

operations discussions of manned irregular warfare aircraft.

My amendment, then, simply declares it the sense of Congress that the Secretary of Defense should include the reserve components when establishing requirements for manned airborne irregular warfare platforms. Congress has led the way in examining the concept of a light attack, light reconnaissance aircraft. In this era of constrained defense budgets, it is vital to make every dollar count. I am pleased that in this amendment the Senate signaled the importance of reserve component work on this concept, and I hope that the language is retained in conference so the House can send a similar signal. It is increasingly clear that the Nation needs this capability, and the combined efforts of all components at the Defense Department will bring these aircraft to the warfighter sooner rather than later.

#### GROUND-BASED MIDCOURSE DEFENSE ELEMENT

Mr. BEGICH. Mr. President, there are some very important provisions in the Armed Services Committee bill, S. 1390, the National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2010, regarding the Ground-based Midcourse Defense, GMD, element of the Ballistic Missile Defense System, BMDS. GMD is a system designed to protect the homeland against long-range missile threats. Would the chairman agree that GMD plays an important role in the architecture of the overall BMDS?

Mr. LEVIN. GMD is an important element of the overall Ballistic Missile Defense System. It is important that the GMD element be an operationally effective, cost-effective, affordable, reliable, suitable, and survivable system capable of defending the United States from the threat of long-range missile attacks from nations such as North Korea and Iran, and that adequate resources be available to achieve such capabilities.

Mr. BEGICH. Mr. President, Alaska plays a critical role in GMD. The majority of infrastructure currently required to support deployment of the GMD system is located at Fort Greely in Alaska. Recently, the Missile Defense Agency determined that in order to ensure the best infrastructure is available to support deployment of interceptors from Alaska in defense of the Nation, a seven-silo configuration in Missile Field 2 is warranted to replace older, less reliable, silos in Missile Field 1. In the Armed Services Committee report accompanying S. 1390, the committee expressed the view that, if the Department of Defense believes there is a benefit to completing the seven silos at Missile Field 2 during fiscal year 2010, the committee would look favorably upon a reprogramming request from the Secretary of Defense to provide the funds to complete the seven-silos in fiscal year 2010. Would the chairman agree that providing a

seven silo capability in Missile Field 2 is beneficial to GMD in defense of the homeland?

Mr. LEVIN. I agree with my colleague from Alaska that Fort Greely plays an integral role in supporting the GMD element of Ballistic Missile Defense System, and will continue to do so in the future. Constructing Missile Field 2 in a seven-silo configuration to replace the older silos at Missile Field 1 will provide updated and more reliable infrastructure in support of GMD. If the Department of Defense believes there is a benefit to completing the seven silos in fiscal year 2010 and the Secretary submits a reprogramming request to do so, I believe the committee would look favorably upon such a request, although subject to evaluation of course. If the Department does not submit such a reprogramming request, I believe the Department will request the funds to complete construction of the seven-silos in fiscal year 2011.

Mr. BEGICH. I thank the chairman for his response. Section 243 of S. 1390, the National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2010, would require the Department of Defense to submit to Congress early next year two reports concerning the GMD element. Would the chairman agree that until the reports required in section 243 of S. 1390 are delivered to Congress the Department of Defense should not make any irreversible decision concerning operational silos in Missile Field 2 at Fort Greely, and that decommissioning of Missile Field 1 should not be completed until the seven-silos have been emplaced at Missile Field 2?

Mr. LEVIN. During consideration of S. 1390, the Senate adopted an amendment, offered by the Senator from Alaska, that would require the Secretary of Defense to ensure that Missile Field 1 does not complete decommissioning until seven-silos have been emplaced at Missile Field 2. It would also require the Secretary to ensure that no irreversible decision is made with respect to the disposition of operational silos at Missile Field 2 until 60 days after the reports required by section 243 are submitted to Congress.

Mr. BEGICH. I thank the chairman and appreciate his work on improving GMD and recognizing Alaska's infrastructure is necessary to support GMD in defense of the homeland now and in the future.

#### U.S.-CHINA STRATEGIC AND ECONOMIC DIALOGUE

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, the meeting of the U.S.-China Strategic and Economic Dialogue this week in Washington is an important opportunity. It is a chance to advance a comprehensive relationship between our two countries and to highlight the importance of fundamental rights to that relationship.

I am chairman of the Congressional-Executive Commission on China. The Commission examines human rights

and rule of law developments in China. In recent years, I have witnessed human rights concerns being pushed to the margins of the U.S.-China relationship. This is due in part to China's growing financial, diplomatic and military strength. Sidelining our human rights concerns with China is a strategic mistake for the U.S.

The advancement of human rights concerns with China is more important to U.S. interests than ever. The reporting of the Commission I chair makes this crystal clear.

Press censorship in China makes it possible for toxic food and public health crises to spread globally.

The harassment of whistleblowers and the suppression of criticism and dissent remove internal checks against environmental damage that not only hurts ordinary Chinese citizens but has a global impact.

Abuses of low-wage labor compromise goods that come to the U.S. have harmed U.S. consumers, as well as Chinese consumers.

The government's control of mass media and the internet allow it to stoke nationalist anger against the United States in moments of crisis. This can be terribly dangerous.

Let there be no doubt—I have enormous respect for China. I respect the progress China has made by lifting hundreds of millions of people out of poverty. I admire its rich and remarkable culture and immensely talented people. But I firmly believe that its people should be free to speak their minds and practice their chosen faiths without fear.

The news is not all bad. There have been positive developments in recent years. The government has enshrined in its Constitution the state's responsibility to protect and promote human rights. The Congressional-Executive Commission on China has also reported on China's recent adoption of new labor protections, and the relaxing of restrictions on foreign journalists inside China. These and other gains were made partly as a result of sustained international pressure. The meeting of the Strategic Economic Dialogue presents another opportunity to press for more such gains.

But let us be clear: Nothing we ask of China regarding human rights is inconsistent with commitments to international standards to which China in principle already has agreed. So we are not necessarily looking just for more agreements. We are waiting for action. We are waiting for China's leaders to demonstrate true commitment, not just in words but in deeds, to prioritizing human rights, including worker rights, and the development of the rule of law in no lesser way than they have prioritized economic reform.

In closing, the Strategic and Economic Dialogue this week provides an opportunity to underline how advancing the welfare of citizens must not be separated from a demonstrated commitment to human rights and the rule