

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:47 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m., and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. WEBB).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

PALESTINIAN U.N. REQUEST

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I take this time to bring to the attention of my colleagues activities that will take place this week in New York at the United Nations and the request that has been made by the Palestinians that they seek status as an independent state with full membership in the United Nations.

It is clearly the position of the United States, it is clearly I think the position of the international community, that there needs to be two states, a Jewish State of Israel along with an independent Palestinian State, living side by side in peace. But the only way that will take place is through direct negotiations between the Palestinians and the Israelis. Prime Minister Netanyahu, the Prime Minister of Israel, was here in Washington and spoke before a joint session of Congress. He laid out very clearly how peace in the Middle East needs to evolve, through the recognition by the international community of the Jewish State of Israel and an independent Palestinian State through direct negotiations between the Palestinians and the Israelis.

Israel has been one of our strongest allies. They have been a loyal ally to the United States. We share common values. It is strategically critical to the United States, particularly in that part of the world. It is clear to all that the only way we will achieve the two states will be through direct negotiations between the Palestinians and the Israelis. The Palestinians have been reluctant to have these direct negotiations and tried to use intermediaries. They need to do it directly. Sit down with the Israelis. Negotiate the issues. That is the way to move forward to accomplish their goal.

The action they are seeking in the United Nations will be counterproductive. We have gone on record, every single one of us in the Senate of the United States, in S. Res. 185, a resolution I brought forward with my colleague from Maine, Senator COLLINS. It was passed unanimously by the Senate. It stated very clearly that if the Palestinians were to pursue this unilateral action through the United Nations, that would not advance the peace process, that it would be counterproductive to the objectives of the Palestinians to establish an independent state.

This past week, Senator COLLINS and I sent a letter to President Abbas, the President of the Palestinian group. We

told him that we believed trying to go directly to the United Nations, circumventing the peace process, would be a lack of good faith in peace negotiations and that it would have repercussions on United States foreign policy.

What we have been told by the Palestinians is they will seek full membership as a state in the United Nations, going to the Security Council. That is not going to succeed. We hope the Security Council will recognize the inappropriateness of such action and will not take it up or will not provide the necessary support to forward it to the General Assembly. In the unlikely case that it were to get the necessary support in the Security Council, the United States has made it clear that it would veto any such action, for good reason—because it would be counterproductive to achieving the objectives of two states living side by side in peace.

The Palestinians may go to the General Assembly. Although they cannot get full membership, they could try to advance a resolution within the General Assembly in the United Nations. We know the numbers. We know what could happen. But I must tell you, seeking some form of recognition through the General Assembly, circumventing the peace process and the Security Council, will be harmful to advancing the peace process and the objectives of the Palestinians for an independent state.

Let the parties negotiate directly, in good faith. Israel has indicated they are prepared to do that. We have been prepared to do that—negotiate in good faith through direct negotiations. There are no shortcuts to achieving this. Moving through the United Nations will not achieve those objectives.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.
The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The junior Senator from Nevada.

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

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

NEVADA TRAGEDIES

Mr. HELLER. It is an honor serving the people of the great State of Nevada, and today I am speaking on their behalf for the first time in the Chamber of the Senate. Before I begin, I would like to take a moment to reflect on two tragic events that have taken place in Nevada recently.

In Carson City, our Nation lost three Nevada National Guard members at a local restaurant shooting. Those members were MAJ Heath Kelly, SFC Miranda McElhiney, and SFC Christian Riege.

The other was the horrific crash at the Reno air races this weekend. As with the shootings in Carson City, this

terrible event not only impacted the communities in northern Nevada but the entire State and the Nation. Having visited the scene where the crash occurred, it is difficult to describe the amount of damage that took place there.

Our State's first responders and medical personnel did an amazing job in a very difficult situation. My thoughts and prayers go out to all the victims and their families, and I wish the injured a quick recovery.

REENERGIZING AMERICA

Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, I am deeply humbled by the opportunity to stand here today and to address the body as Nevada's 25th Senator. Nevada is a small State, but it is one that has provided many with a great chance to succeed. Most people know that it was in Nevada where Samuel Clemens began to sign his writings as Mark Twain and reported on the territorial legislative sessions. However, the reason Samuel Clemens came to the Nevada territory was to follow his older brother, Orion Clemens, who served as the first and only secretary of the Nevada Territory. That position would later become secretary of state, a position which I held prior to my service in Congress.

Similar to the Clemens brothers who sought greater opportunities, it is in a State such as Nevada where a son of a mechanic can have the opportunity to interact with those who are responsible for governing the State. For instance, as a boy I delivered the newspaper to then-Gov. Mike O'Callaghan. For a time, I went to Sunday school with then-Lt. Gov. HARRY REID's sons, and I was educated at the same public high school as Senator Paul Laxalt. Our current Governor, Brian Sandoval, is someone whom I used to play organized basketball with. I wish to thank Senator Laxalt for his support and Senator REID for being here today. I also wish to thank Senator MCCONNELL for being here as well.

My father's automotive shop was across the street from the Nevada State legislature, so many of the legislators would come into my dad's business. I spent a lot of time there as a kid working in that garage, sweeping floors, repairing cars, fixing engines and transmissions. In that shop, I learned the value of hard work and responsibility and the importance of family.

I am proud of what I learned growing up in Nevada: values from two great parents, good teachers, and good neighbors. Nevada values such as faith in God, hard work, honesty, and commitment to family—these are the values I try to bring to Washington, DC, every day.

Although Nevada has changed over the years, in many ways it is very much the same place as when I grew up. I bring this up because I recall what it took for my father to keep his

business in operation, and I think about what might have happened if he were still in business today. During this time when so many people are hurting and our economy is so fragile, it is important to understand how government impacts our economy and businesses across the Nation. While Washington politicians tarnish one another, Americans are still out of work. My home State of Nevada, in particular, leads the Nation in unemployment, foreclosures, and bankruptcies. Nevadans do not want finger-pointing; they want jobs. Nevadans do not want political talking points; they want to keep their homes. Nevadans do not want to hear all the promises; they want to pass on a better future to their children and grandchildren.

Job creation and economic recovery should be a bipartisan value. Unfortunately, Washington is paralyzed by politicians and has been reduced to sound bites. Too often it seems we cannot move beyond the politics of today. It appears we are more interested in press conferences than solving our Nation's most pressing problems—issues such as Medicare, which is on the verge of bankruptcy. Instead of strengthening and preserving the program, it is often used as a political weapon.

The truth is, Washington has not done enough to get our Nation back on track and the American people know it. I recently received a letter from a small business owner who had this to say:

My business had to dramatically cut our spending and unfortunately lay off half of our good employees. Many of our customers have lost their jobs and their homes due to government intervention in the housing market and massive mismanagement of our tax dollars . . . government employment has gone up, while private sector employment has dropped.

These are the kinds of stories I hear from Nevadans far too often.

For over 4½ years I have done weekly telephone townhall meetings, where I have the opportunity to speak with thousands of households across my great State. During a recent round of phone calls, I have been asking participants if they believe their children and grandchildren will have a better economic future than we have today. More than two-thirds of these respondents say no. Many Nevadans believe the economic burden of our national debt and the impact it will have on future generations will lead to fewer opportunities and less upward mobility. I am certain Nevada is not alone in this sentiment.

Do we want to be the first Congress that hands our children and grandchildren a lesser quality of life? This should serve as a wake-up call for Washington.

Passing a better life to our children and grandchildren is a value we all share as Americans. From all corners of Nevada and our Nation, the message is clear. The status quo is not working. We can no longer afford to ignore the biggest problems facing our country:

government spending and the national debt. The choices are clear. We can continue down this path which leads to bigger government, higher taxes, less jobs, and rationed health care for our seniors or we can decrease government spending, create jobs, and fulfill our promises to future generations. Washington needs to place its trust in the American people to reenergize our economy, not the Federal Government. It was Reagan who said:

From time to time, we have been tempted to believe that society has become too complex to be managed by self-rule, that government by an elite group is superior to government for, by, and of the people. But if no one among us is capable of governing himself, then who among us has the capacity to govern someone else?

Our debt will serve as an anchor on future prosperity if we do not work today to solve this problem. Business as usual is not an option. What we do as Senators and the decisions we make are critically important to those whom we wish to represent. Sometimes the results of our actions are seen immediately and sometimes the full ramifications take decades to unfold. Record deficits, high unemployment, an anemic recovery, and inflation are fueling anxiety over our Nation's fiscal health. The key to recovery is to create an environment where economic growth can flourish and provide certainty and stability to our Nation's job creators.

I evaluate legislation through what I call the entrepreneurial standard or the "more, higher, less test." Does this bill provide more competition with higher quality at less cost? What would a small businessman do? If the Federal Government approached problems through an entrepreneurial perspective, we would have a more efficient government at less cost to the taxpayer.

Unfortunately, our government is not providing that certainty today. We have a temporary Tax Code, overly burdensome regulations, and an ever-increasing national debt. There is no question the Federal Government must stop spending money we do not have. If we are going to keep America exceptional, we have to chart a new direction for our country.

As families across Nevada struggle to pay their bills and fight to keep their homes, government spending has grown exponentially. This must end if we are going to turn this economy around. We must focus on the long-term health of our economy and remove impediments that have caused economic stagnation and disabled businesses from creating new jobs.

The Federal Government has been on a massive spending spree, and it is time for this reckless behavior to end. History offers little evidence that massive deficit-financed spending leads to economic recovery. As an opponent of the stimulus and the Wall Street bailout, I believe reining in government spending is critical to economic recovery and the future of our country.

The unemployment rate, foreclosures, bankruptcies, all represent people who have become victims of this recession. There are those who have endured pay cuts to keep their jobs, individuals who are underemployed, and seniors on fixed incomes dealing with the increases in cost-of-living expenses. No question, times are tough.

So the question we must answer is, Do we have the courage to overcome partisan divides and work together to solve our Nation's problems?

While we all may not be members of the same political party or share the same philosophy of government, I believe we are all here to do what is right. In these difficult times, it is more important than ever that we work together, find common ground, and make tough decisions to create jobs and get people back to work.

Every day I go to work to advocate for the great State of Nevada, and every day I let Nevadans know there is someone in Washington who is on their side. There is not a day goes by that I do not think about what can be done to create jobs and get our economy moving again.

This is not the first time Americans have endured tough times, and it probably will not be the last. There will be better days ahead. However, it is incumbent upon us to effect change in difficult times to create a better future.

Today, we are at a crossroads, possibly a defining moment in our Nation's history, where we must change the way we govern. The window of opportunity is available, but it is growing smaller every day. Mark Twain wrote: "You are a coward when you even seem to have backed down from a thing you openly set out to do."

I ask another question: What is it that we set out to do? I ran for office to make a difference, to leave this place better than I found it. We still are the greatest Nation on Earth, with the greatest form of government. Our best days are yet to come—if we act now to return our Nation to what made us great: families, entrepreneurs, community, the American dream.

We must stop the mindset that we have all the answers here in Washington because I can assure my colleagues we don't. The answers are out there. They are in places such as Nevada, Alaska, Ohio, and perhaps Kentucky; in small towns and large cities across this country. Let the American engine fire again. Tear down the barriers to growth and opportunity and launch this great Nation to its great next chapter. I stand ready to serve and ready to bring us all together.

When my children and grandchildren look back many years from now, it is my hope that history will show we rose to the occasion to ensure their future and the future of our great Nation. I am confident we can meet those challenges. Our strength as a nation is bigger than the troubles of today. May God bless the State of Nevada and may God bless this great country.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. FRANKEN). The majority leader.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I congratulate my colleague on his fine speech. I was happy to hear him mention some of my family. I think most everyone in Nevada knows that my son Leif is one of his best friends and vice versa. So I congratulate the Senator from Nevada on his first speech. It will be the first of many, and the first one is always the hardest. After that, it is a lot easier.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, let me add to the remarks of the distinguished majority leader and say congratulations to our brandnew Senator from Nevada for his outstanding inaugural address. He is off to a very fast start representing the people of Nevada and doing a wonderful job. I congratulate him again for an outstanding address.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

EXTENDING THE GENERALIZED SYSTEM OF PREFERENCES—Continued

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, under the leadership of Chairman BAUCUS, I have the honor of chairing the Senate Finance Subcommittee on International Trade. That is why I wish to take a few minutes to outline some of the issues I think are relevant to this important debate, about going to bat for workers under the trade adjustment program.

In my home State, about one out of six jobs depends on international trade. The trade jobs tend to pay better than the nontrade jobs. So I have said my philosophy about international trade is, what we ought to do is everything possible to grow things in Oregon and in the country, to make things in Oregon and across America, add value to them here, and ship them somewhere because this is an extraordinary opportunity we have in front of us in terms of expanding exports.

The fact is, the American brand—the brand that is attached to American goods—the exports we send all over the globe are something consumers worldwide want. That is my first point. More than 90 percent of the world's consumers live outside the United States—90 percent—and they are all potential customers for the products we make in the United States. More customers for American products means American businesses have to make more products. To make more products, they go out and hire more workers. Hiring more workers to make more products to sell to more consumers is the upside of the trade debate we are starting today.

Dismantling trade barriers to American exports gives our businesses access to those new consumers. Doing that creates and supports good-paying

jobs—jobs people can support a family on, with a family-wage job.

As I mentioned, trade-related jobs provide better benefits and pay than many of those jobs unrelated to international trade. That is why when we have an opportunity to open markets to American products and American exports we ought to take advantage of it.

Point No. 2 is that our successful efforts to open markets are undermined when foreign governments and foreign competitors cheat. I use that word specifically because cheating is exactly what engaging in unfair trade practices that work to undermine our producers and our innovators is all about. So a central component of our trade policy always has to be enforcement—enforcement of U.S. trade laws and global trade rules.

Senator SNOWE, Senator PORTMAN, Senator BLUNT, Senator MCCASKILL, Senator SCHUMER, Senator BROWN, and I have been focused specifically on stopping foreign suppliers from laundering their merchandise to evade U.S. antidumping and countervailing duty laws. These are the duties that are put in place to remedy the damage that unfairly traded imports cause to American producers. Those foreign trade cheats, especially those from China, have been found guilty of dumping their goods in our country. Instead of stopping the dumping or paying the appropriate duties, the Chinese goods are shipped into a country such as Korea where the goods get repacked into boxes that say “Made in Korea” in order to avoid the U.S. trade remedy laws.

All of this has been occurring under the sleepy eyes—the sleepy eyes—of our customs agency. Fortunately, with bipartisan support, the Senate is positioned to act on this matter and address the issue. It will not come a minute too soon.

I was stunned when the staff of my Subcommittee on International Trade basically set up a sting operation, set up a dummy company, and we were amazed at the number of firms, particularly from China, that basically said: Look, we are plenty interested in figuring out how to get around American trade laws.

So these foreign trade cheats are out there. They are looking for ways to exploit the fact that the customs agency has not been tough, has not been relentless, particularly not with respect to protecting our manufacturers.

So point No. 2 is to make sure in the days ahead we put in place a stronger response to trade cheating, where cheats from China and other countries literally launder their merchandise, stamp it as coming from somewhere else, in order to avoid our trade laws.

The third point speaks to the bill we discuss today, and especially to the valuable Casey-Brown-Baucus amendment that I hope we will be voting on shortly. America's ability to compete in the global economy rests on opening

foreign markets, enforcing the trade rules, and preparing our workforce—the American workforce, the workforce on which American businesses depend—to be globally competitive for the jobs of tomorrow.

That is what the TAA, trade adjustment assistance, Program is all about. Just as over 90 percent of the world's consumers live outside the United States, so does over 90 percent of the world's workers. Although we have the most productive, innovative workforce in the world, sometimes a foreign producer finds a way to do something better or produce something more efficiently than an American one. The result is, we can have Americans losing jobs through no fault of their own.

So the Congress decided long ago that the best way to respond to global competition was to meet it head on, to meet it directly, and that is what a trade agenda with a robust Trade Adjustment Assistance Program does.

Trade adjustment assistance throws a lifeline to the workers who lose their jobs, and to their families, because we have been open, we have been free, we have been expansionist in the area of trade, particularly when it comes to creating exports. Trade adjustment assistance provides American workers with an opportunity to acquire the skills they need to not just become re-employed but to help American businesses better compete in the global marketplace while those families make their way back to the American economy, where they can earn a wage at which they can support their families.

Trade adjustment assistance is a pretty modest program. The lifeline that is thrown to these workers is modest—just a few hundred dollars a week on average—and the job training that is provided to those workers is typically provided through existing infrastructure such as our community colleges. Trade adjustment assistance provides just enough assistance for resourceful and thrifty and industrious workers to rebound from a trade-related job loss. That, in effect, is what I hope we can start looking at programs such as trade adjustment assistance as being.

What we want these programs to be all about is to be something of a trampoline, where, in effect, people can get a modest amount of assistance, and through that modest amount of assistance be in a position to bounce back to the American economy with skills that have been improved and be in a position to again make a good wage at a company that can be involved in areas such as exports and productivity and innovation-driven services.

For much of the last half of the century, the United States vigorously promoted an open and global economy. As a result, our country launched an effort to become the largest, most dynamic market in the world. Today that global market is more competitive than ever before. The rise of China and India and other emerging markets,