

I ask that the full text of this letter from the DAV be inserted into the RECORD at the conclusion of my statement.

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

(See exhibit 1.)

Mr. BOND. In addition to being able to make benefits payments, the legislation ensures that the VA's 173 hospitals will be able to pay their vendors and continue to provide high quality medical care. This will prevent costly violations of the Federal Prompt Payment Act, and avoid potential disruptions in the delivery of contracted services, pharmaceuticals, or other necessary medical supplies in veterans hospitals, nursing homes, and outpatient clinics.

Mr. President, none of us finds any merit or advantage in this second lapse of funding authority to continue the operations of the Government. I agree with the Republican Leader that this budget impasse does none of us any credit . . . indeed, it is time for some adult supervision to end this squabbling and finger-pointing. I can only hope we soon will hear clearly the American people express their growing disgust and contempt for all of this political posturing, and get on with the business of running the Government.

I have been very critical of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Jesse Brown. He and I have very different views of the responsibilities of the Secretary in charge of managing one of the largest Departments in the Federal Government. He clearly sees his role as an extension of his previous advocacy for more funding of veterans programs. By contrast, I believe he should be alarmed by the Federal deficit and aggressively looking within his Department to improve operations as a means of better serving our Nation's veterans, a task made all the more critical by the budgetary constraints necessary to bring the budget back into balance. But despite our differences, we do share a commitment to those served by this Department. Although he didn't even bother to pick up the phone to express his concern over the necessity of enacting this bill, there can be no doubt that he also supports this measure to prevent any disruption in the payment of veterans benefits.

Mr. President, as we look for means of resolving the budgetary gridlock which has caused this latest shutdown of the Government, I hope that we can draw upon these points of agreement. The growing frustration and polarization still can be reversed if we build upon these shared concerns. Agreement on a framework for a mutually binding process to achieve a balanced budget must be achieved without further delay.

The appropriations bill vetoed by the President earlier this week would have provided a \$400 million increase for veterans medical care. Despite that veto, I am hopeful that this funding increase soon will be enacted into law. At that point, the full \$37.7 billion proposed by

the Congress for veteran services and benefits will be available to be administered by the Department. This is an enormous responsibility. I hope to be able to work with Secretary Brown to assure that this large commitment to our veterans will serve their needs in the most effective and beneficial manner possible. At some point he must turn his attention from politics to management. That massive task will provide ample opportunity for a moving beyond our current differences.

Mr. President, we now have the responsibility for taking an important first step toward restoring a necessary governmental function. Let us not hold America's veterans hostage to this budget impasse. For veterans January benefits checks to be on time, this legislation must be enacted today. I strongly urge the adoption of this joint resolution.

EXHIBIT 1

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS,

807 Maine Ave., SW.,

Washington, DC, December 19, 1995.

Hon. CHRISTOPHER (KIT) BOND,
Chairman, VA, HUD, and Independent Agencies
Subcommittee,
Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington,
DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN BOND: As National Commander of the more than one million members of the Disabled American Veterans (DAV), I request your support for S. 1414, introduced by Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison. This measure would allow the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to pay compensation or pension awards, notwithstanding the fact that an appropriations bill or continuing resolution has not been enacted.

As you know Mr. Chairman, VA benefits payments will be delayed if the impasse on the budget is not resolved by December 21, 1995. Expedient handling of S. 1414, which has currently been referred to the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, is necessary if veterans' benefits are to be paid in a timely manner.

Many veterans rely on their VA disability compensation payments for the necessities of life and, any delay, no matter how short, can have a devastating effect upon them and their families. It is extremely important that the men and women who served their country with honor in its time of need are not forgotten in their time of need.

Accordingly, I call upon you, Mr. Chairman, in your position of leadership in the Senate, to take all action necessary to expedite S. 1414.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter, and I look forward to your reply at your earliest possible convenience.

Sincerely,

THOMAS A. MCMASTERS III,
National Commander.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment (No. 3110) was agreed to.

The joint resolution (H.J. Res. 134), as amended, was deemed read a third time, and passed.

Mr. LOTT. I yield the floor.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I think it is very important to note that there is a lot of credit due to the managers, the whips, Senator LOTT, Senator FORD for the passage of House Joint Resolution

134. This legislation enables the Department of Veterans Affairs to make disability and pension payments to approximately 3.3 million veterans in the event a continuing resolution is not enacted. It ensures that any time this fiscal year in which there is no appropriations authority VA will be able to make benefits payments to veterans including compensation, pensions, education and training, and also to pay vendors in the veterans health administration.

This measure was made necessary, let us be quite frank about it, because the President vetoed the VA-HUD bill. Last week, when we considered that bill, I pointed out that if the President vetoed it, we put all of these programs at risk.

The reason given was that there was not enough money in the bill. Mr. President, the money in the bill we passed was all of the money that was allocated to us in the appropriations process under the budget. I suggested at that time that they sign the bill so they could continue these vital programs and if and when an agreement is reached more money could be added. Unfortunately, they did not choose that path. I commend Members on both sides for enabling us to go forward. I urge the House to move promptly. It is vitally important. We need to get on with the process, and I hope that we can continue to make progress in other areas.

I thank the Chair.

Mr. BUMPERS. I ask unanimous consent that I be permitted to speak for 2 minutes as in morning business.

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

TEA-TASTING BOARD

Mr. BUMPERS. Mr. President, I was in my office a moment ago preparing some notes to speak on the START II Treaty. I have since found we will have more debate when we return, possibly next week, so I will forego until next week.

I heard the Senator from Colorado and the senior Senator from Nevada discussing the so-called tea-tasting provision of the agricultural appropriations bill, and the Senator from Nevada, the senior Senator from Nevada, said he had taken this up with the senior Senator from Mississippi, chairman of the committee, and the senior Senator from Arkansas, namely me, as ranking member of the committee about how did the tea-tasting provision wind up in the bill.

The answer to that is, if it is in the bill, I certainly did not have anything to do with it. I thought we had killed that sucker once and for all. But I just want to say I really resent the situation that somehow or other I was in on it, some conspiracy to put the tea-tasting provision back in the agricultural appropriations bill. I detest that provision as much as the Senator from Nevada or anybody else does.

I came over here to say that people ought to be very careful about how they implicate other people and what happened to show up on a bill—as the Senator from Nevada knows, our side of the aisle is not in control of these things. I am not speaking for the Senator from Mississippi because he is capable of speaking for himself. When I get an opportunity, I will join the Senator from Nevada in trying to get rid of that provision once and for all.

I want to make it clear to my colleagues when the Senator from Nevada mentioned this to me the other day, I was as shocked as he was. I can tell you I certainly had nothing to do with it and will do everything I can to take it out. I yield the floor.

TREATY WITH THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION ON FURTHER REDUCTION AND LIMITATION OF STRATEGIC OFFENSIVE ARMS (THE START II TREATY)

The Senate continued with consideration of the treaty.

Mr. PELL. Mr. President, I am very pleased—as all of my fellow Members should be—that the Senate will now be considering whether to give its consent to ratification of the START II Treaty.

We can anticipate that the floor debate will be relatively brief by contrast with the time devoted to previous strategic offensive arms accords—the 1972 Interim Agreement and the 1991 START Treaty.

This treaty deserves the Senate's careful consideration, and approval. In the nearly 3 years since it was negotiated, the treaty has been carefully weighed, and I believe it to be clear now to almost all Members that START II is a logical and significant successor to the first START Treaty, which is also assuredly in the national security interests of the United States.

The Russian legislature has started, but not finished, its work on this treaty. The Russian Federation has just had elections, and the consideration and approval process, if successful, will involve many new members heretofore unfamiliar with START. I deeply believe that Russian legislators will carefully consider the present political, economic and military situation of their nation, will weigh priorities, and will see that START is a significant achievement that is clearly in their national interests. I believe very strongly that our activities and action in committee and the consideration being taken in the Senate today will serve to reassure their legislature that we are a serious party to this endeavor and will be of value as they consider their approach to the treaty.

Mr. President, the START II Treaty, which builds upon START, was signed by the United States and the Russian Federation on January 3, 1993, and was transmitted by President Bush to the Senate on January 15, 1993. The treaty builds upon the reductions of offensive strategic nuclear arms required by

The START Treaty. Members will recall, requires about a one-third reduction in the strategic offensive nuclear arms of the United States and, collectively, of Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan. The treaty specifically cuts the former Soviet Union's heavy ICBM totals in half.

In addition the START Treaty and the subsequent Lisbon protocol obligates Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan to give up all of their nuclear weapons and to join the START II Treaty, which is a bilateral treaty between the United States and the Russian Federation.

The START II Treaty has several critically important aspects:

First, it will reduce by 2003, Russian and American deployed strategic warheads to a level at or below 3,500—a more than two-thirds reduction over pre-START levels.

Second, it bans deployment of multiple-warhead intercontinental ballistic missiles [MIRVed ICBMs]. These missiles are generally considered to be the most threatening component of each nation's strategic arsenal.

Third, it legally obligates Russia to destroy all 154 SS-18 heavy ICBMs and to destroy or convert all silo launchers for such missiles. The SS-18 missile is the largest and most destabilizing ICBM in the world. Half of them were eliminated by START. This treaty will finish the elimination process.

These are three very important accomplishments. All of them are important to strategic stability. The details make that evident.

The START II Treaty calls for reductions, in two phases, in ICBMs, ICBM launchers, ICBM warheads, SLBMs, SLBM launchers, SLBM warheads, heavy bombers and nuclear armaments on heavy bombers.

The first phase of reductions is to be completed no later than seven years after entry into force of the START Treaty.

The second reduction phase, to be completed no later than January 1, 2003, requires each party to achieve the following final reduction limits:

Between 3,000 and 3,500, for the aggregate number of warheads on deployed ICBMs, deployed SLBMs, and deployed heavy bombers;

Between 1,700 and 1,750, for warheads on deployed SLBMs;

Zero, for warheads on deployed MIRVed ICBMs; and

Zero, for warheads on deployed Russian heavy ICBMs (SS-18s).

Mr. President, the START II Treaty was considered thoroughly in hearings that I chaired in May and June 1993, and that Senator LUGAR, my colleague from Indiana, chaired in January, February, and March 1995. Witnesses included Secretary of State Warren Christopher; former Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger; Secretary of Defense William Perry; General John Shalikashvili, Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff; John Holum, Director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agen-

cy; Ambassador Linton Brooks, chief negotiator of the treaty; Thomas Graham, Jr., Acting Director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency; Director of Central Intelligence, Mr. James Woolsey and Douglas MacEachin, Deputy Director for Intelligence, Central Intelligence Agency. Non-governmental witnesses included Steven Hadley, an attorney with Shea and Gardner; Sven Kraemer, president, Global 2000; Michael Krepon, president, Henry L. Stimson Center, and Jack Mendelsohn, deputy director of the Arms Control Association.

Earlier this month, the committee considered and approved a resolution of ratification in an 18 to 0 vote. The resolution contains six conditions and seven declarations, none of which will require any renegotiation of the provisions or the further agreement of the Russian Federation. These are the key points of the conditions and declarations:

Condition 1, on noncompliance makes it clear that the Senate would view as a most serious matter actions by the parties to START or by the Russian Federation with regard to START II that are inconsistent with the object and purpose of the treaties or in violation of the treaties. In such an event, it specifies courses of action to be taken by the President with regard to the Senate and the noncompliant party.

Condition 2, makes it clear that the Senate, in approving START II, is not obligating the United States to accept any modification of the 1972 ABM Treaty.

Condition 3, makes clear that Russian ratification and implementation of START II is not contingent upon a United States-Russian agreement for financial aid.

Condition 4, makes clear that specified exchanges of letters are of the same force and effect as treaty obligations.

Condition 5, recognizes that the administration has reached an agreement with the Russians under which there will be strict accountability for all ballistic missiles associated with START. The Senate reaffirms its view that space-launch vehicles containing items limited by START are subject to the relevant treaty terms.

Condition 6, embraces the administration's view that the START and START II provisions on national technical means do not preclude the United States from pursuing options to urge the Russian Federation to dismantle its electronic eavesdropping facility at Lourdes, Cuba.

Declaration 1, deals with cooperative threat reduction. Vigorous continuation of the Safe and Secure Dismantlement talks is urged. The resolution makes clear the importance of confirming the irreversibility of the process of nuclear weapons reduction.

Declaration 2, urges the President to regulate reductions so as to avoid any strategic imbalance endangering the national security.

Declaration 3, expressed the sense of the Senate that the President should