

east Texas roots. We attended the University of Texas law school. We both held this seat in the U.S. Senate, which both of us reached through a special election in the spring after the resignation of a Senator in January. Like me, he reached this Chamber less than 2 years before the term was up, and probably felt, as I did, envy for Members of the other body, who have a full 2 years between campaigns.

Mr. President, on behalf of all the citizens of Texas, I offer to Mrs. Yarborough, his widow, the rest of the Yarborough family, and his many friends, our deepest condolences. May he rest in peace.

Mr. President, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

The Senator from Wyoming is recognized.

CONSISTENCY IN LEADERSHIP

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, from time to time, in the mail we get a letter, an observation, or a communication from a constituent that we think is particularly on target. I would like to share that a little bit this morning. It has to do with consistency in leadership and with where we are going in this country. The President has talked in the last couple of days about the consistency of his administration. Of course, I think there is great question about that. If we are to move forward to make the changes that most of us want to make, that I think most Americans want to make, we have to have some consistency in policy.

The President came to Washington based on a campaign of change, based on a promise of change, based on a promise of a new Democrat. He said more recently that the era of big government is over. The fact is that there has not been much consistency. The fact is that there was a great deal of talk about reforming of welfare which is certainly high on the agenda of most people. Most people want to continue to be able to help people who need help, but in a program that helps people back into a position to help themselves. Yet this Senate passed a bill on welfare, I think 85 positive votes, that was vetoed by the President who says he wanted to change welfare as we know it.

The balanced budget—I suspect the prime issue of this entire congressional session—it took four budgets to come up with a balanced budget, despite the President saying he was for a balanced budget when he ran, and would do it in 5 years. It took four budgets to do it in 7 years, and then, frankly, not a real budget.

Most everyone who studies the issue knows that if you are going to change the financial direction that this country has taken, if you want to be responsible for finances, that there has to be a significant change in the budget, that you cannot tinker around the edges.

The President and his staff, and Mr. Panetta, whom I worked with in the House, and I always thought was responsible—almost as if you push a button, we protect Medicaid, protect the environment, have an investment in education. The fact is that over a period of several years you cannot do that; there is no money to do that unless you do something about entitlements. That is a fact.

So to say we are going to balance the budget and we are going to protect Medicare, Medicaid, the environment, invest in education, it is impossible to do, unless, of course, you raise taxes considerably.

Mr. President, these are the things raised about consistency. I want to read the letter from Linda Russell of Rawlins, WY.

President Bill Clinton,
White House,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: I sent you a wire to just get the budget balanced and quit "posturing" and playing politics.

You wrote a very nice letter back—but I am very concerned that you don't understand what the people of this USA want and need. You say we must "maintain our values—protecting Medicare, Medicaid, and the environment". Certainly no one would disagree that these are excellent GOALS—but they are NOT our base VALUES. Our base values would be fiscal responsibility, keeping a military strength sufficient to protect us, and staying out of the faces of people who are perfectly capable of handling the GOALS you mention far better than the Washington DC political establishment.

I attended the White House Conference on Small Business and heard you address the group on how you felt regulations should be reduced and the budget balanced and the tax burden lessened. WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR SUPPORT OF THOSE IDEAS since that meeting??

May I respectfully suggest that you let the power revert to the people by going with the block grants so that we can take care of our neighbors with our tax money and not waste 90% of it paying a huge bureaucracy in "DC" to tell us how to do it. TRUST US—we are neither stupid nor insensitive. If you have any wish at all to be reelected, it would be well to give us the respect we are due—and stop taking more and more money via taxes to support some liberal agenda.

Mr. President—listen again to your own inaugural address to the nation, which I thought very impressive—and WALK YOUR TALK??

Sincerely,

LINDA RUSSELL,
Rawlins, WY.

Mr. President, I think her expression "and walk your talk" is an expression from someone who represents a good deal of the thought in my State in Wyoming. I think many of us believe that this is the direction we should take, make the changes that we came here to make—less government, less cost, less regulation, move the responsibilities to communities, to States, and frankly to individuals.

I had the opportunity last evening to meet with a group of students from Washington and Lee High School in Arlington, VA, who were inducted into the Honor Society. We talked to some of them about the concepts of freedom and about the responsibility in leadership that goes with freedom. I was really pleased at the receptiveness they had to the notion that if you are going to be free and responsible and have a Government where we participate and we govern ourselves, then you have to be responsible and take some leadership positions to do that.

Mr. President, that is sort of what it is all about and what this letter is about.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the President's response to Linda Russell's wire be printed in the RECORD.

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

THE WHITE HOUSE,
Washington, DC, December 6, 1995.

Ms. LINDA RUSSELL,
Rawlins, WY.

DEAR LINDA: Thank you for sharing your views. It's important for me to know how you feel about the challenges facing our nation.

I believe that we must balance the budget, but we must do it in a way that is good for our economy and that maintains our values—protecting Medicare, Medicaid, and the environment, and continuing our investment in education. And we have to do it without raising taxes on working families.

In the weeks ahead we will continue our bipartisan efforts to find common ground on balancing the budget, and I hope you will stay involved.

Sincerely,

BILL CLINTON.

Mr. THOMAS. I yield the floor. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, are we in morning business?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct.

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I will take the floor in morning business to speak about a concern that has been global.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii is recognized.

FRANCE'S CESSATION OF NUCLEAR TESTING IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, it is with a great sense of relief and hope that I rise today to comment on the announcement by French President Jacques Chirac that France has concluded its nuclear weapons testing program for good and will close its nuclear testing center in French Polynesia.

Like most people throughout the Pacific islands and Asia, the citizens of Hawaii were angered by the six underground nuclear explosions at Mururoa and Fangataufa atolls conducted by France. The threat to the environment and public health posed by the numerous blasts over the years is real and ongoing. This week, an article in the Washington Post documented French acknowledgement that radioactive materials have leaked into the sea surrounding the atolls. These reports confirm claims made by international organizations that French nuclear testing has weakened the coral atolls and vented radioactive materials into the Pacific. Regrettably, France has not allowed independent inquiry and verification at the test sites.

The global outcry against the resumption of French nuclear testing has given renewed vigor to the drive for an international moratorium on nuclear testing and the completion of a comprehensive test ban treaty. International protests extended well beyond the nations of the Pacific; the French action drew criticism in the United States and objections from most members of the European Union. The Senate and the Congress joined the international chorus of concern following President Chirac's announcement last summer that France would end its testing moratorium. Last session, the Congress adopted a sense of the Senate resolution I authored calling on France and China to abide by the international moratorium on nuclear test explosions and refrain from conducting underground nuclear tests in advance of a comprehensive test ban treaty.

Mr. President, the definitive end to nuclear testing by France is welcome news. It comes after six unnecessary and ill-advised nuclear explosions. However, France's rejoining the global moratorium, pledge to sign the Treaty of Rarotonga, and commitment to pursue a zero-option test ban treaty presents an opportunity to conclude a permanent nuclear test ban treaty and advance nuclear nonproliferation. The challenge we face is to reach agreement among the nations participating in the United Nations Conference on Disarmament. In his State of the Union message, President Clinton called for the signing of a truly comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty this year. This ambitious timetable underlines the President's strong leadership in the effort to halt the nuclear arms race, advance nuclear disarmament, and ensure peace and security for all people.

President Chirac's intention to play an active role in concluding an international nuclear testing ban should add momentum to efforts now underway in Geneva, Switzerland aimed at resolving remaining disagreements over the text of the treaty. We should encourage all positive contributions toward nuclear disarmament, even those that come from recent converts to the cause.

Mr. President, the state visit and address to Congress by the President of the Republic of France has prompted denunciations and calls for action by many citizens and elected officials. This understandable reaction reflects the anger, pain, and offense felt by the people of the Pacific islands over the arrogance and insensitivity with which their objections have been dismissed. This singular opportunity offers President Chirac a forum to embark on a new course to advance nuclear nonproliferation. I encourage President Chirac to pursue reconciliation with the Pacific island peoples and nations. France should not delay its pledge to sign the protocols of the Treaty of Rarotonga, which declare and establish the South Pacific as a nuclear-free zone. I also call on President Chirac to permit independent inspection and evaluation of the test sites and the lagoon and sea surrounding the atolls for environmental damage and radiation leakage.

The political and environmental damage wrought by the recently concluded tests cannot be undone. However, the end of the final series of underground nuclear testing by France offers an opportunity and challenge for our countries to cooperate on the successful conclusion and approval of a comprehensive test ban treaty this year. It is with this spirit of hope that I greet the state visit by the President of the Republic of France.

Mr. President, I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. JEFFORDS). Without objection, it is so ordered.

AGRICULTURAL MARKET TRANSITION ACT OF 1996

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now turn to the consideration of calendar No. 330, S. 1541, the farm bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will state the bill by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1541) to extend, reform, and improve agricultural commodity, trade, conservation, and other programs, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the immediate consideration of the bill?

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on S. 1541, the farm bill:

Bob Dole, Strom Thurmond, Dirk Kempthorne, James M. Jeffords, John H. Chafee, Thad Cochran, Ted Stevens, Trent Lott, Richard G. Lugar, Craig Thomas, Don Nickles, Bob Bennett, Alan K. Simpson, John Warner, Larry Pressler, Dan Coats, Larry E. Craig.

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, for now nearly 10 months, the U.S. Senate and the Senate Agriculture Committee have been working diligently to craft a new farm bill for our country. We all know that on September 30 of this immediate past year, the old farm bill expired. We also recognize that under the necessary budget changes and spending procedures and priorities that we were establishing, a large portion of the farm bill appeared and was a part of the Balanced Budget Act that we sent to the President, and the President vetoed it.

That has placed American agriculture, in my opinion, in a very precarious situation. While they have worked with us through the year of 1995 in numerous hearings that the Senate Agriculture Committee, on which I serve, participated in, we began to hear a very clear message from American agriculture that current policy was not serving it as well as it should, that there was a great desire on the part of production agriculture to progressively move to the market and produce to market trends and market ideas instead of to the perpetuation of farm programs.

Now, recognizing that, we also saw the clear importance that that transition American agriculture was talking about come in a way that all could live with. None of us wanted to shock the market. None of us, more importantly, wanted to create any kind of economic catastrophe in agriculture across this country. As a result, the Senate, in a very bipartisan way, worked diligently.

We also have the mandate of the Senate Budget Committee to meet the criteria of the budget. That was to find additional savings for the year and then to spread those savings out over the 7-year period of the Balanced Budget Act to arrive at some 40 billion-plus dollars' worth of savings. All of that was accomplished. Of course, all of that was for naught when the President decided to veto that most important piece of legislation.

Recognizing that that did not happen and that clearly American agriculture now has been asking us on a very regular basis over the last month, "What are you going to do?" it became important here in the Senate and in the House—the House acting yesterday—to mark up their version of the farm bill, and the Senate in the past week attempting to bring procedure forward,