

I repeat, Mr. Ahsan is pro-Western, prodemocracy, somebody who has labored his life long to promote democracy and the spread of political freedoms in his country.

The family has not been in contact for more than 3 days. You can imagine how worried they are. We have even been told there was a move to arrest his wife and that she was not home at the time the security forces came to detain her.

I hope the Pakistani Government realizes how this looks to those of us who have been friends of this Government, who have respected the alliance between our countries, to have somebody like Mr. Ahsan arrested.

I repeat, he is the chief counsel to the Chief Justice of the Pakistani Supreme Court. He is head of the Pakistani Supreme Court Bar Association, is a longtime leader of the Parliament, somebody who has been retained as counsel by leading figures in Pakistan for many years when they encountered legal challenges.

I very much hope the Pakistani Government is listening. I have spoken to the State Department yesterday. We will have further conversations today. I am going to be asking the Ambassador from Pakistan to come and see me to discuss this matter.

I take this very seriously. When somebody of Mr. Ahsan's remarkable record and stature is detained in Pakistan—somebody who is pro-Western, prodemocracy, upholds all the values America stands for—that is a serious matter.

Mr. President, I hope the Pakistani Government is listening. I hope the State Department is listening. I hope my colleagues are listening. At our caucus today, I will circulate a letter and ask other colleagues to sign the letter to President Musharraf asking for Mr. Ahsan's immediate release.

If Pakistan is to have a future—and all of us pray that it will—it is critically important people of Mr. Ahsan's stature and standing are part of that future.

I thank the Chair and yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

Mr. REID. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, how much time is left in morning business?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Eight minutes.

Mr. REID. OK. Whose time is it?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. It is the majority's.

Mr. REID. OK. I do not see any takers.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. REID. Mr. President, if there is any morning business time left on the Democratic side, I yield it back.

#### CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

The majority leader is recognized.

#### UNANIMOUS-CONSENT REQUEST— H.R. 2419

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that amendments to H.R. 2419 be relevant to the bill or to the substitute amendment.

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I hope beyond all hope that we can have a farm bill that will be related to the substance rather than the procedure. It is a good bill. The committee has worked very hard on it. People have some problems with parts of the bill. But if we had a vote on the bill right now, we would get 70 votes. We are not going to be able to do that. People are going to come out here—and I suggest they are going to have to write new speeches. This has happened so many times, all you have to do is go to the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD and read what has gone on before. It doesn't matter whether it is a Democrat or a Republican who is majority leader, the same thing always happens when we are trying to get out of here.

This time we are trying to finish the work period before Thanksgiving. There are things we have to do. I say to my friends, do people really want an open process on this bill? Do we want to debate the war in Iraq on this bill? Do we want to debate amendments relating to labor issues throughout this country? I have been told those are some of the amendments that are going to be offered on my side. I have no idea what amendments the Republicans will offer, but I have kind of a good idea. I have seen the rule XIVs in the last few weeks and the very mischievous amendments that have nothing to do with the farm bill—political amendments.

We are late in this year of Congress. We have just a few weeks left, and every majority leader does what I have done. I didn't invent this. As I said earlier this morning, I learned a lot from my Republican counterparts—from Senator LOTT, when he was majority

leader, and from Senator DOLE. They did the same thing. I have to acknowledge that Senator Mitchell did it and Senator Daschle did it because it is the only way we can get the business of the country done.

We have had an open amendment process this year—not always but generally speaking. Once we got to the bills—and that has been tough—I have had to file cloture on motions to proceed, which has been a big waste of time. But we have been able to work our way through many different things we have done.

I think we have accomplished a great deal, Mr. President. We have done the minimum wage; the balanced budget, pay as you go; the CR; the work on U.S. Attorneys; the excellent work we did on higher education, health care for vets, and Active-Duty servicemembers; disaster relief, wildfire relief, SCHIP—a lot of good things.

So I hope everyone will understand HARRY REID hasn't invented what is taking place on the Senate floor. I am just copying what others have done. Why? Out of necessity. I have told everybody this farm bill is a pretty good bill. It is not everything I want, but one of the interesting things about American farm policy is we don't import 65 to 70 percent of our food as we do oil. Oil, we have been told, is soon going to go up to \$4 per gallon.

Food, Mr. President, we pay too much for food. But we pay far less, on a proportionate basis, than any other country in the world. Why? One reason is the farm policy in this country. Could the farm policy be better? Sure. That is why we are having a bipartisan effort to change the underlying bill. Democrats and Republicans think it could be better.

Mr. President, we should move forward on this farm bill and finish it. We only do it every 5 years. If there are amendments that deal with this, I have said—and that was my consent just asked—if there are relevant amendments dealing with farm policy, move to change it, debate it, and vote on it. That is all I am asking. But I don't want to debate the estate tax repeal. The American people don't deserve that at this time. I don't want to debate another SCHIP bill that a number of Republicans believe is the right way to go for children's health because they are in such desperate shape for the vetoes the President has done. I have mentioned just a few things.

Mr. President, we are doing the right thing. I hope people will go to work on the farm bill. Both Democrats and Republicans have worked for months on a farm bill to get here. Do you think it was easy for Chairman HARKIN to get a bill out of committee? No; it was difficult. How many meetings did he hold—private meetings—with this group or that group of Senators? I have no idea, but there were scores of them. We are at a point where we are today so that we have a farm bill that received overwhelming support in the

Agriculture Committee, and now it is on the Senate floor. For the American people, we need to do this bill.

Mr. HARKIN. Will the leader yield for a question?

Mr. REID. Yes, without losing my right to the floor.

Mr. HARKIN. I thank the leader for his statement. I just want to make sure everyone understands what just happened. As I understand it, the majority leader propounded a unanimous consent request that all amendments to be offered to the farm bill be relevant to the farm bill; is that not correct?

Mr. REID. That is exactly what I said.

Mr. HARKIN. There was objection on the other side. Why would there be an objection to that? We have a farm bill, and we have worked hard. The leader is right. We reached a bipartisan agreement. I daresay none of us like every little bit in the farm bill, but that is the art of compromise. You compromise on these sorts of things and you move them ahead.

I don't know, for the life of me, why there would be an objection to saying that all amendments should be relevant to the farm bill. Let's move the farm bill. I hope people in farm country are watching this. I hope agribusiness is seeing this. I hope people know what is at stake in this farm bill for rural America for specialty crops, for our dairy farmers, for rural development, and I might add the nutrition programs, food stamp recipients, things that we have done good work on in this bill, to provide an underpinning of nutrition and support for some of the least among us. We have done good work in that area. Now it is held up because some people want to offer nonrelevant amendments. For the life of me—and this is my seventh farm bill, counting my time in the House, and my second as chairman—I don't understand why we cannot have a bill. Yes, open it to amendments on the farm bill. If people have amendments on the bill and want to change this, add this, or subtract that, fine. But why should we now debate, as I said, the war?

Can the leader think of any reason we should not just stick to the farm bill?

Mr. REID. I say to my friend, the chairman, and to the ranking member, who have worked well together, I am not saying we are only going to allow Democratic amendments to be offered. I have made it very clear in my presentation to the Senate this morning that I am talking about mischievous amendments not only by Republicans but my colleagues over here.

I also say this of the farm bill: I was listening this morning to public radio as I was doing my exercise. There was one provision that struck me on this bill. Over a billion dollars for fresh fruits and vegetables will go to schools. That may not sound like much to people. I was raised, as everybody knows, in rural Nevada. When I was a boy 9 or

10 years old, the only grocery store in Searchlight burned down. It was never rebuilt. To this day, I like canned asparagus better than fresh asparagus. I love canned peas and canned fruit. The reason is, we never had fresh fruits or vegetables. We didn't have them and could not buy them. We all know fresh fruits and vegetables are better than that heavily salted stuff you get in a can that I am used to eating.

This bill is going to say the kids in Searchlight today are still—there are a few, such as the 7-Eleven you can go to.

Places, such as where I was raised, where there are no stores, but they have some food programs, they are going to be able to have fresh fruits and vegetables on occasion. Isn't that great? I would know—I am using me as a point of reference—what a fresh asparagus is, an apple, an orange. So this is a good bill. It has a lot of warts and pimples on it, but it is a good bill. I only picked one provision.

Why don't we go ahead and try to get this bill passed? I am not trying to play any games with anybody. I am trying to do what I have made a decision on that I think is best for the American people. Do we want to spend all this week on one amendment? People say: How would that happen? Let's go back to the Amtrak legislation. What happened when we went on that bill? As soon as it was open for amendment, bang, out came a tax amendment, and we spent all week on it, Internet tax. I am glad it is done, and that issue has now been sent to the President. He signed it. But we do not have time to do that this week. We must get an appropriations bill to the President. The House is going to work and send us something tonight. The President will wind up getting Labor-HHS later this week, unless we get hung up on some procedural issue.

We need to pass the Defense appropriations conference report, with a CR included in that, this week. So this is no effort on my behalf to try to circumvent rules or procedures. I am following the rules of the Senate to the letter. But I am saying, I repeat, I am doing what every majority leader has done, similarly situated, in recent history.

I said I hope we can deal with this important bill as we focus on efforts to pass an important farm bill. It appears the minority intends to offer unrelated amendments to the farm bill. They will have to wait until later to do that. Hopefully, maybe the time we are here during December, there will be amendable vehicles we can deal with. I hope we can work on this bipartisan farm bill in an orderly, relevant fashion.

So in an effort to keep this debate focused on farm-related issues, I intend to fill the amendment tree, but I will be willing to lay aside pending amendments for Members who wish to offer farm-related amendments to this bill.

I ask the Presiding Officer to lay down the bill.

## FARM, NUTRITION, AND BIOENERGY ACT OF 2007

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 2419, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 2419) to provide for the continuation of agricultural programs through fiscal year 2012, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Harkin amendment No. 3500, in the nature of a substitute.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

AMENDMENT NO. 3508 TO AMENDMENT NO. 3500

(Purpose: To strengthen payment limitations and direct the savings to increased funding for certain programs)

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I call up an amendment on behalf of Senators DORGAN and GRASSLEY. The amendment is at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Nevada [Mr. REID], for Mr. DORGAN, for himself and Mr. GRASSLEY, proposes an amendment numbered 3508 to amendment No. 3500.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

(The amendment is printed in today's RECORD under "Text of Amendments.")

Mr. REID. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 3509 TO AMENDMENT NO. 3508

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I send a second-degree amendment to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Nevada [Mr. REID] proposes an amendment numbered 3509 to amendment No. 3508.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

At the end of the amendment add the following:

This section shall take effect 1 day after enactment.

Mr. McCONNELL. Reserving the right to object, I wish to make a few comments at this point.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I apologize to my distinguished colleague. That was actually in my script and I should have done that. I apologize for not doing that. Without losing my right to the floor, I yield to my friend. I apologize.

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

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, the majority leader is certainly within his