

jobs—high paying jobs—I want to see us return to the issue of trade negotiating authority in the coming session of Congress. I want to see both Houses of Congress move on as broad a front as possible to secure our economic future.

Because of what is at stake, we must make progress where we can, regardless of how broad a consensus we can ultimately achieve. We need to address the reality of these impending items on the international agenda and define the strategy the United States will promote in each. That does not give us the luxury of waiting until a final consensus has been reached on every issue raised in our recent debates. We need to be able to make an impact now and I will be working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to ensure that we do.

As for building a stronger bipartisan consensus for the long run on trade, my sense from our debates is that there are a number of important issues that need to be examined. They need to be examined in a way that would excise the politics and help us all understand the dynamics at work in an increasingly global economy. We need to develop a mechanism for addressing these issues, helping us resolve our collective concerns, and allowing us to move forward in a way that will benefit all working Americans. I intend to work closely with my colleagues toward this end in the coming months.

Let me conclude with words of praise for each and every Member of this body. I believe that we have shown incredible leadership ourselves on an issue of the utmost importance to America.

I know we share a common goal of a stronger American economy that benefits all working men and women. In the months ahead, let us unite in an effort to resolve the differences between ourselves in order to remove the roadblocks that stand between us and that common goal. Let us pull together in this coming session of Congress to redefine the debate in terms of the progress we can make together toward our ultimate objective.

Based on the Senate's record in the past, I have great confidence that we can and will take that step forward to embrace a brighter American future. I thank my colleagues for their efforts over the recent weeks, and look forward to the opportunity to rejoin them in pursuit of the greater good for all Americans in this coming session.

Mr. President, I make a point of order that a quorum is not present.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. GRAMS). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

MAURICE JOHNSON

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I want to take a few minutes to recognize the

work of a man who has been a real asset to this institution. He has many fans in this room, both here on the floor of the Senate and up there in the press gallery. His name is Maurice Johnson, Superintendent of the Senate Press Photographers Gallery. He is retiring this year after nearly 30 years.

What a perspective—30 years of life in the Senate through a photographer's eye. Maurice has seen the entire range of congressional milestones, celebrations, inaugurations, investigations, and, of course, occasional legislation. He has taken part in sharing those events with the world, helping in many ways to ensure that the media coverage has run smoothly. No one has yet found a corner of the Capitol for which Maurice doesn't know the best angle and lighting.

Maurice is a voice for all photographers who cover the Senate day to day. As liaison between the Senators and the photographers, he has been an effective adviser, advocate, and coordinator.

He has been most helpful to my staff and to me over the past year and a half as we have adjusted to our leadership role. I thank him for his graciousness always under all circumstances.

We should not forget that Maurice is an accomplished photographer himself. He captured history as he covered the administrations of Presidents Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson and Nixon. Many of the images that we have from national political campaigns and conventions are Maurice's work. Some assignments must have been less like work than others, though. Photography for him has included the Redskins games or the U.S. Open golf tournament. Sometimes it has been the Miss America pageant. It certainly seems to me he hasn't exactly always had a tough day at the office. It sounds like it has been fun.

His talents have been rewarded by a steady stream of awards that have names like "Best Picture of the Year" and "First Prize." He has been honored nationally for single photos, for his work in the Senate Photographers Gallery, and for the entire span of his career.

At a recent reception in Maurice's honor, the room overflowed with colleagues, friends, and family members who conveyed their affection and high regard for him. Now, as the session draws to a close, I want to take the opportunity to let Maurice know how much we in the Senate appreciate him and his work. I am sure my colleagues join me in thanking him for his many years of dedication. We wish him, his wife Lanny, and their children, Keith and Maureen, well.

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

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

ABSENCE OF DEBATE

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I noted on Monday of this week that the administration had taken an important step on drug policy. I think, however, it was very much a misstep, and I do not think the administration played fair in doing it. Each year, the Congress requires the administration to submit a list of countries to be considered for certification on drug cooperation. This is called the Majors List.

The list serves as a basis for considering whether the countries listed have fully cooperated with the United States to control drug production and trafficking. It is this list that the President then considers for certification on March 1 of each year.

This year, and in keeping with what seems to be a tradition with this administration, the list came up to the Hill very, very late. Because of this and because of the history of tardiness, I decided to send a message to the administration, one that seemed necessary to get their attention. So I put a hold on several ambassadorial nominations to send the signal that Congress takes compliance with this certification law on the Majors List very seriously. After more than a week's delay, we finally received the list. As a result, I removed my holds, but the list as a document contains an omission that deserves careful notice.

Left off the list were the countries of Syria and Lebanon. Not just left off, but what does that mean, "left off"? In this backhanded way, the administration decided in one big step to certify these two countries as somehow fully cooperating with the rest of the world, in this case the United States, on drug policy.

Let's think about this for a moment. Syria has been decertified for over 10 years. Syria was not certified even during Desert Storm or Desert Shield when it was one of our allies in that war. Lebanon has just received a national-interest waiver—a decertification with somehow a get-out-of-jail-free card. Now, without debate or without substantive explanation, the administration has simply left these two countries off the list. This is a momentous change in policy. It reverses years of consideration, and it appears to ignore considerable evidence.

In the letter forwarding the list to Congress, the President makes two arguments for doing this. Neither argument stands up well.

The first argument seems to advance the idea that because Syrian and Lebanese cultivation of opium has dropped below 1,000 hectares, that this act alone justifies a reconsideration of their being on the list.

It may justify a reconsideration, possibly, but it hardly justifies backdoor certification, and this is backdoor certification. Even the State Department's own annual drug report makes

it clear that both Syria and Lebanon remain major transiting countries for drugs. This criterion alone is enough to qualify for inclusion on the Majors List, but the administration then advances the argument that this is somehow OK, because the drugs do not come into the United States. There seems to be some belief in the administration that this is a justification for not keeping these two countries on the Majors List. However, it is apparent the administration does not read the law or doesn't even read its own reports.

But even if the facts supported removing Syria from the list, which they do not, the Congress deserves to be briefed on this momentous change beforehand. Israel and other European allies deserve notice of this dramatic change of our policy. The American public deserves a chance to understand the change. This did not happen. Instead, what we have is indirect certification. As a result, Syria will now escape serious consideration next March, despite evidence of significant trafficking and production of these illegal drugs.

When my staff first learned of the prospect of the change in policy, I told them to indicate to the State Department that this would be a very, very big mistake. I hoped that the Department would not take the step that they took.

I was of the opinion, however, mistake though it was, that if the administration wanted to proceed well, then it was their call. I did not extend my hold on the ambassadorial nominations to cover the issue of Syria, and I withdrew my hold on these nominations as soon as the list was delivered, late though it was. But this list raises yet another concern.

What we are left with, days before Congress adjourns, is a roundabout certification of Syria. I believe, as I said before, that such a decision is a big blunder. The way it was done does not do justice to the issue or the process of certification.

If it had not been done this way, imagine for a moment how the issue would have been handled. Next year, in February, the administration would have to make a decision to certify Syria or not based on the merits. It would have to make a case to Congress at that point and even to the public at that point for such a move. There may be some who believe that in that more straightforward environment, the same decision would have been made, but I doubt it.

With time to reflect and to consider, to publicly debate the issues and the facts, I seriously doubt that this administration would have certified Syria as fully cooperating in drug control. So not wanting to face the music, the administration did this behind-the-scenes two-step instead. I hope the administration will reconsider, and I hope that my colleagues will join me in signing a letter to the President asking him to relook the issue.

I ask unanimous consent that a copy of that letter by myself from this body and Congressman J.C. WATTS, who is leading the effort in the House of Representatives, be printed in the RECORD.

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

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
Washington, DC, November 13, 1997.
THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES,
Executive Office of the President, The White House, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: We note with concern that you have not included Syria and Lebanon on the annual Majors List sent to the Congress. By this act, you have, in effect, certified Syria as fully cooperating on drug control issues. The arguments advanced in your transmittal letter to Congress, however, seems to be based on assumptions supported neither in the relevant law or by the facts. Even should the facts justify the decision to ultimately certify Syria and Lebanon, however, we are also concerned about the method by which this momentous decision was reached. This change in policy and approach was not discussed with Congress nor was there an effort made to establish the justifications for this action. Instead, the decision was made in a most indirect way at the end of the Congressional year, thus precluding debate or public discussion of the issues.

For these reasons, we hope that you will reconsider the decision to place Syria and Lebanon on the Majors List. That change will then provide the Administration, Congress, and the public the opportunity to discuss the merits of this decision publicly, with ample time to reflect on the justifications for such a decision.

Sincerely,

CHARLES E. GRASSLEY.
J.C. WATTS.

NEED FOR HIGHEST STANDARDS FOR INSPECTORS GENERAL

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I spoke a week ago about the necessity of the inspector general of the Treasury Department to resign. I want to continue that discussion, because she has not done that yet.

Next year is going to mark the 20th anniversary of the Inspector General Act of 1978. In my experience, inspectors general are an important function of our system of checks and balances. Whereas committees of Congress may not have the time or inclination to perform rigorous oversight, which happens to be our constitutional responsibility, the inspectors general offices are there full time with nothing else to do.

I have worked very closely with many IG's. For the most part, they are good at what they do. The IG Act has been a tremendous success. Hundreds of billions of dollars have been saved by inspectors general.

At the same time, rarely has the IG's integrity been called into question. That is, at least until now, Mr. President. The integrity of the inspector general of the Treasury Department, Valerie Lau, has been called into question.

The Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, chaired by Senator SUSAN COLLINS, held 2 days of hearings just

last month. The subcommittee found that the IG broke the law twice and violated the standards of ethical conduct. These violations involved the letting of two sole-source contracts, one to a long-time associate of hers. In addition, her office improperly opened a criminal investigation on two Secret Service agents. In that matter, at least one key document was destroyed—just plain destroyed. And that indicated a coverup.

Furthermore, the inspector general provided false information to Congress. And that is a no-no for anybody, but particularly for somebody charged with looking out to see that laws are faithfully enforced and that money is properly spent. Of all people in the bureaucracy, the inspector general should be most careful.

The irony in all of this is, the IG is supposed to stop this kind of activity, not commit it. Yet that is what Valerie Lau did.

Mr. President, the charge that IG Lau violated these legal and ethical standards is not conjecture. It is not someone's opinion or judgment. They are simple facts—concrete facts. They are findings. They are findings of a subcommittee of the Congress of the United States. They are found in conjunction with the independent and non-partisan General Accounting Office.

Bad enough that these violations occurred by a watchdog, a watchdog whose job it is to deter such actions, but this IG's reaction is even more troubling. She agreed that they were technical violations of law, but she thinks that her actions were justified.

The Treasury IG is one of the most important of all inspector general positions. Perhaps it is the most important. The Treasury IG oversees 300 employees, many of whom are law enforcement officers.

How in the world can we allow an IG who violated the law twice and who is in denial about committing the violations to continue to perform the important functions of inspector general? How can the public, how can the Congress, how can even her own employees have confidence that she knows the difference between what is and what is not the law?

Her responsibility is to catch those who break the law. That is what an inspector general is supposed to be doing. How can she do that given her own actions and her responses to the findings of the General Accounting Office?

Ten days ago, Mr. President, immediately after Senator COLLINS' hearings, I called, as I said previously today, for Inspector General Lau's resignation, citing all these aforementioned violations. I cited the need for the IGs to be beyond reproach, to have the highest standards of integrity and credibility and conduct. The public's trust and confidence in this inspector general has without a doubt been undermined.

Today, I renew my call for her resignation. If the Treasury IG does not