

liberate the peace process, advance the cause of peace, and enable the issue of IRA decommissioning to take its rightful place as one of many reforms essential to the full implementation of the Good Friday Peace Agreement and the achievement of lasting peace for Northern Ireland.

Now the Irish and British governments and the political leaders of Northern Ireland must commit to implement all aspects of the Agreement fairly and fully, especially the critical provisions on reductions of the presence of British troops, reform of the police service, and equal treatment and equal opportunity for all of the people of Northern Ireland. Through this action, the IRA has enhanced the prospect for peace.

Sinn Fein President Gerry Adams' public call for the IRA to decommission its weapons was strong and bold, and I commend him for his leadership on this difficult issue at this critical time. This extraordinary breakthrough could never have happened without the skillful and constant leadership of Prime Minister Blair of Great Britain and Prime Minister Ahern of Ireland. I also commend President Bush and his envoy to Northern Ireland, Ambassador Richard Haass, for their skillful assistance in helping to break this extremely serious impasse.

I commend as well the leaders in Ireland, and Great Britain, and the U.S. who, over the years, have contributed so much to the beginnings and continuation of this all important peace process. They all deserve great credit for their vision and leadership in the cause of peace.

I am mindful of the extraordinary role of John Hume, who shared the Nobel Peace Prize with David Trimble. I can remember many years ago meeting John Hume, who at that time was a local political leader and who had exhibited extraordinary political courage.

His life has been one of commitment and dedication to peace. He played an instrumental role in securing the cease-fire. His voice for tolerance and understanding and his call for respect for the two great traditions in the north—the Protestant and Catholic faiths—have been eloquent.

He has recently retired as political leader for his party, the SDLP in Northern Ireland. His contribution to a political resolution of the conflict in Northern Ireland will be forever emblazoned in history.

All who share the goal of peace should welcome the action that has been taken today.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. NELSON of Nebraska). Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from North Dakota.

FUNDING OF A FARM BILL

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I rise today to talk about the question of funding a farm bill. A number of the commodity groups have written to leadership suggesting we do not have to worry about moving with expedition to deal with a farm bill this year because, they suggest, they have received a commitment from the administration, and I will quote from the letter:

The administration has provided assurances that the resources necessary to fund a farm bill above the current baseline will be available next year.

I ask unanimous consent that the letter to which I referred be printed in the RECORD.

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

OCTOBER 23, 2001.

Senator TOM DASCHLE,
Senate Majority Leader,
The Capitol, Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR DASCHLE: The following organizations would like to offer our thoughts on the current consideration of the farm bill in the Senate. To date, the debate has reflected the assumption that the additional funding for the bill provided in the FY-2002 Budget Resolution will only be available if the legislation is completed by the end of the First Session of the 107th Congress. This premise has led a number of interested parties to support a process that would limit the amount of time for consideration and development of a farm bill.

The Administration has provided assurances that the resources necessary to fund a farm bill above the current baseline will be available next year. In light of this commitment, we would support the Senate Agriculture Committee continuing a deliberative process with a goal of reaching Senate passage early in the Second Session of the 107th Congress. We believe that a careful and deliberative process will provide an opportunity for all parties involved to fully address the needs and implications of the next farm bill on U.S. agriculture and on consumers at home and around the world.

We believe it is also important to recognize that the attention of the Administration and Congress today is appropriately focused on conducting the war against international terrorism. Rushing the process of developing comprehensive farm legislation at this critical time without full and careful consideration could well result in policies and programs that do not effectively address today's needs.

Based on the Administration's support for a deliberative Committee process and the necessary levels of funding, we urge you to set a goal of finalizing the farm bill by the spring of 2002. We feel this schedule will enable all of us to address the needs of all farmers, ranchers, and other interested parties, and to chart a successful course for agriculture and consumers for years to come.

Sincerely,

American Soybean Association; National Cattlemen's Beef Association; National Corn Growers Association; National Chicken Council; National Pork Producers Council; National Sunflower Association; National Turkey Federation; United Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Association; U.S. Canola Association.

Mr. CONRAD. That assurance is meaningless. That assurance by the ad-

ministration that the resources are going to be available next year is meaningless. Why is it meaningless? It is meaningless because the administration plays no role in the writing of the budget resolution. That is purely a congressional document. It does not even go to the President. It is considered in the House and in the Senate, and it is conferred between the House and the Senate and it never goes to the President.

I am the chairman of the Senate Budget Committee. I want to alert my colleagues that anyone who believes the same amount of money is going to be available next year as is available this year is absolutely in a dream world.

I understand the Secretary of Agriculture has called Members in the last few days telling them money is not a problem, that she has been assured by the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, Mr. Daniels, that money is not a problem. Wrong. Money is a problem. Money is going to be a big problem. We have funding in the current year budget to write a new farm bill. We have \$74 billion over the so-called baseline with which to write a new farm bill. Those resources were provided because it was understood without additional resources we could not write an adequate farm bill because the so-called baseline is based on the previous farm bill that has proved to be such a failure. It has been a disaster itself.

If it has not been a disaster, why have we had to write four economic disaster bills in a row to keep our farmers from mass liquidation? That is what would have happened without the disaster assistance bills we have passed in each of the last 4 years.

The administration says—and these farm organizations people who they are supposed to represent send a letter to the leadership saying—the administration has provided assurances the resources necessary to fund a farm bill above the current baseline will be available next year? How much above the baseline? Seventy-four billion dollars above the baseline because that is what is available now.

So they are buying a pig in a poke? They are saying to those of us who represent farmers all across America: You just line up there and you wait and do not worry about it because we are going to have money above the baseline? Really? How do you know? Where is the money coming from?

Is it going to be \$74 billion, or is it going to be \$1 billion above the baseline? The administration would meet its supposed assurance if they provided \$1 billion instead of the \$74 billion that is available in the budget now.

I have never been so disappointed in farm organizations as in the farm organizations that wrote this letter to our leadership telling them do not worry about getting the job done this year because they have gotten assurances that the money is going to be there; that

some amount of money—they do not know how much—theoretically is going to be available and they have taken assurances from the administration, which plays no role in determining what resources are available in the next budget resolution to write a farm bill.

It is a dereliction of duty. I think they have let down the people who they purport to represent by sending up a letter like this saying: Do not worry about it, the money is somehow going to be there. I say to my colleagues, do not be fooled. The money is in the budget now. If we do not use the money that is in the budget now, it is very likely not going to be available next year.

When we write the next budget resolution, we are going to be facing a totally different circumstance than we faced in the spring of this year when we wrote the budget. Does anybody not understand that? Does anybody not see the dramatic transformation from a weakening economy, from a sneak attack on this country, from the need for substantial funds for rebuilding the country, for defending the Nation for counterterrorism efforts?

Somehow the money is going to come from somewhere to write a new farm bill. I say to my colleagues, there is money in the budget this year to write a new farm bill, and if we do not use the money that is available this year, you can forget that same amount of money being available next year. It is not going to happen.

The economy is weakening. That means less revenue. On the spending side, we are having to spend more money on defense, on counterterrorism, and on rebuilding those areas that were damaged in the attacks. That means everything else next year is going to be very squeezed. That means there is not going to be the same amount of money available next year to write a decent farm bill. Frankly, the money that has been provided in this year's budget is just barely enough to write a decent farm bill. It is, in fact, less—it will provide less than farmers have gotten each of the last 3 years. Not just a little bit less, substantially less; in fact, 26 percent less on average than they have gotten under the disaster assistance bills of the last 3 years.

So nobody should be under any illusion about the money being available next year. Nobody should be under any illusion. The administration is in no position to help with this problem because they have no role—none, zero—in writing the budget resolution that will be adopted next spring. So these farm organizations that have run out, supposedly representing their members, and told the leadership here, don't worry about getting the job done this year, have done an enormous disservice to their membership—enormous.

What are they going to say when we get to write a new farm bill next year and the money is dramatically re-

duced? What are they going to say to their members then, after counseling delay? What are they going to say to them? What is the administration going to say? Because this administration has made clear they don't want us to write a new farm bill this year; they don't want to spend the amount of money that is in the budget. Unfortunately, what that means is that the rural parts of this country, those that are dependent on agriculture, are going to be in very grave danger of being left out and left behind as we write, ironically enough, a stimulus package for the national economy.

These farm organizations that have written the leadership here saying the resources necessary to fund a farm bill above the current baseline will be available next year are giving very bad advice. They are wrong. They are just as wrong as wrong can be. It is really hard to understand how they would ever have written such a letter without doing their homework first because they have let down their membership.

Mr. DAYTON. Will the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. CONRAD. I am happy to yield.

Mr. DAYTON. I say to the distinguished chairman of the Budget Committee, who you might say was instrumental in getting this \$73 billion into the budget resolution for the sake of the farmers from North Dakota, Minnesota, and elsewhere across the country, I received one of these phone calls asking if we couldn't hold off on the farm bill until next year. It seems not coincidental that this letter follows that conversation by just a day, in fact, in my case.

I am wondering if the Senator from North Dakota thinks there is some connection with these organizations, that they have been persuaded somehow to write a letter. As you say, why would they be contrary to the interest of their own member farmers? As part of this desire of some, and I guess the administration, to delay a farm bill until next year, what do you think the consequences of that will be?

Mr. CONRAD. I say to my colleague, there is no question in my mind what the consequences will be. No. 1, substantially less money to write a new farm bill than the money left in this budget.

No. 2, that means a totally inadequate farm bill.

No. 3, that means hard-pressed farmers would be in even more serious shape because we failed to use the money that was available in this year's budget to write a farm bill that would strengthen their economic condition.

I want to make this as clear as it can be. They say they have received assurances that the resources necessary to fund a farm bill above the current baseline will be available next year.

No. 1, there is no statement there about how much above the current baseline. The current baseline was predicated on the old farm bill—the old farm bill that was a total failure, the

old farm bill that required us to write four disaster assistance bills in the last 4 years. This has no assurance that it is going to be the same amount of money that is in the budget this year. In fact, we know the administration doesn't want us to have the same amount of money. They have proposed a dramatic cut from what is in the budget this year to write a new farm bill. That is the dirty little secret.

They proposed a substantial cut. Instead of over the next 5 years \$40 billion being available, they have said only \$25 billion ought to be available. Guess what. You can't write a decent farm bill with \$25 billion when the money that is in this year's budget is already substantially below what we had the last 3 years to assist farmers at this time of economic crisis. We are already, in the funding that is in this budget, 26 percent below what has been provided in each of the last 3 years.

These farm organizations, somehow, got sold a bill of goods. I suspect it is from the Secretary of Agriculture, who is calling colleagues, trying to sell them the same bill of goods, telling them: Don't worry, the money is going to be available; we have been assured by the Office of Management and Budget.

Please, don't anybody be misled. The Office of Management and Budget has nothing, zero, to do with writing the next budget resolution. I am chairman of the Senate Budget Committee. I can tell you the same amount of money is not going to be available next year as is available now. If anybody will just do a quick reality check, they will understand that what I am saying is true.

No. 1, on the revenue side, the revenues are going down as a result of the economic slowdown and as a result of this sneak attack on the United States. The economy is weaker. It is generating less revenue, so less money will be available on that side of the equation.

On the spending side of the equation, the expenditures are going up, and up dramatically. There is more money to defend the Nation, more money for counterterrorism, more money for item after item that is coming to our attention as a result of this vicious attack on our country on September 11. Just a commonsense approach would tell you less money is going to be available next year—perhaps dramatically less money.

For anybody to suggest that they have an assurance from the administration—or anybody else who is outside of the Congress where these issues are decided—that resources are going to be available, they are not dealing with reality. They are not dealing with reality. For these farm organizations to send a letter to our leadership telling them, oh, don't worry about getting the job done this year with the money that is available in this budget because they have gotten assurance from the administration that the money is going to be available next year—they have

not done their homework. They have done an enormous disservice to their members, in my judgment. And I will say that to them directly when they come to see me about this farm bill. They have done an enormous disservice by telling people money is available, don't worry about it, when, with absolute assurance, we can see the money is not going to be available in the same amount that is available in this year's budget.

Mr. DAYTON. Will the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. CONRAD. Yes.

Mr. DAYTON. If I understand the chairman of the Senate Budget Committee correctly, in this body, the Senate, we have to pass a farm bill this year. Then do we also have to have it conferred and sent to the President in this calendar year as well, in order to protect these funds?

Mr. CONRAD. We do. The hard reality is this, in my judgment. In the budget resolution, those funds are available to us until the next budget resolution is passed. But there is another thing that is going to happen. In January of next year a new economic assessment is going to be made by the Congressional Budget Office, by the Office of Management and Budget, and it is going to show significant deterioration. That is going to change the dynamics very significantly, and that is going to make the ability to use this money in this budget resolution now to write a new farm bill much less real next year.

So nobody should be under any illusions. A lot is at stake for agriculture. This is not agriculture somehow separate and distinct from the rest of the economy because we know agriculture plays a key role, right at the heart of this economy. We know if agriculture is hurting, Main Street businesses are hurting. Certainly that is true in our State. Certainly that is true in the State of the distinguished Chair.

The irony is, right at the time we are considering writing a stimulus package for the national economy, we are getting advice to forget about writing a strong farm bill this year when we know the money that is available now will not be available next year. That is reality.

For these farm groups to write to our leadership and say to them, don't worry about it, we have assurances that the resources necessary to fund a farm bill that is above the baseline will be there next year, they have completely bought a pig in a poke.

I hope the members of these organizations will call their associations and ask them: What are you doing? What kind of advice are you giving down there? It is not advice that is good for the people you represent. This may be good advice for the administration. This may be the advice the administration wants to give. Why are they signing up for that? Why are they endorsing the administration's position when the administration is taking the posi-

tion that is totally counter to what is good for not only I believe the farmers of America but for the national economy?

One of the things the economists have been telling us about the stimulus package is that one of the most effective things you can do is get money into the agricultural sector because, No. 1, that money gets out quickly to the farmers and, No. 2, because there is such economic hard times for farmers.

We have the lowest farm prices in real terms in 50 years. That makes farmers have a greater dispensation to spend the money that is part of the farm program.

Mr. DAYTON. Mr. President, the Senator and I share a common border. I know our farmers are in a similar predicament. These dollars are going to be central to the survival of farmers in Minnesota, and I dare say in North Dakota as well.

It seems to me that somebody is playing a very dangerous game with literally the lives and the livelihoods of a lot of farmers in my home State of Minnesota, and I expect others as well. It makes me wonder who is looking out for whom here. How could it be there are those who are so active in trying to postpone action on a bill with the result being that farmers are going to receive less money. It will take longer one way or the other.

The bottom line, from what I hear from the Senator from North Dakota on the Budget Committee, is that they may be out of money entirely if we don't act this calendar year.

Mr. CONRAD. I believe these groups have been flimflammed. I do not know a nice way to say it. I don't think they understand how the budget process works—for them to be realigned on the representation from the administration about money that is going to be available in the next budget resolution. The administration doesn't have any role in writing the next budget resolution. That is written in the House of Representatives and the Senate. The administration has absolutely nothing to do with writing the budget resolution. That is what makes the resources available next year. Just a little bit of commonsense analysis would tell you that the same amount of money is not going to be available next year. Receipts are going down. Expenses are going up. That means there will be less money available.

When a budget resolution is written next year, there will not be anywhere close to this amount of money available for writing a farm bill. That puts all of the people who we represent in jeopardy. That puts their financial lives on the line.

For the farm organizations that are supposed to represent these very people to send up a letter such as this tells me one of two things: No. 1, either they have been totally hoodwinked about the budget circumstances we face next year, or, No. 2, they aren't thinking very carefully about who they have a

responsibility to represent. No. 3, perhaps they have just not done their homework and don't know the circumstances that we will be facing.

Mr. DAYTON. I know the time under the previous order is about to expire. I thank the Senator from North Dakota for sounding this alarm. I was not aware of this situation. I thank the Senator for making it very clear to the Members of the Senate and to farmers throughout this country what is at stake. My hope is that our colleagues will join with us in insisting that we have a farm bill passed so we don't leave our farmers back home seriously in the lurch.

Mr. CONRAD. I thank the Senator from our neighboring State, who is a member of the Senate Agriculture Committee. Already, just in the first months of his term, he has demonstrated a real commitment to family farmers, and also to an understanding of the budget process. I wish that same understanding had been evidenced by these farm organizations that sent this advice to the leadership that could be so very harmful to the very people they seek to represent.

I conclude by saying to my colleagues that we need to write the farm bill now. We need to use the money that is in the budget resolution now. No one should be under any illusion that this money is going to be available next year. Most assuredly it is not.

Let's be crystal clear about what is at stake; that is, the economic lives of tens of thousands of farm families.

FOREIGN OPERATIONS, EXPORT FINANCING, AND RELATED PROGRAMS APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2002

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 2506) making appropriations for foreign operations, export financing, and related programs for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2002, and for other purposes.

The Senate proceeded to consider the bill which had been reported from the Committee on Appropriations, with an amendment to strike all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

That the following sums are appropriated, out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2002, and for other purposes, namely:

TITLE I—EXPORT AND INVESTMENT ASSISTANCE

EXPORT-IMPORT BANK OF THE UNITED STATES
The Export-Import Bank of the United States is authorized to make such expenditures within the limits of funds and borrowing authority available to such corporation, and in accordance with law, and to make such contracts and commitments without regard to fiscal year limitations, as provided by section 104 of the Government Corporation Control Act, as may be necessary in carrying out the program for the current fiscal year for such corporation: Provided, That none of the funds available during