

should say, that were not given to the lowest bidder who was qualified.

I had asked the GAO to determine how much money that cost the taxpayers, how much difference there was between the lowest bid and the higher bid that the airport in Denver accepted, and they were unable to come up with that. The information was simply not available as to how much money the taxpayers had lost because they had not taken the lowest qualified bid.

I give that background because my concern about the sixth runway is that that practice may be repeated on the sixth runway construction grants, and I think we would be remiss if we gave money for construction to that project which did not insist on either the lowest bid or, if they choose not to take the lowest bid—and there may be circumstances that justify that—at least they would disclose the amount of money that the bid they accepted exceeded the lowest bid.

Frankly, I believe disclosing that would be a strong incentive for officials who get Federal money to look for the best bargain for the taxpayer.

Here is what has happened. The amendment I offered—it was adopted on this floor—that required disclosure when you do not take the lowest bid of the major contracts was lost in conference. The House would not go along with it. I asked the City of Denver to give me a letter committing to disclose the amount of money of the bid that they accepted for the sixth runway exceeds the lowest bid, and they have declined to do so.

Mr. President, I cannot in good conscience ask this Congress to send money for the sixth runway in Denver without at least a disclosure by the city of how much money they leave on the table or how much money it cost the taxpayers.

So I am sad tonight. The Senator from Arizona listened to our concern. He was willing to help out Denver to try to work with us. He bent over backwards to try to be helpful, to look for avenues where this could be corrected and the sixth runway could go ahead, but I was not able to bring to the Senator from Arizona or this body a commitment from Denver that said they will disclose the facts when they get the lowest bid.

Mr. President, in light of that, unfortunately, the sixth runway is lost for this year. As I leave this body, I know it will be considered again next year. But, Mr. President, I hope future Congresses do not hand out money for someone who is not going to take the lowest bid, or at least disclose how much over that lowest bid they took.

Mr. President, I might point out that what happens in some of these cases is that the contractor who gets the bid, when he has not been the lowest bidder, then gets hit up for paying contributions from the politicians who ran for office who were involved in letting the bids. I think it is crystal clear to everyone what is involved here. You

turn down the lowest bidder, you give the contract to someone who did not deserve it, at least in terms of the bidding process, and then you go and ask that contractor for money. I think there is not any doubt in anybody's mind who understands this situation what is going on there.

I do not think we ought to let it happen. I do not think we ought to hand out money without at least insisting that it be disclosed. I appreciate the efforts of the Senator from Arizona. I appreciate the efforts of the Senator from South Dakota, to work on this.

I am sad that we have not been able to go ahead with the sixth runway. But, Mr. President, this is an issue we should not ignore.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Colorado. I want to tell him that I had no idea that it was not a matter of public record when taxpayers' dollars are being used, as to what the bids were and who made the low bid and who made the high bid and what, in fact, was the entire process of ascertaining and awarding these bids. They should be open to public scrutiny. For the life of me, I cannot understand any rationale, when it is taxpayers' dollars being used, why this procedure and process should be hidden from public view.

I want to assure the Senator from Colorado that I view it, not only as something that I would want to do, it is something that I feel obligated to do, and that is to follow up on this issue next year. I do not know all the details of this matter in regards to Denver International Airport but let me tell the Senator from Colorado, as he knows as well as I do, when processes like this are kept from public view, it lends itself to procedures and results which are not always in the public's interest. That is why we demand open disclosure of bidding in the Federal process. Frankly, it should not happen anywhere without an open and complete accounting to the taxpayers for the taxpayers' dollars uses.

If they are using private money, if someone donates the money to the airport and says use this however you want to—fine. If they do not want to describe how it is being used or who gets the bid, that is fine also.

But, as long as it is taxpayers dollars—and correct me if I am wrong, some \$4 billion has gone into the construction of Denver International Airport, I would ask the Senator from Colorado? Then I think, obviously, the best value for the dollar should be gained, not only for the people of Colorado, but for taxpayers all over America.

So, I again thank my dear, dear friend from Colorado. Frankly, I view him as our conscience. I am not sure what we are going to do without him. Everyone is replaceable around here, but he is one that I think is far harder

to replace than most. I appreciate, again, his commitment on this effort.

Mr. President, before going through closing down the Senate, I want to again thank my friend from South Dakota, Senator PRESSLER, the chairman of the Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee, which I will do again at the end of this process on Thursday. And I hope it is earlier.

Senator PRESSLER has been committed to this process. He has been actively involved. His leadership in the conference, his leadership as we went through this two year-long process, was absolutely critical and vital. I am grateful for his leadership and his example of conscientiousness, that he sets for all of us.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there now be a period for morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein.

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

DEMOCRATIC TRENDS IN ASIA

Mr. PELL. Mr. President, as the 20th century draws to a close, we all find ourselves musing and marveling over the changes history has brought the world in this millennium. Human ingenuity has brought astounding advances in technology and in medicine. Society has also faced revolutionary changes and our forbearers who welcomed the year 1900 would little recognize the lives their descendants lead today. In politics, the 20th century brought new ways of thinking about the social contract between citizens and their government. Some, like fascism and communism, were dangerous and ultimately discredited failures. But democracy, the great experiment our Founding Fathers created on the shores of the New World, has not just endured but spread around the world. It has been my great delight to watch democracy begin to spread in Asia.

Some would argue that it is not natural that democracy would grow in Asia. Some Asian leaders and intellectuals have actively resisted the idea that democracy be a political option for the region. They have argued that Asian values—loosely Confucian, authoritarian, and family- or group-focused rather than individually-focused—are inconsistent with democracy. These leaders further argue that the stunning economic success of the East Asian "Tigers" is specifically due to their more closed political systems and to their emphasis on social stability at the expense of individual voice and choice. Moreover, these same leaders will point to legitimate problems in many Western societies—such as drug abuse, homelessness, violent crimes, to name a few—are the direct result of an overly permissive society that emphasizes individual freedom over social stability. But I believe that these cultural arguments distort reality and are

often used as excuses for maintaining an authoritarian-style regime.

Democracy precludes neither economic success nor social stability. In fact, the rapid economic development of many Asian countries has brought new social problems and pressures that perhaps only a more democratic political system can relieve. Take, for example, Taiwan. As income levels rose, individuals gained a new sense of control over their own and their children's futures. Many traveled to the West and sent their children to study in Western universities, where they learned of the plethora of opportunities—professional, social, and personal—that democratic societies offer their citizens. They returned with new ideas and new expectations of and for their own government. The authoritarian style of leadership that characterized the government under Chaing Kai-shek proved unable to meet the needs of the rising middle class in Taiwan and the government was forced to evolve. Taiwan's current president, Lee Teng-hui, deserves much credit for managing and even fostering the change. Perhaps as a just reward, Lee won a popular reelected bid last March and became the first democratically-elected Chinese leader in history.

Mr. President, the political and social system on Taiwan is far from perfect, something the leadership there readily admits. But Taiwan has managed an astounding economic and political transformation in a relatively short period of time, with little violence or social upheaval. I believe that Taiwan serves as a sharp rebuttal to those who say that traditional Asian values will not permit the growth of a healthy democracy. Other Asian states, including Japan and South Korea, have found democracy to be consistent with economic development. Now even Mongolia has chosen democracy as its path to a brighter future.

Other Asian nations could benefit from following a Taiwan model of political reform. I find it unlikely that a country that is experiencing the rapid economic growth, technological development and social change that China is experiencing can long restrain the inevitable pressure for political changes as well. The military leaders in Burma have only hindered their country's economic development by forcibly resisting the results of democratic elections there.

Indonesia, in particular, has reached a critical point in its economic and social development. There are clear signs that the developing middle class is restless and chaffing within the current restrictive political system. President Soeharto, who has done so many good things for his country's development already, could cement his legacy as a great leader by taking steps toward a more responsive and participatory political system. Such steps would serve to enhance his government's standing in the country and in the world, not diminish it.

Mr. President, the U.S. cannot and should not ignore important cultural and historical differences between our own country and countries in Asia. There is much in Asian society that we in this country can learn from and we should be open to doing so. But Asian individuals are no less deserving of a responsive government and freedom of choice than their Western counterparts and cultural differences should not be used as a mask to conceal and support authoritarian regimes. It is very much in the U.S. interest to promote and support the trend toward democracy in Asia, as we have done for several decades.

We do not know what changes the 21st century will bring to our world. But we can hope and expect that our descendants will enjoy greater peace and prosperity if our nation trades and cooperates with a democratized Asia. Individual freedom and choice are not exclusively Western values and promoting them around the world is not Western imperialism. The growth of democracy has brought great benefits to nations that adopted it and Asian nations deserve these benefits as well. The trend toward democracy is already there; we should do all we can to foster and encourage it.

THE SAVINGS IN CONSTRUCTION ACT OF 1996

Mr. PELL. Mr. President, during my time in the Senate, I have worked to see that United States joins the rest of the world by converting to the metric system of measurement. Believe it or not, the United States is the only industrialized nation in the world that has failed to change to the metric system of measurement.

I believe the Federal Government, as a major consumer of goods and services, should lead the way and convert to the metric system. In 1973, I authored the Metric Conversion Act that later became law in 1975. That act set forth the policy of the United States to convert to the metric system. Section 3 of the Act requires each Federal Agency to use the metric system of measurement in its procurement, grants and other business-related activities.

Slowly but surely, the Federal Government has started to make that move. Federal construction officials in particular have made great progress in this area and have met with limited resistance from the construction community around the United States. All concerned deserve our praise for their efforts.

Unfortunately, legislation introduced in both the House and the Senate during this Congress would have provided permanent, complete exemptions for two industries from requests for the metric-sized building products required by Federal law for Federal construction projects.

Needless to say, I strongly opposed that legislation. Federal laws and Presidential Executive orders signed by

Presidents of both parties over for 20 years clearly state that the United States should move to the metric system and that the Federal Government should lead the way—by example.

Over the last several weeks, I have joined with Senators HOLLINGS, GLENN, and BURNS to craft an acceptable amendment to the original legislation. I am not completely pleased with the result of our efforts and it is certainly not what I would have written. The result is, however, a compromise. I believe compromise to be integral to the working of the U.S. Senate and did, therefore, not oppose this substitute.

THANKS TO STAFF OF THE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. JOHNSTON. Mr. President, when I first came to the Senate, I was assigned to the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, which we of course know today as the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources. As I prepare to finish my Senate career, I look back on my years on that committee as the source of the most rewarding and intellectually stimulating challenges of my years here. From the Arab embargo of 1973 to the natural gas wars of 1978, from the complex Alaska land issues of the early 1980's to the National Energy Policy Act of 1992, we have been engaged in vitally important work that is often long on complexity and short on glamour.

I am proud of the record we achieved, not only during my 8 years as chairman, but throughout my service, and I wish today to say thank you to a professional staff unlike any other, one which has served the committee and the country so well over the years.

Some of the best minds in the country have served on the committee staff over the years.

Whatever their reasons for coming, I believe most stayed and relished their time there because they found themselves in the company of other keen minds, and they knew that their mission would not be mortgaged to politics and that their task was to find honest, pragmatic, workable solutions to vexing problems. Almost all of them have gone on to rewarding careers in government and business, and I can only hope they were as enriched by their experience as the public product was by their service.

Luckily for me, some of the very best and brightest have remained to assist me as my service in this body comes to a close.

One of those staff members who has served me the longest and with particular distinction is the minority staff director of the committee, Dr. Ben Cooper. About the time I joined the committee, we became involved in the development of national energy policy in response to the crude oil supply interruptions in the Middle East that were disrupting our domestic economy. The committee has continued to be involved deeply in this issue, as indicated