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Senate

The Senate met at 3 p.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore [Mr. THURMOND].

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Lloyd John Ogilvie, offered the following prayer:

Sovereign Lord, help us to see our work here in Government as our divine calling and mission. Whatever we are called to do today, we want to do our very best for Your glory. Our desire is not just to do different things, but to do the same old things differently: with freedom, joy, and excellence. Give us new delight for matters of drudgery, new patience for people who are difficult, new zest for unfinished details. Be our lifeline in the pressures of deadlines, our rejuvenation in routines, and our endurance whenever we feel enervated. May we spend more time talking to You about issues than we do talking about issues to others. So may our communion with You give us deep convictions and high courage to defend them. Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on us so we may serve with fresh dedication today. In the Lord's name. Amen.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will now be a period for the transaction of morning business not to extend beyond the hour of 4 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 5 minutes each.

Mr. BREAUX addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Louisiana.

Mr. BREAUX. I understand there are two bills due for their second reading that are at the desk.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator is correct.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 1438

Mr. BREAUX. Mr. President, I ask that the clerk read S. 1438 by title.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will read the bill.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1438) to establish a commission to review the dispute settlement reports of the World Trade Organization, and for other purposes.

Mr. BREAUX. Mr. President, I object to any further proceedings on this matter at this time.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The bill will be placed on the calendar.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 1441

Mr. BREAUX. Mr. President, concerning the second bill, I ask that the clerk read the second bill by title.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. FRIST). The clerk will read the second bill.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1441) to authorize appropriations for the Department of State for the fiscal years 1996 through 1999, and for other purposes.

Mr. BREAUX. Mr. President, I object to any further proceedings on this matter at this time as well.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The bill will be placed on the calendar.

Mr. BREAUX. Mr. President, I understand there is a 5-minute limitation. I ask unanimous consent that I be able to speak for no more than 10 minutes.

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

THE BUDGET IMPASSE

Mr. BREAUX. I thank the Chair.

Mr. President, as the Congress comes back from the weekend recess, a lot of people I know throughout the country, and in my State of Louisiana in particular, have been wondering whether Congress is going to be able to get together to solve the budget crisis. We do not have a lot of time before December 15, and there is the prospect of yet another shutdown of the Federal Government because Congress has not been able to resolve how to come together on a plan to balance the budget over a specified period of time.

Mr. President, I will make a couple of comments about that impasse because I think indeed it is very serious. I remember looking at the New York Times on Saturday morning. It was a report on the progress that Congress has made on this effort to balance the budget. I will read perhaps a couple of sentences from that article on Saturday by Mr. David Rosenbaum:

The budget negotiations this week between Congress and the White House were a complete bust. For 3 days in a row, lawmakers and administration officials met around a table in a conference room in the Capitol of the United States, closed the doors, accomplished absolutely nothing, and came out and accused each other of refusing to negotiate in good faith. Then, on Thursday afternoon, they adjourned until next week. No one savvy about Washington politics was surprised.

Mr. President, at a time when President Clinton can bring all the heads of the territories in Bosnia to Dayton, OH, and ask them to sit in a room until they reach an agreement ending a war that has been going on for centuries, can we not bring together the parties in this body called Congress to agree on what we should do with the budget?

I mentioned another article, which I think is right on target. It is by our distinguished leader, Senator TOM DASCHLE, the Democratic leader. He

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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pointed out in this article, which appeared in Roll Call:

People of this country are sick and tired of a Government that does not understand their problems or their neighbors' problems, sick and tired of politicians fighting over things that the rest of the country cannot understand, and, most of all, they are sick and tired of the fact that it seems impossible to get anything done in Washington.

Mr. President, I think that it is time, when we talk about the budget, for the moderates in both parties to come together and help resolve this problem. I am absolutely convinced that you cannot put people in a room who have visions of what the future of this country should be like that are as different as night and day. It is my opinion that the most difficult problems cannot be solved from the left working in, nor from the right working toward the center. I am absolutely convinced that you cannot take the fringes of any political party and try and use that methodology to solve difficult problems, such as a budget problem.

I know that all the folks that are working on the budget are people of good faith and have strong beliefs about what a budget agreement should accomplish and what it should contain. Mr. President, I am suggesting today that there are moderates on the Democratic side—moderates in the Democratic Party, both in the House and in the Senate, that really want to have a budget agreement. I think it is now time for the moderates on both sides of our political parties to try and band together to help resolve this problem. I am very concerned that as the days go by and hours keep ticking off the clock, that we are not making the progress needed and necessary in order to solve this problem before yet another deadline occurs.

As it was said in the Saturday article I quoted, the talks so far between Congress and the White House were a complete bust. Mr. President, we owe to the American people much more than that. We owe the best talent, the best minds, and the best dedicated public servants to work together across party lines to bring this debate to a closure. Let me suggest a couple of things I think moderates can agree to.

First, I think it is certainly possible that we can agree that there should be a balanced budget and it should be in 7 years. Point No. 1.

Second, I think that all of this debate about which economic assumptions we are going to use to help solve this problem almost border on the point of being ridiculous. The Congressional Budget Office has suggested that growth is going to be about 2.3 percent next year. The Office of Management and Budget suggested that growth rate will be about 2.5 percent. Is there not a middle ground between those two numbers, a figure between 2.3 and 2.5 that people with good intentions cannot agree to? I suggest that we split the differences between those, and I think that is something that can be done. I

think it can be done in a way that brings about the best economic assumptions that we need in order to fix this problem.

Third, I think people should be able to agree on a Consumer Price Index adjustment. The people who have looked at this issue have recommended that, clearly, the Consumer Price Index on which we base so many of our economic programs is overstating the cost of products that consumers buy and that an adjustment of somewhere up to 1 percent perhaps is a reasonable and rational adjustment.

I suggest that we could take a point, a percent adjustment, and by doing that really allow us a great deal more flexibility in solving this budget impasse.

Fourth, I think we ought to be able to agree on a tax cut that is reasonable and fair. Some have suggested no tax cut at all, zero. Some have suggested we absolutely have to have \$245 billion in tax cuts. Is there not, again, a middle ground that we could agree on that comes up with a reasonable tax cut and save somewhere in the range of \$100 to \$150 billion over the 7-year period? Is that not a fair compromise to those who say we should have none and those who say we should have the higher amount? I suggest it is.

The fifth point I think we should be able to come together on is the fact that the savings we have from these procedures I just outlined should be utilized to put back money in Medicare and Medicaid and the earned income tax credit and the welfare program, environmental programs, and yes, equally if not more important, the education programs which determine the future of the people of this country and use those extra funds to increase some of those drastic, suggested cuts in those programs.

Mr. President, I think reasonable people in both parties who could call ourselves moderate should be able to get together and do these things. I think it is more difficult when you have people who are on the left in their party, or on the right in their party trying to resolve these differences. Is it not better to have a group of people in the middle who are moderates who can agree, and once we get an agreement which I think is pretty easy to get to, work it out so that we then move toward the outside to solve the problem?

The way to solve this problem is working from the center out, not from the left end or from the right end, but, rather, working out the principles. These five principles I outlined I think give us the strong basis for trying to reach a balanced budget in 7 years, one that, hopefully, this President would be able to see meets the needs that he has outlined, solves the problem, and everybody comes away a winner.

I do not see how anybody wins if we have another stalemate. Everybody loses. Yet if we do reach an agreement, everybody should win. And winners or losers in the Congress is not really

what it is all about; it is whether we will craft a program that the American people can win with and the future generations can say that Congress did the right thing when they were called upon to meet this challenge.

I strongly suggest that now is the time for moderates in the Republican Party and the Democratic Party to start talking to each other. There is nothing wrong with that. That is what a democratic Government is all about—compromises, meeting together, solving the problems in the center, and then working it away, and these agreements are received by more people in order to reach a majority.

I am just very concerned if we do not do that, if we try and solve this problem from the left working in or from the right working in, we will just have a stalemate. I do not think there is any political capital in bringing this Government to a closure again because we at that time will be admitting once again we cannot make Government work. That is not why we were sent to Congress. Just the opposite is the reason we are here.

I call today upon moderates in both parties to start talking, to meeting, to see if we cannot agree on these five principles I have tried to outline and take it from there and see where it leads us.

I suggest, in conclusion, we might be very surprised that it leads us to a balanced budget agreement that the Congress can pass with great enthusiasm, and this President will find that he will be able to support it as well.

I yield the floor.

TRIBUTE TO SENATOR ALAN SIMPSON

Mr. HEFLIN. Mr. President, I was very saddened to learn of the retirement of Senator ALAN SIMPSON of Wyoming. He and I came here together in the class of 1978 and have served with each other on the Judiciary Committee, tackling some contentious nominations and other high-profile issues. He has emerged as a true leader on many issues including immigration and population issues. He is someone I would term a "character," for he is certainly one of the more colorful and humorous individuals to have ever served in the Senate. His quick wit is legend, and many of us—Democrat and Republican alike—have been victims of it at one time or another over the years, but, much more often the beneficiaries of it. He uses it both ways—to score a point but more often to break an unresolved impasse.

Senator SIMPSON is the son of former Wyoming Governor and Senator Milward Simpson and has been in and around politics all his life. Born in Denver, CO, in 1931, he earned both his bachelor of science and law degrees at the University of Wyoming in Laramie. He served in the U.S. Army from 1954 to 1956 and began his career as a litigator, raising his family in Cody, WY,