the AT-6 Texan and the P-40 War Hawk. He then, in 1944, became an active fighter pilot in Italy, conducting over 60 long-range combat missions as part of the 100th Fighter Squadron. His squadron defended B-17 Flying Fortresses from German assaults. On March 3, 1945, he was shot down by ground fire in Yugoslavia. He parachuted from his burning plane and successfully avoided German capture with the help of Yugoslavian partisans. Upon his recovery, he returned to the U.S. and was honorably discharged.

After being discharged, Mr. Martin continued to serve in the Army Air Corps Reserves, rising to the rank of captain. Following his military career, he maintained a commitment to public service, serving as an engineer for Cook County, IL. He was also a leader in Tuskegee Airmen, Inc., an organization whose members travel the country as educators and historians.

Mr. Martin was awarded a number of accolades for his service, including the Distinguished Flying Cross, a Purple Heart, an Air Medal with six Oak Leaf Clusters, and, in 2007, the Congressional Gold Medal. Moreover, he was inducted into the Iowa Aviation Hall of Fame and presented the George Washington Carver Medal from Simpson College, which recognizes individuals who have served as an inspiration to others; demonstrated leadership and conviction; advanced the fields of science, education, the arts, or religion; and dedicated themselves to addressing humanitarian issues. Mr. Martin's record exemplifies the extraordinary military service African Americans performed and the dedication that they displayed for their country in spite of the prejudice they experienced.

Robert Martin is a remarkable citizen, truly deserving of his many decorations and my gratitude. I wish him and his family all the best and thank him and all the Tuskegee Airmen for their steadfast service.

CONSULTATION REQUEST

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that my letter dated June 10, 2013, to the minority leader be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

U.S. SENATE,

Washington, DC, June 10, 2013.

Hon. MITCH MCCONNELL,
Senate Minority Leader, U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR MCCONNELL: I am requesting that I be consulted before the Senate enters into any unanimous consent agreements or time limitations regarding H.R. 180, National Blue Alert Act of 2013.

I support the goals of this legislation and believe suspects who seriously injure or kill federal, state or local law enforcement offi-

cers in the line of duty should be apprehended as quickly as possible. However, I believe the responsibility to address this issue, as it relates to state and local law enforcement officers, lies with the states and local communities that these brave law enforcement officers serve. Furthermore, while I do not believe this issue is the responsibility of the federal government; if Congress does act, we can and must do so in a fiscally responsible manner. My concerns are included in, but not limited to, those outlined in this letter.

While this bill is well-intentioned, it will likely cost the American people several million dollars over 5 years without corresponding offsets. I recognize this bill no longer contains the authorization included in prior versions of this legislation; however, establishing a new program which requires the Department of Justice (DOJ) to carry out additional responsibilities, even if implemented by existing staff, is not free of future costs. In examining last year's National Blue Alert Act of 2012 (H.R. 365), the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimated the DOJ would incur an additional \$5 million over 5 years solely in administrative costs to operate the Blue Alert system. As this legislation made no changes from the 2012 bill, it is safe to assume those costs will recur.

It is irresponsible for Congress to jeopardize the future standard of living of our children by borrowing from future generations. The U.S. national debt is now over \$16.7 trillion. That means over \$53,000 in debt for each man, woman and child in the United States. A year ago, the national debt was \$15.7 trillion. Despite pledges to control spending, Washington adds billions to the national debt every single day. In just one year, our national debt has grown by \$1 trillion or 6.4%.

In addition to these fiscal concerns, there are several problems specific to this legislation. First, there is no need to establish a national Blue Alert system because many states have already developed their own Blue Alert programs for the same purposes outlined in this bill, including alerts issued for the injury or death of federal, as well as state and local law enforcement officers. In 2008, Florida and Texas were the first states to establish these programs. Fourteen additional states soon followed—Oklahoma, Maryland, Georgia, Delaware, California, Virginia, Mississippi, Tennessee, Utah, Colorado, South Carolina, Washington, Kentucky, and Ohio. This year, in July and October, respectively, Indiana and Connecticut will begin their Blue Alert systems. Several state legislatures currently have legislation pending that would establish a Blue Alert system, including Minnesota, Illinois and Alabama.

Furthermore, there is no data to support the success of any of the existing state Blue Alert programs. Oklahoma established its Blue Alert system in 2009, but it is not yet fully functional. The last five states to establish an alert system did so just last year. As a result, not only have states already established their own programs, but from the limited use of the existing systems, there is no clear evidence of a substantial need for a Blue Alert system, or of the consistent, successful apprehension of suspects as a direct result of a Blue Alert. If anything, we should wait for these programs to produce results that can be examined and determine whether this type of system is useful before instituting a federal one-size-fits-all program.

Second, while the bill's supporters likely envision pursuing suspects who have injured or killed a law enforcement officer in a routine traffic stop or while fleeing a crime scene, for example, the bill's definition of "law enforcement officer" is much broader.

The bill incorporates the definition in Section 1204 of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968, which includes “an individual involved in crime and juvenile delinquency control or reduction, or enforcement of the criminal laws (including juvenile delinquency), including, but not limited to, police, corrections, probation, parole, and judicial officers.” As a result, a Blue Alert could be issued for a state court bailiff, a state parole officer, or an officer within a state’s juvenile corrections facility, if injured in the line of duty.

Finally, I do not believe the federal government has the authority under the Constitution to provide federal funds to coordinate the tracking of state and local fugitives or to establish national protocols to apprehend suspects accused of injuring or killing state and local law enforcement officers. Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution enumerates the limited powers of Congress, and nowhere are we tasked with funding or becoming involved with state and local criminal issues.

There is no question those suspected of injuring or killing a state or local law enforcement officer in the line of duty should be aggressively pursued and prosecuted. However, I believe this issue is the responsibility of the states and not the federal government. Despite these Constitutional limitations, if Congress does act in this area, like most American individuals and companies must do with their own resources, we should evaluate current programs, determine any needs that may exist, and prioritize those needs for funding by cutting from the federal budget programs fraught with waste, fraud, abuse, and duplication.

Sincerely,

TOM A. COBURN, M.D.,
United States Senator.

TRIBUTE TO COMMANDER GEORGE KOVATCH

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, the Homeland Security Appropriations Subcommittee will soon bid farewell to our congressional fellow, Coast Guard CDR. George Kovatch, who has served the Committee on Appropriations over the past 3 years. Unfortunately, Commander Kovatch is retiring, so not only is his departure a loss for the Committee on Appropriations, but it is also a loss for the Coast Guard.

Commander Kovatch has been detailed to the committee from the U.S. Coast Guard since 2010 and is a key member of our professional staff. Commander Kovatch performed admirably in his role on the Homeland Security Appropriations Subcommittee. He did everything we asked of him, with pinpoint accuracy, and always beat the deadlines given to him. I would also add that he served the committee during interesting times, perhaps more interesting than he imagined when he accepted the job. He was here for the Deepwater Horizon oilspill, the Times Square bombing attempt, the air cargo printer scare, Hurricanes Isaac and Sandy, and the Boston marathon bombing.

The Homeland Security Appropriations Subcommittee has greatly benefited from the experience Commander Kovatch gained as a Coast Guard officer, in particular his insights into the operations of a complex military orga-

nization that is combined with a large domestic agency. He has superb analytical skills that have been critical in our review of a \$39 billion budget request and in developing complex spreadsheets that synthesize funding issues into easily understood documents we have used in hearings, closed briefings, in full committee, and on the floor. He made critical recommendations that were adopted to improve key components within the Department of Homeland Security, most notably carefully overseeing integrity efforts following the rapid hiring of agents and officers at Customs and Border Protection as well as Immigration and Customs Enforcement to ensure that all agents, but especially new hires, receive comprehensive training in ethics and public integrity. His unqualified professionalism, perception, superb analytic focus and technical skills, combined with a keen sense of humor, a cool head, and a modesty rarely seen on Capitol Hill, have helped keep the momentum for these bills moving forward. His high standards of professionalism and thoroughness are beyond reproach, and his contributions have been highly valued.

Through all of this, George maintained the decorum and professionalism that we have all come to expect from our military officer corps, and he has represented the Coast Guard with the highest integrity and competence. Commander Kovatch has served me, this subcommittee, and the Senate well. We are sorry to see him leave and will miss him as our colleague but are glad to count him as a friend. Each of us on the Homeland Security Appropriations Subcommittee wish George all the best as he moves forward in the next phase of his career, where we anticipate seeing great things of him in the coming years.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

HAM RADIO IN ALASKA

• Mr. BEGICH. Mr. President, the American Radio Relay League is the national association for amateur radio, connecting ham radio operators around the world. Each year, the league sponsors a 24-hour Field Day in June. The weekend of June 22 to 23 was chosen for 2013.

Ham radio has a variety of uses from private recreation, to roundtable discussions, self-training to emergency correspondence. Throughout its history, amateur radio has been a tool for inventors and hobbyists to share experiences and spread ideas. Notable enthusiasts include the late Walter Cronkite, “CBS Evening News” anchor, and Nobel Prize-winning physicist Dr. Joseph H. Taylor. In the past, just by signing on one could converse with a foreign dignitary or even bounce radio waves off the Moon or aurora borealis to speak with cosmonauts aboard the International Space Station.

In Alaska, there are 16 ham radio clubs. These clubs provide a vital communication link that may otherwise not be available. This link includes checkpoint updates for the Yukon Quest and Iditarod sled dog races, support for local organizations such as the Boy Scouts, and critical forecast information to and from the National Weather Service.

In 2011, a superstorm in the Bering Sea crippled communities along the west coast of Alaska. Ham radio operators took up the task of providing real time data to local, State, and Federal weather services, as well as to emergency responders, on the condition of residents. As ham radio can operate independent of AC power or internet connection, it is well-suited to communities in rural Alaska.

Indeed, ham radio operators have been there throughout our Nation’s times of need: the 1964 Good Friday earthquake in Alaska and more recently Hurricane Katrina in the lower 48. These operators are deeply committed to public service, and they work tireless unpaid hours to maintain the flow of information.

As Alaska’s Field Day approaches, let us remember the vital role ham radio operators have played in education, science, survival, entertainment, and relationship-building in the United States.●

TRIBUTE TO MICHAEL F. ADAMS

• Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, today I wish to pay tribute to Dr. Michael F. Adams, president of my alma mater, the University of Georgia, which is the first State-chartered university in America. Dr. Adams is stepping down as president on June 30, 2013, after 16 very successful years leading Georgia’s flagship university.

Dr. Adams was named president of UGA on June 11, 1997, and immediately focused on making the university one of America’s best. Under his leadership, student quality has risen dramatically, research production has increased significantly, and UGA is serving the people of Georgia and our Nation in new and innovative ways. As a result, U.S. News & World Report has ranked it as one of America’s top 20 public research universities in 8 of the past 10 years.

The UGA campus has been transformed during Dr. Adams’ presidency, with more than \$1.2 billion in new construction, renovation, and infrastructure undertaken. He created the UGA Real Estate Foundation as a funding mechanism for much needed campus projects. His dedication to making UGA’s campus one of the most breathtaking in the country is apparent. When approaching Sanford Stadium from the west end, two of the capital projects that Dr. Adams has undertaken are visible. Not only are the Richard B. Russell Special Collections Libraries and the expansion of the Tate Center a testament to the growth of the university’s physical campus, but