

State are much more prescriptive today and controlled by the very issue of the Endangered Species Act. But here, by a wink and by a nod, nothing happens. It is a river that you and I, Mr. President, for years have worked to pass legislation that would progressively clean it up and improve it, moving it back toward a time when it was a viable fishery on the east coast. But with the millions of pounds of sludge dumped daily into this river in the dark of night under a permit that has not been reissued since 1994—really, how long do we allow something like this to go on? How long do we allow the Army Corps of Engineers to continue to operate because it is in our best interest in the Nation's Capital, the city that ought to lead by example but can get away with a direct violation of the law or by ignoring the enforcement of the law?

I do not think that should be the case. That is why I stand in the Chamber to dramatize this issue and to speak more clearly to it. While I believe the Endangered Species Act needs to be reformed, there is not any way I could write it to reform it that would justify this, nor would I try. Nor would any Senator vote for that kind of a reform.

Yes, we would expect the Endangered Species Act to be more practical in its application, and, yes, we would want a more cooperative relationship with local communities of interest, but never would we ever tolerate the kind of an aggressive act that goes on in Washington on a daily basis, as I have said, oftentimes in the dark of night by this city and by our own agency, the Army Corps of Engineers, which is primarily responsible for the water treatment of this city.

The application of the Endangered Species Act, as we see it, is good for the country and good for the West. It ought to be the same act and it ought to be enforced in the same way in our Nation's Capital. This is simply not being done.

I am in the Chamber to speak to that issue and to recognize I have been involved with others in trying to bring about the conformity of the enforcement of the Endangered Species Act as we rebuild the Woodrow Wilson Bridge. This is one of many issues where there seems to be this attitude, well, if it is the Government doing it, somehow the Government can get away with it, and if it is in or near our Nation's Capital, where national security and the importance of the Congress are involved, then surely we can wink and nod and we can let the law be bypassed.

I think not, Mr. President, and I think you agree with me.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Wyoming, Mr. Thomas.

PLANNING THE SENATE AGENDA

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, we enter into our second week of this fall's

session after the recess, and we are faced with much to do. I think that is not unusual. It is often the case things pile up towards the end of the session, of course, but it seems to me we have a great many items to consider.

There are 13 appropriations bills to be passed in order to have this Government operate in the next fiscal year. The fiscal year begins October 1, which is only 3 weeks away. In the course of those 3 weeks, there are several days which, for various reasons—the Jewish holidays, and so on—there will not be votes. So we have really a relatively short time.

Obviously, what we will be doing is passing a continuing resolution before this is over, but nevertheless we have a great deal to do. None of these bills has yet gone to the President. Some of them have been passed in both Houses and are waiting now on the conference committees.

To be sure, it is difficult. It is always difficult. This year we are seeing some more difficulties because of the change in conditions with regard to the surplus, because of the difficulty I think we are finding now in staying within the budget we passed some time ago. Nevertheless, those are the items before us.

It does not seem to me perhaps that we are moving ahead quite as rapidly as we might. It does not seem to me we have a very well designed plan to accomplish these things within a certain period of time.

I understand it is very difficult to bring together a group of this kind with different views and properly argue those views. On the other hand, the role of leadership is to have a plan. It is the role of leadership to cause things to happen. Even though they are difficult issues, they must be done. Unfortunately, as I noticed particularly this weekend on public media, and so on, rather than seeking to find a plan to move forward, we seem to be spending more time blaming one another, particularly the President and the administration, for the difficulties in which we find ourselves.

We can have different points of view about whether that is valid or whether it is not, but even if it is, the fact is we have things to do and we should be moving ahead with the plan to do them. Instead of that, we seem to be spending more of our time complaining about the administration's plan. The fact is, we do have indeed the second largest surplus in our history. We also have a budget that we passed that is about a 4-percent increase, which is a fairly low increase, which is what we need compared to what we have spent in the past several years. Our challenge is to stay within the budget we passed and to continue to move forward in doing that.

We hear a great deal of complaint about tax relief—too much tax relief. As a matter of fact, we are in the process of passing that relief back to the people who own the money, and that is

as it should be, I believe, particularly as we find ourselves in a time with a very slowing economy. What else is more important than to return more money to the taxpayers if we indeed have a surplus? And we are doing that.

The question, of course, is one of not reaching into Social Security, which I happen to agree with, although we have done that for how many years and those dollars are accounted for in the Social Security fund, even though for years they have been spent for other things without a great deal of complaint, I might add.

However, I do not think that is really the issue. The issue is holding down spending to comply with the budget that we passed. It seems to me that ought to be our challenge.

There is, of course, in my view, no real threat to the beneficiaries of Social Security. Those obligations are there. They are going to be there. We have paid down more debt because of the surpluses over the last several years than in years past. So what we really need to do is address ourselves to the issues we have before us. The turn-down in the economy, of course, is the thing most of us are very concerned about, all of us, whether we are here, whether we are in Casper, WY, or wherever, and to do what we can to seek to play the Government's role in doing what we can to change that.

A reduction in taxes, the return of taxes, is designed to help do that. Hopefully, it will. We are not through with that yet. We are in the process with, I believe, seven reductions in the last year in interest rates designed hopefully to stimulate the economy. We need to do that.

Limiting our spending in the budget is another aspect we are seeking to help pick up and strengthen the economy. There are some other things we ought to be doing. We ought to be doing something with giving the President the opportunity to have trade agreements that are then brought to the Senate for approval. They are all brought to the Senate for approval, but the world economy and our involvement in trade, particularly in agriculture, in which I am involved, was the difficulty in the Asian currency a year ago which brought a good deal of problems to our economy. So we are a part of that, of course.

There are a number of things we can do, and I cannot think of anything more important for us to talk about collectively than what is appropriate for the Government in helping to strengthen this economy.

Yesterday, again on the TV, there were some questions about that: Oh, no, it is up to the President to do that. I do not agree with that. Of course, the President is the one who brings up the suggestions to the Senate. The President is not in control of the Senate, and the Senate has some responsibilities to take leadership as well. The idea of saying it all began since this President became President is not true.

It has been here for a year, and then to say it is up to the President, I do not agree with that.

Each of us in this body has some responsibility to give thought to what we can do to help strengthen this economy, which everyone in this country wants us to do.

In addition to that, of course, it seems to me we ought to be moving on an energy bill. This is very important to us, not only to the economy, but we are going to see some more impacts of it, of course, in the winter. We can do that. We started to work on pharmaceuticals. The budget contains opportunity for that. We can do that. Education has been passed by both Houses of Congress and still remains in conference.

I know many in the leadership on both sides are very anxious to work together and show evidence of working together and want to work together. I certainly encourage that be done so we can do what we are here to do, which is to solve the problems before the country, the legitimate problems for the Federal Government.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Nevada.

THE BUDGET

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I say to my friend from Wyoming, it is true we have the second largest surplus in the history of this country; however, it is all Social Security money.

The administration keeps talking about this huge surplus. They never give a caveat, saying, yes, we have the second largest surplus, but the reason we have that is because in 1983, the Congress, with Thomas "Tip" O'Neill, Claude Pepper, Senator BYRD, and President Reagan, got together and said, let's forward fund Social Security. In fact, Social Security has been forward funded, recognizing the baby boomers would have to receive large sums of money up front. So when the baby boomers come, there will be money. If we did nothing with Social Security, everyone would draw 100 percent of their benefits until about the year 2030. After 2030, if we did nothing, they would still draw 75 to 80 percent of benefits. The debate is to make sure after the year 2030 Social Security recipients receive all their benefits.

For Members to say President Bush is such a great guy, he has the second largest surplus in the history of the country, is disingenuous. It is not factual. The surplus is as a result of Social Security.

My friend from Wyoming said we should move forward. We have been trying to move forward. We would have already completed the appropriations bills but we have been prevented from moving forward on them. When we finished the legislation last week that we worked so hard to complete, the Export Administration legislation—which, by the way, was held up strictly by people

from the Republican camp, totally, for weeks and weeks, and months, and more than a year; we were finally able to get to that legislation after being held up for several days—after we finished that bill we wanted to go to Commerce-State-Justice but they would not let us. There was an objection to a motion to proceed.

Members can come to the floor all they want to talk about what is going on, but Members should state the facts. The facts are, we have been trying to move forward. If it had been up to us, we would have completed all the appropriations bills.

The economy is in trouble. Whether we like it or not, the President of the United States is seen to be the person directing the economy of the country. Basically, that is true.

Over the weekend, the press reported all over America a conversation between Speaker HASTERT and the President of the United States, George W. Bush. I quote Speaker HASTERT: A year from now is when it matters. He is talking to the President about the terms of the economy. A year from now is when it matters.

Let's see, a year from now is real close to midterm elections. Is that what they are talking about? Of course it is.

President Bush responds: "It's my timeframe, too." So we have the Speaker and the President saying they are not concerned about the economy now, but they are concerned about what happens a year from now. That is too bad. We have to be concerned about the economy today, not a year from now. We have an economy that is in real trouble. That is a fact. Rarely do all economists agree on everything, but when it comes to the current state of our economy, there is uniform agreement that things are getting worse instead of better.

As a result of the 1993 Budget Deficit Reduction Act, which was a very difficult vote, President Clinton gave us that budget. It was a tough vote for all Members. In the House of Representatives, without a single Republican vote, it passed by one vote. Courageous people lost their seats in the House of Representatives. The hero that I look to is MARIA CANTWELL. She served one term in the House of Representatives. She knew if she voted for that Budget Deficit Reduction Act it would hurt her in reelection, and it did, but she did the right thing and now is a Member of the Senate. Not all people were as fortunate as MARIA CANTWELL. Some lost and their political careers ended.

In the Senate of the United States, the vote was a tie and the Vice President of the United States came over and sat where the Presiding Officer is now sitting and cast a tie-breaking vote to allow that budget deficit plan to go forward. As a result, we had 7 years of really good times in this country. The votes were tough. We reduced unemployment by over 300,000 people, excluding the military. We had the

lowest inflation, lowest employment in more than 40 years, created 25 million new jobs, reduced the deficit from \$300 billion a year to surpluses.

Now, with this great budget we have been given by George W. Bush, we are in trouble already. Everyone acknowledges that we don't have the money for these tremendous tax cuts in the future. It has put a real damper on our economy.

Since the passage of the President's budget, we have witnessed a steady decline in the number of economic indicators. Each week there is a new economic indicator indicating we are in trouble. Majority Leader DASCHLE said this weekend, when you take a U-turn on economic policy, you can expect a U-turn in the direction of the economy.

That is what we have. The problems we face because of the President's budget deserve immediate attention.

My friend from Wyoming said it is really not the President. It is the President. He got us into this mess. He needs to give us a blueprint for trying to get out of this mess. We are going to go ahead and do the country's business and work our way through the appropriations bills the best we can. We have a one-vote majority. That makes it tough in the Senate. We need some leadership from the President of the United States, other than saying "a year from now is when it matters."

It matters right now. The current state of the economy is one of people losing jobs; the surplus has already disappeared. We are going back to the days of deficits already. And the fact that the ranking member of the Budget Committee, my friend from New Mexico, Senator DOMENICI, was quoted in the press, saying maybe we should spend Social Security surpluses.

To show the disarray on the other side, we have some who are calling for more tax reductions to solve the problems of this economy and to reduce the capital gains taxes. The thing we are now hearing is the Republicans are fighting among themselves as to whether that is a good deal.

The President of the United States today, as we speak, is in Florida talking about the need to pass an education bill. The first thing the Democrats did upon taking power in the Senate was pass the education bill. We did that. Senator DASCHLE could have brought up all kinds of other legislation, but the majority leader placed education on the agenda. And we worked our way through that and passed it. There were some battles as to whether we should do this or that, but it was passed. There was compromise. Legislation is about the art of compromise.

For the President of the United States to be in Florida saying, "Pass my education bill," which is now in conference, takes money, dollars, not to just go around talking about what a great bill we have.

I can remember when I was not as educated in "things Washington," and I would read in the newspapers that