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CONGRESSIONAL RECORD — Extensions of Remarks
June 9, 2000

HON. ELIJAH E. CUMMINGS
OF MARYLAND
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Friday, June 9, 2000

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise today to congratulate a remarkable woman, Melva Jones, who was recently chosen as one of only ten people nationally to receive the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Community Health Leader award. The award is considered the nation's highest honor for community health leadership and includes a $100,000 grant to help further her work.

Ms. Jones is the director of the Mattie B. Uzzle Outreach Center in Baltimore, which provides street outreach to help people with substance abuse problems get treatment, counseling, food, clothing, and emergency funds. The center, which is located in a neighborhood with one of the state's highest substance abuse rates, also offers housing, job referrals, free testing for HIV, and community education programs on drug-related issues.

Ms. Jones, who is a native of my district in Baltimore, gave up a lucrative nursing administration career to help found the center in 1994 after watching drug abuse transform a once-thriving neighborhood into streets of boarded up houses. The center is a "neighbor" to residents in this community and has steered more than 2,500 people into drug treatment programs since its inception. It also boasts a forty-five percent recovery rate, which is 10 percent higher than the national average.

With her hands-on approach, Ms. Jones has been instrumental to the success of the program. A visible force in the neighborhood every day, she serves as a welcome sight to a community that is all too familiar with the horrors of drug addiction close by. With a reputation for persistence and strong love, she makes regular rounds to find people in need and coax them into treatment.

Mr. Speaker, Melva Jones has demonstrated true leadership by addressing one of the most difficult problems in our community and it comes as no surprise that she was selected for this distinguished award. Although much more needs to be accomplished in the fight against substance abuse, in Baltimore and across the United States, it is a comfort to know that there are people like Ms. Jones on the street, working every day.

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH
OF OHIO
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Friday, June 9, 2000

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I submit the following for the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

STAR WARS

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH
OF OHIO
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Friday, June 9, 2000

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I have been之家 the Star Wars, a political issue, for twenty years. It will be my fate to be the one who gets to close out this debate. But, as Frances FitzGerald shows in her new book, Way Out There in the Blue (the title derives from Arthur Miller's line in Death of a Salesman in which he describes Willy Loman as "a man way out there in the blue, riding on a smile and a shoeshine"), Reagan's Star Wars proposal was more than a political symbol; it was a dangerous and misguided attempt to bolster the Reagan Administration's fixation on nuclear arms control. Whether or not missile defense is an effective response to alleged threats, it seems to many members of Congress, who lack the expertise and inclination to question the fevered threat projections of the US military, unnecessary, unworkable and unaffordable. While at least some of the motives of NMD advocates may be understandable, they are also dismally misguided. Even Clinton's so-called "limited" system is unnecessarily dangerous and expensive.

In short, the official Clinton/Gore Administration position on NMD was a means of preserving the option to deploy a costly, highly dubious missile defense system to defend against a Third World missile threat that does not currently exist and may not ever materialize. To understand how we got into this mess, we need to take a look at the genesis, "death" and resurrection of Reagan's Star Wars dream.

A SMILE AND A SHOESHINE

When Reagan gave his March 1983 Star Wars speech, in which he pledged to launch a new US-initiated effort to render nuclear weapons "impotent and obsolete," he was acting primarily on the advice of Edward Teller, the infamous "father of the H-bomb." In closed-door meetings organized by the conservative businessmen in Reagan's kitchen Cabinet, Teller sold Reagan on a new nuclear doctrine of "assured survival" based on an unworkable and unaffordable defense system. Whether or not missile defense --missile defense--will top the agenda at the Clinton/putin summit on June 4-5, a central issue in Moscow will be how to reconcile Russian President Vladimir Putin's proposal for deep cuts in US arsenals with the Clinton Administration's fixation on developing a National Missile Defense (NMD) system. Clinton has pledged to make a deployment decision this fall, after the Pentagon and the White House analyze the results of the next test of the "hit to kill" defense system, slated for late J une or early J uly. The system failed its most recent test, conducted in January, while an allegedly successful test was made possible only by the fact that the kill vehicle was guided to the right spot by a large, easy-to-find decoy balloon.

The Clinton/putin proposal is a far cry from Ronald Reagan's Star Wars scheme, which was designed to fend off thousands of Soviet warheads at a cost estimated by former Wisconsin Senator William Proxmire at up to $1 trillion. In contrast, this missile defense plan is meant to deal with a few dozen incoming warheads launched by a "rogue state" like North Korea and is projected to cost only $60 billion. But despite the NMD's seemingly modest goals, it is every bit as dangerous and misguided as the Reagan administration's Star Wars scheme, threatening the stability of arms-control agreements and heightening the danger of nuclear war.

NMD's purported political revival is rooted in the three Cs of contemporary US politics: conservative ideology, Clintonian cowardice and corporate influence. These short-term measures are reinforced by an ambitious long-range military objective: the misguided quest for a state of absolute military superiority.

The strongest push for missile defense has come from Reaganite true believers in conservative think tanks, especially the small but highly effective Center for Security Policy. The Right-Wing crusade for missile defense has been instrumental to the success of the Center for Security Policy, which is directed by new-look conservatives like Senator Jon Kyl of Arizona, who led last fall's successful Republican effort to defeat the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. Fresh from that victory, the NMD lobby is now seeking to destroy the Anti-Ballistic Missile treaty as the next target in its campaign to promote "peace through force rather than peace through paper," as Kyl put it in a recent speech.

The right-wing crusade for missile defense has received aid and comfort from Bill Clinton and Al Gore, who have decided that looking "tough" on defense is more important than protecting the world from weapons of mass destruction. Support has also come from the lumbering behemoths of the military-industrial complex: Lockheed Martin, Raytheon, which are desperate to sell their expertise and inclination to question the feed-back system, and the Clinton Administration, which is determined to maintain its focus on arms-control agreements and heighten the danger of nuclear war.

NMD's military boosters see the system primarily as a way to enhance the offensive capabilities of US forces, not as a defensive measure. In its revealing "Vision for 2020" report, the US Space Command—a unified military command that coordinates the space activities and assets of the Army, Navy and Air Force—sings the praises of the outer space as the ideal platform for projecting US military dominance “across the full spectrum of military operations.” US military leaders have a more immediate military goal: using NMD as a shield to protect US forces in interventions against states like North Korea and China. So long as the US military is able to maintain control of the development effort, it is worth noting, has been on hold for almost two years.

A growing number of moderate-to-conservative Democrats are also supportive of a limited NMD system. Whether or not missile defense is an effective response to alleged threats, it seems to some members of Congress, who lack the expertise and inclination to question the fevered threat projections of the US military, unnecessary, unworkable and unaffordable. While at least some of the motives of NMD advocates may be understandable, they are also dismally misguided. Even Clinton's so-called "limited" system is unnecessarily dangerous and expensive.

In short, the official Clinton/Gore Administration position on NMD was a means of preserving the option to deploy a costly, highly dubious missile defense system to defend against a Third World missile threat that does not currently exist and may not ever materialize. To understand how we got into this mess, we need to take a look at the genesis, "death" and resurrection of Reagan's Star Wars dream.