

What we do not want to happen in Bosnia—if you look at what the administration has done to our military—is for them to come back and say we need another billion dollars. They came back for a \$1.4 billion emergency supplemental just to cover these humanitarian missions in places like Somalia, Haiti, Rwanda, and other places. And we are in a position where we did not have a voice in making the decision to spend that money on humanitarian missions, money we have to borrow from future generations, because we are borrowing this money. Yet, we cannot deny the President his request for emergency supplementals, because if we do that, he will take it out of the operating account of our existing military, and, of course, we are down now to a bare bones military system.

I think what is happening right now in Bosnia has a far greater significance than what we have been talking about in just the cost.

I had occasion to spend 6 months in Bosnia. I did it all in 4 days. It was the most miserable 4 days I ever spent. But I learned something while I was there. I looked around and I saw a country that had been pounded and pounded. Yet, we are not real sure who is doing the pounding all that time. We have three warring factions in Bosnia. We have the Croats, the Bosnian Serbs, the Bosnian Moslems. Yet, while the peace talks are going on, I suggest to you that some of the parties causing the problems over in Bosnia are not at the peace table.

So here we are faced with a dilemma where we are going to have to make decisions as to what is taking place over there, and we are going to try to stop the President from sending 25,000 ground troops in there where, certainly, there will be many, many deaths.

I will wind this up by only repeating the words of the commander of the U.N. forces in Bosnia, that British general, Gen. Michael Rose, who said, "If the Americans send troops into Bosnia, they will sustain more losses than they did during the Persian Gulf war." That was 390 losses. I remember when I asked Secretary Christopher and Secretary Perry, "Is whatever we are doing over in Bosnia significant enough—whatever mission that is—for the loss of several hundred—specifically over 400—American lives?" They said, "Yes."

So I think there is the basis of the difference of opinion. Is the mission of containing a civil war and of protecting the integrity of NATO worth several hundred American lives. I say, "no."

That is another debate that is going on now. I would like to advise the President that it is my intention to introduce legislation that is going to make it more difficult for him to send troops into Bosnia on the ground.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. GRASSLEY). The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

CUBAN LIBERTY AND DEMOCRATIC SOLIDARITY [LIBERTAD] ACT OF 1995

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I ask that the Chair lay before the Senate a message from the House on H.R. 927, a bill 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 PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the House of Representatives:

Resolved, That the House disagree to the amendment of the Senate to the bill 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", and ask a conference with the Senate on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses thereon.

Ordered, That Mr. Gilman, Mr. Burton of Indiana, Ms. Ros-Lehtinen, Mr. King, Mr. Diaz-Balart, Mr. Hamilton, Mr. Gejdenson, Mr. Torricelli, and Mr. Menendez be the managers of the conference on the part of the House.

Mr. DODD addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to address the Senate on the pending matter for such time as I may consume.

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

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I rise this afternoon to debate the message from the House requesting a conference on H.R. 927, the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act of 1995, and the naming of conferees.

I find it somewhat remarkable that today, of all days, we are being asked to deal with this matter, of all matters. I would have thought that today we would be devoting ourselves instead to finding our way out of the serious box we have fallen into over the budget impasse.

Let us remember what is about to occur shortly in this Chamber. As of midnight tonight, the Federal Government ceases all but essential services. Likewise, the Government's ability to borrow shortly will be exhausted. Keeping our Government operating and keeping the U.S. Treasury solvent should, in my view, be the only business of this body today. Even if it were not in the throes of a critical fiscal crisis, I would still argue the priorities of the leadership in taking up this particular bill at this juncture.

The Senate, as my colleagues will recall, has already exhausted 5 days debating this bill. There is no pressing

reason why we must turn to it again now or go to a conference today or tomorrow. It is not as though the Senate has nothing else to do. We have yet to complete the bulk of the so-called must-pass legislation for this year. To date, we have completed action on only 4 of the 13 appropriations bills that we must enact—only 4 of the 13. We have yet to complete action on budget reconciliation, on welfare reform, on Medicaid and Medicare reform.

Instead, here we are debating going to conference with the House on legislation that has no particular urgency to it whatsoever. Fidel Castro has been around for more than three decades. I do not think anyone seriously believes that this legislation is likely to markedly alter his status or the current situation in Cuba any time soon, no matter how much we may wish it so. In fact, as I argued when the Senate spent 5 days debating this bill last month, I believe this legislation is fatally flawed.

In this case of the House-passed version, this bill would actually do serious damage to the United States, especially to our Federal courts. Frankly, Mr. President, this legislation is nothing more than special interest legislation par excellence. It is particularly ironic, Mr. President, that we should be here today deliberating legislation that falls within the jurisdiction of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

As I am sure my colleagues are aware, the Foreign Relations Committee has been basically shut down for the past 3 months by the chairman of the committee, with the concurrence of the majority leader. Eighteen ambassadorial nominees, nominees to China, South Africa, Pakistan, the Philippines, and several dozens of treaties, including START II and the Chemical Weapons Convention, have been held hostage by the chairman of the committee until he secures passage on S. 908, the State Department reorganization legislation.

The distinguished chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee has been unable to pass that legislation to date because in its current form it does not enjoy bipartisan support. I appreciate the fact that the Senator from North Carolina is unhappy that he cannot get his bill passed. That circumstance, Mr. President, happens to all of us in this body from time to time. However, I believe it is the height of irresponsibility to hold up nearly all the other business of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee over one piece of legislation. I believe the action is almost unprecedented, if not in fact unprecedented.

I, for one, would argue that it is far more important that the United States be ably represented abroad at the highest diplomatic levels in countries where there are a great many U.S. interests at stake. China, Pakistan, South Africa, Indonesia—these are all countries of critical importance to the

United States and the conduct of our foreign policy.

I also believe that arms control must and should continue to be a high priority for the United States. START II and the Chemical Weapons Convention are critical elements in that arms control strategy. I would assert, Mr. President, that the American people care far more about arms control and being well represented abroad than they care about how some boxes get drawn on some State Department organizational chart or who draws them.

Under the current circumstances, I am not prepared to facilitate efforts by the majority to pick and choose the foreign policy items that they want acted upon while ambassadorial nominees and other major agenda items on the Foreign Relations Committee continue to be held hostage.

I would be far more sympathetic to proceeding with the matter before us if I thought some critical foreign policy issue were at stake. That is not the case, Mr. President. The motivation for moving the pending matter this week and today is driven primarily by a domestic political agenda and by a Presidential straw poll that will be held this coming weekend in Florida.

If the leadership of the House and the Senate thinks that this bill is of such high priority that it must be acted upon this week, then I would suggest that the House take up and pass the Senate version of the bill. While I believe that this version, the Senate version, has serious deficiencies, it is light years better than the House-passed version of this same bill. Unfortunately, they are not prepared to take that course of action because the sponsors of the bill are eager to restore title III of the bill in conference, the most controversial title of the bill, that was deleted in this body.

Mr. President, I am obviously prepared to speak at some length about my substantive objections to the bill at an appropriate moment. I respectfully urge that we forget about dealing with this matter and return to the critical issues that threaten to close down the Federal Government in a matter of hours and to call into question the full faith and credit of the U.S. Treasury.

Mr. President, I mentioned earlier there were some 18 nominees that were at stake being held hostage. Let me identify them, if I can: Sri Lanka, which has been vacant since August of this year; the APEC convention; Cambodia; Malaysia, vacant since June; Thailand, vacant since August of this year; Indonesia, vacant since July; Oman, vacant since June; Pakistan, vacant since September; Lebanon, vacant for 1 year, no ambassador there; South Africa; Cameroon; the Marshall Islands; Fiji; China; Mali; Rwanda; The Gambia.

All of these places, Mr. President, are without U.S. representation. We could have dealt with these matters. They have come out of committee without any real controversy. It is not as if

some of these people here are particularly controversial at all. That is not the issue. I would understand that if that were the case. We made the decision here we are not going to deal with these Ambassadors over one piece of legislation.

But it is not just the Ambassadors. I mentioned earlier that treaties are being held up as well. START II, the Chemical Weapons Convention, nine bilateral investment treaties, five mutual legal assistance treaties, five extradition treaties, three tax treaties, two environmental treaties, the Law of the Sea Convention, the Women's Convention, the American Convention on Human Rights.

Now, again, Mr. President, some of these matters might provoke some controversy. I would not suggest that they are necessarily in the same status as these ambassadorial nominations. But, nonetheless, these matters certainly, I would argue, are of equal or greater significance than the pending legislation that we would like to appoint conferees on. As important as that legislation may be in the eyes of some people, it does not deserve to have a status higher than all of these other matters and higher than the status that we ought to be providing to the START II Treaty and the Chemical Weapons Convention that has been pending for some time.

Now, Mr. President, I mentioned earlier when we had the debate on the Cuban legislation that I thought the bill was fatally flawed. I still believe that to be the case. Let me say once again this is not an issue of whether or not you like Fidel Castro or are happy with the present situation in Cuba. I will state once again for the record, I am not. I would like nothing more than to see democracy come to Cuba, that a dictator leave, that we try to be able to achieve some human rights in that country and a restoration of representative government. That is not the issue here before us.

The issue is, is this particular strategy incorporated in this legislation the correct course to be followed? This legislation does not in any way change the present embargo, although there are many who feel the embargo ought to be modified because it is not achieving the desired results.

The problem with this bill is that it places some contingencies on other foreign policy matters that ought to be of greater weight than what we are presently doing or not doing in Cuba. I said at the outset of that debate that when we consider matters such as the legislation before us, we ought to ask ourselves two basic questions: Is what is being proposed in the best interests of our own country? And is it likely to achieve the desired results?

Mr. President, as you know, I had grave concerns about the legislation as it was originally drafted. I believe the bill would have done serious harm to our own country, particularly to our court system. Fortunately, the center-

piece of that bill that would have caused that harm, title III, is no longer a part of the Senate version. As I mentioned earlier, I thought it would be at least better, if the House wanted to move this matter along, to just take up the Senate-passed bill and pass that. But thanks to Senator KASSEBAUM and others who worked so hard to correct this serious problem, it is no longer a part of the Senate version.

Notwithstanding, however, Mr. President, this change, the two basic questions still remain: Is this bill in our own interests? Will it achieve the desired results? Regrettably, I believe the answer to both of those questions is still no. It is not in our interest, Mr. President, to complicate our relations with the governments of Russia or the other New Independent States that were formerly a part of the Soviet Union.

Yet provisions of this bill would do just that, by linking our assistance to Russia and these New Independent States based on their policies toward Cuba. We provide assistance to Russia and the New Independent States because, I believe, Mr. President, we want to see them carry out the kinds of reforms and programs that we are funding, because we want to continue to strengthen this still fragile democracy that exists in these nations. Conditioning our aid to Russia and to the New Independent States based on what is going on in Cuba, I think, is counterproductive, and yet that is exactly what we do in this bill.

It seems to me, Mr. President, we have to ask ourselves, is it in our interest to try to shore up these democratic institutions, these fragile democracies that only a few months ago were in the grips of communism? Fragile as they are, should we be linking that assistance based on whether or not they continue to provide concessional aid to Cuba? We may not like the fact that they do that, but are we going to jeopardize the democracies in Russia and the New Independent States solely because they maintain concessional aid to Cuba? Yet, that is exactly what the bill does.

Again, I do not necessarily disagree if people want to have some strong language about what we do, what kind of aid we provide to Cuba, what kind of support we provide. That is a legitimate debate. But to say to Russia and the New Independent States, "We are going to cut off aid to you, we are going to deny you the kind of support" that these countries need if they are going to succeed in the transition to democracy, based on the fact that they provide concessional aid to Cuba, I think, is very wrongheaded.

Provisions of this bill also impinge on arms control. Again, one can argue about whether or not you want to proceed with arms control. I think it ought to be a source of some collective pride and sense of well-being that today we no longer have any nuclear weapons that formerly resided in the

Soviet Union pointed at us. There has been a remarkable degree of success in dismantling that nuclear arsenal. And yet today, this bill on Cuba threatens, in my view, our arms control agreements with Russia and the New Independent States, specifically when it comes to Russian verification of United States compliance with these arms control agreements.

As I said a moment ago, it is certainly legitimate for the United States to discuss the types of activities that appropriately fall within the scope of verification of arms control treaties. That should be done bilaterally with the Government of Russia, not unilaterally imposed by the Congress in the context of its debate about Cuba.

Other provisions of this legislation bar Cuban participation in international financial institutions. That might be fine, but the bar goes until after democracy has been established in that country. We all know the critical roles played by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund in the early days of Russia's transition to democracy and to a market economy. It is foolhardy, in my view, Mr. President, to prohibit the IMF or the World Bank from offering their assistance and expertise to a post-Castro government.

Mr. President, my objections to the underlying bill were based on several points. One is that, of course, to be tying our aid to Russia and to the New Independent States, based on Russia's continuing support of concessionary aid to Cuba, does not make a great deal of sense to me. In fact, to tie those two issues together jeopardizes, in fact, the very fragile democracy that exists in Russia and in the New Independent States.

Second, to tie arms control is just as dangerous, in my view. We have achieved great success in the last number of months by turning those missiles, which were pointed at our shores, away from our shores and, in fact, the arms control efforts have proven a great success. To link a future arms control success, based on whether or not Russia provides concessionary aid or assistance, to Cuba seems to me to have misplaced priorities. Whatever one thinks about Cuba, you do not jeopardize arms control because Russia does what 57 other countries in the world are doing—that is, providing aid or assistance, or allowing their businesses to operate in Cuba. Again, I am not applauding those particular actions, necessarily, but I do not think you want to link the foreign policy of this country—particularly the vital interests that we have with regard to Russia and the New Independent States—based on a relationship that those countries may have with Cuba.

This bill—the underlying bill—would also have the United States spend more money on TV Marti. Here we are cutting public broadcasting in the United States, cutting into those budgets; yet, we turn around and support additional

funding to TV Marti—a program that, by any estimation, with all the studies that have been done, has been an abysmal failure. GAO report after GAO report has found it is totally ineffective, that virtually nobody in Cuba watches it, that it is a total waste of taxpayer money. Those are not my conclusions, but the conclusions of the General Accounting Office. Yet, we are going to spend more money on TV Marti at a very time, as I said, when, frankly, we are told that resources are not there to support our own public broadcasting efforts in this country.

As I said, Mr. President, during the consideration of the legislation, the only individual who has truly benefited from the debate, in my view, has been Fidel Castro. Once again, we have managed to make him larger than life and given him excuses for why his government has failed or why the Cuban economy is in a shambles. Once again, we will force our allies to come to his defense because they profoundly disagree with our own tactics.

Consider what happened in the United Nations only a few days ago, where a resolution on Cuba was offered. We had one country that supports us—one out of the entire world stood with us with regard to Cuba, and that was Israel. I point out, as I have in the past, Israel, in fact, has businesses, Israeli businesses, doing business in Cuba. So instead of having some profound affect on our allies around the world, we are achieving just the opposite.

So, Mr. President, I object to us moving forward, for a number of reasons. Let me reiterate them for my colleagues. One is that I do not know why, today, of all days, with the Government about to shut its doors and close down, with all of the other pending matters we should be raising before us, here we are dealing with a bill focused on Cuba. As I said earlier, we have only dealt with 4 appropriations bills out of 13. Why do we not deal with some of those appropriations bills? It seems to me that ought to have a higher priority than a piece of legislation that will have virtually no effect on Cuba, no effect on Fidel Castro. Yet, we bring that up today, with no particular urgency about it whatsoever.

Second, here we are moving to this bill, which comes under the appropriate jurisdiction of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Yet, we are going to rush this bill to the forefront, while 18 nominees to serve as ambassadors to the United States have been in limbo for weeks now—not days, weeks. These are 18 ambassadors that are going to critical countries, like Pakistan, China, and Indonesia, where we have critical United States interests at stake. Yet, those nominees cannot be voted on because the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee wants another bill to be resolved—a bill he has an interest in. Now, I respect his interests. I disagree with him on what he wants to do in major part, but I know what it is like to have a bill

you are interested in. But this ties up 18 nominees to serve as ambassadors of the United States to these foreign countries, and a number of critically important treaties, including START II and the Chemical Weapons Convention, nine bilateral investment treaties, and a host of other agreements, all of which have been held up, not because there is great disagreement with them.

These treaties ought to be debated if people have disagreements. Let us debate it here on the floor of the Senate and vote on them. But here it is, the majority controlling, saying these nominees cannot come forward to serve as ambassadors, and a whole host of treaties cannot be brought up. We will not deal with the reorganization of the State Department, but we are going to rush to the forefront a bill on Cuba.

It seems to me that we have misplaced priorities here, Mr. President. On this very day, hours away from shutting down the Federal Government, we are going to debate about whether or not we are going to cut off aid to Russia and jeopardize arms control because we are unhappy with how we see things in Cuba. Try to explain that to the American public. If they wonder what is going on in Washington, consider what we are debating today. Here it is, the majority, which controls the debate and the agenda, brings up a bill regarding Cuba. We are hours away from shutting down the Federal Government, while not even considering bringing up, as I said earlier, the nominees for the important ambassadorial posts and these important treaties, not to mention appropriations bills, Medicare reform, Medicaid reform. All of that takes a back bench while we deal with Cuba.

I mentioned earlier, I have problems with the underlying bill itself. The fact that we are going to link United States assistance to Russia and the New Independent States based on whether Russia and the New Independent States provide concessionary aid to Cuba—explain the logic of that to me, why you would jeopardize fragile democracies critically important to the United States and to Western Europe based on their concessionary aid to an island 90 miles off our shore, and why you jeopardize arms control—a critically important issue to this country. And yet this bill says that we will not provide the kind of assistance to the arms control effort if, in fact, Russia continues to provide concessionary aid to Cuba.

It just does not make any sense. The international organizations here are saying no aid to a post-Castro government—not Castro. Forget that. No aid to a post-Castro government in transition.

All of us recognize the value of the international organizations—a few months ago when Russia was going through that transition—yet in this bill we say with regard to Cuba “No international financial assistance” for

the World Bank or the IMF until democracy is absolutely established.

Were we to apply those provisions to the New Independent States and some of the conditionality in this bill, we would still be denying that kind of assistance to them as they struggle to get their footing into established democracy, a firm democracy in their country.

Mr. President, I feel very strongly that today to be raising on the floor of this body a bill involving Cuba, which I believe is fundamentally flawed—I realize it passed this body, but I know a number of my colleagues think it is a bad bill. Because we are going to have a primary, a straw vote I guess it is, in Florida this weekend, we are rushing to get the Cuba bill done.

So the closure of the Federal Government, the important appropriations bills, Medicare, Medicaid, they all take a back seat here now so that we can score some points to maybe win a straw poll in Florida. That is the only reason this bill is being brought up now—the only reason.

In fact, if they wanted to deal with this issue expeditiously, the House could adopt the Senate version and send it back over to us. No, that is not the case.

So today we are going to try and move through to deal with this Cuban aid bill while we put aside the very issue of whether or not the Federal Government is going to close its doors.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 115

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I am about to propose a unanimous-consent request that would recognize the distinguished chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee for the purposes of raising the continuing resolution.

At the conclusion of that discussion I will be prepared to ask unanimous consent that the Senator from Connecticut be recognized to continue his discussion on the matter before the Senate.

Mr. President, let me propound that unanimous-consent request: That, without losing his right to the floor, the Senator be recognized at the conclusion of the time that the Senator from Oregon is recognized, for the purpose of introducing the continuing resolution; at the conclusion of that introduction and discussion that the Senator from Connecticut be recognized once again and his remarks be uninterrupted.

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

FISCAL YEAR 1996 CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. HATFIELD. Mr. President, I ask that the Chair lay before the Senate a message from the House of Representatives on House Joint Resolution 115, a joint resolution making further con-

tinuing appropriations for the fiscal year 1996, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the House of Representatives:

Resolved, That the House agree to the amendments of the Senate numbered 1 and 2 to the joint resolution (H.J. Res. 115) entitled "Joint resolution making further continuing appropriations for the fiscal year 1996, and for other purposes."

Resolved, That the House agree to the amendment of the Senate numbered 3 to the aforesaid joint resolution with the following amendment:

Delete the matter proposed by said amendment, and beginning on page 15, line 1 of the House engrossed joint resolution (H.J. Res. 115), strike all down to and including line 7, on page 36, and redesignate title IV as title III, and renumber sections accordingly.

Mr. HATFIELD. Mr. President, I move that the Senate concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. So the motion was agreed to.

Mr. HATFIELD. I move to reconsider the vote, and I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, on behalf of the Democratic side here, we did not object to proceeding to the continuing resolution. It is important we move this process forward.

Mr. HATFIELD. This procedure has been cleared with—

Mr. DODD. And I understand that, but I wanted to make note that we disagree with the continuing resolution, Mr. President; and I ask unanimous consent that the vote that occurred last Thursday be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 567 Leg.]

YEAS—50

Abraham	Frist	McCain
Ashcroft	Gorton	McConnell
Bennett	Gramm	Murkowski
Bond	Grams	Nickles
Brown	Grassley	Pressler
Burns	Gregg	Roth
Campbell	Hatch	Santorum
Chafee	Hatfield	Shelby
Coats	Helms	Simpson
Cochran	Hutchison	Smith
Coverdell	Inhofe	Specter
Craig	Jeffords	Stevens
D'Amato	Kassebaum	Thomas
DeWine	Kempthorne	Thompson
Dole	Kyl	Thurmond
Domenici	Lott	Warner
Faircloth	Mack	

NAYS—46

Baucus	Feingold	Lautenberg
Biden	Feinstein	Leahy
Bingaman	Ford	Levin
Boxer	Glenn	Lieberman
Breaux	Graham	Mikulski
Bryan	Harkin	Moseley-Braun
Bumpers	Heflin	Moynihan
Byrd	Hollings	Murray
Cohen	Inouye	Nunn
Conrad	Johnston	Pell
Daschle	Kennedy	Pryor
Dodd	Kerrey	Reid
Dorgan	Kerry	
Exon	Kohl	

Robb	Sarbanes	Snowe
Rockefeller	Simon	Wellstone

NOT VOTING—3

Akaka	Bradley	Lugar
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Mr. DODD. Mr. President, the Democrats on this side still have objection to this proposal, but nonetheless we feel the process is worthwhile.

Mr. DOLE. If I may proceed for 5 minutes.

Mr. DODD. Absolutely.

Mr. DOLE. First, let me state that the Senate will remain in session until midnight tonight in the hopes we can get this to the President very quickly and that if he should veto the continuing resolution, which I hope he will not, there still might be time for the President and the leadership to work out some agreement that would prevent a shutdown of the Federal Government.

I am not an advocate of shutting down the Federal Government. I think there ought to be some way to come together. I think the American people expect us to do that.

This will be on its way to the House within a minute or two and will go directly from the House and we will see it is expedited and over to the President and hopefully the President will have it a little after 5 o'clock. That would still give us 7 hours to resolve the difference.

There has been some discussion today of maybe changing one of the provisions on Medicare, just writing in the figure \$46.10 which would amount to a freeze. That was raised by the distinguished Senator from New Mexico in a talk show over the weekend and also by the Senator from Oklahoma, Senator NICKLES, and discussed by the Senate leadership at 12:30 today, and then discussed with the Speaker maybe an hour or so ago, along with a number of other things we are also looking into—items of disagreement on the total reconciliation package, and we are about to wrap that up.

Before we concluded our discussion, we understand Mr. McCurry resolved the matter for us at the White House, indicating in addition to the Medicare provision they had other substantive problems with the continuing resolution.

So it underscores that all this weekend was a smokescreen on Medicare, and the truth of the matter is there were other objections—not just Medicare.

So they are playing the Medicare scare card all weekend, so we were working on maybe a softer version just to freeze at \$46.10 and that, again, Mr. McCurry indicates was not satisfactory.

In fact the quote reads, "Explain what's wrong with the freeze, just explain what's wrong with the freeze."

Mr. MCCURRY. Well, because the President prefers current law. Current law is very clear on what premium increases should be.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have the entire transcript of the White House Press Secretary's remarks printed in the RECORD.