

Human Services, and Education, just a word or two about the speech of the President of France which we just heard in a joint meeting of Congress. It was truly inspirational. They applauded the United States for our values and urged close cooperation, alliance, and friendship between the United States and France.

He touched some very important subjects, committing France to expanded participation in NATO, to have Europe take over more of its own defense—which is good news for the taxpayers in the United States since our Nation has undertaken more than its proportionate share. He spoke in emphatic terms about the unacceptability of Iran having a nuclear weapon and the pledge of cooperation from France to engage in negotiations and dialog, to see that does not happen.

There were important words about the Mideast peace process, the need to take risks for peace, the need for a secure Israel, the need for release of intervention in Lebanon by Syria, about the importance of having Israel and the Palestinians come to agreement.

It was a very impressive speech. I think it bodes very well for United States-French relations and for greater participation of France in international matters. He also spoke about global warming—received a standing ovation—about the need for U.S. participation with other nations in environmental protection.

LABOR-HHS CONFERENCE REPORT

Mr. SPECTER. Now on to the discussion about the legislation, the conference report. This bill does not contain excessive funding. What we are looking at is a bill which has a cost-of-living adjustment to what the figure was last year. The President has come in with a figure which is \$3 billion less than last year. When you add the cost of living adjustment, and some very modest increases in very important programs, this is a modest bill.

The National Institutes of Health, which have been increased under the stewardship of Senator HARKIN and myself, has been increased from 12, now to \$30 billion. Last year it was \$29 billion. The extra billion dollars does not even keep up with inflation costs.

We have mine safety, which is a major item. It was pared back as much as can be done consistent with the mine accidents most recently in Utah.

Community health centers are still underfunded. Community health services, as has been noted by the President, are very important programs. GEAR UP, a program to deal with at-risk youth, very modestly financed. Very important to my State, Pennsylvania, and Philadelphia, which had 406 homicides last year and a real effort to add mentoring to try to take at-risk youth and try to deal with this issue.

It is my hope we can negotiate with the President and come to an accept-

able term. The President has stated his willingness to negotiate on SCHIP where there is a significant difference between what the President wants and what the Congress has legislated. As the facts suggest negotiations ought to be undertaken on SCHIP, they do as well on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education.

It is my suggestion these bills not be considered together. They violate the rules in their joinder. There will be a point of order raised, and I believe they ought to be separated in accordance with regular Senate rules.

If we combine the Veterans bill with the Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education bill, we have already been advised there will be a veto of both bills. The veterans financing is too important to be delayed. I chaired the Committee on Veterans' Affairs for some 6 years. The additional funds are necessary, and there would be undue delay if they are joined together.

So it would be my hope they will be separated so the veterans funding can go forward, and we can send this bill to the President with a view to negotiating terms. I have been in touch with the White House, talking about the possibility of coming to an agreed settlement so we can move the appropriations process forward and serve the needs of the American people.

In the absence of any other Senator seeking recognition, 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.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican leader.

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

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

NICOLAS SARKOZY'S VISIT TO THE UNITED STATES

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, nearly two centuries ago, the Congress welcomed back to America a great Frenchman whose bravery during the Revolutionary War still illuminates the pages of our Nation's early history.

The Marquis de Lafayette wanted to come back to thank his Revolutionary companions and to see the effects of the freedom he and other veterans of 1776 had risked their lives to secure.

His 1824 speech at the Capitol was the first ever by a foreign dignitary before a joint session of Congress, and he was introduced by a Kentuckian. Henry Clay happened to be the Speaker of the House at the time, and he said he could not have had a more gratifying duty than to congratulate the Marquis on his return and, as he put it: To assure him of the satisfaction which his presence afforded this early theatre of his glory and renown.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Henry Clay's remarks on that

important occasion be reintroduced and printed in the RECORD, 183 years after they were first recorded there.

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

Mr. SPEAKER then rose, and, in behalf of the House, addressed the Nation's Guest, in the following eloquent strain, adorned by those graces of oratory for which he is distinguished:

“General: The House of Representatives of the United States, impelled alike by its own feelings, and by those of the whole American People, could not have assigned to me a more gratifying duty than that of being its organ to present to you cordial congratulations upon the occasion of your recent arrival in the United States, in compliance with the wishes of Congress, and to assure you of the very high satisfaction which your presence affords on this early theatre of your glory and renown. Although but few of the members who compose this body, shared with you in the war of our Revolution, all have a knowledge, from impartial history, or from faithful tradition, of the perils, the sufferings, and the sacrifices, which you voluntarily encountered, and the signal services in America and in Europe, which you performed, for an infant, a distant, and an alien people; and all feel and own the very great extent of the obligations under which you have placed our country. But the relations in which you have ever stood to the United States, interesting and important as they have been, do not constitute the only motive of the respect and admiration which this House entertains for you. Your consistency of character, your uniform devotion to regulated liberty, in all the vicissitudes of a long and arduous life, also command its highest admiration. During all the recent convulsions of Europe, amidst, as after, the dispersion of every political storm, the people of the United States have ever beheld you true to your old principles, firm and erect, cheering and animating with your well-known voice, the votaries of Liberty, its faithful and fearless champion, ready to shed the last drop of that blood which, here, you so freely and nobly split in the same holy cause.

“The vain wish has been sometimes indulged, that Providence would allow the Patriot, after death, to return to his country, and to contemplate the intermediate changes which had taken place—to view the forests felled, the cities built, the mountains levelled, the canals cut, the highways constructed, the progress of the arts, the advancement of learning, and the increase of population. General, your present visit to the United States is the realization of the consoling object of that wish. You are in the midst of posterity! Every where you must have been struck with the great changes, physical and moral, which have occurred since you left us. Even this very city, bearing a venerated name, alike endeared to you and to us, has since emerged from the forest which then covered its site. In one respect, you behold us unaltered, and that is in the sentiment of continued devotion to liberty, and of ardent affection and profound gratitude to your departed friend, the Father of his Country, and to your illustrious associates in the field and in the Cabinet, for the multiplied blessings which surround us, and for the very privilege of addressing you, which I now exercise. This sentiment, now fondly cherished by more than ten millions of people, will be transmitted, with unabated vigor, down the tide of time, through the countless millions who are destined to inhabit this continent, to their latest posterity.”

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, historians tell us Members of the Senate

almost missed the Marquis de Lafayette's speech. Clay and the other House Members did not tell them it was happening until the very last minute, and relations between the two Chambers have not been the same since.

But America's friendship with France has endured. As French President Charles de Gaulle put it in his own 1960 address before a joint session of Congress:

Our common past is filled with efforts and sacrifices. [And] it is great because at all times we have served together for freedom.

Similar to Henry Clay, I consider it an honor today to welcome another great Frenchman to the American Capitol. When French President Nicolas Sarkozy addressed the Congress this morning, he stood beside a painting of the Marquis de Lafayette. Similar to that great Frenchman, President Sarkozy sees much to admire in America. He spoke eloquently about that admiration today. I think there is an important lesson in his words and in his election for the 110th Congress.

President Sarkozy admires America's openness to new ideas and to new people. He admires our work ethic, and he has already begun to implement policies that will make hard work pay in France. In an effort to lure back the so-called fiscal exiles who have left Paris for London or Geneva, he has cut the top tax rate from 60 percent to 50 percent.

He plans to replace two-thirds of retiring Government workers to shrink the size of Government, and to end the right of some Government workers to retire at age 50 with a pension. He is starting to take away the tools French labor unions routinely use to cripple France. To encourage work, he has significantly cut taxes on overtime work.

A lot of people on this side of the Atlantic, and I am one of them, were skeptical about whether President Sarkozy could actually get some of these sensible ideas past his Parliament. We hoped he would. We want France to be strong. He told us today he is deeply committed to carrying his mission through. But the cultural forces opposed to change seemed even stronger.

Yet it turned out his election signaled a deep sense of urgency among the French people, an urgency about their future. Sarkozy put it this way in his book, "Testimony":

I am convinced that no country in the world can get by without effort, and that France, notwithstanding its undeniable merits and prestigious past, will become a thing of the past if it doesn't take the steps necessary to adapt to the changes taking place in the world.

The French people surprised us by electing a free-market reformer. Then they surprised us again by electing a center-right Parliament that could get his ideas through. Some of those ideas, such as cutting the top tax rate, have gone through. The winds of change are clearly blowing through France.

And not just France. Over the past few years, the "Old Europe" model of

big government and bloated entitlements has shown signs of cracking. Germany elected a reformist chancellor from the Christian Democratic Party. Canadian conservatives rebounded under Stephen Harper after near extinction.

Even the Socialists are admitting their mistakes. The Socialist former Prime Minister of France, Lionel Jospin, shocked his countrymen when he blasphemously declared that: The State cannot do everything.

In Italy, center-left Italian Premier Romano Prodi announced in July he would raise Italy's retirement age from 57 to 61. Much of Europe, it seems, is trying to steer itself away from an economic model that has left it with double-digit unemployment and anemic growth. After scoffing at the Reagan Revolution two decades ago, many of them are now taking our 40th President's economic principles to heart.

Meanwhile, in the United States, the new Democratic Congress has turned away from the ideas that righted our own economic ship after the crisis of the 1970s. They are proposing higher taxes on everything from the size of our houses to the gas we put in our cars. They are handing out favors to big labor by proposing to end the secret ballot union elections and by working to defund the Federal office that was created to shine a light on how unions spend members' dues.

The Democratic Presidential candidates are practically tripping over each other to propose newer, bigger entitlements to anybody in Iowa or New Hampshire who will listen. In short, some Democrats in Congress and out on the campaign trail would like to turn America into France, when even the French themselves are obviously having second thoughts.

The effects of the Socialist model in France and other Western European countries are perfectly clear. President Sarkozy recently assumed control of a government that consumes more than 50 percent of France's gross national product. In Germany and in Italy, the percentage of GDP spent by the Government is above 45 percent. Compare that to about 30 percent in the United States. As one economist recently put it:

Europe's economy is so bad because government is so big.

So we congratulate President Sarkozy on his recent victory and his courage in attempting to restore France's economic vitality. America welcomes him. We are hopeful he will help lead the people of France into a new era of prosperity and economic freedom and strengthen the noble tradition of our two countries serving together for freedom.

I urge my Democratic colleagues to heed his message.

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. HARKIN. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

DEPARTMENTS OF LABOR, HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, AND EDUCATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2008—CONFERENCE REPORT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to the conference report to accompany H.R. 3043, which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

The committee of conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 3043) making appropriations for the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2008, and for other purposes, having met, have agreed that the House recede from its disagreement to the amendment of the Senate and do the same with an amendment and the Senate agree to the same, signed by a majority of the conferees on the part of both Houses.

(The conference report is printed in the House proceedings of the RECORD of November 5, 2007.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, as I understand the order, we now have 1 hour; is that correct? Am I correct we have 1 hour divided up in 15-minute blocks?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator would be advised there is a total of 3 hours, of which the Senator controls 15 minutes.

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I yield myself my 15 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is recognized.

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I urge all Senators to support the Labor-Health and Human Services appropriations conference report. The Senate version of this bill passed, as we all know, a couple weeks ago. We had 75 votes in favor of it. We would have had 80 votes if all Senators had been here. So it was a strong bipartisan endorsement of a bill that reflected priorities on both sides of the aisle.

I am here today to say I am pleased the conference report we are considering is even stronger than the bill the Senate approved 2 weeks ago. Much has been added to the bill. I thought what I might do, for the benefit of other Senators, is sort of run through the priorities in this bill and what our appropriations bill does compared to the President's budget. I think it will give everyone a good idea of how strong this bill is, why we garnered so much support in the first place and why I hope we will garner even more support with the conference report.

Right now, the conference report invests about \$8.2 billion more than last year in education, health, and labor programs. The President's budget cut \$3.5 billion—cut \$3.5 billion—from these