

and there are no signs that the upward spiral will abate. Before the Persian Gulf war, the United States obtained approximately 45 percent of its oil supply from foreign countries. During the Arab oil embargo in the 1970's, foreign oil accounted for only 35 percent of America's oil supply.

Anybody else interested in restoring domestic production of oil by U.S. producers using American workers?

Politicians had better ponder the economic calamity sure to occur in America if and when foreign producers shut off our supply—or double the already enormous cost of imported oil flowing into the United States—now 9,391,000 barrels a day.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I will have a unanimous-consent request momentarily with regard to calling up Calendar No. 84, S. 924, the Department of Defense authorization bill. We have been in communication with the Democratic leadership and Senators on both sides about our desire to call up this legislation. We do have some concerns on both sides about some provisions that are in or not in it. But I want to withhold on making that request just for one moment.

I had, also, as a second consideration, hoped that we could get up the intelligence authorization bill this afternoon. We are asking the Armed Services Committee to continue to work on that and consider that as something we would like to try to do this week if at all possible. But we are still working to get that cleared.

We will ask consent later on this afternoon to go to S. 923, which would deny veterans benefits to persons convicted of Federal capital offenses. I believe we can get that done this afternoon. Senator SPECTER has been working on that. I understand there are Senators on the other side of the aisle having some input. I believe we can get something worked out on that this afternoon. It is something certainly we should do.

UNANIMOUS-CONSENT REQUEST— S. 924

Mr. LOTT. With that, Mr. President, I do ask unanimous consent that the Senate now turn to the consideration of Calendar No. 84, S. 924, the DOD authorization bill.

Mr. GRAMM addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. GRAMM. Mr. President, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. LOTT. I regret we have had this objection to proceeding on this very important legislation, the Defense authorization bill.

The Armed Services Committee in the Senate has worked very hard on this legislation. It is urgently needed to this extent: Until we can get the authorization bill through the complete process, it makes it difficult for the defense appropriations subcommittee to do its work. So timing is important.

We would like to get this authorization bill done at the earliest possible opportunity so it can get on into conference and so that the defense appropriators will know what the authorization numbers are. It is important for our country.

It is my understanding that a major issue of contention is still being discussed with respect to the depots and bases that could be affected by it or will be affected by it in Texas, in Oklahoma, in California, in Utah, and Georgia. There are a lot of Senators on both sides of the aisle and on both sides of this issue that are very concerned about how it was handled in the committee.

So I have urged those on both sides of the aisle to work together and see if we cannot come up with something that is acceptable to both sides. It will not be easy. This is not a new issue. We went through this in a way in the base closure rounds.

We had debate and amendments on it last year. So everybody knows the arguments on both sides. I still believe that there is a way that we can come to some compromise language that would allow us to go forward.

The Senators are exercising their right to object to waiving the 2-day rule or calling up the bill to go straight to debate and amendments. But I hope that they will not do this for very long, because we have our work to do.

So I understand there is a meeting that will meet again, perhaps today, this afternoon at 5:30, on this issue. We had a preliminary meeting on it in my office yesterday. I will be glad to work with both sides. I want a resolution to be found. But I am not inclined, as I discussed with the distinguished Senator from Kentucky, the acting minority leader, here—I want Senators to be able to exercise their rights, and I want to be helpful with that, but I also think at some point, if you cannot work out something, if you do not work out something, then we will have to use the rules of the Senate to move this very important legislation forward. But I would like everybody to get an opportunity first to work together, and you know we are losing some time here. Every day that goes by that we do not take it up, it means that it already looks like it could be the week of July 7, 8, before we could actually get this legislation completed. I just wanted to make those points.

I understand Senators on the floor now would like to be heard on this issue. I would like to yield the floor so that they could make their statements.

I yield the floor.

Mr. FORD. Mr. President, will the majority leader yield just for a question?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The acting minority leader.

Mr. FORD. Once the statements are made by those who have objected to bringing up the Department of Defense authorization bill, how long will they go, and what kind of schedule would we have? How soon will we get to the so-called veterans bill?

Mr. LOTT. As soon as we can get the agreement worked out. I believe they are working on it right now. We hope by the middle of the afternoon we will have something ready to go on that.

Mr. FORD. Put us in morning business?

Mr. LOTT. We will probably have morning business, but I do know also there are Senators, a number of Senators, who probably want to speak on this issue at hand. Maybe we will let them talk a little bit and they will feel better and we will find a way to move this bill forward.

Mr. FORD. The leader knows and we all know at some point it will.

Mr. LOTT. Right.

Mr. FORD. It is the will that will move it.

Mr. LOTT. Yes.

I yield the floor.

Mrs. HUTCHISON addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, my colleague from Connecticut asked if he could take 3 minutes. I am happy to give him 3 minutes.

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

The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. LIEBERMAN. I thank the Chair. I particularly thank my friend and colleague from Texas for her graciousness, and her graciousness will allow this Senator to find his way to his daughter's school to watch the moving-up ceremony. I appreciate my good friend, the Senator from Texas.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I am very pleased to hear that the daughter of the Senator from Connecticut is having her moving-up ceremony, because she is a special friend of mine and I think she is a potential future Senator from Connecticut. So I am glad that he is going to be able to make that important ceremony. He will give her my regards, I hope.

THE CITY OF JERUSALEM

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, yesterday we passed the State Department Authorization Act by a vote of 90 to 5. Today there is comment on the bill that we passed yesterday in the Washington Post regarding particularly the sections of that legislation that deal

with the city of Jerusalem and the recognition of Jerusalem as the undivided capital of Israel.

In this article, the State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns is quoted as saying:

Our view is that Jerusalem is the most emotional and complex issue that Israel and the Palestinians will have to deal with in the permanent status negotiations. We do not believe it is wise for the United States or any other outside country to make an initiative on Jerusalem that in effect prejudices that issue.

Then later on in the article, the writer of the article says:

The State Department regards Jerusalem as "disputed territory" with its permanent status to be settled in negotiations and has kept the U.S. embassy in Tel Aviv.

Mr. President, I want to respond very briefly to that and say that the suggestions made by the State Department spokesman in my opinion are wrong. The commentary by the reporter does not recognize the fact that in the Jerusalem Embassy Act of 1995—both Houses of Congress passed and it became law—is a provision that not only directed that our Embassy be placed in Jerusalem instead of Tel Aviv thereby doing what we have done in every other country but one in the world, which is to have our Embassy in the city in which the host country had designated as its capital. But, Mr. President, in that bill—that bill now law—this Congress made very clear its intention that it is American policy to recognize Jerusalem as the undivided capital of Israel. We, in fact by strong bipartisan majority, adopted a resolution a short time ago on the 30th anniversary of the reunification of Jerusalem restating that position.

So, Mr. President, this may be controversial. But trust is built up among parties, including those who are involved in the Middle East process, including Israel, the Palestinians, and other countries. Trust is built on honesty. And honest reflection of not just American policy but American law as adopted by this Congress in 1995 is that Jerusalem is the undivided capital of Israel.

It is time, therefore I would say, to bring our policies in line with our law; that time for the statements such as those made by the State Department spokesman in my opinion respectfully has passed.

I appreciate very much again the graciousness of my friend from Texas for allowing me to say this.

I thank the Chair.

I yield the floor.

Mrs. HUTCHISON addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 1998—PUBLIC-PRIVATE COMPETITION OF DEPOT MAINTENANCE

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I thank the majority leader for stating

his concerns here. I notice the distinguished committee chairman is also here.

I think it is very important that the rights of Members be upheld here because there is a significant issue that is very important to the Department of Defense for the readiness of this country that is at issue in this bill. Hereofore, our side has not really had any ability to have an accommodation or to make sure that what the Department of Defense wants to do, what BRAC allowed them to do, in fact they will be able to do. Because in the bill that would be brought before us, it vitiates any public-private competition for depot maintenance work by the Air Force. That is the effect of this bill.

To think that someone, for parochial interests, would put language in a bill that would do away with what BRAC said to the Department of Defense was their option, which is to go out and spread the workload to other depots from the bases that are closed, or privatize in place, the Department of Defense should be able to make the decision based on the efficiency of taxpayer dollars and where we need the defense dollars to go. The Department of Defense should be able to make that decision. That is what BRAC said.

The Department of Defense made the decision. They said it would be more efficient and save more money to privatize in place. They are doing public-private competition to make sure that the price is better. Yet the bill that would come before us says they cannot do any of that work, privatize in place, until the depots get the work and are up to 75 percent of their capacity. Well, that is impossible, because some of those depots may not ever get to 75 percent capacity, nor does that have anything to do with efficiency.

So, Mr. President, yes, we are standing on principle. We are standing on the principle that the Department of Defense should be able to have a public-private competition, to save taxpayer dollars and to put those defense dollars into readiness. We can save millions of dollars for the taxpayers and for the Department of Defense. And those millions of dollars, rather than being wasted, can be put into equipment that will keep our troops safe and secure.

We are standing for the integrity of the BRAC process. We are standing for the integrity of the Department of Defense and for their ability to make their decisions without congressional mandates that cause the waste of millions of dollars for the taxpayers and for the young men and women who are putting their lives on the line to protect our freedom. That is what this issue is.

So, yes, Mr. President, we are objecting. We hope to find an accommodation. I will say that the distinguished chairman of the committee wants to find an accommodation that will give the Department of Defense the flexibility they need, that will do right by the

taxpayers of this country, that will do right by the people who are in our Armed Services, and that will do right by the depots that are still left in Oklahoma, Utah, and Georgia.

We want something that will be fair to everyone. And when we come to that fair conclusion, then we will be happy to debate this bill and hopefully authorize a good defense bill. But, Mr. President, make no mistake, if there is not a defense authorization bill that can be worked out that can be fair, I hope that we will not go forward putting shackles on the Department of Defense and wasting taxpayer dollars.

I hope we will have the strength to resist that.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I want to associate myself with the remarks of my colleague from Texas, Senator HUTCHISON, who I thought really homed in on why this issue is so important. I am very pleased the distinguished chairman of the committee is here because it gives us an opportunity to speak with him about why we are so frustrated about this bill as it now stands.

Mr. President, it would be a historic moment if this bill were to pass because it would, for the first time ever, overturn a BRAC decision. Now, we all know that when the four base closure rounds went through Washington, DC, many of us were not happy with the process. Many of us felt the savings were overstated. Many of us felt this was not the right way to go. But not one of us, until today, moved to undermine a BRAC decision.

By objecting to this bill, we are taking a stand, it seems to me, for the integrity of the process. After all, this is the law of the land. This is just the kind of unraveling we do not want to see happen, because if this effort succeeds to overturn BRAC, to stifle competition between the private sector and the public sector with respect to depot maintenance, where will it end? Tomorrow, someone else will try another unraveling, and the day after, someone else will, and we will have chaos.

I want to say, Mr. President, there are two other reasons why this bill as drafted is so harmful. Not only does it unravel the Base Closure Commission's decisions of the past but it undermines a promise made to the people in the Sacramento area and the people in Texas who will be so adversely affected. There was an explicit promise by the President of the United States that privatization in place could take place at McClellan Air Force Base. There was also a promise made by Congress that such privatization in place could move forward at McClellan. After all, Congress passed the BRAC, so, therefore, we would be breaking a deal, a sacred deal, really, made with these people who were told that privatization in place could, in fact, occur.

Lastly, Mr. President, I thought we were all really concerned here about