

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. HOLLINGS. Mr. President, on behalf of the leadership, I ask unanimous consent the 12 remaining minutes of the distinguished Senator from Arkansas be yielded back.

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

Mr. HOLLINGS. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum with the time assigned to all sides.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

COMMENDATION OF STAFF

Mr. HOLLINGS. Mr. President, again I would like to thank the professional staff who worked so hard on this appropriations bill. On the majority side I want to recognize David Taylor, Scott Corwin, Vas Alexopoulos, and Lula Edwards. And, of course, I would be remiss if I did not recognize Mark Van DeWater, our full committee's deputy staff director. Time and time again Mark worked to develop compromises that let this bill go forward. Finally, I want to recognize Emelie East, of our minority staff, who staffs this bill, foreign operations, military construction, and defense appropriations.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that all time be yielded back, except that there be 10 minutes reserved for the leader and 10 minutes reserved for the ranking member of the Appropriations Committee, Senator BYRD; that a vote be set to occur at 4 o'clock on final passage; that the yeas and nays be ordered; and, that, pending the 10 minutes being used by the leader, or the 10 minutes to be used by Senator BYRD, we be in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

Mr. HELMS addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

REFORMATION OF THE FOREIGN AFFAIRS APPARATUS

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, it is not exactly a secret that I introduced legislation many months ago to reform the foreign affairs apparatus of the United States by abolishing three wasteful, anachronistic Federal bureaucracies—the Agency for International Development, which we call AID around this

place; the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, which is called ACDA; and the U.S. Information Agency, USIA—and folding their functions into the State Department, thus saving billions of dollars.

Senators know the history of what has transpired since that day early this year when I offered that bill. There has been one delay after another. But I am hopeful that late this afternoon Senator KERRY and I will complete an agreement that will lead to a consummation of the activities so that we can have some ambassadors confirmed and some other things accomplished by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the U.S. Senate, which could have been done months ago had it not been for the objection to our having a vote on my bill.

That is all I ever asked. I did not ask that there be a victory or that the bill be passed. I asked only that there be a vote. But that was denied me. And the media, of course, do not make that clear. That is all right with me if it is all right with them. They are not very accurate about many things anyhow.

Many Senators are aware that Vice President GORE has been one of the most vigorous opponents of my proposal to abolish the Agency for International Development as an independent entity and place it directly under the purview of the Secretary of State—a proposal, I might add for emphasis, that has been supported from the very beginning by a majority in the U.S. Senate and endorsed by five former U.S. Secretaries of State.

As I understand it, Vice President Gore is in South Africa today. And while Al Gore, as we called him when he was a Senator, is there, I do hope that he will take the time to visit the South African mission of the Agency for International Development.

Let me point out that the Agency for International Development was created more than three decades ago as one of those temporary Federal agencies—temporary, don't you know.

Well, Ronald Reagan used to say that there is nothing in this world so near eternal life as a "temporary" Federal agency. And AID, the Agency for International Development, is one of them.

Let me get down to business. I have before me documented information disclosing that the Agency for International Development's inspector general has just completed an extensive investigation into abuses in U.S. foreign aid programs in South Africa involving millions upon millions of dollars of the American taxpayers' money. This investigation raises, obviously, serious questions about the contracting and hiring practices within the Agency for International Development's mission in South Africa, as well as the headquarters here in Washington, DC.

These questions range from whether AID officials unlawfully awarded multimillion-dollar Federal contracts to politically connected U.S. organizations, and they range from that point

to whether AID also attempted to hire personnel on a basis other than the question, were the persons being hired qualified for the job?

This is not JESSE HELMS talking. This is the inspector general of the Agency for International Development.

Whether the laws have been broken will be decided after careful review of information that led the inspector general of the Agency for International Development to request the Department of Justice and the Office of Management and Budget to review the many, many pages of information already transmitted to the Justice Department and to OMB.

I will add, Mr. President, that this matter will be carefully examined by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee at the earliest practicable time.

Interestingly enough, the Agency for International Development operation in South Africa has been extolled and praised by Mr. Brian Atwood, whom President Clinton appointed to head the Agency for International Development. Now, Mr. Atwood calls the operation in South Africa AID's flagship program in Africa—a program that has spent, I might add, Mr. President, more than \$450 million of the U.S. taxpayers' money in the past 5 years.

All right. Now, Mr. Atwood, in defending his agency explains that AID employees were simply overtaken with "enthusiasm"—and that is his word—in awarding contracts in South Africa. And AID management suggests that this multimillion-dollar problem can be solved simply by giving a little "sensitivity" training to AID employees in South Africa.

That is Mr. Atwood's, and AID's, position as of now, as I understand it to be. It remains to be seen, of course, whether the American public will buy that explanation.

My own view is that the American people have a right to know exactly what is going on with AID's giveaway program in South Africa. Congress has an obligation to get to the bottom of it, and I for that reason have asked the distinguished Senator from Kansas, Mrs. KASSEBAUM, who chairs the African Affairs Subcommittee of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, of which I am chairman, to schedule a hearing on this matter on December 14 at 2 p.m. Senator KASSEBAUM has indicated that she shares my concern about the inspector general's report, and she has readily agreed to schedule such a hearing. We will request the presence of members of AID's South Africa management as well as AID officials in Washington who directly oversee the South Africa program in order to give them an opportunity to explain to the Senate and to the American people precisely what has been going on in South Africa.

Mr. President, I thank the Chair and I yield the floor.

Mr. MURKOWSKI addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I believe there has been a unanimous-consent request that has been acted upon relative to the continued business of this body. I wonder if I may ask unanimous consent that I may make a statement not lasting more than 5 or 6 minutes on section 609 which I think is the issue before this body.

Mr. HOLLINGS. Mr. President, 10 minutes has been reserved for the distinguished majority leader and also 10 minutes for the distinguished Senator from West Virginia. So within that framework, I would not object.

Mr. BYRD. How much time does the Senator need?

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Five minutes will suffice.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I yield 5 minutes of my time to the Senator.

Mr. MURKOWSKI. I thank my friend, the senior Senator from West Virginia.

DEPARTMENTS OF COMMERCE, JUSTICE, AND STATE, THE JUDICIARY, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1996—CONFERENCE REPORT

The Senate continued with the consideration of the conference report.

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, this bill has a section, section 609, which I feel jeopardizes the new chapter in relations between the United States and Vietnam which began last July. With President Clinton's announcement at that time that he was prepared to establish full diplomatic relations with the Government of Vietnam, and with the subsequent steps to open an embassy and begin trade discussions over the last few months, the two-decade long campaign to obtain the fullest possible accounting of MIA's in Southeast Asia truly entered a new stage and a more positive phase. That progress I think is threatened by this section and I wish to go on record as opposing it.

I understand the objective of the authors of the amendment. They want, as I do, to resolve the issue of accountability of the MIA's, and they believe this is the best way to achieve that objective. And while I agree with the objective, I disagree with the means which they have proposed.

I supported the President's decision to establish relations. I have been over there a number of times. And I continue to believe, and evidence supports it, that increased access to Vietnam, not reduced access, leads to increased progress on the accountability issue.

Resolving the fate of our MIA's has been and will remain the highest single priority of our Government. Under no circumstances should it be any different. This Nation owes that to the men and women and the families of the men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice for this country and for freedom.

In 1986, I was chairman of the Veterans' Committee, and I was appalled to learn at that time that we had no

firsthand information about the fate of the POW/MIA's because we had no access to the Vietnamese Government records or to the Government or to the military archives or to the prisons. We could not travel to crash sites. We had no opportunity to interview Vietnamese individuals or officials.

That has changed now. The American Joint Task Force, the JTF-FA personnel located in Hanoi now have access to Vietnam's Government and to its military archives and prisons. They are free to travel to crash sites and interview Vietnamese citizens and officials.

As a result of these and other positive developments, the overall number of MIA's in Vietnam has been reduced significantly through a painstaking identification process. Most of the missing involve men lost over water and other circumstances where survival and identification is doubtful.

Most, if not all, of the progress has come since 1991 when President Bush established the office in Hanoi devoted to resolving the fate of the MIA's and supported further activity by President Clinton. Opening this office ended almost two decades of isolation, a policy which, in my opinion, failed to meet our goals.

In 1993, opponents of ending our isolationist policy argued that lifting the trade embargo would mean an end to Vietnamese cooperation. Well, this was not the case. As the Pentagon assessment from the Presidential delegation's trip to Vietnam earlier this year notes, the records offered are "the most detailed and informative reports" provided so far by the Government of Vietnam on missing Americans.

So let me state firmly here that while we have made progress, we should not be satisfied, and we should continue to push for greater and greater results. But there are limits to the results we can obtain by potentially—potentially—turning to a failed policy which remains rooted in the past and is dominated by the principle of isolation. We have reached those limits. It is now time to continue a policy of full engagement with access and involvement.

Being represented in Vietnam does not mean forgetting our MIA's. Having an embassy there does not mean that we agree with the policies of the Government of Vietnam. But it does help us promote basic American values such as freedom, democracy, human rights, and the marketplace.

When Americans go abroad or export their products, we export an idea and an ideal. We export the very ideas that America went to fight for in Vietnam. Moreover, diplomatic relations give us greater latitude toward the carrot-and-stick approach. So do economic relations, as evidenced by the administration's trade team which recently visited Vietnam for the first time after relations were established.

Retaining diplomatic relations will also advance other important U.S.

goals. A prosperous, stable and friendly Vietnam integrated into the international community will serve as an important impediment to Chinese expansionism. Normalization should offer new opportunities for the United States to promote respect for human rights in Vietnam.

Finally, competitive United States businesses which have entered into the Vietnamese market after the lifting of the trade embargo will have greater success with the full faith and confidence of the United States Government behind it. The amendment in question could jeopardize all this progress and put us back where we were several years ago, which is nowhere. Now I understand that the President plans to veto this bill for a variety of reasons, including because of this amendment. As the administration has told us, it "regrets the inclusion of extraneous language in the bill related to the presence of United States Government facilities in Vietnam." As a result, I expect that the bill will come back to us, to the conference committee, to be considered again. I hope at that time this section will be removed, or at least modified in a way which will not stop progress down the road which has already led to many positive results.

Mr. President. Let me conclude by repeating what I said last July when we first moved toward establishing relations with Vietnam, when I said that I hope that step will continue this country's healing process. I think now, as I thought then, that the time has come to treat Vietnam as a country—and not as a war.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. MURKOWSKI. I thank the Chair. And I again want to thank my good friend from West Virginia for his accommodation. I wish him a good day.

Mr. BYRD addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, both the chairman and the ranking member of the Commerce-Justice-State Appropriations Subcommittee deserve a great deal of credit for the many months of hard work—and it is hard work—that they have put into the fiscal year 1996 Commerce-Justice-State appropriations bill.

This is the first time that the distinguished Senator from New Hampshire [Mr. GREGG], has chaired the appropriations conference. He did so very ably. I congratulate Senator GREGG on his success and keeping his mind on track throughout the conference on this very important, complex appropriations bill.

I wish to recognize the outstanding efforts of the distinguished ranking member of the subcommittee, Senator HOLLINGS, on this bill. On November 9, 1966, a new Member came into this Senate. And for these 29 years and 28 days it has been my good fortune to serve with FRITZ HOLLINGS. He is a man of sterling character. He is absolutely