

car, we calculate 11 hours. It may be 10 or 11 hours. By train, it is 18 hours.

How many stops would you make? If you take an airline, of course, a direct flight, there is only one stop—at Washington. If you take your vehicle, maybe you make four or five stops, three or four stops. Let's assume you make four. But Amtrak, Amtrak makes 18 stops, and it does not take the shortest route to the Nation's Capital.

What about cost? How much does it cost? I was surprised, actually, when we looked at these numbers. I questioned my staff. Could it be an error? This is what they told me: The primary cost of a round-trip airline ticket from Birmingham to Washington is \$328. It has gone up some. That is what they tell me is the recent fare for this trip. If you look at your automobile, and there is only one person in the car—you may have four—but if one person is driving to Washington, it is about \$200 for the gasoline at the current high prices; \$4 or so a gallon. What about the Amtrak train ticket that is going to take 18 hours instead of 2, what does it cost? Four hundred and forty-five dollars.

So you think this may have something to do with why people are choosing to fly or drive, rather than take the train? I kind of wish it wasn't so. I wish there was some way we could make this different than it is, but those are the facts and that is why many of the Amtrak routes are not practical.

People say: Well, why don't we make more routes, more trips, more trains, more often every day, and maybe more people would use it. I don't think so. I think the losses would swell even larger. You can't make this happen, in my view. I wish we had a different statement I could say about it, but that is it.

One reason we maintain these routes around the country that are losing money substantially is because Congress maintains them because politics gets into it. Nobody wants to stand, as I am doing right now, and suggest it is not going to be the end of the world for the State of Alabama if we don't have an Amtrak running through there, if it is costing the taxpayers billions of dollars every year to keep it running.

I wish to mention, briefly, the Washington Metro earmark of \$1.5 billion. This includes Northern Virginia and the Maryland suburbs—some of the richest, most prosperous areas in the country. But they want us to send huge amounts of money here to fund the extension of their subway, their train system. I think we have a right—the people outside this area need to ask why they should do that.

Let me share this. My home county that I have been talking about has double-digit unemployment. It is reported by the New York Times that in my county—Wilcox County, where I grew up and went to school—the average citizen spends a larger percentage of their income on gasoline than any other

county in America. So I guess what we are talking about now is we are going to ask people in my county who are struggling to get by with high unemployment rates and low wages and long distances to work, to subsidize a big, fancy subway system extension and operation that goes beyond, what I think is fair. What principle is being utilized to decide this is a good allocation of limited wealth in America?

So this is a huge mark. It is a huge item. Let me tell my colleagues how huge it is. Our State, as I recall, under the formula for highway distribution moneys, with every State in America, is about average. Alabama is about an average size State in population and probably in size. The tax revenue from gasoline comes to the Federal Government and we allocate it out by complex formulas that we have fought over for years. Alabama and Mississippi felt as though we weren't being fairly treated, but we are doing a little better now under the formula. But the amount of money Alabama gets, as I recall, it is not much over \$500 million a year for the entire interstate highway system in Alabama to be utilized with the State highway money: \$500 million per year. Whereas, they who are pushing this Metro system—\$1.5 billion payment—would, in one project alone, be three times the annual funds that my State gets for highways. I don't think that is fair. I know it is a huge project. But, it is not a project I think can be justified. I wish we could do this and that would be good.

Somebody said: Well, Government employees like it. Many of them live out that way. Well, I have to tell my colleagues that Government employees are treated pretty well. You may not know this, but one reason they take subways is most of the agencies subsidize their ticket. If you take the Metro, the Government agency gives you a transportation allowance. So they have tried everything they can to incentivize riding the subway, but the Metro is still losing money. This is an additional subsidy from the Federal Government to the Washington Metro.

So I have to tell my colleagues I believe this is an important matter. I do not believe this legislation is sound. I don't think it is good for the taxpayers. I believe it is, in many ways, including this very large, one appropriation of \$1.5 billion, that is clearly unfair to the rest of the country. We shouldn't pass it. I am sorry the majority leader seems determined to move forward with this bill. But as I said, I would not object if he sets it aside temporarily, to discuss what we are going to do about the financial crisis.

I thank the Chair, and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi is recognized.

TRIBUTE TO SENATOR DOMENICI

Mr. COCHRAN. Madam President, it is with mixed feelings of remorse and pleasure that I speak on the subject of the retirement from the Senate of my

colleague and friend from New Mexico, PETE DOMENICI. He and his wife Nancy have been close and dear personal friends. When I was elected to serve in the Senate, they reached out to my wife Rose and me and made us feel at home and very comfortable in our new Senate environment. That was 30 years ago.

The Domenici family will surely be missed, but I know we will stay in touch. I wouldn't be surprised to get a call from PETE if he sees or hears about my not doing right on an issue he feels deeply about. He is not bashful, nor easily intimidated, and he is going to continue to be consulted for advice and counsel from time to time by me and others who respect him so highly and realize they would benefit from his good judgment and insight.

From public works to budget and energy, to appropriations, he has been a conspicuous and forceful advocate of public policy in the Senate committees. His contributions to public policy during the years of his service in the Senate are unsurpassed, and the genuineness of the respect in which he is held by his colleagues is unequalled. It has been a great honor to have served with PETE DOMENICI. I extend my sincere congratulations to him on his outstanding career in the Senate.

SPACED-BASED INTERCEPTOR STUDY

Mr. KYL. Madam President, today I wish to describe an important step towards providing the American people with a global, persistent ballistic missile defense system. This step is the space-based interceptor, SBI, study that was recently funded in H.R. 2638, the fiscal year 2009 Continuing Resolution, which contains the fiscal year 2009 appropriations for the Department of Defense.

Congress appropriated \$5 million for the Secretary of Defense to conduct an independent assessment of a space-based interceptor element of our missile defense system. This is the first time since the Clinton administration and a Democrat-controlled Congress in 1993 cancelled all work towards a space-based layer missile defense system that we have the potential to expand our space-based capabilities from mere space situational awareness to space protection.

In the past 15 years, the ballistic missile threat has substantially increased and is now undeniable. Today, at least 27 nations have ballistic missile defense capabilities, and last year alone over 120 foreign ballistic missiles were launched. North Korea and Iran are developing and proliferating ballistic missile technology and continue to be major threats to our allies and our deployed forces.

Developments in China, as illustrated in the 2008 Annual Report on Military Power of the People's Republic of China, raise the concern about accidental or unauthorized launches of

intercontinental ballistic missiles, ICBMs, by China's military.

In addition to the long-established threat of ballistic missiles as a delivery system for weapons of mass destruction, on January 11, 2007, the world witnessed the vulnerability of space assets when China launched a ballistic missile to destroy a satellite. This capability extends beyond China; the Director of National Intelligence recently testified, "over the last decade, the rest of the world has made significant progress in developing counter space capabilities."

Every part of our daily lives depends upon the capability and reliability of our space systems. An attack on our space systems would not only adversely affect our military and intelligence systems, but also items such as: the Internet backbone, financial systems, navigation systems, manufacturing inventory control systems, emergency response systems, and weather tracking. Our vulnerabilities have not gone unnoticed; Wang Hucheng, an analyst for the People's Liberation Army has called our space systems the "soft ribs" of the U.S. military.

The \$5 million appropriation for the SBI study allows the Secretary of Defense to enter into a contract with one or more independent entities to review the feasibility and advisability of developing a space-based interceptor element to the ballistic missile defense system. It is clear from the project tables in H.R. 2638, specifically the Program Element numbers in those tables, that Congress understood the importance of funding this study.

I have the utmost confidence in Secretary Gates to make the decision about what research and development entity should perform this study. I would like to recommend that an entity like the Institute for Defense Analysis, IDA, lead the study. IDA has the experience and technical expertise to provide policymakers a complete picture of the merits of a space-based interceptor system.

The study could lead to the development of new technologies and concepts that would provide the United States, our allies, and our deployed forces protection from the threat of rapidly proliferating ballistic missile technology, as well as the rising threat of attacks on our vulnerable national security space systems.

I would like to share the views of a few senior military leaders about what they believe to be the benefits of conducting the space-based interceptor study.

GEN Kevin Chilton, Commander of United States Strategic Command, stated:

Space based systems have great potential to address many significant global missile defense challenges. The high ground space provides could alleviate many geographic and political challenges.

GEN Henry Obering, Director of Missile Defense Agency, stated, the study

is "a pragmatic hedge against an uncertain future, not an acquisition program for space-based missile defenses. It is opportunity to learn—while there is time to learn—what is possible in space against the day when emerging threats may compel us to decide."

MG Thomas Deppe, Vice Commander of Air Force Space Command stated:

Starting the preliminary studies and analysis on a space-based layer now will provide time to understand the potential benefits and technological challenges of such a system. Early studies help to reduce risk and better determine cost and feasibility of any space-based endeavor by identifying required technologies.

The United States must study space-based defenses now while we actually have the time to gather the data necessary to make informed policy decisions and before we are forced to make a decision in a time of crisis.

I would like to thank Senators INHOFE, ALLARD, and SESSIONS for their support in ensuring this important initiative was funded.

This study—some in this body have been afraid of—will help Congress understand what a space-based layer in our missile defense system could do to defend this Nation from ballistic missile attacks and threats to our space systems.

Mr. ALLARD, Madam President, I would like to associate myself with the remarks of Senators KYL and INHOFE. I supported the Space Test Bed study requested by the President. I would have preferred to be here today urging that my fellow Senators keep an open mind until that study can begin providing data to policy makers.

Yet there are those who refuse to study—even study—whether space-based interceptors can offer added defensive capability against ballistic missile threats to the United States, our allies, our deployed forces, even our national security space systems. As a result, this space interceptor study is the best we could get out of the Congress this year.

Let there be no mistake, this is an important step forward. I am pleased to have been able to help to push this study across the finish line.

I urge the Secretary of Defense to move quickly to get this study underway so that the next administration and the next Congress can build on today's study and finally move past the ivory tower debate about the weaponization of space.

Mr. INHOFE, Madam President, I strongly agree with Senator KYL in regard to the space-based interceptor study. This study provides the Secretary of Defense an independent assessment of a space-based interceptor element of our missile defense system. I think we all agree that a layered missile defense capability provides us with the best defense against ballistic missile delivered weapons of mass destruction as well as a defense against attacks against our satellites which have become so necessary to what we do militarily and economically.

This study will be an independent investigation into the technical feasibility and cost effectiveness of incorporating a space-based layer to our ballistic missile defense system. The study is neither a procurement program nor an attempt to weaponize space. It could lead to the development of new technologies and concepts that would provide the United States, our allies and our deployed forces protection from the threat of rapidly proliferating ballistic missile technology, as well as the rising threat of attacks on our vulnerable national security space systems.

As Senator KYL stated, last year 120 foreign ballistic missiles were launched. North Korea, Iran, and China remain likely suspects in ballistic missile proliferation and China has proven its ability to attack satellites. Recent Russian aggression in Georgia and reports on the state of China's military raise concerns about accidental or unauthorized launches of ICBMs.

The threat exists. It is important to do these studies now in order to develop the technologies and the defenses we need. Waiting until our Nation or our allies are attacked is too late. Wishing away the threat, as some in this Congress would have us do, is not a solution.

I thank my colleagues for this important move to ensure the safety of our Nation. Having the knowledge gleaned from this study will allow us to decide on the next step, should it be necessary.

CHANGES TO S. CON. RES. 70

Mr. CONRAD, Madam President, section 225 of S. Con. Res. 70, the 2009 budget resolution, permits the chairman of the Senate Budget Committee to revise the allocations, aggregates, and other levels in the resolution for legislation that enhances medical care and other benefits for America's veterans and servicemembers. The revisions are contingent on certain conditions being met, including that such legislation not worsen the deficit over the period of the total of fiscal years 2008 through 2013 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2008 through 2018.

I find that S. 3001, the Duncan Hunter National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2009, which was cleared by Congress on September 27, satisfies the conditions of the reserve fund for America's veterans and servicemembers. Therefore, pursuant to section 225, I am adjusting the aggregates in the 2009 budget resolution, as well as the allocation provided to the Senate Armed Services Committee.

I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the following revisions to S. Con. Res. 70.

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