

lease sale 181 but far from the Florida coast—indeed, 260 miles west of Tampa Bay and Clearwater Beach, that from Pensacola, FL, in the panhandle, would be 150 miles to the south but then would honor the so-called “military mission line,” about which Secretary of Defense Don Rumsfeld stated in a letter before Christmas that oil and gas drilling in that area, which has been restricted space because we train and test our military weapons, would not be compatible; to use his words: It would be incompatible with military objectives, with military preparedness through our training and testing in the waters, off the waters, and around the waters of the Gulf of Mexico off Florida.

Therefore, Senator MARTINEZ and I proposed a line that would honor the request of the Department of Defense. That request was corroborated the day before yesterday in front of the Senate Armed Services Committee, when this Senator put the question to Secretary Rumsfeld, again in the form of thanking him for his clear statement, and he acknowledged that statement again.

Where does this leave us? We must continue to have this fight.

We have the prodrilling forces, as evidenced by Senator DOMENICI and his proposal wanting additional drilling off the coast of Florida. We have a more modest proposal by the Secretary of the Interior, who consulted with a couple of dozen oil companies and their proposal, and we have the proposal of the two Senators from Florida, recognizing there is much at stake beyond drilling.

The stakes are very high, not even to speak of Florida's economy, which is certainly evidenced by a \$50 billion a year tourism industry which depends on pristine beaches, without oilspills the likes of which occurred last week in Alaska.

When people say: Oh, it is gas that we want to drill, not oil, ignoring the fact that one of the largest and most costly oil spills occurred when a gas rig blew off the coast of California in 1968, causing this massive oilspill, which led to the enactment of a moratorium of all drilling off the Continental Shelf of the United States.

Certainly, economic interests of our State are clearly one component. But there is another component; that is, we have bays and estuaries where so much of our marine life is spawned where the delicate environment would be savaged with an oilspill.

People said it would be far from Florida shores, but winds and currents do not understand mileage. Indeed, there is that current that comes up into the Gulf of Mexico in a northward arc off the Yucatan Peninsula of Mexico and then turns southward and comes around the Florida Keys, then northward it is the current known as the Gulf Stream.

The idea that long distances are going to protect the delicate environment, I hope that can be recognized as a false argument.

Another component of the argument is simply that there is very little oil out there. They have had several dry holes. The geology shows there is not very much oil. The oil, in fact, in the Gulf of Mexico, is where the 4,000-plus oil rigs are, which is the central gulf and the western gulf off of, primarily, Louisiana and Texas.

But then, of course, there is the fourth component of why we should not drill in the eastern gulf. That is our military preparedness. If you fly commercially from Tampa to New Orleans, you do not fly across the gulf. You hug the coast of Florida. Why? It is restricted space. It is the largest testing and training area for our U.S. military. It is what Secretary Rumsfeld memorialized in the letter to the Senate Committee on Armed Services in December saying: Do not drill east of that military mission line.

We are testing weapons systems such as the F/A-22. All pilot training is being done at Tyndall Air Force Base in Panama City. Why? Because the Gulf of Mexico is restricted space. In a dog fight with the F/A-22, compared to the F-15, the F/A-22 is engaging in air-to-air combat at a speed of 1.5 mach, not like the F-15 and the F-16 at .75 mach, three-quarters of the speed of sound. In other words, the new stealth fighter is engaging in air-to-air combat at twice the speed of our present fleet of aircraft. Therefore, the training area has to be so much larger.

We are testing right now a laser weapon shot from a ship, which goes several hundred miles. We have to have restricted space. Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld said oil and gas rigs are incompatible with the military uses of that space.

That is four components. Senator MARTINEZ and I took all those components into consideration in suggesting our plan. And we added a 20-mile cushion since that military mission line that Secretary Rumsfeld referred to was established in 1981, and the weapons have gotten more sophisticated and, as I stated, require much more space in which to test and to train our military.

That is the line we have drawn which is in effect from Clearwater Beach, right there at Tampa Bay, St. Petersburg Beach, 260 miles to the west from a position further south of Florida, like Fort Myers or Naples. It is in excess of 300 miles from the coast of Florida.

To my knowledge, as of today every newspaper editorial page in the State of Florida, save for one newspaper, has editorialized in favor of Senator MARTINEZ and my proposal from last week. I don't have the exact count, but that is something upwards of 20 editorial pages.

As we come here for the fights that are going to occur, Senator MARTINEZ and I are looking for a practical line that will accommodate the interests of everyone, including our military preparedness. That is why we cannot have a bill that was offered in the House of

Representatives last fall that says leave it up to the States. We can't leave it up to a State to set military policy. We cannot leave it up to an individual State legislature to determine whether the U.S. military is going to be prepared in this long war on terror. That is why Senator MARTINEZ and I have said these boundaries ought to be permanent, not in some 5-year plan that is now being offered but permanent.

We are going to continue the fight. I can tell the Senate there is no daylight between Senator MARTINEZ, who sits on that side of the aisle, and this senior Senator of Florida, who sits on this side of the aisle. We will employ every opportunity we have under the rules of the Senate to try to get others who disagree to understand the practicality and the wisdom of the proposal we have laid out to accommodate all of the interests, including the military interests of this country.

I share that with the Senate. This is not going to be the last time we will discuss that, but I make this Senator's position unalterably clear. I thank the Senate for this opportunity to share these thoughts.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. GRAHAM). The Senator from Montana.

Mr. BAUCUS. What is the pending business before the Senate?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate is on S. 852, the asbestos legislation.

Mr. BAUCUS. I ask the Presiding Officer, is there an amendment pending?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There are several amendments pending.

Mr. BAUCUS. Is one of the amendments the Cornyn substitute?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There are two Cornyn amendments pending. There is a perfecting amendment pending and a second degree to that perfecting amendment.

Mr. BAUCUS. I thank the Chair.

Mr. President, I strongly oppose the Cornyn amendment to the underlying bill. I want the record to reflect my deep disappointment in those two amendments. I am deeply concerned we are losing sight of what is at stake.

What is that? Making sure that people who are sick, who are likely to become sick from exposure to tremolite asbestos are not denied the ability to fight for their rights against the persons or companies that injured them. That is absolutely the bottom line. If these amendments are agreed to, people in the small county of northwest Montana will not get justice. These people will not get relief. They will not get support. They will not be able to pay for needed health care as they die.

We are talking about hundreds of sick and dying people. This amendment turns our back on them. It will hurt them while they are already down. It will hurt the people of Libby. The people in Libby are proud. They have had more than their share of hard knocks. They just keep going, getting up and