

deploy a national missile defense system "as soon as technologically feasible." That was the language, wasn't it, Senator LIEBERMAN? Indeed, we are now deploying it. We are already deploying the system, and the American people took comfort last July 4, when the North Koreans launched missiles to demonstrate their power—they took comfort because of you and others, before I even came into the Senate—such as Senator SHELBY, my colleague from Alabama—who were pioneers moving that forward. We can now take comfort that we do have ability. It means a lot for our people and for the safety of America.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Connecticut is recognized.

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to extend my statement, which I will now offer for 10 minutes instead of 7; to be followed by the Senator from Alabama, Mr. SHELBY, for 10 minutes; followed by the Senator from Vermont, Mr. SANDERS, for 10 minutes.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, I extend my time to respond to two things my friend from Alabama, Senator SESSIONS—one of my two friends from Alabama, Senator SESSIONS, mentioned.

The first is the good news from the Missile Defense Program of the successful test last Friday. We wish we did not have to spend money building a missile defense, but the truth is that the number of powers, including a lot of hostile anti-American countries that have the capacity to fire missiles at us and our allies, carrying both conventional weapons and potentially weapons of mass destruction, is increasing and has increased.

The creation of this program has been controversial. The funding of it is controversial. But I believe, just as deeply as anyone can believe anything, that we will, particularly as we hear the success of the testing, look back on the investments we have made in this program and be very thankful we did it because it will protect the security of the United States from attack via a missile from the enemies that exist to our country and to our values.

I wish to just briefly echo what Senator SESSIONS said about General Pace, who has just ended his time as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. I put an extensive statement in the RECORD last week without being on the floor. I just say now that this is a good man, a patriot who has served his country with a tremendous sense of excellence, of bravery, of honor, taking on risks and burdens to himself for the defense of America.

When he was appointed and confirmed as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, there were two pieces of history, two firsts. We are a country that

loves firsts because when people do something for the first time, it talks about the increasing openness, the reality of what we call the American dream. The one that was greatly commented on was Peter Pace was the first marine to become Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. That was a historic first. The other—perhaps less commented on but a great story of America—Pete Pace was the first Italian American to be Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff—yet another extraordinary accomplishment and act of service to our country from its Italian-American community.

Pete Pace served during a difficult time. He served with honor and integrity. He was intensely devoted to the men and women who serve all of us, and their families. He has maintained the fighting edge of our military going through a very difficult time, oversaw two extraordinary victories in Afghanistan and Iraq and then the post-Saddam war increasingly against al-Qaida in Iran and Iraq—very difficult times. But he leaves office now at a moment when, obviously thanks to the skill and bravery of the American military, there are some reasons for encouragement in Iraq, good reasons.

I thank General Pace, his wife, and his family for their service to America. We wish them well in the years ahead.

AMENDMENT NO. 3058

Mr. President, I rise to speak in support of the amendment offered by Senator KENNEDY and Senator MIKULSKI and others, including myself, which will be voted on later today. This amendment would bring some commonsense reforms to the process by which agencies decide whether to outsource Federal jobs to contractors.

Sometimes, obviously, it makes a lot of sense for agencies to turn to contractors because they are able to perform certain functions more efficiently than the agencies could themselves. That is in everybody's interest, including the taxpayers'. However, in many cases, experience has shown Federal employees can perform the work just as efficiently or more efficiently than the contractors and deserve the right to bid when work is proposed to be outsourced. Additionally, agencies must ensure that inherently governmental work—in other words, work which is intimately related to the public interest—is performed by Federal employees and not by private contractors. That is why the Government was created.

The process for deciding when to outsource jobs has to be a careful one, it has to be fair to contractors, and it has to be fair to Federal employees. Of course, it has to be fair, most of all, to America's taxpayers.

The Kennedy amendment provides Federal employees the same right contractors currently possess to appeal outsourcing decisions. In other words, when a particular function is proposed for outsourcing, open to bidding by private contractors, there is a process—

and a good one—that has been created where Federal employees themselves may bid against those contractors for that outsourcing work. What the Kennedy amendment says is Federal employees should have the same rights contractors have to appeal outsourcing decisions. Why just have one of the competitors for the outsourcing have the right to appeal and the other one does not? To me, that is simply a fundamental issue of fairness.

The amendment also contains a provision to ensure that contractors competing for Department of Defense work do not receive an unfair advantage because they offer inferior health or retirement benefits to what we are offering to Federal employees. I do not think any Member of this Chamber would want employees of the Department of Defense to be at a disadvantage in competing for their jobs because they receive health and retirement benefits that we authorize and ordain from the Federal Government.

This amendment also addresses a concern I have had for quite a long time; that is, it sometimes appears as if the Office of Management and Budget pushes agencies to meet arbitrary numerical targets for the outsourcing of jobs. Decisions on outsourcing should be made on a case-by-case basis where it makes sense for agencies to outsource the jobs as opposed to giving them a quota of outsourcing and say they have to hit that quota.

Arbitrary numerical targets, I am afraid, take agencies off the path of pursuing other means of cutting costs. They overtax agencies already struggling to monitor work performed by contractors. I believe they sometimes, without cause, undermine the civil service, which we ought to be elevating as it is elevated in so many of the other industrialized developed democracies. Those types of numerical targets were prohibited by Congress in the fiscal year 2003 Omnibus appropriations bill, but the Office of Management and Budget seems to be continuing to pressure agencies to conduct competitions between Federal employees and contractors on a certain number of jobs each year. That is not right. The amendment before us makes clear that use of such quotas at the Department of Defense is impermissible.

These are all, in my opinion, sensible, modest reforms. They do not and they are not intended to prohibit the outsourcing of Federal jobs, which I support when it makes sense, but, rather, ensure that the process is objective, fair. It essentially puts both parties here on a level playing field.

The core provisions of this amendment have, in fact, received bipartisan support in the Senate over the last few years. I hope we can continue that support when the amendment comes to the vote today.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. DURBIN). The Senator from Vermont.