

and saying in the 21st century our kids will have the same opportunities.

There are some things we have to commit ourselves to as a nation. That isn't being done here. Instead, we languish in this debate, lost in the minutiae about local control and forgetting the big picture. The American people expect Congress to understand the challenges our Nation faces for the next century. It is not reflected in the debate on the budget or in the appropriations bills.

We have talked about school modernization, we talked about smaller classroom sizes in K through 4. Let me discuss another critically important topic: Quality teachers, men and women who will become professional teachers who are good at it—not to take what is left over from college or high school, but to take the very best and brightest and put them in a classroom to spark in each kid that feeling of creativity and learning which those who are blessed to have such teachers have experienced. Yet we don't have that commitment.

The President has said: Invest in teachers. Make sure they have a chance to have their skills improved. Hold them accountable for what they do in a classroom. But make sure to bring these young men and women into the teaching profession.

We can turn on the television almost any night and see the exposés about education in America where, unfortunately, some people are in classrooms and they shouldn't be there. The vast majority of teachers are good, hard-working men and women. We can help them improve their skills and keep those who are not good out of the classroom with a commitment in Washington that we just haven't seen during the course of this year.

The last point I will make is on after-school programs. I have been mystified by the fact we are still caught up in a mindset that is, frankly, old fashioned, a mindset that says children start school at the age of 6 and school lets out at 2:30 or 3:00 in the afternoon and we take 3 months off in the summer. This might have made sense at some point in time. It doesn't make sense in today's America. Six years of age is a good age to put a child in a classroom, but 5 is better; 4 may even be better. There might even be learning experiences for those younger who are now in a day-care setting.

Ask any teacher, if they could add a year in education, where would they add it. It isn't at the end of 12th grade but at the beginning, kindergarten or before. The teachers say: Give me a chance to mold that child before they come into the classroom, and I will show you a better person and a better student.

Yet our commitment to preschool programs, our commitment to programs for the earliest ages, just isn't there. We ignore it. We act as if it isn't a reality. We know it is. A younger child in a learning situation is a child more likely to be a good student.

Classrooms adjourning each day at 2:30 or 3 o'clock in the afternoon made sense when Ozzie and Harriet were at home with milk and cookies waiting for the kids, but not in today's America. More parents are working; kids are going home to empty houses and getting in trouble after school.

One might ask, Why doesn't the schoolday reflect the family day where parents might get home at 5:30, 6 o'clock, or after? Some schools adjust to that. Some schools provide that. Some schools need help. We have yet to come up with any suggestion here on Capitol Hill about afterschool programs responsive to the needs of today's working families. I suppose taking summer vacations off was an idea that made sense in my home State of Illinois. After all, the kids did have to go work on the farm. But out of a State of 12 million people, we only have 75,000 farm families. Those children should be in another learning experience, another supervised experience so they are better students. If they are falling behind in reading and math, let them have remedial work during the summer. If they are good students, give them enrichment courses, teach them a musical instrument, or something new about science. Introduce them to computers. All the options and possibilities are there. Yet when you bring that up on Capitol Hill, you would think you were speaking a foreign language. People just cannot quite understand what we have to do with it.

I think we have a lot to do with it. That this Congress has been so derelict when it comes to the issue of education is a suggestion to me that we just don't get it. We are not listening to American families who identify education as their highest priority. We certainly are not reading history, which tells us education made the 20th century the American century because of our commitment to education.

Make no mistake about it; other countries around the world, in Europe, in parts of Asia, are starting to move forward. These are tomorrow's competitors. These are the people with whom our children will have to be ready to do business and with whom they will have to compete. If we are not prepared, they will pass us by. I don't want to see that happen to my children. I don't want to see that happen to this country.

The honest question we have to ask ourselves is, Does Congress get that message? If you look at the budget debate, it is pretty clear to me we have missed the point completely. We are now entangled in this terrible budget debate with the President. Thank goodness the Republican Party has abandoned this \$750 billion or \$800 billion tax cut for wealthy people. They took that out in August. They were going to go home with it and explain to the American people why this was the real important thing to do for America's future. It fell on its face. It had about as much popularity as the new Coca-Cola.

They came back and said: We have given up on that idea. Maybe we will do it next year.

I hope they have walked away from it. But in abandoning that bad idea, why don't they pick up on a good idea like education? Why don't they join us in making certain the education funding bill is one that really is a source of pride rather than a source of embarrassment. At this point, unfortunately, we have seen that bill delayed. There have been absolutely no hearings on it and absolutely no effort being made, no initiative being shown, when it comes to improving education for the next generation.

I think the American people rightly give us that responsibility and ask us to meet it. It is a responsibility that should be shared on a bipartisan basis. The things I have suggested are not radical Democratic ideas. The things I have suggested I think would appeal to families of Democrats, Republicans, and Independents—all families who care about the future of their children.

I yield the floor hoping the debate soon will turn to these issues such as education, issues which most American families consider to be one of our highest priorities.

DEPLORING THE ACTIONS OF PRESIDENT CLINTON REGARDING GRANTING CLEMENCY TO FALN TERRORISTS—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. COVERDELL. Will the Chair advise the Senator the order of business?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. It is S.J. Res. 33.

Mr. COVERDELL. This is the resolution by Mr. LOTT, myself, and Mr. BROWNBACK, deplored the actions of the President of the United States regarding the granting of clemency to terrorists called FALN?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. That is supposed to be the order, yes.

Mr. COVERDELL. I thought it was interesting to make note of the business before the Senate at this moment. With that in mind, I yield up to 5 minutes of our time to the Senator from Kansas.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

Mr. BROWNBACK. Mr. President, I would like to talk about the business that is before the Senate because I think this is critically important. There were a number of allegations made in the last speech that I think deserve to be refuted, but what is presently before us, what has taken place, is something that needs to be addressed before the American public.

I rise in support of the resolution condemning the President's actions in granting clemency to 16 terrorists. I want to be clear what I am talking about: 16 terrorists who were members of the Armed Forces of National Liberation, FALN. The President's condition for releasing these men was that

they would be willing to say they would not use violence anymore. This is a standard that I think would easily be met by almost everyone in prison in America today. The condition is a sham. The FBI, the Justice Department, and the Bureau of Prisons all recommended strongly that these terrorists not be released. Yet the President went ahead and released these terrorists.

The sad part about this is this administration claims to understand that terrorism is one of the greatest threats facing America. And it is. We see that threat towards the United States being posed and acted upon in many places around the world. It is only because of our own abilities that we have been able to stop some of this. Yet some of it has still gotten through.

This act of the administration of releasing these terrorists will have the effect of encouraging terrorism. They are repeatedly telling us they are bringing terrorists to justice and that is a high priority. How is this act of releasing terrorists compatible with fighting terrorism? By his actions, the President is sending a message that, in fact, he does not take terrorism seriously, that it is OK to kill and maim American people. After all, the President may pardon you even when there is no petition of clemency before him.

This encourages terrorism. We should be very clear about that. At a time when terrorism is a great threat to our peace and prosperity, at a time when terrorism has touched everywhere in this Nation, at a time when Americans face terrorist threats all around the world, the last thing we should do is grant clemency to convicted terrorists. I believe Congress should be standing up to tell the President, as well as the Nation, that we strongly condemn pardoning terrorists who have killed and shown no remorse whatsoever. Whatever the reason the President took this action, it is clear the pardon was not based on the merits, and by carrying through with this he severely damaged our leadership in the world fight against terrorism.

The FALN carried out more violence than any other terrorist group in the United States. They pose a direct threat to the safety of American citizens on American soil everywhere. Yes, these convicted terrorists have spent some time in jail, but the acts these people committed were the most heinous and should not seem less so simply because of the passage of time. A fair court system found them guilty and punished them accordingly. Nothing they have done or said since then can justify their unsolicited release.

Making concessions to terrorists is wrong and it is very harmful to us as a country and as a people. In so doing, the President has made a mockery of all the administration's tough talk about terrorism and the need to combat it worldwide. This is an action that should be roundly condemned.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. COVERDELL. Mr. President, how much time remains on our side?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia has 6 minutes and 40 seconds.

Mr. COVERDELL. Mr. President, ever since the introduction of this resolution which basically put the Senate on record, if passed, we were deplored the action of the President commuting the sentences of 16 known terrorists, in this timeframe, the White House so far has refused to allow any of its representatives in the Department of Justice, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, its own White House, or the Bureau of Prisons to testify before any congressional hearing. It was as late as 9:30 p.m. last evening that the testifier from the Federal Bureau of Investigation called our office to decline to testify. In other words, there is a total blackout at the White House.

The vote that occurred on the House side had 71 Members of the other side of the aisle voting "I am here," refusing to make a statement. This debate in the Senate will have soon been 2 hours long. So far, on the other side there has been only one sentence discussed about this national issue of the President commuting the sentences and releasing 16 known terrorists. One sentence in the entire debate has come from the other side. Mr. President, 71 of their Members in the House simply voted they were in Washington, and the White House has refused to make any comment and refused to allow any of the administration to testify.

Mr. President, this book, "Patterns of Global Terrorism, 1998," is published by the State Department of the United States. It was published in April of this year. On the first page it says:

United States policy with regard to terrorism.

And the first statement is:

Make no concessions to terrorists and strike no deals.

These 16 terrorists have been given the concession of being released from prison, and the entire process was one of dealmaking and negotiations among the White House and representatives of the terrorists and the terrorists.

The question is the incongruity with the administration as well as our Government's policy with regard to terrorism.

The second premise is:

Bring terrorists to justice for their crimes.

We are in the midst of sending 16 of them from prison out into the population, again with no real assurance—in fact, we have already seen some signs that they would not recant terrorist activities.

The President, in a rather tortured effort to explain—that these folks were not the ones who actually dropped the bomb or fired the weapon has already been alluded to by Senator HATCH, chairman of the Judiciary Committee—what they are trying to do is

set degrees. Under that theory, bin Laden, responsible for planting the bombs in Kenya and Tanzania, would somehow be in a more favorable position. To put it another way, if you are a successful terrorist, you are going to be in a lot more trouble than an unsuccessful terrorist because you were captured by the FBI before you set off the bomb.

In this very booklet published by the administration, it gives a definition of terrorism: "The term terrorism means premeditated"—we have concluded that—"politically motivated violence"—we have concluded that was the case—"perpetrated against non-combatants"—and I met the son who was 9 years old when his father was killed when he was simply having lunch in New York as a noncombatant—"by subnational groups or clandestine agents usually intended to influence an audience."

The point I am making is, all 16 whose sentences were commuted fit this definition to a T. They are terrorists. What does not match is the President's violation of the terms of how we deal with such people when it says "make no concessions" and he did, it says "and strike no deals" and he did. We can only hope and pray that law enforcement officers who were involved with this, families who were involved with this, are not now in harm's way, or the judge who sat in the adjudication of these cases and who was threatened to be assassinated by these people as he conducted the trial of the 16.

What a massive incongruity we face. We will shortly vote on this resolution. I very much hope this will be as successful as in the House so that international terrorists, law enforcement officials who put their lives on the line every day, and the victims of these terrorists will understand that the people's branch, the legislative branch of the U.S. Government, thinks these are the rules of the road when you deal with terrorists, that you do not make concessions, that you do not make deals, and that they are apprehended and, if apprehended, they are subsequently harshly dealt with and imprisoned accordingly.

The Presiding Officer is signaling me that my time is up.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CRAPO). Time has expired.

Mr. COVERDELL. That being the case, and no Senator from the other side is here to speak on their version of the issue, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

Mr. INHOFE addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Does the Senator withhold his request?

Mr. COVERDELL. I withdraw my request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma is recognized.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be recognized to speak as in morning business for up to 10 minutes.

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

Mr. INHOFE. I thank the Chair.

GRANTING CLEMENCY TO TERRORISTS

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I had been presiding and listened intently to the debate that has been taking place. I have a couple of thoughts which I think have not been addressed.

For one thing, we recognize that this has to have been politically inspired, that you do not offer clemency to known terrorists without some type of motivation to do so. If one has been watching the media and if one has been listening to this debate, one has to come to the conclusion that it was politically motivated. There can be no doubt about that. Of course, there are a lot of Puerto Ricans in the United States and in some of the States such as New York, New Jersey, and Florida, perhaps, who could determine the outcome of a vote. So we have politicians catering to them.

I suggest to you, Mr. President, that while this is onerous enough, this is not happening in a vacuum because at the same time people are going after this voting block by offering clemency, something else is going on right now, something that not many people are aware of, and that is, for the last 57 years we have been able to use an island called Vieques off the shores of Puerto Rico as a bombing range, as an amphibious training base. This is classified and characterized by the Navy, as well as the ground troops, as an imperative area for our training and our readiness.

I guess what I am saying is, there is no place else in the Western Hemisphere we can use for this kind of training. It is high-altitude bombing training and also amphibious training. What this also means is when we are about to deploy a ship such as the U.S.S. *Eisenhower* they will not be able to train because of a moratorium on training on Vieques.

How does that relate to this subject at hand? It relates directly in that the reason we are having problems with the range which we have used successfully for 57 years and which is an imperative part of our state of readiness is that it is unique, but they have stopped us from doing it through a moratorium because of the people of the island of Vieques. There are only 9,000 residents on this island who are saying, all of a sudden: Well, we decided we don't want to have bombing on the far end of this island.

This island is over 20 miles long. The bombing range is way over on one side. There is a buffer zone in between that is a national park on which we have spent literally millions of dollars to satisfy that handful of people who want us to abandon the range.

What do we have going on right now? We have people who are running for high office—and I do not think there is any reason to mention who they are at this time—going in and holding press

conferences in Puerto Rico, saying: We want to stop the bombing that is taking place on this range; we want to deactivate the range.

Those individuals who are running for office in Puerto Rico are going one step further. Right now, there are four groups of protesters. These protesters are down on the firing range, walking around where there are live ordnances on the ground, picking them up, throwing them around, and someone is going to get killed. Consequently, having witnessed this, when I came back I wrote a letter and made a phone call to Janet Reno, our Attorney General, to insist she apply the law to these trespassers to stop them from doing that.

I do not know what her motivation is, but she refuses to do it, and she is selectively interpreting and enforcing the law. I suggest that the Senator from Utah was correct when he said the Attorney General is asleep at the switch while the White House is running the Justice Department. We are allowing the White House to run the Justice Department insofar as clemency is being offered to these terrorists, but also running the Justice Department by not enforcing the law in getting these people out of harm's way.

I can stand on the Senate floor today and say that I believe someone is going to be killed, and when that someone is killed, it is going to be the fault of our Attorney General and her boss, the President, because they are selectively not enforcing the law at this time.

While it is bad enough we allow terrorists to go unpunished—we turn them loose on society; we somehow fall into this mindset that punishment is not a deterrent to crime for political purposes—it is even worse, in my opinion, to take away the one thing that is necessary, the most significant, an important training area, from our military in order to prepare to defend America.

So I think this thing has gone far enough, and I do believe it is politically inspired. I do believe that was the reason for the offer of clemency. I do believe that is the reason so many politicians right now are saying: Fine, we'll go ahead and close the range.

One last thing on the range. I know this message will get out to the right places when I say it. It is true that the people and the citizens of the island of Puerto Rico would like to have this range deactivated. But they also at the same time want to keep our facilities that are so significant in making contributions to their economies, such as Roosevelt Roads.

As chairman of the Readiness Subcommittee of the Senate Committee on Armed Services, I went out and told them I am going to do everything within my power—if they deactivate this range; and are successful in doing this, through the White House and the President's efforts—to do what we can to move those functions that take place in Roosevelt Roads, to deactivate that and bring those back to various installations in the United States that are only partially utilized.

So that is going out as a warning. I think it is time we take this whole thing very seriously and try, just for a while, to get politics out of this process which we have been discussing.

Lastly, yes, it is significant. We are talking about a President who has offered clemency to a bunch of people, some terrorists, who have inflicted crime on American citizens. When you stop and think about how the young people of America are looking at this and saying, "Well, I guess there's not anything wrong with participating in this kind of activity," this is morally wrong, and it should be stopped.

I yield the floor.

Mr. CRAIG addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Idaho.

Mr. CRAIG. I ask unanimous consent to speak up to 5 minutes in morning business.

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

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, the other morning on the "Today" show—which many of us wake up and listen to as it relates to the morning news or the late-breaking events—there was a Puerto Rican terrorist who the day before had just been released from prison under the clemency that President Clinton had granted him.

During that interview, he was consistently asked if he was remorseful, if he was concerned about the lives of American law enforcement officers that had been taken by him and other terrorists such as himself. In all instances, he did not answer.

He went on to speak of the cause and the movement and why independence was more important than anything else—independence as it relates to the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, not his personal independence. But never once did he speak in any tone that would suggest he was sorry, only that he was glad to be free. I think anyone who had been imprisoned by a court and found guilty would want that.

I listened to him and grew increasingly more angry—and I must use that word "anger"—at a President who is at this instant once again trying to have it both ways on an issue that I know the Presiding Officer and I are very concerned about—and that is the misuse of second amendment rights in our country by citizens of our country. And oh, by the way, that Puerto Rican terrorist is an American citizen, is a citizen of the United States by birth in the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. He was not a foreigner who knew nothing about our law; he was an American citizen who violated a Federal firearms statute.

When I say I speak with a certain amount of anger in me that we have a President who is living up to his double standard reputation once again in the twilight days of his administration, he is coming to the American people and saying: Give me more Federal firearms laws so I can enforce them and make the streets of America safer. If we have