

Mr. THOMAS. I certainly agree with that analysis and suggest to the Senator that we did involve ourselves very deeply in this and had bipartisan support, administration support. I think it still would be the desire of this body to have a statement, and we intend to bring it up in another way.

I thank my friend very much.

Mr. MURKOWSKI. If I might ask my colleague one more question, since I joined with him and cosponsored the resolution to reaffirm the Taiwan Relations Act by the U.S. Senate, and that is if it is his intention to pursue this matter and bring it up on the next vehicle that, obviously, is moving? Is that the intent of the Senator from Wyoming?

Mr. THOMAS. Yes. Let me say that is our intention, and I do believe really that the Members of this body do want to make a statement. I think this statement generally reflects what we are for, and we will make every effort to bring it up at the earliest possible time.

Mr. MURKOWSKI. I thank my colleague. I appreciate the reassurance. I think as we look at the tensions in the world today and recognize the obligation the United States has under the Taiwan Relations Act that, indeed, a voice of support is indicated by the amendment to reaffirm the terms and conditions of the Taiwan Relations Act. The fact that the administration further supports that action, we find ourselves in a rather perplexing situation where no one who is objecting seems to care to come to the floor and explain the basis for the objection. I commend my friend from Wyoming for his diligence and commitment to persevere on something that I think is, indeed, appropriate and timely.

I thank my good friend for joining me in a colloquy.

If there are no further Senators wishing recognition at this time, I ask unanimous consent to speak for 5 minutes as in morning business until such time as another Senator seeks recognition.

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

Mr. MURKOWSKI. I thank the Chair.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TAIWAN AND CHINA

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I would like to continue relative to the matter that the Senator from Wyoming and I discussed, because I think we have seen an extraordinary series of events take place. I am referring specifically to the fact that on the 23d of March, free elections will take place in Taiwan.

It is significant that we have seen an extraordinary activity as evidenced by Beijing who has seen fit to harass the process, threaten the Taiwanese with a military presence, missile threats, as well as naval activity of significant merit.

The consequences of that effort seem to have been misdirected, however, be-

cause President Li, who is running for reelection, in the sense that these would be free elections, is in a situation where he has been attacked by the Government of Beijing, time and time again, as fostering independence for Taiwan.

Yet, the Taiwanese know, and most of us who have followed the election process are aware, he is not the candidate of independence. Dr. Peng is the candidate of independence. The people in Taiwan are aware of the distinction. As a consequence, Mr. President, as they have continued their attacks on President Li, it has rallied the support of the Taiwanese people around President Li.

I can only assume that the attack against President Li was directed in hopes that somehow he would receive less than perhaps 50 percent of the vote. Well, we will have to see what percentage of the vote he will ultimately receive. But clearly the attacks seem to have helped President Li's popularity in Taiwan. I was recently over there, about 3 weeks ago, and had an opportunity to meet with various officials, including President Li.

One of the other interesting things, as a consequence of the presence of the PRC in the election process in Taiwan, is an extraordinary realization and identification of Taiwan as a significant voice in international affairs. Now it seems that there is more concern being leveled by Beijing against Taiwan's prominence. Taiwan is called upon to participate in humanitarian contributions and various activities by international organizations. They clearly are one of the most prosperous countries in the world, having the highest per capita capital reserves of virtually any other nation.

So what we see today is the perplexing situation where, on one hand, we have the focus of a democracy initiating its first free elections, a real concern internally by the Chinese leadership as to what role they should play with their renegade province, recognizing that next year Hong Kong is basically within the total control of China, when 1997 comes, and in 1997 the people's Congress will meet to basically set the parameters for the next 5 years and the hierarchy of the leadership in China.

We do not know what the mindset of that leadership is. We can only guess. But it is fair to say that their extreme views of what should be done—and as we look at the capability of the M-9 missile and the accuracy of that missile to be launched from within China to targets on either end of Taiwan, southern and northern target areas, and we note the capability of the naval activities, clearly, there has been a strong signal sent.

The difficulty in trying to determine just how this is ultimately going to play out, I think, deserves the action that was proposed tonight by my friend from Wyoming, and that is a reaffirmation of the Taiwan Relations Act. As I

said earlier and we discussed in our colloquy, the President of the United States has an obligation to come before the Congress if, indeed, in his opinion, the national security interests of Taiwan are in jeopardy. I think the President and the administration's actions so far are to be commended. We have, by our display of naval power, intelligence and other assets, basically reinforced our commitments to the Taiwan Relations Act.

There are a couple of other significant events that probably should be noted, Mr. President, and that is the reality that initially the Chinese indicated they would cease their missile tests on the 15th. Further, they would cease their naval activities on the 20th. And, of course, we have the date of the 23d for the free democratic elections in Taiwan.

So I think we will have to watch those dates very closely, Mr. President, to see if, indeed, the Chinese are serious in terminating the missile activities, terminating the naval activities on the dates that they have stated. If they do not, why, clearly they intend to escalate the tensions that are now in existence. And, as a consequence, Mr. President, I fear for the ultimate disposition because the Taiwan Relations Act mandates that the resolve of China and the issues of China with regard to its two provinces, particularly Taiwan, will be by peaceful means.

So I guess we will just have to wait and see what the ultimate outcome of this is as each day goes by, but I think it is most appropriate this body reaffirm the terms and conditions of the Taiwan Relations Act. We have already seen, under the terms of that act, the ability of the Taiwanese to seek military assistance in the form of purchases for their defensive needs—I want to stress defensive needs—as a prerequisite of the Taiwan Relations Act. That activity has been carried out by the United States on a decreasing dollar amount. We have the request for some of the higher technological capabilities associated with the Patriot missile system as an antiballistic missile defense.

There are some of us in the Congress that feel perhaps this is the time to escalate those sales and offer the people of Taiwan the psychological assurance, as well as the real assurance, of what that type of technology should be. This Senator from Alaska is reserving his firm opinions on that depending on what the situation is as we approach these dates of significance relative to a determination of whether or not Beijing simply wants to show its strength with regard to Taiwan or whether we can expect an extended period of tensions.

In my meetings with President Li, I had the assurance that after the elections, assuming President Li were elected, that he would initiate communications with Beijing in an attempt to reduce tensions. I think that that will occur. My concern is what price Beijing

may demand of Taiwan with regard to easing those tensions.

So I will encourage my friend again from Wyoming to pursue the resolution that is before this body that unfortunately we were unable to bring up tonight because of objection on the other side. I would again hope that some of my colleagues on the other side who have raised these objections would come before this body so that we might enter into a discussion, because obviously, if there are issues that the Senator from Alaska is not aware of that are appropriate, why, they should be considered.

If it is objection for the sake of objection, why, indeed, that is an unfortunate set of circumstances. I hope my friend from Wyoming will renew the request on the next vehicle. I will certainly look forward to joining him.

Mr. President, I yield the floor. I see some of my colleagues seeking recognition.

Mr. BUMPERS addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

BALANCED BUDGET DOWNPAYMENT ACT, II

The Senate continued with the consideration of the bill.

AMENDMENT NO. 3524

Mr. BUMPERS. Mr. President, if I could have the attention of the Senator from Alaska.

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Yes.

Mr. BUMPERS. I was curious about two things. No. 1, has the Senator offered his amendment that would require the Federal Government to buy back from the Alaskan salmon industry \$23 million worth of Alaskan salmon?

Mr. MURKOWSKI. I have no idea where the Senator from Arkansas came up with that interpretation. The answer is, absolutely no.

What the Senator from Alaska has proposed is an amendment that would eliminate a mandatory inspection by the Department of Agriculture on salmon sold into the Department of Agriculture's food give-away program, as opposed to the inspections that exist for all other salmon that is canned in salmon canneries throughout the United States. All other salmon is canned, is inspected under State and Federal regulations, and ends up on the shelves of Giant or Safeway where it is available to all consumers. There is absolutely no reference to a mandate to buy any Alaska salmon in this amendment.

Mr. BUMPERS. It does not require the Federal Government to spend anything for Alaskan salmon?

Mr. MURKOWSKI. It requires the Federal Government to stop insisting on a dual inspection process mandated only by USDA for salmon that is purchased under their program. It does not require purchase of one can of salmon.

Mr. BUMPERS. All the amendment says is, if any salmon is purchased, it would eliminate the dual inspection?

Mr. MURKOWSKI. No, it says if salmon is purchased by the USDA for its Federal programs, that it does not require a special inspection, which is the current requirement.

Mr. BUMPERS. Let me ask a couple questions, if I may.

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Happy to respond.

Mr. BUMPERS. The Food and Drug Administration's inspection, for example, of canned salmon is for the purposes of determining its safety, that is, that it is clean and edible; is that correct?

Mr. MURKOWSKI. I think, as a matter of fact, that the process recognized by the FDA—but is actually performed by the State, does assure wholesomeness. However, in doing so it also assures the level of quality that you and I might find in our favorite store. It is my understanding that the safety standard is uniform under the State as well as Federal requirements for the inspection before the salmon can end up on a Safeway shelf or a Giant Food shelf, or available to any retail or wholesale purchase. The USDA cannot explain when we get into a discussion why it should use a completely different standard than the one considered good enough for everyone else.

I hope my friend from Arkansas can perhaps enlighten me as to why a dual inspection would be necessary above and beyond the existing inspection that is required for domestic retail and wholesale sales and to put product on store shelves in the United States for the homemaker.

Mr. BUMPERS. Let me ask the Senator from Alaska who, in his opinion, would inspect this salmon for quality—not for safety, but for quality? Some of it is graded, I guess No. 1, No. 2, No. 3, No. 4. Who does that inspection?

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Traditionally, as the Senator may know, we have five types of Pacific salmon. Obviously, there is a quality differential. The buyers would inspect the salmon by lot inspections. In other words, each can of salmon carries on the lid a special code. That code says where it was packed. It identifies a date, a type, and a quality.

A buyer will go into the warehouse—they do not buy from the canneries in Alaska or Washington or Oregon. They go to a warehouse in Seattle and make a determination of what quality they want. Do they want pink salmon? Do they want skin or bone? Do they want red or sockeye or silver or chum? So the buyer makes that choice.

The inconsistency here is if the USDA will buy your salmon, they demand you have an inspector in your cannery even before they say they are willing to buy. It is just the USDA. The question is, why?

Mr. BUMPERS. If the amendment of the Senator only eliminates the necessity for what he has described as a double inspection of salmon—

Mr. MURKOWSKI. In effect, that is correct.

Mr. BUMPERS. Does it apply to anything else except salmon?

Mr. MURKOWSKI. I am concerned with canned salmon.

Mr. BUMPERS. It would not apply to anything except salmon?

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Well, it would apply to other canned seafood, but it is directed primarily at salmon. There may be a requirement for tuna. Tuna is not one of the fisheries in the northern part of the west coast, so I am not as familiar with it. I do not really think it makes a difference.

There is an inspection process—both State and Federal, a mandatory requirement, in order for the product to be placed on the shelf of the grocery stores. That applies to other types of fish in a can, as well—mackerel, tuna, perhaps.

Mr. BUMPERS. Can the Senator assure the Senate that his amendment would eliminate the necessity for two inspections? Specifically, an inspection by the Department of Agriculture that would apply to all commodities bought by the Department of Agriculture, for example, for the School Lunch Program, it would apply to all canned seafoods?

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Certainly, it is the intention of the Senator from Alaska not to exclude any. My interest just happens to be in salmon.

The rationale behind that is, we have a considerable amount of salmon that is canned in our State and in the State of Washington, and we look to find relief in selling a portion of that to the USDA in their food program. Much to our chagrin, we find out unless that particular pack has an additional inspection, we cannot break into that market. It is pretty hard to explain why there should have to be an additional inspector in a cannery above and beyond the inspections that are required to put it on the consumer shelf.

Mr. BUMPERS. Senator, what is the purpose of the amendment? Why do you want to eliminate the Department of Agriculture's right to determine the quality of the fish?

Mr. MURKOWSKI. That is not an issue in this regard. They can make a determination of what quality they want. They do that as a buyer. This involves a specific inspection. No other industry has to pay extra for a dual inspection to sell into the USDA program, to my knowledge, except the fish products industry. I do not believe it is required in the chicken producing areas.

I know my friend from Arkansas well enough to know that he is concerned about ensuring that there is nothing more in the amendment from the Senator from Alaska than trying to get rid of something that no one has been able to give a satisfactory explanation for. That is, why the USDA should demand an inspection for only the purchases they make as opposed to the inspections that are good enough for the consumer and buyers that represent the consumer. If Safeway or Giant come in and buy a carload of salmon, they pick it out by quality. They pick