

Mr. President, about a year ago, on February 9, 1995, I introduced legislation to hasten the day when Fidel Castro no longer can inflict terror and hardship upon the people of Cuba. Today, the Cuban people have reason to hope that Castro's days are indeed numbered: The Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act is on its way to the White House for the President's promised signature.

So, we are today one step away from seeing the long-awaited legislation signed into law. This conference report has broad bipartisan support, and the President has endorsed the bill and is urging all Members of Congress to support it.

The Libertad Act may very well persuade Fidel Castro to withdraw his stranglehold on the Cuban people. It is difficult to see how Castro can sensibly continue to hope that his dictatorship can survive the tough provisions of this legislation, for example, the strengthening of all international sanctions by putting into law all the scores of Cuban embargo Executive orders and regulations enacted and imposed since President Kennedy. Simply stated, the embargo cannot and will not be lifted until Castro has departed and a democratic transition is underway in Cuba.

In short, it is time for Mr. Castro to wake up and smell the coffee.

Most importantly, the Libertad Act forces foreign investors to make a decision, a choice: They can trade with the United States or they can trade with Cuba, but not with both without paying a serious price. This legislation specifically creates a right of action for American citizens to sue those who traffic in property stolen from them by the Castro regime. The bill also makes it mandatory that the Secretary of State deny entry into the United States to individuals who are enriching themselves with confiscated American properties.

Mr. President, it may be hard to believe but there are still a few voices calling for the United States to lift the embargo. In the past 2 weeks, those arguments have been completely, totally, and utterly discredited. For during these past 2 weeks, the Castro regime deliberately, intentionally, and in violation of international law, blew two unarmed civilian planes out of the sky. Castro has launched the most brutal crackdown on dissidents in more than a decade. There have been wholesale arrests in the middle of the night, followed by show trials; there have been illegal searches that have shown what Fidel Castro is—a brutal dictator.

These atrocities have not surprised the Cuban people who, for three decades now, have witnessed brutal atrocities every day of their lives under Castro's tyrannical regime.

Fidel Castro has also launched a crackdown on members of the independent news media in Cuba. Since early 1995, Castro and his agents have arrested and jailed journalists who made the mistake of trying to make

objective reports regarding Cuban Government activities.

They arrested Olanco Noguera Roce for trying to protect the health and well-being of his fellow Cubans by detailing the perilous violations of safety regulations and the faulty construction of the Cuban nuclear powerplant.

Perhaps the most despicable attacks made by Castro, Mr. President, were against Cuba's blossoming religious community. After years of persecution and open hostility by the Castro regime, the Cuban people, especially the young people, are flocking to the church in record numbers. But, fearful that the church will tell the truth about Fidel Castro, his security agents have closed churches, arrested clergy, and harassed church-goers. Freedom to worship is nonexistent in Castro's dictatorship.

So, Mr. President, this conference report recommending that the Libertad Act become law is more desperately needed by the people of Cuba than ever before. The enactment of the Libertad Act will give these beleaguered Cuban people hope.

This is the light at the end of the tunnel for which the Cuban people have prayed—those poor souls locked in Castro's gulags, those desperate people who attempt to cross the dangerous straits to Florida, the journalists and clergy who have sought the freedom to shed light on Castro's lies, and the average Cuban citizen struggling to survive under Castro's tyranny. Now that they are about to have this new law on their side, surely it will be only a matter of time before the Cuban people enjoy the freedoms that too many Americans take for granted.

Mr. President, earlier I mentioned that President Clinton supports the Libertad Act. I ask unanimous consent that the President's letter to the distinguished majority leader be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the letter was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

THE WHITE HOUSE,  
Washington, March 5, 1996.

Hon. ROBERT DOLE,  
Majority Leader, U.S. Senate,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. LEADER: The Cuban regime's decision on February 24 to shoot down two U.S. civilian planes, causing the deaths of three American citizens and one U.S. resident, demanded a firm, immediate response.

Beginning on Sunday, February 25, I ordered a series of steps. As a result of U.S. efforts, the United Nations Security Council unanimously adopted a Presidential Statement strongly deploring Cuba's actions. We will seek further condemnation by the international community in the days and weeks ahead. In addition, the United States is taking a number of unilateral measures to obtain justice from the Cuban government, as well as its agreement to abide by international law in the future.

As part of these measures, I asked my Administration to work vigorously with the Congress to set aside our remaining differences and reach rapid agreement on the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act. Last week, we achieved

that objective. The conference report is a strong, bipartisan response that tightens the economic embargo against the Cuban regime and permits us to continue to promote democratic change in Cuba.

I urge the Congress to pass the LIBERTAD bill in order to send Cuba a powerful message that the United States will not tolerate further loss of American life.

Sincerely,

BILL CLINTON.

Mr. HELMS. I thank the distinguished manager of the bill, Mr. COVERDELL, of Georgia.

I yield the floor. I yield such time as I may have.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time?

Mr. COVERDELL. Mr. President, I ask that all time be yielded and the debate be concluded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time is yielded.

#### DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1996—CONFERENCE REPORT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the clerk will report the conference report to accompany H.R. 2546, the District of Columbia appropriations bill.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The committee of conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 2546) making appropriations for the Government of the District of Columbia and other activities chargeable in whole or in part against the revenues of said District for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1996, and for other purposes, having met, after full and free conference, have agreed to recommend and do recommend to their respective Houses this report, signed by a majority of the conferees.

The Senate resumed consideration of the conference report.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there are 15 minutes allotted to each side.

Who yields time?

Mr. KOHL addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wisconsin.

Mr. KOHL. Mr. President, my remarks will be very brief. This afternoon—after the vote on the Cuba resolution—the Senate is scheduled to vote on a third motion to invoke cloture on the D.C. appropriations bill. The first motion was rejected by a vote of 54 to 44. Last Thursday, the Senate rejected a second cloture motion by a vote of 52 to 42. Today, I urge my colleagues to reject this motion as well.

The time has arrived for the Senate to move beyond single issue politics to address the urgent needs of our Nation's Capital. It is clear that there is a significant—and unresolvable—difference of opinion on the scholarship program proposed in the conference report.

Repeated attempts to move this report have failed, and I am certain that the question of vouchers will not be settled on this particular legislative

vehicle. I believe it is time now to move forward with the many other reforms that will begin to put the District on a sound fiscal and operational footing. As Chairman JEFFORDS and others have indicated, the District is about to experience a serious cash shortage. If the remainder of the Federal payment is not released within the next 2 weeks, the city will be unable to pay its bills or to provide essential services. The debate over the scholarship program has been a robust and informative one but it is time to move on. So I urge my colleagues to vote against the cloture motion.

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, I honestly hope this is the last time that we are called upon to debate the D.C. appropriations conference report. It is time to get beyond our differences and come to agreement. This conference agreement represents the best consensus that can now be achieved. To those who believe that by delaying or defeating this conference report they can somehow ensure a better deal, I can tell you that this is highly unlikely. I do not know what the House reaction is going to be, but I do know that we negotiated long and hard on this conference report which essentially gave total local control on the question of vouchers and, to my mind, brought it out of the specter of being a national test on your feelings on this issue.

Mr. President, the Federal Government still owes the District government more than \$254 million, of which \$219 million is the remaining portion of the Federal payment. There are real human consequences to this delay. District vendors are carrying the city's debt. The city owes more than \$300 million to its vendors. Partially as a result of not receiving the Federal payment, the city has taken steps to conserve cash including delaying payments to vendors. Many of these individuals are small businessmen who depend upon prompt payment to meet their own payroll and business expenses. When one of their customers is late, it causes a hardship. Some have gone out of business. Some have had to lay off employees, and some, like snowplow operators, refuse to do further business with the city. And let us hope we do not get another snowstorm. But it is still too early to be sure of that.

Mr. President, each year we make an appropriation of \$52 million to the District's retirement fund for police, firefighters, teachers, and judges, who were formerly Federal employees when the District government was a Federal agency. As a result of the delay in enacting this bill, the Federal Government has not paid \$35 million of this amount for those pensioners. These funds are invested for the future benefit of retirees. Through the end of January, the retirement fund estimates that it has lost over \$2 million

in interest proceeds as a result of not having these funds to invest. That is not fair.

I do not know what more can be said to convince Senators that this is the best deal possible under the circumstances and that the District desperately needs the money. Last week, the Chairman of the D.C. Control Board, Dr. Andrew Brimmer, visited me and gave me a letter concerning the effect of delay in enacting the D.C. bill. He stated that without the remainder of the Federal payment, the District could run out of cash this spring. He also noted that without the bill being enacted, the District cannot spend \$42 million in new Federal grants identified after the 1996 budget was prepared. That authority is contained in the conference agreement.

In closing, Dr. Brimmer states:

The Authority has begun to make significant progress toward the goal of restoring financial stability to the District without sacrificing core public services or adversely impacting our disadvantaged citizens. . . . All this is jeopardized by failure to enact the D.C. budget. I plead with you and your colleagues to adopt the District's FY 1996 appropriation bill without further delay.

The White House has issued a statement which threatens that the President's senior advisers would recommend he veto this bill in its present form. The Mayor has written a letter to the President in which he appeals to the President's good sense and judgment as he weighs the advice of those senior advisers. The Mayor makes the case very well when he states, "This appropriations bill is not a vouchers bill. It is a bill that only gives local officials the option to do so if they choose."

Mr. President, we have come to another vote on this conference report. I hope my colleagues will heed the words of the mayor and the chairman of the control board and invoke cloture so that we do not have to wait for some other legislation to enact this bill. Time and the District's need for cash are of urgent concern. I ask my colleagues to support the conference agreement so that we may discharge our obligations to the city.

Mr. President, I yield the floor and yield 4 minutes to the Senator from Iowa.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, the issue before us is not just the city government of Washington, DC, because that general issue is not what is holding up this legislation. The issue is whether or not the children of the District of Columbia ought to have a better education and a better educational system. And if that educational system does not evolve, then that the poor of the District of Columbia would have the same opportunity as the rich of the District of Columbia to make sure their children have an equal educational opportunity. And that revolves around whether or not school vouchers ought to be available to the poor of Washington, DC, so that they can have then the same educational op-

portunities as the rich of this city who choose to send their children to private schools.

Now, I have not historically promoted the wholesale move to school vouchers because I have in the past only supported a limited demonstration program that would provide school vouchers to poor families that reside in troubled school districts.

Obviously, the District of Columbia falls into that category. But it is certainly an idea, the idea of school vouchers, that deserves a chance. And more importantly, it may give many poor children in the District of Columbia a chance for a better education.

How ironic. We have been told that the President's advisers may suggest a veto. How ironic that this very same President, when he was Governor of Arkansas, supported a voucher program. Thank goodness for a candid story in the Post explaining why the President of the United States now has a different view. The Washington Post last Sunday showed why President Clinton flip-flopped on school vouchers and why the other side of the aisle is in lockstep behind him in opposition to this bill. You see, it is the special interests. Now, in Iowa, special interest when it comes to education means children or, if it is not education, it means the elderly or the disabled veterans, but here in Washington the special interests are fellows waving big checkbooks. The special interest in this case is the National Education Association which provided \$4.4 million to Federal office seekers, virtually all of them Democrats, according to the Washington Post story.

So I do not want to hear from the other side of the aisle how they are voting to save education when they vote against cloture. They are not voting for the children's interest of the District. They are voting for the special interests of the District.

Incredibly, many people in the White House and in Congress who oppose this small effort to give children of working families a chance send their own children to the most expensive private schools in the city. I hope as they drive their sons and daughters to their elite academies that they can roll up the tinted windows of their cars and, thus, will not have to look at the children who have no chance, and they can shut out the noises of those children asking for a chance.

The Post story recounts that President Clinton told the NEA after he was elected that he would not "forget who brought me to the White House."

No, President Clinton has not forgotten his big special interest friends. Unfortunately, it is the children of the poor struggling to get a good education who have been forgotten by this White House if they, in fact, veto this bill.

I hope my colleagues will do the right thing for the children of the District and vote for this bill and give

them a chance for a better education tomorrow and a better future as a result thereof.

Mr. JEFFORDS addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, I want to thank the Senator from Iowa for some very explicit and appropriate comments on the situation that we are in. I hope that my colleagues will heed his words.

I yield the floor, seeing there are speakers on the other side, I believe, ready to go.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, how much time remains?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts has 13 minutes, 6 seconds remaining.

Mr. KENNEDY. I yield myself 6 minutes.

Mr. President, just to sum up where we are in the U.S. Senate, and really speaking to the people who live in the District, we are seeing a third vote on an issue in which I believe our good Republican friends are basically playing politics with the children of the District of Columbia.

It is an interesting fact that 2 years ago, the majority cut \$28 million out of funding for education in the District. This last year, they cut some \$14 million out, and then \$8.5 million out of title I.

So that is the background, and now what they are doing is asking \$42 million over the period of the next 5 years for a very narrow program, which has been rejected 8 to 1 by the District of Columbia, and that is the voucher system that is not going to give the choice to the individual, it is going to give the choice to the school.

That is something that our Republican friends do not seem to understand. Only 2 percent of the children in the District would be able to qualify for this particular program. Who is going to make the judgment? Do you think the parents are? Of course, they are not. It is going to be the schools that are making the judgment about which children they are going to take.

So, on the one hand, we have seen the commitment to try and enhance the academic achievement and accomplishment for all of the children 2 years ago, and that was cut back, and then you see the commitment to enhance opportunities for all of the children, and that is cut back.

Now we are faced with a conference proposal that effectively undermines the first elected school board for the District of Columbia by not funding them. Do you hear that, Mr. President? I hope all of our Republican colleagues understand, local control. How often we hear, "Let's have local control over school planning, local control over the allocations of resources." That is not this bill.

The officials elected by the District of Columbia selected their school board, and that program is defunded. We have basically a Federal oversight

that is going to say to the District of Columbia, "Use this money our way or you're not going to get it." That is real choice. That is real choice. That is real choice for the citizens here.

So we ought to understand, this is the third time that we are being asked to vote on this, Mr. President, along with the other provisions of the legislation that provide an assault on the incomes of working families here, unlike any other part of the country, where the changes in the worker protection under Davis-Bacon have been included, and the position of the Congress on the issues of funding for abortions. We are making a judgment which the Supreme Court has recognized ought to be a State or a local judgment, but, oh, no, we are saying we know best, we know what is really best for the education of the students, and we know what is in the best interest of the poor and needy women in the District, and we know what is in the best interest of workers in the District.

We will hear, as we have over the period of these past months, that we in this body do not always know what is best for the people around this country. How often we have heard that speech. Now you have the chance to say no to that judgment by rejecting this conference report and saying yes to workers, yes to needy women, yes to the parents and to the enhanced quality of education for the people of the District.

So, Mr. President, I hope for these reasons and the excellent reasons that have been outlined by Senator KOHL earlier today and during the last debates and my friend and colleague from Illinois, Senator SIMON, that this conference report will not be considered; that we will send a very clear message.

As Senator KOHL has pointed out, and it has not been controverted, if you eliminated these kinds of restrictions that have no business whatsoever being on this bill, this funding would be available this afternoon. But, no, we have voted on it. People understand where those votes are, and we are being asked to go through this routine and what I think is basically blackmailing the children and families of the District of Columbia to achieve some purpose for the majority that the majority might be able to explain to us. But we are asked to do that, Mr. President.

I want to make it very, very clear to all the members of the District of Columbia, we stand strong to make sure that the District of Columbia is going to get its funding. It could get it this afternoon if they drop these three proposals off the conference report. They could work that conference report. All of us have been around this institution to know the conferees would be able to get back together. Drop those three, and they could get it this afternoon.

We have had the two votes, and still they want to have the third one. But we will do everything we possibly can to work with our friend and colleague, the Senator from Vermont, who we ad-

mire both his commitment to the quality of education nationwide and also in the District of Columbia. We will work with him and the other Members of the House to make sure the District of Columbia gets its payment, but on this proposal we should say no.

Mr. President, I see my friend and colleague. I yield 4 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. SIMON. Mr. President, I simply want to underscore what Senator KENNEDY has had to say. The Presiding Officer, as a new Member of this body, may not be aware of this, but in addition to everything that Senator KENNEDY had to say, one of the things that is happening in our world that is really dramatic is the spread of democracy. It is in Russia, it is in Poland, it is in many countries of Africa now.

It is interesting, Mr. President, that in all of the democracies of the world, there is only one democracy where we deny the people in the capital city the right to be represented in a democracy, in their parliament. That democracy, I regret to say, is the United States of America.

The District of Columbia has their own elected school board, and we make all these speeches about local control, but we say to only one school board—and it is not insignificant, it is a school board that does not have a vote in terms of having a U.S. Senator—we say to one school board, "You have to do this or you don't get this money." That just does not make sense. I add one other point, Mr. President. I have been around here now 22 years and, generally, we try and work out compromises between the House and the Senate. These are provisions that were not favored by a single Member of the Senate side. Democrats and Republicans capitulated to the House. I understand capitulating because you have to do that sometimes. But the body does not need to do that. The precedent is simply wrong.

So I hope that our vote on cloture will be the same. There is no reason for anyone to change his or her mind. This is not good policy, and I hope we will continue to resist the cloture motion.

I yield the remainder of my time back to Senator KENNEDY.

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, first, I thank my colleagues for their kind words about our relationship, which I cherish. I thank them for very eloquently making my arguments, because they have pinned it all on the fact that we are shoving something at a city that has no opportunity with their elected officials to say no.

That is not the case. I wish they would read the bill. What it says is simply that we set up the operation, and there is a nonprofit corporation set up to handle private funds and public funds. Then there will be two voucher plans. One voucher plan nobody disagrees with. One is that every child that has problems with their education will have an opportunity to seek a

voucher to go after school—or to go someplace to get the kind of remedial attention they need. Nobody disagrees with that. The bill further states that, however, the corporation can recommend that money would go for tuition vouchers. However, there must be agreement upon how much to spend on tuition vouchers, down to zero, and that is up to the elected city officials, the District Council. They can say no money.

When we reached this agreement, I was fully aware there had been a referendum that said, 8 to 1, "We do not want any vouchers." That simply means that I knew, and I am sure others that have agreed to this know, that many people in the District are against it. To make the presumption that the city council does not remember this vote, that was on the ballot, which said that the city voters do not want vouchers, 8 to 1, and they are going to say forget about that, forget about how you feel now—of course, they are not. So I appreciate Senators on the other side making the argument strongly that we should not have anything that is locally controlled. This conference agreement gives the city local control.

So how can you say you are against it because it does not have local control when the whole thing is based upon local control?

The other issues, we have argued before, with respect to Davis-Bacon may not be a problem. If it is, we will correct it. The abortion issue is a compromise between the language adopted in 1995, and which was adopted by the Senate this year and the more restrictive language of the House bill. The conference agreement states that no funds, either from the local government or the Federal Government, can be used to perform an abortion unless it is to save the life of the mother or in cases of rape or incest. That was the best we could do.

Let us concentrate on the educational provisions now. Mr. President, we have done everything in this agreement we can to protect the people of this city from a mandatory Federal program which would violate local control. That is the case in this agreement.

In addition, we must remember that there are many other important education reforms in this bill besides that one provision. We run the risk, as I mentioned earlier, of ending up with nothing here, and all the catastrophes that can come from that, including losing the funding for the reforms.

I want to say briefly that I know there are several Members—enough to pass this bill—that are tortured by this vote right now, who want to support the cloture motion, but they know that the problem has been an agreement by the unions to hold the line. The White House is putting pressure on and saying they will veto it if it is presented in its present form. I urge those Members to look at the facts and get the grit to be able to do what you know you

should do to help the city and to, most of all, help the kids get the education they need in this city.

I reserve the remainder of my time.

Mr. KENNEDY. How much time do I have?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has 4 minutes.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I yield myself 3 minutes.

Mr. President, I appreciate the explanation of the Senator from Vermont. But I do not think that that ought to be very satisfying to the parents of the school district in the District of Columbia. Effectively, what the Republican Congress has done is this: They have cut \$52 million in the last 2 years on the one hand, and they are giving \$42 million back on the other, if it is used as explained by the Senator from Vermont, and that is whether it is vouchers or after-school vouchers. But if they do not spend it for the vouchers, they lose it. They lose it. They do not get the money.

You have had these draconian cuts that we have seen in the last 2 years, and they are dangling the money in front of the District now and saying the only way you can use this money is if you use it for the programs of after-school vouchers and the other vouchers.

What do you say to the school that says they would like just a few more hundred thousand dollars for the literacy program, or they would like to have an in-school after-school program? It would not be just the kids that get the vouchers, but all the children. You are saying no to that group of parents that want to have an after-school program and use some of the money. We otherwise would have gotten another \$42 million for the after-school program. What if the teachers and parents say we would like to have more technology, computers? Oh, no, we have to permit 2 percent of the school children to go to some other schools. We cannot say that in your school you might be able to get some additional resources for technology.

Those are the things that are out there, parents, and under this proposal, you are denying it. You have had significant cuts in the last 2 years. You are offering them a lot of money this way, but it has to be used not the way the District of Columbia wants to use it, which has rejected vouchers in recent years by 8 to 1—if they had wanted vouchers, they would have had it before this year. They never have. So you are saying we know best, and you are going to use the money this way, or you are going to lose it.

That is unacceptable. We say that the schools know best and the parents, who may want to be able to develop after-school programs. Schools and parents want to have literacy and technology, and schools and parents want to have enhancement of math and science. But we are saying, no, you cannot do that. You have to use it our way, or you lose the money. That is the issue.

That is unacceptable, Mr. President. I hope that we will defeat the cloture motion and move toward providing the funding to the District of Columbia.

Mr. JEFFORDS. How much time remains?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There are 30 seconds remaining.

Mr. JEFFORDS. I point out that we have never cut the school budgets of the city. The city has recommended reductions, some of which were accepted. We have never imposed cuts. So, again, let us get the facts straight.

In addition to that, this \$5 million is the only thing at risk here. All of that can be used if the city council and the scholarship corporation agree. It can all be used for the kind of vouchers that no one opposes, for remedial instruction. Local control is total here.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, as the Senate today again attempts to limit debate on H.R. 2546, the fiscal year 1996 District of Columbia appropriations bill, I would like to address what seems to be the principal roadblock to Senate approval. That issue is the proposed discretionary educational voucher program.

The conference report on H.R. 2546 would authorize school vouchers for as many as 1,500 low-income children at up to \$3,000 each. These vouchers could be used for one of two purposes: Either for supplemental educational services such as remedial training after school, or as tuition scholarships to assist with the costs of private education.

As proposed, the voucher demonstration is not mandated. It is authorized first as a choice for the District of Columbia Council. No voucher program could go forward until it was approved by the District government.

Furthermore, should the District decide to implement the voucher demonstration, the D.C. Council could specify the type of vouchers which would be available. For instance, all of the demonstration funds could be targeted to supplemental educational services with no tuition assistance alternative.

Mr. President, this legislation respects home rule by giving the D.C. government the discretion to choose the type of program it may wish to provide, or reject the program outright. It would also give up to 1,500 D.C. families the ability to make important choices to improve their children's education.

I strongly support the bill, and I strongly support the discretionary school voucher demonstration. This is consistent with my support of a similar voucher demonstration proposal during the 1994 debate on the Goals 2000 legislation.

The American education system should provide an environment which fosters innovation and experimentation. Here is an opportunity to test that environment in the Nation's Capital. I urge my colleagues to join in voting in favor of educational choice for the District of Columbia.

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, I yield back the remainder of my time.

# RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will now stand in recess until the hour of 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:29 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m.; whereupon, the Senate reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer [Mr. COATS].

## CUBAN LIBERTY AND DEMOCRATIC SOLIDARITY [LIBERTAD] ACT OF 1996—CONFERENCE REPORT

The Senate continued with the consideration of the conference report.

Mr. DOLE addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. DOLE. Mr. President, as I understand, the vote is set for 2:15.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. That is correct.

Mr. DOLE. Mr. President, the Senate is taking a historic step today. We will soon vote on the conference report on the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act of 1996. It is a tragedy it took the brutal attack on unarmed American citizens in international airspace to overcome resistance to tightening the economic noose around Castro. Many of us believed legislation should have been enacted much sooner. Fifty-nine Senators voted for cloture on this bill last October. Though we were forced to delete a critical section to overcome the filibuster last year, that section has been restored in the conference report pending in the Senate.

Castro still has a few supporters in the United States. The tired rhetoric defending his dictatorship is the last stand of the old left. But their voices are irrelevant. Their voices are drowned out by the overwhelming and uncontestable evidence of Castro's true nature. Castro is clearly determined to cling to power at all costs, but his days are numbered. Enactment of the Libertad bill will weaken, and eventually end, Castro's desperate dictatorship.

There has been much said in the debate this morning about this bill. The key provisions deserve special mention. First, the Helms-Dole-Burton Libertad bill codifies all regulations implementing the embargo on Cuba. This will ensure no more mixed signals will be sent from the United States—the Cuban embargo stays in place until a transition government is in place.

Second, the Libertad bill requires entry to the United States be denied to all individuals who traffic in stolen property in Cuba. Entry into the United States is a privilege, not a right. Enactment of this bill will guarantee that the privilege of entry to the United States is not extended to those who profit from property stolen from American citizens.

Third, effective August 1, 1996, the Helms-Dole-Burton bill creates legal recourse in American courts against firms and individuals who profit from property confiscated from Americans. Limited authority to suspend this provision is included in the conference report, but only for 6-month periods, only with advance notice to Congress, and only if the President certifies that such a suspension will expedite democratic change in Cuba.

There are many other important provisions in the bill: Authorization to support democratic and human rights groups in Cuba, tough conditions on aid to the former Soviet states if they provide aid to Cuba, mandatory reductions in United States assistance and credits to any country which support completion of the nuclear reactors in Cuba, and tough requirements for United States Government action on American fugitives in Cuba.

The Libertad bill is a comprehensive package which will cutoff Castro's foreign economic lifeline. The Libertad conference report will speed up democratic change in Cuba. It sends a clear message: The time of Fidel Castro has come and gone. It has been a long, hard road to get to the point of final Senate action. I wish we could have been here much sooner. I wish we could have acted without facing veto threats and filibusters.

But today, these differences are behind us. President Clinton has endorsed the Helms-Burton bill—in its toughened form. President Clinton has asked all Members of Congress to support this legislation. In a letter to me this morning, he wrote:

The conference report is a strong, bipartisan response that tightens the economic embargo against the Cuban regime and permits us to continue to promote democratic change in Cuba. I urge Congress to pass the Libertad bill in order to send Cuba a powerful message that the United States will not tolerate further loss of American life.

There can be no doubt that the signal from the United States is stronger when the Democratic White House and Republican Congress speak with the same voice. There can be no doubt that the signal from the United States is unmistakable: Democracy yes, dictatorship no.

Now that the White House is on board with a tougher approach to the Castro regime, I hope they will enact unilateral steps to increase pressure on Castro—steps they could take today. The Clinton administration should beef up enforcement of the embargo, including opening a Treasury Department office in Miami. The Clinton administration should also instruct the FBI to crack down on Cuban agents in the United States including tougher restrictions on so-called diplomats and stronger steps to counter Cuban spies in Miami. The administration should also require strict compliance with the Foreign Agents Registration Act to ensure all of Castro's lobbyists are publicly disclosed. Measures like these will

help demonstrate a genuine change of heart by the White House.

Let there be no mistake: Castro's dictatorship will end. From Poland and Prague, from Moscow to Managua, from Kiev to Kazakhstan, Communist tyrants have fallen to the will of people. Castro stands alone as the last dictator in the hemisphere. When the history of the fall of Castro is written, today's action will have a central place. The atrocity over the Florida Straits—the murder of martyrs of February 24—has galvanized opposition to Castro. And it has overcome obstacles to passing their Libertad bill before us today.

There is a long list of people who worked hard on the legislation before us. Senator HELMS made enactment of this legislation a priority when he assumed the chairmanship of the Foreign Relations Committee. Senator MACK of Florida was critical in mobilizing Senate support for the bill.

In the House, Congressman BURTON played a critical role in shepherding the legislation to the overwhelming vote last September. Congressman DIAZ-BALART and Congresswoman ROSELEHTINEN were tireless in their work for the bill—in the House and in the Senate. Congressman MENENDEZ of New Jersey was central in getting the Clinton administration to see the light on the legislation last week. All of these Members deserve credit for the Libertad conference report. Without their efforts, we would not be where we are today. Enactment of this legislation will end the debate over how to foster democratic change in Cuba. Enactment of this legislation will send a signal to our allies and our adversaries that the United States is united in opposing Fidel Castro. And enactment of this legislation will bring the end of Fidel Castro's reign of terror much closer. I urge my colleagues to support the Libertad bill to send the strongest possible message to the hemisphere's last dictator.

The signals are clear. It is now non-partisan, bipartisan, call it what you will. I hope with an overwhelming vote that Castro will finally get the message. And I think the administration has finally gotten the message. After cozying up to Castro in 1994 and 1995, they now see the error of their ways. And I am happy that they are now on board.

I particularly want to thank the distinguished chairman of the committee, Senator HELMS, for his tireless efforts throughout the past several months.

## MIDDLE EAST TERRORISM

Mr. DOLE. Mr. President, apparently the White House press secretary made some statements this morning that I think probably he should not have made. I am not certain it helps the cause of counterterrorism to talk publicly about the type of equipment we are sending to help our allies. I support, and I am certain all of my colleagues support, United States efforts