one of his lead professors was Dr. Madeleine Albright's father. He speaks many, many languages. He is seen as a leading authority on Latin America. He teaches in Chile as well as at the University of Portland—in fact, he just came back from there.

I could go through all these things about him, but from a personal point of view he is very special to me. His sister, Marcelle, and I have been married now for 38 years, and he was present when we were married, as were his brother Rene and his father and mother, Phil and Cecile Pomerleau. Phil and Cecile are no longer with us, but I have a feeling they look down in pride at their son this morning, as we all do. He is a teacher, he is a mentor, a brother, a son, a beloved uncle—in our family he has been all of those and more.

He has been a very dear friend to me. I think of what Edward Everett Hale, a former distinguished Senate Chaplain, once said. He was asked:

> Do you pray for the Senators, Dr. Hale?

And he said:

> No, I look at the Senators and I pray for the country.

I am privileged to have a brother who not only prays for the country, but prays for this Senator. I consider it, in my 26 years here, one of the rarest privileges I have had to be able to see him on the floor.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Mr. REID. Will the Senator yield for a comment about Senator LEAHY?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Does the Senator yield?

Mr. MURKOWSKI. I yield.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, before Senator LEAHY and his brother-in-law leave, I want the good Father to know how much the Senate cares about you and Marcelle. You have expressed so well your feelings about your brother-in-law, but we want you to know how much the entire Senate on both sides of the aisle respects Senator LEAHY and your lovely sister.

MAKING CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2001—Resumed

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

> A joint resolution (H.J. Res. 110) making further continuing appropriations for the fiscal year 2001, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, what is the time circumstance on this bill?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There are 12 minutes a side. The time is evenly divided.

Mr. STEVENS. I yield the 12 minutes on this side to the Senator from Alaska.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

ENERGY POLICY

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I think it is important to note the situation escalating in the Mideast as a consequence of the tensions. It is unfortunate it would be at a time when we had hoped there would be an effort to get a firm peace agreement. As a consequence of that, I think it is important to bring to the attention of my colleagues a reality relative to the release of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve at the recommendation of Vice President GORE to our President.

As you know, the President did release 30 million barrels of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve. This was the largest single release of crude oil from SPR in the 25-year history of the reserve. The administration has claimed this has been a successful effort because the price of oil has dropped. Notwithstanding that, using SPR to manipulate prices is contrary to the law because we have not reauthorized SPR, and of course the success of this is determined in the long term, not the short term.

But I wish to bring to the attention of each and every Member some facts. Since the President made his announcement, there has been no new heating oil placed into the market and no measurable rise in inventories. It may surprise some of you, particularly those in the Northeast, to know that American consumers may, under the current arrangement, never see any of the product refined from the crude oil that we released from our Strategic Petroleum Reserve. Let me explain why because this is important.

In the arrangement, there was absolutely no requirement that those who successfully bid on crude oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve needed to refine it into heating oil. They may decide to make gasoline or some other product.

Second, there is absolutely nothing that prevents this product from being shipped to foreign markets, either in its crude form or as a refined product such as heating oil.

Guess what. That is just what is happening. We are shipping heating oil to Europe. Look at the Wall Street Journal this morning. Let me quote:

> Europe's market for heating oil is 50 percent bigger than the U.S. heating oil market. Europe's stocks are even tighter and prices there are a few cents a gallon higher, so U.S. refiners have renewed incentive to ship heating oil across the Atlantic. . . . U.S. exports of heating oil to Europe have ballooned nearly six times, in the first 7 months of this year. . . .

That tells the story of the arrangement that the administration made to take the oil out of SPR and increase our heating oil supply. What has happened with it is it is going to Europe. I am not surprised by this, in the sense of the market going to the highest price where it can generate a return. But I am astonished about the claim of the administration and those who support the movement of SPR, and the release, that it was done because of concerns over supply for the benefit of the American consumer. The American consumer has not benefited. This is a spin being put on by the pundits.

I asked the Secretary of Energy pointblank at a hearing last week:

> Is it possible as a result of oil being released from SPR that prices could fall but no new heating oil would find its way into the U.S. heating market?

Do you know what the answer was? It could happen. The irony is that we are going to release oil from our Strategic Petroleum Reserve to provide product to a European market. That should not be lost on the American consumer or Members of this body.

Finally, SPR was created for one specific purpose: as a reserve in case our supply, our dependence on OPEC and other countries, is disrupted. We are 58-percent dependent on imported oil. We have a situation in the Mideast. Iraq is claiming Kuwait is stealing its oil, the same claim it made prior to the Persian Gulf war. Kuwait is now claiming Iraq stole oil during the gulf war. The entire Israeli-Palestinian peace process appears, unfortunately, to have fallen apart. All this leads to a reminder that we should not use our petroleum reserve for political purposes, and that appears to be what we have done in this arrangement.

Mr. President, how much time is remaining on this side?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has 7½ minutes remaining.

Mr. MURKOWSKI. I ask the Chair to advise me when I have 4 minutes remaining.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair will do so.

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, as a consequence of the focus on energy between our two Presidential candidates, it is very appropriate that we identify differences.

The Vice President has said he has an energy plan that focuses not only on increasing the supply but also on working on the consumption side, but the real facts are the Vice President does not practice what he preaches. Let's look at the record over the last 7½ years.

The administration has opposed domestic oil exploration and production. We have had 17 percent less production since Clinton-Gore took office, and the facts are it decreased the number of oil wells from 136,000 and the number of gas wells has decreased by 57,000. These are wells that have actually been closed since 1992. There has been absolutely no utilization of American coal in coal-fired electric generating plants. We have not built a new plant since 1990.

The difficulty is the Environmental Protection Agency has made it so uneconomic that the industry simply cannot get the permits. We force the nuclear energy to choke on its own waste. We were one vote short in the Senate to pass a veto override. Yet the U.S. Court of Appeals has given the industry a liability case in the Court of