

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who seeks time? The Senator from North Carolina.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. FAIRCLOTH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there be a period for the transaction of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

Mr. FAIRCLOTH. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

VA-HUD APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, one of the pleasures and honors I have in this body is to serve as the chairman of the appropriations subcommittee that funds veterans' programs, housing, as well as environment, space, science, and emergency management.

On the veterans side, we have a very heavy responsibility to the people who, in my State and throughout the country, have been willing to put their lives on the line to protect our freedoms, and I think they deserve the best that we can give them. That is why in past years, I have been very disappointed and troubled at this administration's approach to funding for veterans' medical care. Quite frankly, they were willing to sacrifice these important programs, at least on paper, in order to pretend that they were reaching a balanced budget. I think that is just plain wrong.

I was also disappointed earlier this spring when the President and the congressional leadership proposed to take \$300 million out of veterans' medical care as a part of the budget agreement. I said at the time that we would not let that happen.

I am pleased to report that last night in a bipartisan, bicameral session, the Senate and House negotiators on both sides, Democrats and Republicans, approved a measure that provides more funding than the President, more funding than the budget agreement for veterans' medical care. The conference agreement that we hope will soon be signed into law provides \$17 billion next year for medical care for veterans. This level of funding ensures that we keep our promise of continued care to all eligible veterans.

We will also be able to continue our efforts to improve the VA medical system, which has been under great stress and which we hope is making progress toward more efficient, more effective, more humane care and treatment for our veterans who need care.

It is sometimes easy during peace and prosperity to forget temporarily the promises that we as a country have made to those veterans who were willing to risk their lives to protect us. I said throughout this budget process I did not intend to let us forget, and I hope we will move quickly to send this bill to the President.

In addition to the tough battles we fought in the veterans' medical care area and the difficult decisions we made, we had to make some tough decisions and take some difficult actions with respect to housing. Over the last several weeks, many elderly residents in public housing complexes in Missouri and I am sure in other States represented in this body, have expressed their deep concern about the possibility of their housing subsidies being ended.

HUD was required by law and did send notices to thousands of senior citizens across the country over the last few months telling them that their rent subsidies were scheduled to expire this fall. That is required by law. But for most of the seniors who received the notices, it is very frightening because it threatens to tell most of them they will no longer be able to afford their homes and will be forced to move.

I visited residences of complexes in St. Louis and Springfield, MO, and listened as the residents described their fears about losing their rent subsidies. I told them I would do everything in my power to help them stay in their homes.

I am pleased to announce once again that last night the House-Senate conference agreed to provisions that we crafted, that I crafted to protect elderly housing. During the years I have spent as a member of the Senate Banking Committee and now as chairman of the VA, HUD, and Independent Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee, I made preservation of affordable, low-income housing, especially for seniors, for the elderly, a top priority and a long-term commitment.

Unlike the administration which, for some reason, continues to emphasize the possibility of vouchers as a one-size-fits-all approach to housing needs of low-income families and the elderly, I believe that elderly housing complexes, which are good, safe places, comfortable for the elderly residents, should be maintained. Frankly, it is terrifying to seniors who may have lived 10 to 15 to 20 years in the same housing complex to tell them suddenly they must move: "Here is a voucher, go out and pound the pavement and try to find housing."

Mr. President, if you have visited these complexes, and I am sure you have them in your State as we have them in all of our States, all you have to do is go into one of those complexes and meet with the residents, many of them in walkers, using canes, in wheelchairs and think just a minute of giving those people vouchers and asking them to go out and look for housing.

What a ridiculous thought that is. We are not going to force them to go out and look for housing.

How many of us who have parents and grandparents or other relatives in elderly housing complexes want to see them torn away from their communities and forced to find new housing? I really believe that seniors should be treated differently from young persons eligible for subsidized housing.

While the trend in recent years has been to provide vouchers for recipients to use for housing of their choice in a variety of neighborhoods, many seniors—most of whom I talked to—prefer to remain in senior-only housing complexes. I think it makes sense for them to remain in communities where they have grown accustomed to living and have made friends and feel comfortable.

As chairman of the Senate appropriations subcommittee, I included language in the HUD-VA bill that was agreed to last night which does allow these seniors to remain in their homes, to remain in their complexes. Specifically, we provided for the renewal of project-based section 8 contracts at a rate affordable to the elderly.

Good, affordable elderly housing, more than just an example of a successful private-public partnership, is a community of people who live together and care about each other. We cannot afford to lose this type of housing. We cannot afford to lose the type of community this housing represents.

Washington sometimes loses sight of people and the importance of local communities. But I do not plan to let Washington lose sight of these elderly housing communities or the people who live in them now or in the future.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SANTORUM). The clerk will call the roll. The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DASCHLE. 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. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I will use my leader time to make a statement on a couple of issues.

TRIBUTE TO GEN. JOHN SHALIKASHVILI

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I have very mixed feelings about the decision announced yesterday at the White House. After nearly four decades of exemplary service to his adopted Nation, Gen. John Shalikashvili will step down as the top soldier of our Nation's military forces. We understand that by statute he is required to do so, but it does not make the reality any less of a disappointment.

With his 39 years of distinguished service, General Shali, as he has come to be affectionately known, has earned

the respect and admiration of men and women in uniform, the Nation and indeed the whole world. His brand of quiet, steady leadership will be greatly missed.

The General Shali story is as unusual as it is remarkable. Born in Warsaw, Poland, on June 27, 1936, John Shalikashvili was just 3 years old when Hitler's tanks rolled into his homeland. Five years later, Stalin's troops invaded Poland from the east. His family fled to Berlin, Germany, after World War II and then later moved to Peoria, IL, when John Shalikashvili was 16 years old. He graduated from Peoria High School in 1954 and received a degree in mechanical engineering from Bradley University 4 years later.

General Shali began his extraordinary military career in an ordinary way—as a draftee in 1958.

He graduated from officer candidate school a year later and was commissioned a second lieutenant in the Army. During the next 23 years, General Shalikashvili served in a variety of command and staff positions before becoming a brigadier general in 1982.

In addition to serving on the Army staff, Shali served in Germany as an assistant division commander in the 1st Armored Division. In 1986, he was promoted to major general, and, from 1987 to 1989, he served as Commander of the 9th Infantry Division in Fort Lewis, WA.

In 1989, he was promoted to lieutenant general and returned to Germany to serve as the deputy commander in chief of the Seventh Army. Then, in 1991, he was selected to command Operation Provide Comfort, the relief operation that returned hundreds of thousands of Kurdish refugees to northern Iraq.

In 1991, he became the Assistant to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and later served as the Supreme Allied Commander in Europe and the commander in chief of the U.S. European Command from June 1992 until October 1993.

On October 25, 1993, Gen. John Shalikashvili completed his rise to the top of the military. President Clinton appointed him to serve as the 13th Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. In that position, he has served as the principal military adviser to the President, the Secretary of Defense, and the National Security Council. During that tenure as Chairman, Shali was integral to the United States-led efforts to restore democracy in Haiti, enforce sanctions against Iraq, and keep peace in Bosnia.

His guidance, his commitment, and dedication truly made a difference in each of these and more than 40 other missions in which our troops participated over the last 4 years.

In addition to his extraordinary operational successes, the general has also made significant contributions to improving the Department of Defense. He was instrumental in adjusting our military forces to post-cold-war realities

and budget levels, always ensuring that the troops received the best equipment and training in the world.

There is not a single soldier in our military today who has not benefited from the concern General Shali has consistently displayed for his or her well-being. His commitment to improving the quality of life for those serving in the Armed Forces has been second to none, and I am sure that they, like the rest of their fellow Americans, salute him.

I think his Commander in Chief best expressed the high regard in which General Shali is held. In his comments at General Shali's farewell ceremony yesterday, President Clinton stated:

When future students look back upon his time, they will rank John Shali as among the greatest chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff America ever had.

Mr. President, on behalf of the U.S. Senate, the men and women in uniform, and millions of his countrymen, I concur with President Clinton's assessment and thank General Shali for his 39 years of service to his country. I wish him and his wife, Joan, the very best as they begin a new chapter in their lives in the State of Washington.

THE COMPREHENSIVE TEST BAN

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I come before the Senate this afternoon to talk briefly about the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty submitted to the Senate by President Clinton last week. This treaty represents another useful and important step toward reducing the spread of nuclear weapons. I stand ready to do all that I can to ensure that the Senate considers the CTBT in a timely manner and votes to allow the United States to join 145 other signatories of this treaty to put an end to nuclear testing.

It was on July 16, 1945, at a site called Trinity in the desert near Alamogordo, NM, that the United States conducted the first test of an atomic bomb. In a fraction of a second, the detonation not only released over the isolated test site an amount of energy equivalent to what we consume in the entire United States in 30 seconds—it also changed the world. The nuclear age had loudly begun. For decades to come, humanity would be forced to grapple with the consequences borne out of what occurred at Trinity.

Much has happened since that first test in the New Mexico desert.

The United States was quickly joined in the nuclear club by Russia and several others. We saw the onset of the cold war and an arms race between the United States and the Soviet Union. As each country strove to keep pace with the other, the United States and Russia engaged in a buildup of thousands of nuclear weapons with a destructive power unprecedented in human history.

The United States would go on to conduct more than 1,000 additional nuclear tests; and the Russians more than 700. Several other countries would

carry out a total of roughly 300 tests of nuclear weapons.

The Russians would test the largest weapon ever designed by mankind—a monstrous device that, in a split second, produced enough energy to power the entire United States for a whole day. At the height of the cold war, the United States and the Russians had deployed between them roughly 60,000 nuclear weapons.

Taken together, these frightening developments would make a four decade old comment by the preeminent scientist of the 20th century, Albert Einstein, even more poignant. Einstein played a large role in the conceptual development of the atom bomb. Moreover, in 1939, in a letter he sent to President Roosevelt, Einstein urged the President to begin a nuclear weapons program immediately. Later in life, after observing the early stages of the arms buildup and the development of ever more destructive weapons, Einstein commented, "I made one great mistake in my life, when I signed the letter to President Roosevelt recommending that atom bombs be made."

Fortunately, the outlook has improved markedly since the darkest days of the cold war. The United States and Russia have cooperated repeatedly during the past several years to reduce the nuclear threat. Each country has ratified the START I Treaty.

Following President Clinton's lead, the Senate ratified the START II Treaty, and we hope the Russians will follow suit by year's end. If START II is implemented, each side will reduce its strategic arsenal down to about 3,500 deployed weapons. In addition, once START II enters into force, Presidents Clinton and Yeltsin pledged to immediately begin negotiations on START III. Under the terms of the Helsinki agreement, START III would establish ceilings of as low as 2,000 strategic weapons.

While much has been done to reduce the threat posed by nuclear weapons, much remains to be done. And, President Clinton's submission of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty represents a useful step in the right direction.

The CTBT prohibits any test involving a nuclear explosion, regardless of the test's purpose, size, or location. On behalf of the United States, the President was the first to sign this treaty last September. He would subsequently be joined by representatives from more than 140 other nations.

We will soon hear from the usual critics of arms control, voicing objections to the treaty that are as predictable as they are likely. They will say the CTBT is unverifiable. They will say that it will lead to the inevitable erosion of our nuclear weapons capability. And, they will be wrong on both counts. Although we will have plenty of time to thoroughly address their objections in the days ahead, I will briefly address each of those criticisms.

As to the verifiability of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, this is a