

The report's emphasis on additional ground testing and purchasing additional hardware—such as a second launcher for the Kwajalein test site—makes good sense.

Any program subjected to scrutiny on the level of the Welch Panel's will face some criticism about particular aspects of how the program is being conducted. But one key phrase in the report is worth keeping in mind, and I quote: "Given the set of challenges and the phased decision process, the JPO [BMDO's NMD Joint Program Office] and LSI [Boeing, the Lead System Integrator] have formulated a sensible, phased, incremental approach to the development and deployment decision—while managing the risk."

Every DoD program has some degree of risk; the risk in each program, NMD included, can be mitigated by additional time and money. However, the NMD program is not being developed in a vacuum, a point clearly made by North Korea's flight test of the three-stage Taepo Dong I ICBM in August of 1998. We don't have the luxury of time. Because of the proliferation threat, our choice is simple: We can accept additional program risk, or we can leave the United States vulnerable to rogue threats of coercion by placing a premium on wringing risk from the NMD program.

The emphasis must be on protecting America and American interests. The continued vulnerability of the United States is unacceptable, which is why many of the Welch Report's recommendations should be implemented as quickly as possible.

Because of the threat we have no choice but to accept a high-risk program. We ought to accept as much risk as we can stand, because the consequences of not being prepared for the threat are so high. "High" risk is not synonymous with "failure," as demonstrated by the recent successful intercept conducted by this program. Decision points in the National Missile Defense program should not be adjusted because of a high level of risk in the program, but only if the level of risk becomes unacceptably high. To date no senior Defense Department official has told me that the level of risk in the NMD program is unacceptable.

Much of this report focuses on a lack of hardware to test and insufficient simulation facilities. That is the reason Congress added \$1 billion for missile defense last year.

The Welch Report also calls for flight tests against more varied targets. After the recent successful NMD flight test, there was an unfortunate rush to judgment by some who wanted to indict this program as a fraud for not attempting the most complex intercept test immediately. These critics were obviously unaware of the fact that it was the Welch Panel, during its investigation, which recommended to BMDO that the recent flight test be simplified. I support the Welch Report's suggestion for realistic testing, and

hope that everyone will keep in mind the importance of testing the basics first, and then proceeding to more complex tests.

There are, of course, some problems with testing against more realistic targets that have nothing at all to do with the NMD program. According to the Ballistic Missile Defense Organization, BMDO believes it is—and I quote from a note BMDO sent to my staff—"constrained by START treaty limitations"—from testing against more realistic targets.

This surely must be a misunderstanding within the Defense Department that will be resolved quickly.

I want to commend the members of the panel who produced the Welch Report. I hope that some of their concerns have been ameliorated by the recent NMD intercept, which occurred too late to be included in their report.

PATENT REFORM AND INVENTOR PROTECTION LEGISLATION

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, I rise to express my support for S. 1798, the American Inventors Protection Act. Yesterday I became a co-sponsor of the patents reform legislation, which was recently reported out of the Senate Judiciary Committee. It is my understanding that the provisions contained in that legislation are being folded into a larger bill, which also addresses satellite television and other matters. Although I urge passage of this larger bill, in my comments today I will speak only to the provisions dealing with patent reform and inventor protection, provisions which I strongly believe will provide vital new protections both to businesses and to individual inventors. In particular, I am pleased to see an entire title dedicated to regulating invention promoters, many of whom are little more than con artists. In 1995 I introduced the "Inventor Protection Act" of 1995, which was the first bill to target the unscrupulous firms that take advantage of inventors' ideas and dreams. Several of my bill's provisions now appear in the House and Senate legislation, and I am glad to see that the work we did in the 104th Congress, combined with the efforts of others since, should finally result in the passage of long needed protections against invention promotion scams.

The American Inventors Protection Act is a well-rounded bill. It reduces patent fees and authorizes the Commissioner of the Patent and Trademark Office (PTO) to report to Congress on alternative fee structures. The goal here, as with other titles of the legislation, is to make our patent system as accessible as possible to all. Another reform would save money for parties to a patent dispute. It allows third parties the option of expanded inter partes reexamination procedures; these new procedures before the PTO will decrease the amount of litigation in federal district court.

The "First Inventor Defense" is a vital new provision for businesses and

other inventors caught unaware by recent court decisions allowing business methods to be patented. It is simply unfair that an innovator of a particular business method should suddenly have to pay royalties for its own invention, just because of an unforeseeable change in patent law. It is my understanding that any kind of method, regardless of its technological character, would be included within the scope of this definition, provided it is used in some manner by a company or other entity in the conduct of its business.

Two other provisions provide greater predictability and fairness for inventors. One title guarantees a minimum patent term of 17 years by extending patent term in cases of unusual delay. Another allows for domestic publication of patent applications subject to foreign publication. I support the changes made to this provision since the last Congress, changes which should satisfy the concerns of independent inventors that their ideas might be copied before their patents are granted.

Finally, I applaud the new regulations and remedies which will provide inventors with enhanced protections against invention promotion scams. Each year thousands of inventors lose tens of millions of dollars to deceptive invention marketing companies. In 1994, as then-Chairman of the Subcommittee on Regulation and Governmental Affairs, I held a hearing on the problems presented by the invention marketing industry. Witness after witness testified how dozens of companies, under broad claims of helping inventors, had actually set up schemes in which inventors spend thousands for services to market their invention—a service that companies regularly fail to provide.

The legislation I introduced in 1995 used a multi-faceted approach to separate the legitimate companies from the fraudulent and guarantee real protection for America's inventors. I am gratified that a number of the provisions from my bill have been used in a title of this year's patent reform legislation specially devoted to invention marketing companies. Both bills provide inventors with enhanced protections against invention promotion scams by creating a private right of action for inventors harmed by deceptive fraudulent practices, by requiring invention promoters to disclose certain information in writing prior to entering into a contract for invention promotion services, and by creating a publicly available log of complaints received by the PTO involving invention promoters.

The provisions contained in the American Inventors Protection Act represent our best hope for passage of meaningful patent reform. I urge my colleagues to support their passage to ensure that inventors as well as their ideas are adequately protected.