the Medicare surplus, because we're supposedly saving that money, too. That leaves $2.6 trillion—provided the projections are accurate, which they won't be.

The CBO hasn't put a cost on President Bush's proposed tax cut package. The package supposedly costs $1.6 trillion, but I'll bet that's way understated, which is typical of such things. And it doesn't include the impact of the feeding frenzy that will undoubtedly result with a big tax cut on the table. Remember what happened when the Reagan tax cuts were enacted in the early 1980s? In addition, Bush's campaign proposals are ''back-loaded''—they cost far more in the later years than in the earlier years.

The reason we used to have projected budget deficits as far as the eye could see and now have seemingly endless surpluses lies in the nature of projections—even those as sophisticated and intellectually honest as the CBO's. The CBO takes what's going on now, projects it forward and adjusts for things such as higher or lower interest rates or debt levels, or for programs such as Social Security. It assumes that discretionary spending rises at a fixed rate, which never happens, and that no major new changes in taxes will be enacted. If things are going well in budgetland, as they are now, projections will get better the further out you go. If things are going badly, the projections will get worse.

Now we come to Social Security, which contributes hugely to today's happy surplus situation but is projected to start causing trouble, big time, around 2015. That's not all that long after 2011, when the CBO's 10-year projection ends. In 2015, Social Security is predicted to start taking in less cash than it pays out, so it will have to start cashing in the Treasury securities in its trust fund. In remarkably short order, Social Security will start running 12-figure cash deficits unless something is done.

Until last year, the Social Security problem was projected to start in 2013, but it's been put off because the economy has been doing better than expected. That, combined with now-slipping fiscal discipline, is why the federal budget numbers turned around a few years ago. But if we go on a big tax-cut-and-spend spree, which seems increasingly likely, and the economy performs worse than now projected, we'll be back in the fiscal soup quicker than you can say ''fiscal responsibility.''

For now, I'm going to pass on what many people have taken as Greenspan's support for tax cuts. Even if you believe him to be semidivine, you can parse his public utterances as being cautious about tax cuts. (There is occasionally an advantage to having been an English major in college.)

Finally, despite 10 years of projected huge surpluses, the CBO predicts that the total national debt ($6.7 trillion) would be higher on Sept. 30, 2011, than it is now ($5.6 trillion.) That's because, even though publicly held debt shrinks to $800 billion from $3.4 trillion, the debt held in government accounts, primarily Social Security, rises to $5.9 trillion from today's $2.2 trillion.

So if we go on a tax-cutting and spending spree, don't be surprised to find us back in the soup a few years down the road. Don't say that you had no way to know. The Fed and the CBO were telling you the risks last week. You just weren't listening.

Mr. BYRD. I thank the distinguished Senator from Maryland, a very, very fine Senator, knowledgeable. He has had many years of experience. I thank him for his contribution today and for the articles which he has brought to our attention and which will be included in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD as he has requested. I value my association with the Senator, and I thank him very much.

I yield the floor.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. NELSON of Nebraska). Morning business is now closed.

UNITED NATIONS PEACEKEEPING ASSESSMENT ADJUSTMENT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will now proceed to consideration of S. 248 which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 248) to amend the Admiral James W. Nance and Meg Donovan Foreign Relations Authorization Act, Fiscal Years 2000 and 2001, to adjust a condition on the payment of arrearages to the United Nations that sets the maximum share of any United Nations peacekeeping operation's budget that may be assessed of any country.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that it be in order for me to deliver my remarks seated at my desk.

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

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, the pending legislation makes a small revision in the United Nations reform legislation approved by Congress in 1999 known as the ''Helms-Biden'' law.

This legislation justifiably used the leverage of the United States to press for reforms, by linking payment of the United States' so-called ''U.N. arrears'' to specific U.N. reforms. And it was the product of bipartisan cooperation in the Congress, cooperation between the Executive Branch and the Congress, and cooperation between the United States and the United Nations. And it worked, thereby producing millions of dollars in savings to the American people.

The Helms-Biden law gave the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, Richard Holbrooke, the tools he needed to negotiate much-needed reforms, ranging from restoring the membership of the United States to the U.N.'s administrative and finance committee, known in the rarified language of the U.N. as the ''A-C-A-B-Q'', to the adoption of results-based budgeting.

But the most important reforms restore an equitable burden-sharing for the enormous cost of operating the United Nations.

This was achieved by reducing the U.S. share of the U.N.'s general budget and its peacekeeping budget. In painstaking negotiations, the U.S. faced opposition not merely from increasingly affluent non-Western nations, which were clinging to their cut-rate U.N. assessment rates, but from our rich NATO allies as well.

Ambassador Holbrooke succeeded in persuading the United Nations member countries to reduce the U.S. share of the general U.N. budget to 22 percent, which was specified by Helms-Biden. This was the first reduction, in more than 28 years, in the American taxpayers' bloated share of the U.N.'s budget.

Similarly, Ambassador Holbrooke persuaded U.N. member states to agree to a new scale for assessments for U.N. peacekeeping.

This was an even more complicated undertaking because it required convincing several nations to give up the big discounts they had enjoyed for the better part of thirty years, when they were regarded as so-called ''developing'' countries.

Our friends Israel, South Korea, Hungary, Estonia, and Slovenia were among those who gave up those discounts. We should be grateful to them—I certainly am—for their willingness to do that.

On the other hand, some other nations in the Middle East and East Asia—which have become rich in recent years—dragged their feet—and shame on them.

But when all is said and done, the U.N. put in place a six-year plan to reduce what the U.N. now says the U.S. owes for peacekeeping.

Here's how it will work. The U.S. share of peacekeeping costs will drop: from 31 percent to about 28 percent in the first six months of 2001; and then, Mr. President, to about 27½ percent in the second half of 2001; and then, Mr. President, to about 26½ percent in 2002; and then, Mr. President, down to approximately the 25 percent benchmark specified in the Helms-Biden law.

Now then, Mr. President, when all this is fully implemented it will eliminate at least $170 million each year from the amount that the United Nations had billed the American taxpayers.

While this does not quite meet the Helms-Biden specification of a 25 percent peacekeeping dues rate, not yet, at least, it comes close.

That is why Senator BIDEN, Senator WARNER and I have offered this legislation to propose making a relatively small change in the arithmetic of the original Helms-Biden law.

Based on the clear prospect of U.S. peacekeeping dues moving down to 25 percent in the coming years, we propose to agree to releasing the Year 2 dues payment of $582 million to the United Nations immediately—in recognition of the savings already achieved for the American taxpayers.

This $582 million payment is the largest of the three phases of arrears attached to reform conditions in the Helms-Biden law—and for good reason: the toughest conditions imposed upon the United Nations by the Helms-Biden law were included. These conditions have already been met largely, and I believe, in response, that the Senate should now reward the enormous

progress made in New York last December when the U.N. adopted most of the Helms-Biden benchmarks agreed to when I met with Secretary-General Kofi Annan when we met shortly after he took office at the U.N.

I emphasize that the United States does not owe the United Nations one dime more than 25 percent of the peacekeeping budget.

In fact, in 1994, Senator Bob Dole led a bipartisan effort to institute a cap on how much the U.S. would pay to the U.N. for peacekeeping. That year, a Democrat-controlled Congress passed, and President Clinton signed, a 25 percent cap on the U.S. share of the U.N. peacekeeping assessment.

I see no reason to abandon that bipartisan policy. Some may argue that, in addition to releasing the Year 2 arrears, we should remove that cap as well. I cannot and will not agree to that, though there may be a way that Senator BIDEN and I can work out to do something.

We are already taking an important step by releasing $582 million in arrears.

But we must not (and will not if I have anything to do with it) concede that the United States expects, in the coming years that the U.N. will ultimately reach the 25 percent rate mandated by Congress in two separate pieces of legislation.

In any event, the Helms-Biden reform benchmarks are working, which brings us to the issue of: what next? What are principal remaining agenda items for the Congress regarding the U.N.?

First, the Congress must continue to take public note of the size of the U.N. budget.

There will of course be a major campaign in the U.N., and even by some in the American foreign policy establishment, to allow the U.N. to increase its budget.

Congress must make sure that those seeking another explosion of budgetary growth at the U.N. are stopped dead in their tracks. It is one thing to allow adjustments in the U.N. budget for inflation and currency fluctuations. But Congress must not allow the floodgates for rampant bureaucratic spending to be opened. Fiscal discipline at the U.N. will remain a priority for Congress.

Specifically, we need to focus on the biggest outrage in the U.N.—the bloated public information bureaucracy. The U.N.'s ''PR bureaucracy'' is, quite simply, out of control. I agree completely with Ambassador Holbrooke's assessment made to the Foreign Relations Committee this past January 9, when he declared (and I quote):

> The Office of Public Information must be cut. It still has over 800 people. And I believe that is inappropriate. . . . And that should be one of the next major campaigns. . . . We need to attack the Office of Public Information and its over-padded structure.

I say again, I wholeheartedly agree.

Finally, Congress must keep a vigilant eye on plans to remodel and expand the U.N. headquarters in New York. The so-called ''U.N. Capital Plan'' estimates that it will cost more than $1 billion. The United States—the American taxpayers—will be asked to pay for at least 25 percent of that.

I've asked the General Accounting Office to conduct a thorough study of the U.N.'s plans for the renovation. GAO's initial judgment is that the project will end up with major cost overruns well beyond the billion dollars estimated in the ''U.N. Capital Plan.''

And that U.N. plan calls for interest-free loans from the American taxpayers. New York City will be called upon to transfer even more land to the U.N. as a gift.

Before building plush new offices for U.N. bureaucrats, let's first make sure that all of the reforms called for in the Helms-Biden law are completed first.

For the moment, Mr. President, we are at an encouraging stage in U.S.-U.N. relations. The exchange of visits between the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and ambassadors on the U.N. Security Council last year in New York and Washington had a positive impact.

I believe this exchange gave the U.N. Ambassadors a greater appreciation of the role of the U.S. Congress in shaping our nation's foreign policy. It certainly gave Senators a better understanding of views held at the U.N.

I'm told that the exchange of visits helped bring about the diplomatic achievements of December of 2000 to reform the U.N.'s assessment scales. That kind of cooperation is certainly welcome.

Mr. President, I must conclude. But before I do, I must note that any worthwhile and meaningful cooperation with the U.N. depends upon firm leadership by the United States—and particularly the United States Congress. Almost every reform that has been enacted by the U.N. in recent years was mandated by the Congress of the United States.

Some at the U.N. will always object to so-called Congressional ''micro management'' of the U.N., and will chafe at the United States Government seeking to ''dictate'' reforms. But, Ambassador Holbrooke put it aptly in his final appearance before the Foreign Relations Committee:

> What I discovered was that since people assume the United States is overbearing and arrogant anyway, it is better to say what the U.S. view is. . . . America should be unafraid to say its views. . . . We were persistent. And sometimes to the point of being regarded as a little bit obnoxious, but not arrogant. And we got the job done. And I think that can be a model.

Mr. President, the Foreign Relations Committee and I believe, the American taxpayers, are grateful to Ambassador Holbrooke for a job well done. Needless to say, Mr. President, I hope the Senate will support the pending legislation.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, I have been asked to make this unanimous consent request. I ask unanimous consent that at 3 p.m. today the bill be advanced to third reading and final passage occur at 3 p.m., with no intervening action, motion, or debate; the time between now and 3 p.m. be equally divided between the two managers; and paragraph 4 of rule XII be waived.

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

Mr. HELMS. I thank the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, before I begin, let me, as we say in the Senate, be afforded a personal privilege. I want my colleagues to know and the American people to know that this was accomplished not merely because of the hard, industrious, and imaginative efforts of Ambassador Holbrooke, but this was accomplished primarily because of the Senator from North Carolina. He has been resolute in his commitment to saving the American taxpayers' money. He has been resolute in his commitment to preventing waste, and he has been forthright in his assertion that when U.S. interests are at stake, we should speak up. That is precisely what he did here with regard to the United Nations.

As a consequence of his insistence, although this is called Helms-Biden—and I am proud to be a cosponsor of it and am proud to have worked all along with the Senator from North Carolina—but it was his insistence that we condition our commitment to pay what we agree were the arrears, not what the U.N. asserted was the amount of the arrears, upon some serious and genuine reform at the United Nations. Again, it was his insistence on saving the American taxpayers' money if it didn't have to be spent.

The result that no one anticipated from his efforts—maybe he did; most didn't; and I was not certain it would turn out this way—has been that not only are the very folks upon whom conditions were forced not angry but they are probably happier with U.S. participation in the United Nations today than at any time in the last probably 15 years—at least the last decade.

Senator HELMS demonstrated that there was nothing venal, nor was it an attempt at retribution, nor an ideological assault upon the United Nations when he opened this gambit by introducing the legislation and immediately inviting the members of the United Nations to come to Washington, DC, to speak before and meet with the Foreign Relations Committee. I may be mistaken, but I don't think this was ever done before. I don't think at any time in the existence of the United Nations was there a wholesale invitation to the Security Council to come to the U.S. Foreign Relations Committee.

The amazing thing is, they all came. They came gleefully. They were slightly skeptical. This was as a consequence of the Senator from North Carolina having first spoken to the Security Council.

Again, I don't know how many Senators have addressed the Security Council in the Senate, and I don't know if he was the first, but I know he preceded me, and I can't think of anyone else in my memory who has done that. He went to the United Nations and in his typical southern gentlemanly fashion was bluntly forthright about his objectives.

I remember at the time reading in the press some fairly harsh criticism of his assertions, assertions made in his gentlemanly manner in New York. Again, almost everyone was wrong because they anticipated the response would be a further freezing, rather than thawing, of the relationship between the United States and the United Nations. A vast majority thought the U.N. would deny us the right to vote because we were not paying our dues.

My colleague, although we arrived the same year, arrived with more wisdom than I did. My colleague, once again, demonstrated that he knew what he was doing. A very close friend of his and a man who actually was a former Democratic State senator, I am told, worked with Senator HELMS in years gone by. This man was a public delegate to the United Nations and from North Carolina at the time.

I will never forget, and I don't think anyone ever anticipated they would see, a dinner in New York, organized by our Ambassador, to honor Senator HELMS. If I am not mistaken, originally something on the order of 100 invitations were sent out, and yet close to 140 Ambassadors of the 180 nations showed up in the large ballroom of a large hotel in New York City to honor the man many in the press and other places wanted to vilify.

I never thought I would live to see the day when I saw Senator JESSE HELMS, Henry Kissinger, Ambassador Holbrooke, Mr. Belk, the public delegate from North Carolina, and the U.N. brass have their picture taken in the middle of that ballroom wearing blue U.N. caps. That was a bit of an epiphany for me.

I was sitting at the table with the German Ambassador. My table had at least three members of the Security Council sitting there. I was amazed to watch what happened. Everyone looked somewhat bemused and amused, and then I noticed all these very dignified diplomats, among the highest ranking persons in their governments, lining up very tactfully, as if they really weren't wanting a picture, to have their picture taken with Senator JESSE HELMS.

Now, I don't know if Senator HELMS expected that—I don't think he did, knowing him. I cite it not to be humorous, not to say this was sort of interesting simply because it happened, but to point out that because of Senator HELMS, for the first time in the 28 years I have been here, there is a genuine sense of warmth, there is a degree of trust, there is a greater openness that has occurred between the U.S. and the U.N. as a consequence of his insistence in saving the American taxpayers money.

I reluctantly went along with the conditions, as my friend from North Carolina knows. I had no doubt the reforms were needed. I thought we should pay the back dues and then prospectively insist on conditions in the future. It was a distinction with some difference.

However, I expect we will have people come to the floor and say the way we finally went was the wrong way to go about it. I point out when we were debating this, and I ask my friend from North Carolina to correct me if I am wrong, I don't remember anybody else who supported the U.N. that garnered one single penny in back dues.

I remember saying to a very significant former Member of the House who was upset with the Helms-Biden approach: I will withhold pushing this. I will give you a week if you can come back to me and tell me you are able to raise one single cent in the House of Representatives to pay the back dues; I'll withdraw.

The point was, everyone talked about the pure game, the purity of doing it the ''right way,'' which leads to the second point. I have served with my friend too long not to understand he has a very healthy skepticism of international organizations. Not a hostility, skepticism. I have served with him too long not to know that he has a skepticism for international agreements made with people who have histories of not keeping international agreements. And I have served with him too long to underestimate his ability to know how to get things done. He knew better than most of us that even if he thought there should be no conditions—which he thought there should be—that you weren't going to get anything done here. You had to bring along a significant portion of the House and a significant minority in the Senate who didn't even want to pay the back dues; didn't want to pay anything, conditions or not.

So as the old saw goes over the last 30 years, anyway, just as only Nixon could go to China, only HELMS can fix the U.N. That is true. That is absolutely, positively true. I am sure he has taken some heat from his historically loyal and traditional friends on the center right for doing this, I have no doubt he has taken some heat, but, as usual, being a man who sticks to his principles, he took the heat but in the process of doing so he put the argument against U.S. participation in the U.N. in a position where it had no credibility. How could anyone from the center right challenge the Senator from North Carolina? Nobody doubts his convictions and principle. He is too darned conservative for me. I love him, but he is too darned conservative for me. But if JOE BIDEN had come along and done this, if TRENT LOTT had come along and done this, if DICK LUGAR and other respected Members did this, and it had been Lott-Biden, anybody on the Republican side, BIDEN and not HELMS, this would not have gotten done.

I pay tribute not only to the substantive changes he has wrought, but pay tribute to his tactical genius and how to get it done. It would not have gotten done, without him and we would be standing here today in semicrisis about whether or not we stay in the U.N., whether or not our vote had been taken from us, whether or not it was any longer relevant. We would have had some bitter ideological debates on this floor had he not gotten us to this place.

I, for one, think the United Nations is an incredibly valuable institution that, on balance, overwhelmingly benefits the American people. But, I say to my colleagues, don't do what some of us who have served with Senator HELMS sometimes do—don't underestimate what this fellow did and does, and don't underestimate how knowledgeable he is about getting something done. I am just glad we were not only in the same hymnal on this one, but on the same page on this one.

So I want to personally thank him. He did more than save the American taxpayers $170 million and more to come. He did more than set an atmosphere and tone where now in the United Nations, because of what he did, there is open discussion and debate among the members, not including us, about the need to reform. He was sort of the fellow who came along and said: Hey, but the emperor has no clothes.

Everybody sitting there knew the emperor had no clothes on, but Senator HELMS said, ''The emperor has no clothes and until he starts getting dressed I am not playing.'' Now I ask a rhetorical question. Did my friend ever think he would hear a debate with everyone from the Chinese Ambassador to the Russian Ambassador to the German Ambassador to the French Ambassador talking about the need for further reform? And going back to their constituents and saying: We need Reform. They want to save taxpayers money as well.

So that is a big deal. But the bigger deal, in my view, is there is a new sense of legitimacy and vitality in this Chamber, in this Government, in this country, for the United Nations.

I am not Pollyannaish about this. I don't think the United Nations is a one-world government leading to nirvana. That is the farthest from what it is. But it is a practical tool in a number of circumstances, and an increasingly necessary forum for the one superpower in the world to be able to make her views known and garner the support of—or at least prick the conscience of—the rest of the world. We do not want to constantly be put in the position of being that great nation imposing her view on all the rest of the world.

What most of our foreign colleagues do not understand is we Americans are uncomfortable being the sole superpower. I often tell our European

friends—my colleague knows, I am, as is he, deeply involved with NATO and Europe—I often tell them when they complain about us being the only superpower: You don't understand. Americans were not looking or seeking this title. We don't want to be the superpower. If there has to be one it will be us, but that is not our goal. We have no countries to conquer. We have no desire to impose our will. Americans would just as soon tend to their business and be home.

But that is how we are cast today. That is how we are cast by our friends as well as by our foes. I think in that context the United Nations takes on a different and dynamic role with the possibility that we can use it to further our interests.

So what my friend from North Carolina did is make that possible. Whether the U.N. meets those expectations, whether it continues down the road of reform, whether it does what it has the potential to do, remains to be seen. But we would not even be in this position today, February 7, 2001, talking about this possibility were it not for his insistence.

As I said, only Nixon could go to China. Only HELMS could make the U.N. relevant at the end of this century and the beginning of the next.

I know he understands, but knowing how he is, he probably refuses to believe how big a role that he played. It is literally that big. That is the deal. That is why this is so consequential. This legislation before us is, in a sense, inconsequential. We are changing one number in a piece of legislation to accommodate what we believe to be the good-faith serious effort to have embarked upon and stay embarked upon making an institution of the 20th century relevant in the 21st century.

As my friend and I have pointed out, we have both spoken at the Security Council. We have both had private meetings, and jointly, with I think literally almost every single delegate to the United Nations. The luncheon he and I did up there, there were 160-some U.N. ambassadors. I doubt whether there is a single U.N. representative—there may be one; I will be dumbfounded if there are more than 20—who has not personally met Senator HELMS and personally interfaced with him.

You know, it is an interesting phenomenon. When they looked him in the eye, when they heard him talk and saw him, and kind of touched him, they realized this is the real deal. This isn't about bashing the United Nations for hometown political consumption. And it has had a dramatic impact on the attitude that institution has about itself, the attitude of the American people have about it, the attitude of this body has about it, and the potential utility of that institution to work the way we hoped it would work.

As the chairman has explained, this legislation was reported by the Committee on Foreign Relations earlier today by a vote of 18–0.

This bill is neither long nor complicated. Let me explain it briefly.

In late 1999, Congress passed legislation—the so-called ''Helms-Biden'' law—which authorizes payment of $926 million owed to the United Nations in back dues, conditioned on certain reforms in the United Nations.

The bill provided for payment of the funds in three installments. Each installment was linked to a set of reforms in the United Nations.

The first installment of $100 million was paid in December 1999.

The second installment authorized is $582 million.

The key reform linked to this installment is a requirement that the amount of money the United States pays for U.N. operations be reduced.

We believed such reductions were important because the United Nations had become overly dependent on the United States for its funding.

Also, the economies of many other nations had grown considerably since the rates were last reviewed seriously in the early 1970s, and we believed it only fair that a greater share of the budget burden be assumed by those countries.

I am pleased to report that there has been remarkable progress, not only in the reduction of the U.S. assessment rates, but in U.N. institutional reform in general. Let me talk about the budget reductions.

The United Nations has two budgets. The first budget is the so-called regular budget, which pays for the day-to-day operations of the U.N. Secretariat in New York.

The law that Congress enacted in 1999 required that the rate we are charged for this budget be reduced from 25 percent to 22 percent of the total budget.

Our previous Ambassador to the United Nations, Richard Holbrooke, achieved this objective. Effective January 1, our assessment for this budget is 22 percent.

The second budget is for U.N. peacekeeping operations—for the soldiers in blue helmets around the world. The Helms-Biden law required that our assessment be cut from a rate of just over 30 percent to 25 percent.

Here, as some in the new administration who come from Texas might say, we did not get the whole enchilada—Ambassador Holbrooke did not get our rate down to 25 percent, but Ambassador Holbrooke succeeded in reducing our peacekeeping assessment substantially.

Effective January 1, our peacekeeping rate has been cut to just over 28 percent. It will continue to go down gradually to 26.5 percent by 2003, and possibly lower after that.

It is not everything we wanted, but Senator HELMS and I believe that the United Nations has met us more than halfway—and that we should respond.

Accordingly, the bill before the Senate amends the original Helms-Biden legislation to change the one legislative provision that was not completely satisfied.

Taking that step will release the second installment of $582 million .

The bill was approved unanimously by the Committee on Foreign Relations, and I hope the vote in the Senate will also be unanimous.

So let me reiterate. Dick Holbrooke took us a long way.

Mr. HELMS. You bet.

Mr. BIDEN. My grandfather Abrose's name was Abrose Finnigan. He used to say: Remember, God protects two groups of people: well-intended Irishmen who are drunk, and the United States of America. And then he would joke and say: You know, in our history where there are big and large issues, it always seems to be the right person comes along at the right moment to tackle the big issues. Dick Holbrooke, in another generation, maybe would not have been as consequential, but what did we need? We needed a man who was—remember when our friend from Texas won his first Senate race? He beat an incumbent, an appointed Democrat who was a good guy. They asked the Democrat about how he felt the night of the election when he lost. He said: There are two things you should know about PHIL GRAMM: One, he is meaner than a junk yard dog, and, two, he is smarter than you.

There are two things you should know about Dick Holbrooke: One, he is more persistent than STROM THURMOND, which is almost impossible, and he is likely to be smarter than you.

He kept his commitment to Senator HELMS.

Mr. HELMS. He did.

Mr. BIDEN. He kept his commitment. Senator HELMS was wary at the front end of this when he was named, whether or not he really was going to do it. He held up his nomination until he came before the committee to say: I will commit to Helms-Biden. Once he did that, it was home free and he headed to work. But he did a remarkable job.

So I do not, in my praise for Senator HELMS, mean to in any way suggest that at the end of the day this could have been done without the ingenuity, intelligence, and dedication of Ambassador Holbrooke and his staff, who, as the chairman has pointed out, many nights toward the end stayed up close to around the clock getting this locked down.

So I think we are at a good place. I have been with my friend from North Carolina too long not to think I understand what is behind his reluctance to lift a cap that locked into law the amount we would pay for peacekeeping. In 1994, out of frustration with the United Nations and its waste and failure to modernize, the U.S. Congress passed a piece of legislation that said starting October 1, 1996 we will not pay any more than 25 percent of the peacekeeping assessment. Then we were being charged about 31 percent, as the Senator said.

Now this may confuse people. Although the Helms-Biden change we are

making today will allow over half a billion dollars to go to settle our accounts, if we do not do something about that 25 percent cap—because in spite of everything Ambassador Holbrooke, did our peacekeeping rate is not going to go down to 25 percent this year—we will, by the end of the year, accrue another roughly $70 million in debt. We will be behind the 8-ball another $70 million in terms of what we ''owe'' the U.N.

If I did not know better, I would say, as the old saying goes, my friend from North Carolina is from Missouri because he is a show-me guy. I am hopeful I can convince him or he can become convinced—not that I can convince him—but he will become convinced before the legislative year is over hopefully that these changes are real and maybe we should lift that 25-percent cap. Knowing him, he may toy with the idea of either not doing it at all, doing it temporarily, doing it conditionally—I do not know what. I know he will come up with something.

I say to him and my colleagues, I for one feel very strongly—we have gone this far—we should not now undo the good will and circumstance we have created, primarily through his leadership.

Again, not lifting the 25 percent cap now does not do any damage, any injustice, or any harm to the good that has been done, but if we do not by the end of the year deal with this—and he is committed we will deal with it; not how, not what the result will be, what his position will be, but we will deal with it—if we do not deal with it, I fear we will have begun to undo some of the significant good that we did by changing this legislation.

Mr. President, I thank former President Clinton and former Secretary Albright who were also instrumental in lobbying world leaders to have their countries accommodate this change, which is overdue.

I note parenthetically, when we signed on to these commitments, it was a different world. We were the only game in town economically. The combined GDP of Europe eclipses ours. Thank God, through the good works of a lot of people, including the generosity of the American people, the rest of the world is doing pretty well in many places, and they can afford to pay more. But it still took a lot of cajoling, it took a lot of nursing, it took a lot of diplomatic skill to get it done.

I say to my friend from North Carolina, I look forward to, before the summer passes, being back on the floor, hopefully with an agreement on what to do about the 25-percent cap set in 1994, but at least here to ventilate it, debate it, and let the Senate work its will on what we should do about it.

I note parenthetically that Secretary of State Powell supports such an amendment to the 1994 law. I received a letter from him 2 days ago on this subject.

I have no doubt the Senator has thought about it a lot and will think about it, and I have no doubt that whatever decision he comes to on the 25-percent cap, it will be viewed through the prism of making sure the American people are not paying more than they should and that the American taxpayers catch a break.

It has been an honor working with Senator HELMS. As I said, he and I came the same year, 1972. We have both been here 28 years, going on 29. We have, as the old saying goes, been together and we have been agin one another. For me, it is always more comfortable when we are together. It has never, never been anything other than a pleasure, since I shifted my responsibilities as top Democrat on the Judiciary Committee to Foreign Relations, working with Senator HELMS.

I am told there are some of our colleagues who wish to speak to this. I, quite frankly, would be surprised if there is a controversial aspect to this. It passed out of our committee this morning 18–0, unanimously, with very little debate and with some considerable enthusiasm.

I hope there will be bipartisan support for these objectives. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

I ask unanimous consent to print in the RECORD the letter from Secretary Powell.

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

THE SECRETARY OF STATE,
Washington, DC, February 5, 2001.

Hon. JOSEPH R. BIDEN, Jr.,
Committee on Foreign Relations,
U.S. Senate.

DEAR SENATOR BIDEN: Thank you for your January 23 letter regarding the Senate Foreign Relations Committee's plans, at next week's business meeting, to take up the question of revising Helms-Biden legislation to allow a second tranche of payments of UN arrears to go forward. I appreciate the Committee's willingness to move forward so quickly with this needed step.

In your letter, you asked for my views as to whether a 1994 State Authorization Bill provision that places a 25 percent cap on our contribution to UN peacekeeping should also be revised, so that we can pay at the new assessment rate we negotiated in December. My staff have informed me that, unless this cap is revised, we will accrue new arrears of around $77 million in this fiscal year alone. Clearly, this needs to be taken care of to avoid falling into new arrears; my preference would be to move on it now, so that we can put this behind us quickly and focus together on further steps toward UN reform. I hope that the Committee will take the necessary steps to amend the 1994 provision as rapidly as possible.

Again, thank you for your letter. I welcome your partnership on this and other matters as we seek to advance America's foreign policy interests in the months ahead.

Sincerely,

COLIN L. POWELL.

Mr. BIDEN. I know we do not have a vote until 3 o'clock. That is when it has been set. I am not sure who is going to be here to speak when, but I am not going to trespass on the Senate's time anymore. I am going to shortly yield the floor, and I look to my colleague to ask whether I should suggest the absence of a quorum or does he wish to speak?

Mr. President, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. CLINTON). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. Who yields time?

Mr. WARNER. I ask unanimous consent for such time that I may require.

Mr. HELMS. I yield to the Senator.

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

Mr. WARNER. Madam President, I rise in strong support of the work that has been done by our distinguished chairman, the senior Senator from North Carolina, and indeed the ranking member, the senior Senator from Delaware. I have had the privilege of working with them on this issue including traveling to New York City with them while we were working with the distinguished Ambassador, Mr. Holbrooke, on this issue. I also traveled a second time to New York City at the invitation of then-Ambassador Holbrooke to work on this issue.

These three, the great triumvirate, have brought this about. It is a remarkable feat for freedom. This institution, the U.N., through the years has collected a good deal of disparaging comment, but it is an essential institution. Despite the disparaging references in years past, it is a stronger institution today under the current leadership of the distinguished Kofi Annan, and it is performing tasks that, frankly, I would not want to see our Government out in front on. Better we take second place and work with other nations through the U.N. to achieve certain objectives, rather than the unilateral intervention or, indeed, the unilateral participation by the United States.

This funding issue has been a cloud that has hung over the institution of the Congress and the U.N. for many years. Through the able leadership of Chairman HELMS and the ranking member, Mr. BIDEN, that cloud is now in a large measure dispelled. It is a job that should receive the commendation and support of all in this Chamber.

I see the Presiding Officer is a distinguished Senator from the great State of New York which provides a home for the United Nations. The United Nations is an institution that hopefully will live long and will benefit from the strong support expressed by this vote in the Senate today.

I rise today as an original cosponsor of this very important legislation on the payment of United States arrearages to the United Nations. We are at this crucial point due to the determined efforts of the distinguished chairman and ranking member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee

and our former Ambassador to the United Nations, Richard Holbrooke.

The United Nations Reform Act of 1999, known as Helms-Biden, provided for the payment of $926 million in U.S. arrears to the United Nations in return for a series of United Nations reforms, including a reduction in the U.S. assessment for the regular and peacekeeping budgets. The United States made its first payment under Helms-Biden, which totaled $100 million, in December of 1999. Under Helms-Biden, however, the second installment, totaling $582 million, could only be paid once the Secretary of State certifies that the ceiling for the U.N.'s regular budget scale of assessment for the U.S. is set at 22 percent, and that there is a ceiling set at 25 percent for the U.S. assessment for the U.N.'s peacekeeping budget.

After a lengthy and substantive debate, in late December 2000 the United Nation's General Assembly agreed to reduce U.S. dues to the United Nations. The General Assembly voted to set the ceiling for the regular budget scale of assessment for the U.S. at 22 percent—down from 25 percent—and set the ceiling for the peacekeeping scale of assessment for the U.S. at 28.15 percent—previously there was no ceiling and the U.S. was assessed approximately 31 percent. While the new scale of assessment ceiling for the U.N. regular budget meets the requirements of Helms-Biden, the new scale of assessment ceiling for the U.N. peacekeeping budget falls just short of what is required under Helms-Biden.

This legislation we are considering today will amend Helms-Biden so as to allow the U.S. to make its second payment of arrears to the U.N. Specifically, the requirement that the U.N.'s peacekeeping scale of assessment ceiling for the U.S. must be set at 25 percent is amended to the U.N. agreed upon number of 28.15 percent.

Although we all wish that the U.N. would have agreed to the 25 percent ceiling for the U.S. share of the peacekeeping budget, the agreement that was reached is significant and deserves our wholehearted support. By passing this legislation, we can move forward with the implementation of the goals of Helms-Biden and continue to strengthen our relationship with the United Nations.

At this point I want to recognize three individuals whose heroic efforts made this landmark agreement possible. Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman HELMS and Ranking Member BIDEN spent years crafting the Helms-Biden legislation. Without their tireless efforts and the bipartisanship with which they tackled a task which many felt was unachievable, we would not be where we are today. Their commitment and total devotion to strengthening and reforming the United Nations deserves our highest praise.

Likewise, the unflagging efforts of former U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Richard Holbrooke must be recognized. Ambassador Holbrooke spent his 17 months at the U.N. working incessantly to see that the reforms contained in Helms-Biden were implemented. To achieve this goal, he traveled repeatedly to Washington to consult with Members of Congress, invited numerous Members, including myself, to New York for meetings with U.N. ambassadors and spent uncountable hours on the telephone promoting these reforms. In fact, during Ambassador Holbrooke's tenure I visited the U.N. twice to meet with numerous U.N. ambassadors and Secretary-General Kofi Annan in order to discuss U.N. reform issues. Without Ambassador Holbrooke's efforts, it is unlikely, in my view, that the U.N. General Assembly would have agreed to reform the U.N.'s regular and peacekeeping budgets.

The United Nations, under the strong leadership of Secretary-General Kofi Annan, plays a crucial role in global affairs. It is in our national interests to continue to work with the United Nations to ensure that it is strong and effective.

In light of that, I reiterate my strong support for the rapid passage of this legislation which will keep reforms at the U.N. on schedule and allow for the continued payment of U.S. arrearages.

I yield the floor.

Mr. GREGG of New Hampshire addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields to the Senator from New Hampshire?

Mr. HELMS. Madam President, I yield such time as the Senator may need.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mr. GREGG. I thank the Chair and congratulate the Senator from North Carolina for his efforts in bringing a resolution to the U.N. arrearage issue. This is an issue in which I have had a fair amount of involvement, as I chair the appropriations subcommittee which is responsible for actually paying the bills.

It was a pleasure to work with the Senator from North Carolina and the Senator from Delaware, the Senator from Minnesota, Mr. Grams, and Senator HOLLINGS, my ranking member, as we worked with the prior administration, especially the Secretary of State, to try to bring a resolution to this very intricate and difficult issue—very touchy issue in many ways—which had hung over the U.N. and America's relationship with the U.N. for far too long.

There were very significant issues, however, that had to be addressed and which, as a result of the efforts of Senator HELMS and Senator BIDEN and the working group which I had a pleasure to work with, were addressed.

Two of the ones that have gotten the most visibility, of course, are our contribution levels to the U.N. operation accounts, which were excessive, in my opinion and in the opinion of the Senate and the Congress, and also the contributions to the peacekeeping accounts, which were equally excessive.

So the adjustments in the contribution levels, although not everything we desire, are a significant step in the right direction. But I think we need to remember as we proceed, especially in the area of peacekeeping, that basically the United States is, no matter what the assessment level, giving the U.N. what amounts to essentially a blank check.

The tremendous expansion in peacekeeping activity which the U.N. has undertaken over the last few years—much of it, quite honestly, not consistent with American policy—for example, what is happening today in Sierra Leone, where the U.N. has one of its major peacekeeping initiatives—is not consistent with the present American policy on how to handle that situation. In fact, the British, who are physically on the ground there, and whose position we do agree with, are taking the brunt of the legitimate effort in that country; whereas the U.N. peacekeepers, regrettably, are not contributing to the process of resolving the Sierra Leone situation but are actually, well, at best, on site but not a positive force. Yet we are paying for that. American taxpayers are paying for that.

It is inconsistent with the policy as laid out in a letter from the then-Ambassador to the U.N., Mr. Holbrooke, to the Congress relative to what the American policy was to be in Sierra Leone. That letter, which was very specific and quite appropriate and on point, unfortunately, is not the U.N. policy.

So as we move down the road, this whole issue of peacekeeping is going to be a continuing concern to us, as the payers of the bills, because I am not much interested, quite honestly, in sending a large amount of tax dollars, in what amounts to an open check, to the U.N. on the matter of peacekeeping, if the policies of the U.N. are going to be—in those areas where we are actually paying for the peacekeeping—180 degrees at odds with American policy.

I do not understand why we should be paying to underwrite policies which are inconsistent and, in some instances, actually at odds with what our policies are as a nation. So this issue of an open check for U.N. peacekeeping is one which will require more attention.

But as to the question of arrearages, we have at least settled the matter of what the percentage should be in those instances where U.N. obligations are due relative to peacekeeping. For that reason, we are able to release the $582 million which was held up relative to that issue. There remains, however, one more payment, one more tranche here—$244 million—which needs to be made and which we have appropriated.

By the way, all this money was always appropriated. We, in our committee, put it on the table, signed the

check, but we did not send the check. It was a letter of credit. We said: When you meet the conditions of the letter of credit, which were basically the Helms-Biden proposal, then we will release the funds. But, again, the $244 million, which is available to the U.N., and which is the third payment, is still conditioned on what I would call structural reforms within the U.N. which are very important, structural reforms which go to the operation of the U.N., specifically, stronger Inspector General activities, stronger evaluation of the effectiveness and the relevance of U.N. programs, a termination of programs that are no longer needed, establishment of clearer budget priorities and, of course, an accounting office similar to the General Accounting Office we have here in the U.S. which can actually go in and audit what goes on in the U.N.

One of the big problems we have had in the U.N. was that for many years, regrettably, it was essentially, for lack of a better word, a patronage stop for a lot of folks from other countries who found it was a place where they could basically place friends and relatives, and, as a result, end up with the United States paying the cost of the salaries of those friends and relatives. It had a huge inefficiency. It also had programmatic activity which simply was inconsistent with what you would call good fiscal policy.

I understand it is not something you can change overnight because, to some degree, it is an institutional issue, but the U.N. is moving towards trying to address this. And that is positive. We look forward to these management systems being put in place which can show the American people that their tax dollars are not being wasted when they are sent to the U.N.

The U.N. is a very important institution. It is important that the American people have confidence in it. This is an institution which can play a huge and positive role as we, as a nation, engage the world. Since we are paying a quarter of the costs of the institution, American taxpayers have to know that when they send the tax dollar up there, it is going to be used effectively and efficiently. It is not because they oppose, at least in my State—there is some opposition, but there is general support for the U.N. funding. It is not because they oppose funding per se for the U.N; it is because they oppose the concept that money isn't being used efficiently and effectively. In fact, for a number of years it was being used inefficiently and ineffectively and in some cases just plain in a poor way.

So putting these systems in place—a strong Inspector General approach, general accounting rules along the lines of what we use in the U.S. General Accounting Office, financial data procedures which allow us to track the dollars, where they go, who is using them, and actual personnel tracking procedures which allow us to make sure the personnel that claims to be doing things is actually doing them, and that we are not ending up paying no-show employees—is very important in running a fiscal house effectively.

They are the basic elements of good governance. If you are expecting taxpayers to support an undertaking, then you must expect that the taxpayers will demand that there be an accounting as to how their dollars are being used. That is all we have asked for here. We have not asked for anything outrageous or unreasonable, in my opinion. We have just asked for reasonable accounting procedures.

The U.N., to their credit, especially the present Secretary General, has made an extra effort to try to address these concerns. I congratulate the Secretary General for doing that. I especially congratulate Ambassador Holbrooke because really he has been a fierce force for bringing responsibilities to the U.N. in the way they have dealt with American tax dollars over his tenure there. He has been a conscientious protector of the American tax dollar. I think he has done it because he understands that support for the U.N. is critical, and support is tied to American taxpayers having confidence in their dollars being used effectively.

The agreement which has been reached—I again congratulate the Senator from North Carolina for his extraordinary effort, the Senator from Delaware, and all those who played a role in it—is a very positive step forward in putting in place the systems that are necessary to give American taxpayers confidence in the U.N. When we give that confidence to the American taxpayer, we will in turn give the U.N. strength. When we give the U.N. strength, in the end it will benefit us as a nation and obviously the world. It is a plus for us. It is a plus for the U.N.

I am very happy to be here today to support this initiative and look forward, as chairman of the appropriating committee, to their completion of the additional issues that are to be addressed and the release of the additional $244 million as a result of successful completion of those initiatives.

I yield the floor and 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. LEAHY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, I also rise to voice support for S. 248, a bill to release $582 million in U.S. dues to the United Nations. Payment of our dues is long overdue, and I am glad to see this bipartisan bill come before the Senate.

We know the United Nations is not a perfect organization. No organization made up of 189 countries could possibly satisfy everyone. In that sense, it is sort of like a country composed of 50 States. But just as the States rely on the Federal Government to address problems that affect each of us collectively, the United States relies on the collective diplomacy and security that only the United Nations can provide.

Every day the U.N. is fighting critical battles to resolve conflicts, contain the spread of infectious diseases, stop environmental pollution, protect human rights, strengthen democracy, and prevent starvation, to mention just some of its roles. U.N. peacekeepers are deployed around the world—from East Timor to Cyprus to the Sinai—to help prevent violence and restore stability where it is badly needed. Of the tens of thousands of U.N. peacekeepers deployed, only a tiny fraction are Americans. These missions help to avoid U.S. military intervention and far more costly humanitarian relief operations.

We are the world's only superpower, and we have a wide range of interests on every continent. We need to send a strong message that the United States supports the United Nations but that other nations need to contribute their share as well. This legislation is a clear step in that direction.

Getting here has not been easy, and I want to commend four individuals who deserve special credit. First and foremost, it was the determination of Ambassador Richard Holbrooke who led us to this breakthrough that few thought was possible. In January, he received a standing ovation from both Republicans and Democrats on the Foreign Relations Committee. It was well deserved.

We also had the bipartisan vision and leadership of Senator JESSE HELMS and Senator JOE BIDEN. They established a framework for this deal with the Helms-Biden legislation, and both deserve a great deal of credit.

Finally, we should recognize Ted Turner. It was his gift of $34 million that was the final piece of the puzzle. We should all be grateful for his generosity and foresight, although it is somewhat embarrassing that the government of the wealthiest, most powerful nation in history had to rely on the personal donation of a private citizen to help meet its obligations to the international community.

While I am very pleased with this legislation, more still needs to be done to address weaknesses in United Nations peacekeeping missions. We have seen poorly conceived missions, serious logistical delays, ill-equipped and undertrained troops, and instances of misconduct. While these were exceptions rather than the rule and were largely the fault of the U.N.'s member states, I was encouraged by two developments early this fall that began to address some of these problems.

First, the U.N. issued a report, produced by an outside panel of experts, that included some common-sense recommendations for improving the effectiveness of U.N. peacekeeping. This was followed by a serious discussion of

peacekeeping reform by the heads of state of several key countries at the Millennium Summit.

These two events triggered widespread praise from the international community and a number of supportive editorials in the U.S. press. The Bush administration and Congress need to take a close look at these developments and determine what the U.S. can do to further efforts to improve U.N. peacekeeping.

The administration and Congress should also consider lifting the 25 percent cap on U.S. peacekeeping contributions. During the campaign, President Bush called for the U.S. to act in a more ''humble'' manner in the international arena. This may be a good place to start. The European Union, whose GDP is roughly equivalent our own, pays over 39 percent of U.N. peacekeeping costs, while the U.S. contribution will fall to 26.5 percent. Moreover, the agreement that was reached in December requires 29 nations to accept increases in their assessment rates, ranging from 50 percent to 500 percent. Yet, we still maintain the 25 percent cap, and continue to accumulate arrears—hardly a statement of humility. The time may now be right to remove the cap, especially if the administration concludes that U.S. interests are better served without it.

Mr. President, we all want to see reform to continue at the U.N. However, refusing to pay our dues has irritated our friends and allies, who were legitimately concerned that we wanted a continued veto over U.N. decisions, without meeting our treaty obligations. It hurt our credibility, and it weakened our influence.

So I am pleased that we are finally acting to remedy this problem by passing this legislation today.

I see the Senator from Florida, and I yield the floor to him.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida is recognized.

(The remarks of Mr. NELSON of Florida are located in today's RECORD under ''Morning Business.'')

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia is recognized.

(The remarks of Mr. CLELAND pertaining to the introduction of S. 269 are located in today's RECORD under ''Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.'')

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

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

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I rise today to express my support for S. 248, a bill to amend the Helms-Biden agreement on United Nations arrears payments.

I have long supported the goals of the United Nations as it works to promote peace, to protect human rights, and to improve economic and social development throughout the world. Participation in the UN acts as an incentive to promote peace and provides a forum for negotiations and international action which can avert the need for more expensive unilateral or bilateral military interventions in the future.

I believe repaying United States arrears to the UN is crucial to ensure that the organization can continue to be a force for peace and security in the 21st Century.

As you know, significant steps have been undertaken in the last several years by the UN to reform their administrative structure and to reduce costs as called for by the Helms-Biden agreement. Among other things, the UN has reduced its budget and staffing levels, and has strengthened its Office of Internal Oversight.

In addition, the UN has agreed to reduce the US assessment for the UN regular budget from 25 percent to 22 percent, and the peacekeeping assessment from more than 30 percent. I congratulate Senator HELMS, Senator BIDEN, Ambassador Richard Holbrooke, and Secretary-General Kofi Annan for their efforts and hard work on these issues.

It is my hope that the UN will continue in this direction and enact further reforms designed to save costs and to make the UN a more effective and efficient organization. This bill recognizes that efforts have been made and will continue to be made towards achieving this goal. I urge my colleagues to support it.

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I come to the floor to express my strong support for S. 248, the U.N. dues bill. This is a straightforward bill that continues our efforts to set right U.S. accounts at the United Nations. Those efforts are not yet complete, but in passing this bill today we take a big step in the right direction.

This bill—and the $582 million in U.S. arrears it will allow us to pay—will go a long way to improving our relations at the United Nations. The importance of a solid relationship with a capable UN should not be underestimated. In the last year alone, we have worked with the UN to bolster U.S. interests, including: Containing Saddam Hussein; combating the debilitating effects of the AIDS pandemic; confronting—and detaining—war criminals in the Balkans; and controlling the potentially destabilizing conflicts in East Timor and East Africa.

Two years ago the outlook was much different. At that time, skepticism about the effectiveness of the UN prevailed, and Congress outlined an aggressive agenda for reform at the United Nations. Behind the leadership of Senators BIDEN and HELMS, Congress outlined a series of conditions before we would pay the nearly $1 billion in debts.

Passing that bill was difficult here, including months of debate, deliberation and negotiation. But it turns out that we in Congress had the easy part. The heavy lifting was done by Ambassador Richard Holbrooke and his team at the United States Mission to the United Nations, who took the demands we made here in Congress and came back from New York with a solid deal.

Let's take a quick look at what Ambassador Holbrooke and his team delivered:

A reduction in the U.S. assessed costs for the UN regular budget: That reduction—from 25 percent to 22 percent—is the first rate drop for the United States in the regular budget account since 1972.

A reduction in the U.S. assessed costs for the UN peacekeeping budget: That reduction—from 31 percent to 27 percent—is the first rate drop for the United States in the peacekeeping account since 1973.

A combined savings for the U.S. from these reductions is in excess of $100 million annually; and, perhaps most importantly, rejuvenated Congressional support for the United Nations.

Yet the agreement that Ambassador Holbrooke delivered does not spell the end of reform at the United Nations.

Last year saw the release of the so-called Brahimi Report, a series of common sense improvements to the way the United Nations handles peacekeeping operations. The report gives cause for optimism, but aggressive implementation of the report's recommendations is crucial to ensure success. Those recommendations will go a long way to burying the peacekeeping failures of Srebrenica and Sierra Leone and developing a Department of Peacekeeping Operations that can successfully plan, deploy and manage complex peacekeeping operations.

We will also watch the implementation of a series of accountability, oversight and planning measures created in the last year. Secretary General Annan is demanding a high level of excellence from his team in New York, and we join him in expecting efficiency and results.

Work here in Washington is not done yet. Nor is our work in Congress done yet. Continued reform at the United Nations demands U.S. leadership and involvement—and approving this bill today is only the first step in convincing the international community that we are serious about reform.

As it stands right now, the United States will continue to accrue arrears at the United Nations. A law we passed in 1994 that caps U.S. payments to the UN peacekeeping budget at 25 percent, but we will continue to be billed by the UN for between 26 percent and 28 percent of that budget, generating arrears and engendering criticism of the U.S.—particularly from our European allies whose combined assessments account for well over a third of UN peacekeeping operations.

If Congress does not make this fix this year, we risk worsening U.S. relations with the UN and its member

states, limiting our ability to use the United Nations to advance vital U.S. interests, and setting back the efforts or reform that Ambassador Holbrooke did so much to move forward.

It is my hope that, before the end of this fiscal year, Congress will lift the cap on U.S. assessed contributions to international peacekeeping efforts. Doing otherwise will be a lost opportunity.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I am pleased the Senate will vote today to release $582 million in U.S. arrearages to the United Nations. In 1999, Congress mandated a series of reform benchmarks for the United Nations to meet in order for the United States to release funds we were withholding. One requirement related to reform of the scales for peacekeeping assessments by member nations, which were created in 1973 to fund the Sinai mission and have been in place ever since. As we move today to release the so-called Tranche II funds for the U.N. under the terms of the Helms-Biden law, I commend my colleagues for their work on this issue and note the efforts of Ambassador Richard Holbrooke and the American mission to the United Nations that made this progress possible.

Over the years, the United Nations and its subsidiary bodies have supported U.S. humanitarian interests in a number of ways, performed peacekeeping missions important to the security of our nation and our allies, and provided a useful forum for developing consensus among nations, as demonstrated by former President Bush's extraordinarily successful coalition-building to repel Saddam Hussein's 1990 invasion of Kuwait. But U.N. accomplishments cannot hide the fact that the U.N. bureaucracy must be totally reformed from top to bottom.

As Ambassador Holbrooke recently told the Foreign Relations Committee, ''I leave my position as confident as ever that the United Nations remains absolutely indispensable to American foreign policy. . . . But at the same time, I am even more convinced that the U.N. is deeply flawed, and that we must fix it to save it.'' Our vote today to pay $582 million in U.S. arrearages reflects this philosophy. I expect close Congressional scrutiny of United Nations operations and administration to spur additional and much-needed reforms. And I look forward to a continuing debate in this body over the level of U.S. contributions for U.N. peacekeeping, which requires additional review and may call for further Congressional action.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays on the passage of the bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bill for the third time.

The bill (S. 248) was read the third time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Shall the bill pass? The yeas and nays have been ordered. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. REID. Announce that the Senator from Georgia (Mr. INOUYE) is necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 99, nays 0, as follows:

The result was announced—yeas 99, nays 0, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 10 Leg.]

YEAS—99

Akaka	Dorgan	Lugar
Allard	Durbin	McCain
Allen	Edwards	McConnell
Baucus	Ensign	Mikulski
Bayh	Enzi	Miller
Bennett	Feingold	Murkowski
Biden	Feinstein	Murray
Bingaman	Fitzgerald	Nelson (FL)
Bond	Frist	Nelson (NE)
Boxer	Graham	Nickles
Breaux	Gramm	Reed
Brownback	Grassley	Reid
Bunning	Gregg	Roberts
Burns	Hagel	Rockefeller
Byrd	Harkin	Santorum
Campbell	Hatch	Sarbanes
Cantwell	Helms	Schumer
Carnahan	Hollings	Sessions
Carper	Hutchinson	Shelby
Chafee, L	Hutchison	Smith (NH)
Cleland	Inhofe	Smith (OR)
Clinton	Jeffords	Snowe
Cochran	Johnson	Specter
Collins	Kennedy	Stabenow
Conrad	Kerry	Stevens
Corzine	Kohl	Thomas
Craig	Kyl	Thompson
Crapo	Landrieu	Thurmond
Daschle	Leahy	Torricelli
Dayton	Levin	Voinovich
DeWine	Lieberman	Warner
Dodd	Lincoln	Wellstone
Domenici	Lott	Wyden

NOT VOTING—1

Inouye

The bill (S. 248) was passed, as follows:

S. 248

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. LIMITATION ON THE PER COUNTRY SHARE OF ASSESSMENTS FOR UNITED NATIONS PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 931(b)(2) of the Admiral James W. Nance and Meg Donovan Foreign Relations Authorization Act, Fiscal Years 2000 and 2001 (as enacted by section 1000(a)(7) of Public Law 106–113 and contained in appendix G of that Act; 113 Stat. 1501A–480) is amended by striking ''25 percent'' and inserting ''28.15 percent''.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—The undesignated paragraph under the heading ''ARREARAGE PAYMENTS'' in title IV of the Departments of Commerce, Justice, and State, the Judiciary, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 1999 (as contained in section 101(b) of division A of the Omnibus Consolidated and Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act, 1999; 112 Stat. 2681–96) is amended by striking ''25 percent'' and inserting ''28.15 percent''.

Mr. SHELBY. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote and I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. SHELBY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now be in a period of morning business with Senators speaking therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

TAX CUT DEBATE

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, as the tax cut debate begins in earnest this week, I would like to commend to my colleagues' attention two editorials that appeared in separate South Dakota newspapers this week, the Pierre Capital Journal and the Madison Daily Leader. Both of these opinion pieces give an excellent explication of this year's budget and tax cut debate and responsibly advocate a tax cut while paying down the national debt. In so doing, each reminds us that beyond the Beltway and across the country the American public can see through the often overheated rhetoric of political debate and focus on the bottom line priority of maintaining the fiscal responsibility that forms the foundation of the economic recovery of the 1990's.

As these editorials underscore, balance between tax cutting and debt reduction should be a central principle of the tax and budget debate. While Congress should and will pass a significant tax cut this year, it must also make sure that we pay down the national debt and address budget priorities like education, defense and healthcare. And so I commend Dana Hess of the Pierre Capital Journal and Jon Hunter of the Madison Daily Leader for their exceptional pieces advocating a tax cut within the parameters of sound fiscal policy. Their words should give us all pause for thought.

I ask consent that these editorials be printed in the RECORD.

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

[From the Madison Daily Leader]

PAYING OFF NATIONAL DEBT WILL YIELD GREAT RESULTS

(By Jon Hunter)

Federal budget surpluses are now reducing the massive federal debt after two decades of rapid growth. The benefits of such debt reduction will be broad and long-lasting.

The surpluses are so strong that the United States Treasury announced it will stop issuing one-year Treasury notes at the end of February. Why borrow money for one year when cash receipts outweigh expenses every day?

The change will permit the government to eliminate roughly $20 billion in debt issuance in the current fiscal year. Treasury had already eliminated sales of three-year and seven-year notes.

The changes mean lower interest payments on the national debt but also pose a challenge for investors because there is a dwindling supply of Treasury securities, considered the world's safest investment.

Even this potential challenge will be good for the U.S., in our opinion. Investors who now own maturing one-year bills will have to find other places to invest, and the most logical place is short-term, high-quality corporate notes. The demand will drive down