SENATE—*Thursday, May 25, 2000*

The Senate met at 9:31 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable LINCOLN CHAFEE, a Senator from the State of Rhode Island.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Lloyd John Ogilvie, offered the following prayer:

Gracious God, all through our history as a nation, You have helped us battle the enemies of freedom and democracy. Many of the pages of our history are red with the blood of those who paid the supreme sacrifice in just wars. Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet. Lest we forget, today has been designated as the Day of Honor 2000, to give special recognition to the living minority veterans of World War II throughout our Nation. May we never forget the patriotism of these brave men and women who fought to liberate humankind from the evil grip of Axis tyranny. Enable us to express our debt of gratitude to these gallant Americans by pressing on in the ongoing battle against racial division in our society. Cleanse all prejudice from our hearts and give us courage to work for equality in education, housing, job opportunities, advancement, and social status for all Americans. Help us to honor these minority veterans today as we press on to banish vociferous expressions of hostility and hatred in our society. Shed Your grace on us, crown Your good with brotherhood from sea to shining sea. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable LINCOLN CHAFEE, a Senator from the State of Rhode Island, led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. THURMOND).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, May 25, 2000.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, section 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable LINCOLN CHAFEE, a Senator from the State of Rhode Island, to perform the duties of the Chair.

STROM THURMOND,
President pro tempore.

Mr. L. CHAFEE thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will now begin a period for the transaction of morning business until 10:30 a.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 5 minutes each. Under the previous order, the time until 10 a.m. shall be under the control of the Senator from Delaware, Mr. BIDEN, or his designee.

The Senator from Delaware.

NATIONAL MISSILE DEFENSE

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, I rise this morning to speak about an issue that is going to consume, over the next couple years, a fair amount of this body's time. If there were a contest to name a foreign policy issue that just won't go away, national missile defense would surely be a top contender.

The United States has been researching, developing, and sometimes deploying ballistic missile defense systems for almost 40 years now. Throughout this period, the issues of whether to deploy such a system and what system to deploy have prompted intense and often partisan debate. That debate continues today.

Two events this week argue strongly, however, for a pause in the partisan wrangling that so often accompanies this debate. The first event was Gov. George W. Bush's call on Tuesday for the President of the United States ''not to make a hasty decision, on a political timetable'' regarding amendments to the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty and deployment of a national missile defense.

Anyone on this floor knows that we voted in the last year, assuming that funds are provided and consistent with a policy of continued strategic arms reductions, to deploy a limited national missile defense system ''as soon as technologically feasible,'' and the majority of the Senate voted for that. There has been a bit of a rush, to use the expression we use on the floor, to take steps by the end of this year to ''pour concrete in Alaska.'' That is a euphemism for saying we have to put certain radars up in Alaska in order to meet the timetable to erect by 2005 a limited national missile defense that will defend against, theoretically at least, weapons that may or are likely to be deployed by the North Koreans.

Ninety-nine percent of the American people don't even know what we are talking about because we have not yet debated it, and it is going to cost $30 billion at the low end, probably a lot more. They have not heard that number before. What has happened is that we have been in a headlong rush to be in a position to be able to deploy that system in time to meet the looming threat from North Korea.

Now Governor Bush comes along, the putative candidate for President of the United States in the Republican Party, and says: Don't make a hasty decision, Mr. President, on a political timetable.

Well, really, we are on a political timetable. What is moving this national missile defense proposal forward as rapidly as it has are the likely events in North Korea over the next 5 to 7 years and a political timetable on the part of some of my Republican friends. Fortunately, Governor Bush has stepped in and said: Let's slow all this down; let's think about this. I think we should listen to him.

A second event is Secretary of State Albright's journey to Florence, Italy, where she is making the case for national missile defense to our increasingly nervous allies, who oppose this notion of a limited national missile defense.

What shall we make of Governor Bush's stance on national missile defense? He proposes a missile defense to defend not only the United States but also our allies. That is a different proposal from that which we have been legislating on for the past 2 years. He also proposes not only to defend against missiles from so-called rogue states, such as North Korea, Iran, and Iraq—which has been the rationale offered as to why we have to move so rapidly toward a national missile defense—but also to protect against accidental launches from anywhere in the world.

If we are to defend our allies as well as ourselves, then we are going to have to build a much larger missile defense system than the one being proposed by the Pentagon and the one we have been debating in the Congress for the past year and a half. If we are to defend against accidental launches from any country rather than only attacks from a specific state, then we cannot rely upon the sort of land-based or sea-based boost-phase system that I and others have been supporting as a means

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.