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Senate

(Legislative day of Monday, March 27, 1995)

The Senate met at 9:20 a.m., on the expiration of the recess, and was called to order by the President pro tempore [Mr. THURMOND].

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Lloyd John Ogilvie, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray:

Our Father, You have created us to glorify You and enjoy You forever. You have developed in us the desire to know You and have given us the gift of faith to accept Your unqualified love. You turn our struggles into stepping stones. We know Your promise is true: You will never leave us or forsake us. You give us strength when we are weak, gracious correction when we fail, and undeserved grace when we need it most. You lift us up when we fall and give us new chances when we are devoid of hope. And just when we think there is no place to turn, You meet us and help us return to You. We say with the psalmist, "Bless the Lord O my soul, and all that is within me bless His holy name! Bless the Lord, O my soul and forget not all of His benefits."—Psalm 103:1-2.

Lord our work this day is an expression of our grateful worship. You have called us to lead this Nation. Fill us with Your spirit. Infinite wisdom, we need Your perspective, plan, and purpose. We must make crucial evaluations and decisive decisions. The future of this Nation is dependent on the guidance You give us this day. Thank You for making us wise. In Your holy name. Amen.

Mr. COVERDELL addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The distinguished Senator from Georgia.

SCHEDULE

Mr. COVERDELL. Mr. President, this morning, the time for the two leaders has been reserved and there will now be a period for morning business until the

hour of 10:15 a.m., with Senators to speak for up to 5 minutes each, with the exception of the following: Senator COVERDELL, up to 10 minutes; Senator CAMPBELL, up to 10 minutes; Senator COHEN, up to 10 minutes; Senator THOMAS, up to 5 minutes; and Senator KERREY up to 15 minutes.

At the hour of 10:15 a.m., the Senate will resume consideration of the nomination of Mr. Glickman, to be Secretary of Agriculture, for 10 minutes of debate. At the hour of 10:25, this morning, there will be a 15-minute rollcall vote for the confirmation of the nomination.

Following the rollcall vote, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 1158, the supplemental appropriations bill. Senators should, therefore, be aware that, following the 10:25 vote, other rollcall votes can be expected throughout the day's session.

Mr. President, I would like to be recognized according to the order.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ASHCROFT). Under the previous order, there will now be a period for the transaction of morning business.

The Senator from Georgia is recognized.

THE PRESIDENT'S BUDGET

Mr. COVERDELL. Mr. President, the President was in my State and city yesterday in what was promoted as an economic summit. I think one could take some question with that definition, but we will let that stand.

The day before that, I had an opportunity to come to the Senate floor and to discuss findings of the bipartisan entitlements commission. I specifically referred to one piece of data that just stares at you from that report. It should make every American somber

and humble. Because what it essentially says is that within 10 years—historically that is a snap of the finger, Mr. President—within 10 years, all of our U.S. revenues, all of it, are consumed by 5 things; 5 expenditures, 5 out of 1,000—Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, Federal retirement, and the interest on our debt, and then there is nothing left. There is nothing for the School Lunch Program that we are pointing fingers at each other about. There is not a Defense Department, a road, a canal, a port widening, an Education Department, an agricultural bill, nothing.

Mr. President, this is a calamity that this generation of Americans must confront. I said that it was, in my judgment, a calling so extraordinary to put it in the league of the Founders of the Nation—the fight to keep the Nation united, the fight in Europe. It is of that consequence.

When I hear the President and his administration suggesting that we do not have a problem, I am stunned and appalled—stunned and appalled. To be moving across the country suggesting that everything is a tulip patch, to bring a budget, in the face of the balanced budget amendment and the bipartisan entitlements commission, and to give us a budget that adds \$1.4 trillion to the debt, \$200 billion in deficits for as far as the eye can see, shows either a total disconnect with what is happening in the country or contempt.

Mr. President, Secretary Rubin said:

Another way to look at this is that, without the interest the Federal Government pays on the national debt, the Federal budget would now be running a small surplus.

That is like saying, arsenic is OK, if it was not poisonous.

Mr. President, I am told that the President himself, speaking to students at Emory University, said the same thing—that we are really running a surplus here.

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



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Outside of being patently wrong, it is exceedingly damaging for these kinds of messages, in the face of what we are confronting as a people and a nation. That would be like, instead of saying to the Nation, as President Roosevelt did, that this day will live in infamy and charging the Nation for what it had to do—which was not a very pretty picture—to have traveled around the country and saying the world is in pretty good shape, those fellows are really nice guys.

You are robbing the people of the will that is going to be required to meet this test when you tell them things like this—we are actually running a surplus, if it were not for the debt.

And while they are saying this, they have already added \$1 trillion in new debt or increased it by 20 percent. The incongruities of this message are befuddling.

But the real damage is if it misleads the American people.

I will give the other side this. We can argue about what priorities are. The priorities that I might feel important may be different from those of the Senator from Minnesota, who was on the floor the other morning while we were talking about these issues of debt. We can argue about what we believe more important or less important. But it is not debatable that the United States is expending moneys it does not have. We are piling debt upon debt. We have spent every dime we have and \$5 trillion we do not have, and now we are spending the livelihood of our children and grandchildren and the clock is running out, Mr. President.

Everybody can contemplate 10 years from now. You are either moving into retirement or your children are about ready to go to college or they are looking for a job. They would be staring down the barrel of this great democracy having no revenues left to do anything. That is a serious problem. And it is going to take a serious response. The administration needs to recognize that. They seem to be in denial, sending budgets that accelerate the problem, saying things such as Secretary Rubin has just said here. This is what the President said before Emory University students yesterday, March 29: "After two years we have a reduction in the deficit of \$600 billion for the first time"—much applause, and they would—"this is the first time since the mid-sixties when your Government is running at least an operating surplus."

An operating surplus, Mr. President? This is just staggering and stunning. So like I said, Mr. President, we have an enormous problem. The clock has run out. It has run out. We cannot pass this baton to anybody else. The living Americans, the caretakers of this great democracy, have it in their lap. We must confront it. We cannot ignore it. And worse, to mislead is so damaging, so harmful, because it is taking the will away. Everybody would much rather hear a rosy story.

I want to say, in conclusion, that my message is not one of gloom. We can

turn this around. We can tighten our belts fairly. We can remove the obstacles to an expanding economy. That means get the taxes down, Mr. President, get Government regulation down.

If your prescription for America is to raise taxes, make more Government, and regulate our lives, and in the meantime, tell them messages like this, there is going to be a very serious day of reckoning, a very serious day of reckoning.

Mr. President, I invite the President to an economic debate. I can suggest to him that the empirical evidence is, through all of time, you have to keep taxes down, government down, regulations down, and let people go to work. That is the way to get out of this problem. You do not get there by suggesting to people, in the face of everything, we know that we are running an operating surplus. I yield the floor in total befuddlement.

Mr. COHEN addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine is recognized.

(The remarks of Mr. COHEN and Mr. D'AMATO pertaining to the introduction of S. 648 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I have 10 minutes instead of the previous 5 minutes for morning business.

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

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I thank the Chair.

(The remarks of Mr. LOTT pertaining to the introduction of S. 647 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. KERREY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for 15 minutes as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has that time in the previous order.

Without objection, it is so ordered.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Mr. KERREY. Mr. President, last week, the Senate Commerce Committee reported out a piece of legislation, the Telecommunications Competition Deregulation Act of 1995, that I consider to be a very important piece of legislation.

I have come to the floor here this morning, though, to alert my colleagues, who are also interested and excited about this legislation, that I think it would be very unwise for Members to rush the enactment of this bill.

I take that position not because I have major objections to the legislation. Indeed, I have been intimately involved not just with this bill, but 1822 and the farm team coalition that worked it, trying to make certain there would be universal service for high-cost rural areas.

I have been very much involved with the deregulation of telecommuni-

cations. I suspect I am the only Member of Congress who is actually able to say I have signed a significant deregulation act in 1985 when I was Governor.

The delay that I am suggesting, Mr. President, comes as a consequence of a very interesting, what I would call, disconnect.

Just last November I finished a successful reelection campaign. In meeting after meeting, in debates and so forth that we have when facing the voters, they were asking me about term limits, balanced budgets, health care, and agriculture policy. Crime, of course, dominated almost every discussion and debate. What are we going to do about crime?

I must say, Mr. President, that never in my campaign did the issue of telecommunications arise.

I say to my colleagues, as important as this legislation is, and I think it is an urgent and exciting opportunity here, the citizens, in my judgment, are not prepared for the change that this legislation would bring to them—significant change.

I suspect the occupant of the Chair can remember in 1983 when the divestiture occurred. I know in Nebraska, if I put it to the voters, do voters want to go back to the old AT&T or do voters like the new divestiture arrangement, a very large percentage would have said, "Give me the good old days." Because, all of a sudden, choice meant confusion, choice meant competition, choice meant a lot of problems that people were not prepared for.

The same, in my judgment, is apt to occur here. I believe that we need to come to the floor and argue such things as access charges, so we not only understand what an access charge is but what happens when the access charges are decreased, understand what happens when something called rate rebalancing occurs at the local level in a competitive environment—which I am an advocate of. Chairman PRESSLER and Senator HOLLINGS deserve an enormous amount of credit for being able to move this bill out of committee.

One of the things I brought in a focused way to this argument was the need to make sure we had straightforward competition at the local level. So when an entrepreneur comes to the information service business and wants to go to a household and sell information, and that entrepreneur buys his lawyers at \$50 an hour, he should know with certainty they are going to prevail over a company that buys, at \$500 or \$1,000 an hour, its lawyers who have regular, familiar contact with the regulators. If we are going to have that competition, we need that level playing field for the entrepreneur. They need to know with certainty they are going to be able to offer their services to the customer as well.

But in a competitive environment, you cannot price your product below cost for very long. That is what we