

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

COMMEMORATING THE 94TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, today I rise in honor of the victims of the Armenian Genocide, as we mark the 94th anniversary of this horrific tragedy.

On April 24, 1915, the Ottoman Empire began a campaign of forced deportation against the Armenians. Around 2 million Armenian men, women, and children were driven from their homeland, 1.5 million of whom were killed. Hundreds of thousands were massacred outright, while others perished from forced marches, deliberate starvation, and epidemics that ravaged through concentration camps. Yet despite an outcry of condemnation by Great Britain, France, Russia, and the United States, no action was taken against the Ottoman Empire, as the first genocide of the 20th century continued.

Today, the thriving, vibrant Armenian community in the United States is a testament to their endurance and strength. Yet we can never forget the loss and sacrifice of previous generations. Earlier this week, we also paid tribute to those killed in the Holocaust, and together, these anniversaries mark this week as a solemn reminder of what can occur when prejudice and hatred go unchecked. Just as we cherish the memories and stories of the Armenians persecuted by the Ottoman Empire and their survivors, so must we also honor them by recommitting ourselves to combat intolerance in all its forms.

In my own home State of Nevada, I am proud to represent thousands of Armenian-Americans, many of whom gathered to commemorate the 94th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide this past weekend in Las Vegas. I congratulate the Armenian American Cultural Society of Las Vegas for yet again organizing such a successful and meaningful event. This is a wonderful opportunity for the Armenian-American community and their supporters to come together in our State, which I am pleased is one of at least 40 other States who have recognized the Armenian Genocide.

I extend my best wishes to the Nevada Armenian-American community back home and thank them for their many contributions to our great State.

I thank the Chair, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, I would like to address the Senate.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator is recognized.

NASA

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, there are so many things I would like to talk about, not the least of which—which I will not confine my remarks to—is our space program, which is adrift.

The White House continues to deliberate on who should be the administrator of NASA. The previous administration starved NASA to death by asking it to do too much with too little. The result of that is that now NASA is coming to the end of the life of the space shuttle, as we complete the construction of the International Space Station. With the remaining nine flights—and those nine flights NASA thinks it can get in during the next year and a half, but they can't—we are going to have to fly the space shuttle into 2011, and we ought to do that deliberately and slowly to make sure we don't sacrifice safety.

At the end of that time, upon the completion of the space station—the International Space Station, with components from a number of countries around the world and something that is larger than two football fields long, 200 miles into the cosmos, circling the globe at 17,500 miles an hour, with research laboratories, with habitation modules for the astronauts and cosmonauts on board—the United States, when we shut down the space shuttle, will not have a manned vehicle because we didn't have enough money for the development of the new vehicle—the new rocket, the Aries—and so we are going to have a gap and we will have to rely on the Russians. We will have to buy a ride on their spacecraft in order to get to our space station, which is a \$100 billion investment.

Now, that is the sad state of affairs, and that is where NASA finds itself. NASA is adrift because it doesn't have a vigorous leader, appointed by the Obama administration, to take charge; someone who understands space flight, who understands management, who understands aeronautics. By the way, aeronautics is the first "A" in NASA—the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. NASA does not have a leader as yet who understands how to motivate people and capture the spirit of the American people, which is that we are explorers and adventurers by nature. There is not a heart in America that does not beat more quickly when they think of the potential we have in the cosmos and the exploration of new worlds.

Look at what the Hubbell space telescope has done for us. How do you think we have been able to have the

revelations from the Hubbell space telescope? It is because we have been able to send astronauts out there when it could not even see because it had an incorrectly ground lens when we launched it, over a decade and a half ago. We sent astronauts there to repair it in orbit.

Lo and behold, in 2 weeks another flight with astronauts will go to the Hubbell space station, will repair it, will give it new instruments, and for the next 2 decades it will continue to peer into the universe and unlock those secrets about where did we come from and when did it happen and how are we positioned in this universe that is so vast, so infinite that our human minds cannot even grasp. That is the excitement of the future.

Yet NASA is adrift. I call on the White House to please put in an administrator of NASA who is a leader, who understands space, who understands how to motivate people and who can capture the American spirit and help inspire, standing by our President who wants it, a vigorous space program.

I did not come here to speak about that, but I get pretty exercised because I have been the beneficiary of being a part of this space program. I do not like what I see now and I do not like what I have seen in the last 5 years. I have said so on the floor of this Senate, over and over. The more we try to get additional funding in the budget to develop this new rocket—and we were successful in the Senate—the more we would have our legs cut out from under us by the previous White House budget office because they kept starving NASA of funds. That has led us to where we are today.

I personally know our President is a space aficionado. We have talked about it hours on end. I know he wants us to have a vigorous space program. I know President Obama understands how to accomplish the very thing he wants to do with young people, in getting them educated and particularly educated in math and science and engineering. Look to history. Look at what happened in the Apollo program when young people by the thousands starting going into math and science and engineering because they were challenged by what we were doing in the cosmos. We can do that again if the President will give the full support to the space program and if he will put the right leader in NASA.

I came today to speak about another subject, but I do not think there is a much more important subject at this time. With all the problems facing this country—the economy, the national security situation—you have to tend to your knitting. America's space program and America's preeminence in space—that we do not lose the high ground—is a highly important issue, high among the items on the agenda to which this country must attend.