

Even though former senator James Sasser said he hoped China would not carry out its threat to abolish Legco, his remarks at this sensitive time are certain to be viewed with alarm.

Until now, successive administrations have lent strong support to widening the democratic franchise in the territory. Governor Chris Patten was praised for his brave stand in going ahead with his reforms in the face of violent opposition from Beijing. Democratic Party leader Martin Lee Chu-ming was recently feted in the U.S. and awarded the American Bar Association Human Rights Award.

But speaking at his Senate confirmation hearing late last night, Mr. Sasser said: "Governor Patten has sought to 'enlarge it' [the 1984 Joint Declaration] to some extent by his encouragement of the democratic movement in Hong Kong.

"The Chinese have indicated that they are not going to abide by this democratic election of legislative councillors, and clearly by the covenant of 1984, they are not required to. But I am hopeful they will reconsider that."

His comments appeared to conflict with the passion in the US for supporting the continuation of Hong Kong's rights and freedoms after 1997.

In June, senators joined senior officials in declaring US determination to stay deeply involved in the future of the territory.

China came under fire from all sides for blocking the Court of Final Appeal and for vowing to dismantle the Legislative Council.

Assistant Secretary of State Winslow Lord said the Legco issue had caused great concern to Washington and warned that apparent moves by China to put pressure on civil servants were "making many in the career rank uncomfortable at a time when Beijing should instead be reassuring them".

Former US attorney-general Dick Thornburgh said China "has signalled its intention to renege on virtually all of the guarantees it made to preserve Hong Kong's legal system and the rule of law".

He said he was troubled by the lack of attention that Hong Kong and its people were receiving despite the gravity of the developments taking place in the territory.

Beijing has warned Britain not to "internationalise" the Hong Kong issue and the US not to interfere in China's internal affairs.

Foreign Relations Committee chairman Senator Jesse Helms, a staunch critic of China, promised to "expedite" Mr. Sasser's confirmation for the Beijing job.

A vote could come within one week at which Mr. Sasser is expected to be easily confirmed.

Mr. Sasser vowed to push for human rights improvements in China, stick firmly to the United States' one-China policy and promote US trade with Beijing.

Mr. Sasser told senators: "Some people say China needs us more than we need China. The reality is that China and the United States need each other."

Asked by several senators how he would handle Tibet and other human rights issues, he replied: "I intend at every appropriate occasion and on occasions when it might not seem appropriate to make the views of the administration known in this regard.

"The American people expect the Chinese Government to respect the human rights of its own citizens."

The White House made a symbolic gesture of support for its nominee, by sending Vice-President Al Gore to urge the committee to support Mr. Sasser, whom he described "a man of stature, wisdom and authority".

Mr. Sasser, who when he was a senator voted six times to link China's trading sta-

tus to human rights, said he had changed his mind and now believed that trading with China was the best way to encourage freedom and democracy in that country.

On Taiwan, he defended the administration's one-China policy.

If he is confirmed before October 24, Mr. Sasser said he hoped to take part in the summit meeting in New York between presidents Jiang Zemin and Bill Clinton.

The only question as to Mr. Sasser's competence in the job was raised by Senator Craig Thomas, who pointed out that the past five ambassadors were career diplomats with much China experience, and not political appointees like Mr. Sasser.

However, Mr. Sasser, a Democrat who lost his Senate seat last year, said he had spent recent months studying Chinese language and politics at Harvard University and the Foreign Service Institute.

Mr. HELMS. I thank the Chair. I apologize for keeping the Senate in session a little bit longer than would otherwise have been the case.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HELMS). Without objection, it is so ordered.

THE LIBERTAD BILL

Mr. COVERDELL. Mr. President, first I would like to commend the Presiding Officer, the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, for the attention and dedication to the legislation that is pending before the Senate, the Libertad bill which deals with the notorious dictator and the oppression that has occurred for over three decades over the people in Cuba, and for your attempts to address those vital issues.

As you know, Mr. President, I spoke on that yesterday in support of your effort with particular emphasis on the abrogation of property rights. This has been something that has bothered me, not only in Cuba but in Nicaragua and other countries in the hemisphere, and I think the President is doing exemplary service, not only for our citizens, but citizens around the world in confronting the issue of the confiscation of property in our world today, and without compensation and without appropriate redress.

So I compliment the Chair.

THE FISCAL AFFAIRS OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. COVERDELL. Mr. President, I also appreciate your accepting the duty of presiding so that I might make a comment or two about a number of the speeches that have been made as amendments and commentary at the time of discussing your bill that had nothing whatsoever to do with your bill.

From the other side of the aisle, we have heard repeatedly criticism of the efforts of the new majority to take charge of the fiscal affairs of the United States, even though the vast majority of the American people sent this new majority here to do just that. They have rejected the status quo. They have rejected the concept of spending money we do not have. They have rejected the prospect of robbing the future of its opportunity because there are no resources left. They have rejected the idea that this Nation not stumble into the next century 5 years from now. Yet, all we hear is the same song sheet—leave everything the way it is, and reject the pleas of the American people to take charge of our own financial house.

I tell you. It is mind-boggling.

We have said there are four things that must happen. We must balance our budgets. Eighty-eight percent of the American people say we must balance our budget. Are we deaf? They want the budget balanced, and for good reason. They have to balance their own checkbooks. They have to balance the checkbooks of their businesses. And they know nations have to do the same thing.

I was reading in the bipartisan entitlement commission report just the other day where it said—and it ought to be a loud wake-up call for every American, and certainly for the President and for every American policymaker. It says this: It says that within 10 years—that is a snap of a finger—within 10 years all U.S. resources will be exhausted by just five programs. Just five—Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, Federal retirement, and the interest on our debt. And there is nothing left. We will not be debating a B-2 bomber. There will not be one, nor anything else to defend the Nation, nor a school lunch program nor a Transportation Department nor a Commerce Department nor any of them. No American, no Member of this Senate, not a person who has abused their financial affairs can carry out their mission—not a person, not a family, not a business, not a community and yes, Mr. President, not even nations. No generation of Americans has ever given the future a country crippled. But we are perilously close to doing just that.

Mr. President, we have said we must balance our budgets so that we quit adding debt. We have said we want to save Medicare because the trustees have said it is going bankrupt, and we want to protect it and preserve it. And we want to save \$270 billion, not for a tax increase, but by law to keep it in the Medicare Trust Fund so that its solvency is pushed out years from now so that it does not go bankrupt, so that the current beneficiaries will not have the program closed, and, importantly, so the beneficiaries to come will have it in place.

We said welfare as it is known must come to an end. You would be hard pressed to find a single citizen in this

country that would not agree with that—balance the budget, protect Medicare, alter welfare, and, Mr. President, the fourth item is lower taxes.

You would think that was a travesty from what we have heard on the floor; that it is an absolute sin to talk about lowering taxes on the American working family.

When Ozzie and Harriet were the pre-eminent American family, Ozzie sent 2 percent of his paycheck to this town. If Ozzie was here today, first of all his family would be completely different and not look a bit like what it was then, mainly because he would be sending 25 percent of every dime he earned to this town. Would it be any wonder that Harriet would not be in the house? She would have to be working.

Balance our budget—America wants that done; protect Medicare—America wants that done; change welfare—America wants that done; lower the financial burden on middle America so that it can do the job it is supposed to do with its own family and without a Washington caretaker—America wants that done.

Boy, you would never think that from what we have heard the last 2 days. I tell you. Where America is and where those speeches are is totally different.

A couple more things, and then I will allow the Presiding Officer to get on with his business of the day.

One, where has the President been in this debate? First, during the campaign, he said he was going to balance the budget in 5 years. I do not know what happened to that promise. He was going to balance the budget in 5 years. Then we offered a balanced budget, and he said, I am not offering any budget.

That is real leadership. That did not play very well in America.

So he says, OK, I am going to offer a budget. I will balance it in 10 years, and it will be easier to do. He has gone all over the country saying that. There is only one problem. That budget never balances, ever—not in 7 years, not in 5 years, not in 7, not in 10; never.

How do I know that? Because the Congressional Budget Office, which he told a joint session of Congress is the numbers we should use, says it will not. The only thing that says it is the President and his own budget makers.

Mr. President, your budget does not balance, and that is not leadership, and it is not what America is asking for.

The last thing I am going to say is this, Mr. President. That is a sober message, that all our money would be gone for five things in less than 10 years; that Medicare is going bankrupt. We have to really get tough on managing our financial affairs.

That is a tough message, but America needs to know that at the end of the day, if we take charge of our business, if we run this country the way our forefathers would have us do it, the way those who went to Europe to defend it would have us do it, we will

send America into the next century with more hope and more opportunity than is even describable. We will lower interest rates. That will affect everybody who buys a car or a refrigerator or a home or has to borrow money to send kids to school. We will lower the economic pressure on those families. We will leave more money for them to manage their education, their housing, their retirement. We will create millions of new jobs—millions of new jobs. We will be strong. We will be the only superpower, and we will have the muscle to defend it.

This happens very quickly if we just start taking charge of our business. If nothing else would motivate you to do it, the kinds of results that come from managing our affairs ought to make every American be calling their Congressman, their Senator, and, yes, the President and say: Get on with this. Do this for me. Do this for my family. And, yes, do this for our country.

Mr. President, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COVERDELL). Without objection, it is so ordered.

CUBAN LIBERTY AND DEMOCRATIC SOLIDARITY [LIBERTAD] ACT OF 1995

Mr. DOLE. Mr. President, I now ask the Senate resume the pending business, H.R. 927.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 927) to seek international sanctions against the Castro government in Cuba, to plan for support of a transition government leading to a democratically elected government in Cuba, and for other purposes.

The Senate resumed consideration of the bill.

Pending:
Dole amendment No. 2898, in the nature of a substitute.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. DOLE. I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the substitute amendment to Calendar No. 202, H.R. 927, an act to seek international sanctions against the Castro government in Cuba.

Bob Dole, Jesse Helms, Conrad Burns, Don Nickles, Frank H. Murkowski, John H. Chafee, Chuck Grassley, Paul D. Coverdell, Bob Smith, Hank Brown, Trent Lott, Larry E. Craig, Bill Frist, Jim Inhofe, Rod Grams, Mike DeWine.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. DOLE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there be a period for the transaction of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 5 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mr. Thomas, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, which were referred as indicated:

EC-1499. A communication from the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, the report of the Federal Field Work Group on Alaska rural sanitation; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-1500. A communication from the Inspector General of the Department of Defense, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report on Superfund financial transactions for fiscal year 1994; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-1501. A communication from the Secretary of Transportation and the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting jointly, pursuant to law, the report entitled, "Administrative Assistance to the States: Compliance with Nitrogen Oxides Requirements of the Transportation Conformity Rule"; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-1502. A communication from the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report entitled, "Monitoring the Impact of Medicare Physician Payment Reform on Utilization and Access"; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-1503. A communication from the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report on hospital and hospital health care complex cost; to the Committee on Finance.