

Quite frankly, I do not think that people in the Senate should be holding her hostage. They may agree or disagree with a particular Executive order by the President. I do not come here to debate that, although I agree with the President on what he has done. But the point is, it is just absolutely outrageous to hold her hostage, and it is time to free her. It is time to let Alexis Herman, who is eminently well qualified to be Secretary of Labor, become Secretary of Labor.

Please remember, this is a Cabinet-level position connected to the concerns and circumstances of the vast majority of people in this country who are focused on living wage jobs, who are focused on employment conditions, and who are focused on being able to make a decent living for their children, who are focused on economic security for themselves and their families. This is no small position. It is time to let her go forward.

Mr. President, I know that if that does not happen, we will have a major confrontation here in the Senate and I wish we would not have to have it. I hope we do not get to that point, but really it is time to let her free and it is time to no longer hold her hostage.

DISASTER RELIEF

Mr. WELLSTONE. My last point, Mr. President, which is again related—and I see my colleague from North Dakota has now come to the floor—is that one of the things I hope we will do next week—the sooner the better and I hope we will do it right—is, please, colleagues, help all of us out from the States of North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota and some other States as well. Many of the people who we truly love have just been devastated by this flooding. It really seems of Biblical proportions. It is unbelievable what has happened.

We are now trying to put together a disaster relief bill to enable people to get back on their own two feet, to be able to rebuild their lives, and to rebuild our communities. The bill that is coming over from the House Appropriations Committee takes us in that direction, but we have to do better on the Senate side. This is, of course, evolving. We do not know the extent of the damage yet. But I ask my colleagues, I plead with my colleagues, please give us all of your support. We are going to have to especially make sure that we get the assistance directly to individuals.

For a lot of our small businesses that have been completely wiped out, completely wiped out—people have just lost their homes—right now we do not have near the direct grant assistance we need, and some of the loan programs just will not help them get back on their feet. All of us are working very hard on this. This is truly an example of there but for the grace of God go I.

Every time there has ever been a disaster relief bill come to the floor of the

Senate, I have never hesitated to support it because I always know that this could happen to anybody.

Nobody in South Dakota or North Dakota or Minnesota asked for this. People did not ask for their towns to be under water, did not ask to lose their homes, did not ask to be refugees, and did not ask to have their small businesses wiped out. If there is ever a role for Government, it is to try to help people that really need help.

Mr. President, I just urge all of my colleagues, please, help us out, Democrats and Republicans alike. Please let us do well for the people in our States. This is something that I think really, truly should and must unite all of us together.

Mr. President, with that, I yield the floor.

Mr. CONRAD addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota is recognized for 10 minutes.

Mr. CONRAD. I thank the Presiding Officer.

DISASTERS IN NORTH DAKOTA

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I rise today to again update my colleagues on the extraordinary set of disasters that we have experienced in my home State of North Dakota.

As the President knows, we have had really an extraordinary set of events. First of all, the toughest winter in our history with over 10 feet of snow that fell in North Dakota, the most we have ever had, followed by, in the first week of April, the most powerful winter storm in 50 years that saw nearly 2 feet of snow fall in much of the State. It was accompanied by an ice storm that took down the electrical grid for 80,000 people in my State who were without power for a week.

On top of that, there were 70-mile-an-hour winds that were devastating. Then we followed that with a flood that has been termed a "500-year flood." But we are now told in testimony yesterday the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration indicated it was a 1,000-year flood.

In the midst of all that, the city of Grand Forks, a city of 50,000, is almost entirely evacuated, the largest evacuation of a city that we have seen in the United States in anyone's memory. Virtually the entire city, 95 percent of the city, has been evacuated and have been told they may not be back in their homes for as much as a month.

Truly an extraordinary set of events.

Today, I would like to thank President Clinton for traveling to North Dakota to see the devastation firsthand. I would also like to thank the Cabinet officials who traveled with the President, including Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala. Donna has a twin sister who lives in North Dakota and so has a special interest and concern about our State.

Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman was there. Housing and Urban Develop-

ment Secretary Cuomo was there, and Transportation Secretary Slater. I said to Secretary Slater, who has been there three times in the last 3 weeks, that he about qualifies for paying North Dakota income tax he has been there so often. And, of course, the head of FEMA, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, James Lee Witt, has also been there three times in the last 3 weeks. We deeply appreciate the help that he has brought to our State.

Also with us were high officials of the Corps of Engineers, who have waged a valiant fight. Let me just say that they were fighting this flood in 83 spots up and down the Red River Valley. They won many of those battles. We lost a fight in Grand Forks, but I want to make clear it was not because the corps did not wage a valiant and heroic effort. I think everyone in our State would say the Corps of Engineers has just done a superb job.

Mr. President, we now face the difficult task of recovery. We will be considering a disaster supplemental bill in the committee next Tuesday.

I want to just share briefly with my colleagues photographs from Grand Forks and from other parts of eastern North Dakota so people can see for themselves what has happened.

This shows part of downtown Grand Forks. As someone said to me, it looks like Dresden after the firebomb. After the flood completely swamped the city, 90 percent of the town was flooded, a town of 50,000 people. A fire then broke out that burned much of three blocks of downtown Grand Forks.

As you can see, this is one of the buildings that was gutted. Included in buildings that were destroyed were the newspaper, Grand Forks Herald, which has already announced plans to rebuild, and also the largest bank was destroyed. So we have had just one set of extraordinary occurrences after another.

I talked to one man who called me. He said, "Senator, I'm over in Detroit Lakes, MN. My home has been destroyed. I did not have flood insurance because I was outside the 100-year flood plain. Nobody thought there was any threat to us. My business has been destroyed. All of my inventory is gone. I was trying to reach my insurance agent to find out if I had any coverage, but of course I have no idea where he is. He's been evacuated to some other town."

He said, "I tried to call my banker, but my bank burned down. So I have no idea what the status of my accounts are there in terms of what's happened to receipts. I have 80 employees, and I'm responsible for their livelihood. I have no idea where they are. They were evacuated to different towns."

He said, "My wife turned to me when we were considering all this, and she said, 'Well, you know, let's remember what's important. We have our lives. We're healthy. And we can come back.'"

That is the attitude that has pervaded this community. I am just going

to say how proud I am of the people who have that attitude—that we are going to rebuild, we are going to come back. But it is not going to be easy, Mr. President.

This picture shows a wider shot of the fire devastation. Here you can see an entire row of buildings that are absolutely gutted. By the way, they have already started the process of tearing down these buildings even though the flood water remains.

This is a picture taken in the residential district. It shows a house that has been floated right off of its foundation. There are thousands and thousands of homes flooded in this community. Ninety percent of the community—I think roughly 12,000 homes—many of them are absolutely destroyed. They are up to their eaves as you fly over much of this community. All you see are rooftops, and many homes have been forced right off their foundations.

The pressure and the current running here looks placid. It looks placid, but in fact there is a very strong current. My colleague, Senator DORGAN, just took a boat tour with the Coast Guard. They told him if anybody falls out of this boat, you are in deep trouble because the current is so strong it will suck you right down. So these are the conditions that people are having to deal with in Grand Forks.

This is another shot down one of the streets leading to the University of North Dakota. You can see these vehicles are completely engulfed in the flood water. As Senator DORGAN said, as he went in this boat, at one point they hit something, and they realized they had gone over a car in this boat as they went through the flood waters. In some places the water is 10 feet deep.

This is a picture of a church and graveyard. This is not in the city. This is out in the country. This shows how widespread the flooding is. This is miles from the city of Grand Forks. Yet you can see on the gravestones how deep the water is. And it is still there.

This is a shot, and the last picture I will show, and it perhaps is a little hard to make out because it is a shot that was taken and provided to us by CBS News. I took a CBS News crew with me on a helicopter tour north of Grand Forks. This is something that is an untold story. The focus, understandably, has been on Grand Forks because of the remarkable set of events there. The untold story, now told by CBS News because they were the first to see it, is what has happened north of Grand Forks. Perhaps it is hard to make out. But what you are seeing here, as far as the eye can see—and we are up in a helicopter; this is a picture taken out of the helicopter—as far as the eye can see, it is water.

It is the most remarkable thing I have ever seen. We were at many places as we flew north from Grand Forks, which is 75 miles from the Canadian border, and we flew within 8 miles of the Canadian border. The entire way

the river has expanded—not just river flooding but overland flooding from the extraordinary snowfall. The combination has led to a body of water 30 miles wide. As far as the eye can see, it is water.

You can see, here are some roads that are built-up roads. These are roads that are on raised elevations. You can see where they are flooded as well even though they are 3 to 4 feet above the farmlands. So you can see this water is 3 to 4 feet deep, in some places as much as 8 feet deep, and 30 miles wide. It is simply extraordinary.

Mr. President, I will end the presentation there just to say we will be considering the disaster supplemental next week. I ask my colleagues to help us pass that expeditiously and to provide the assistance that is so desperately needed, not only in North Dakota but neighboring Minnesota and South Dakota as well.

I thank the Chair and yield the floor.

Mr. KENNEDY addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts is recognized for 20 minutes.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, first of all, I thank our friend and colleague from North Dakota for his excellent presentation. All of the citizens in that part of the country have the extraordinary admiration, I think, of all Americans, certainly my region of the Nation, for their determination and courage and perseverance in facing this extraordinary act of nature.

We just want you to know from our area of the country that we want to cooperate and help and assist and will support your initiatives and other initiatives to try to help and assist the people who in so many instances lost so much but still have not lost their spirit. So we are full of admiration for their inner strength and for their resolution. I think all Americans have been very moved by what has happened out there, and we are eager to try to provide whatever help and assistance we can.

I thank the Senator very much for his statement.

TOBACCO NEGOTIATIONS

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, in the short weeks since negotiations to settle litigation against the tobacco industry began on April 3, 28,000 more Americans have died from smoke-related illnesses and 69,000 children in the United States began smoking. One in three of these children will eventually die prematurely because of their tobacco addiction. That is the magnitude of the harm that cigarettes have caused in just 22 days.

The well-documented history of deceit and misrepresentation by the tobacco companies should make any Member of Congress extremely skeptical about the industry's good faith in these negotiations. No industry in America has a worse reputation than tobacco, and no industry in America

has done more to earn such a highly negative image.

The tobacco industry has knowingly peddled an extraordinarily addictive drug to the American public for decades. It has targeted children with massive advertising and marketing schemes designed to hook them on smoking. It has concealed the harmful ingredients in their products. And it has repeatedly lied about its activities to Congress and the Nation.

Just last week, we learned from one of the Liggett documents that the major tobacco companies knew as early as 1958—1958—that smoking caused lung cancer. Given this record of deceit and manipulation, our current skepticism of the industry is clearly warranted.

Research by the Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University has revealed that the harm the cigarette companies have done has extended even beyond the extraordinary death and destruction their product creates directly. Cigarettes are a very significant gateway drug leading to cocaine and heroin addiction. Children who smoke are 12 times more likely to use heroin. Children who smoke are 19 times more likely to use cocaine. Even worse, the younger the children are when they begin smoking, the more likely they are to move on to illegal drugs.

It is not because their executives are suddenly experiencing pangs of conscience over their past behavior that the tobacco companies have initiated these settlement negotiations. The real reason is obvious. Big Tobacco desperately needs a strategy to avoid huge judgments for smoking victims in pending court cases, to evade massive public disclosure in those cases of the industry's scandalous behavior, and to prevent effective new Government regulation of the industry.

The industry sees that the tide is finally turning against tobacco. The combined efforts of the Food and Drug Administration, State attorneys general, public interest litigators, and public health advocates have had a dramatic impact. The Liggett settlement has already exposed some of the industry's darkest secrets to public scrutiny. Each new public survey shows an overwhelming majority of Americans view the industry as evil.

At long last, courts are about to hold tobacco companies financially accountable for decades of injury to individual smokers and the public treasury. We have crossed the Rubicon in the war against tobacco. And the industry knows it. That is why Philip Morris and RJR Nabisco have come to the table seeking a cease-fire. They want to purchase peace at the lowest possible price, with the smallest possible change in their malignant behavior.

That does not mean we should be unwilling to talk. It does mean we should not loosen our grip on the regulatory and litigation steps which have brought the tobacco industry to the negotiation table. We should hold firm to