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Senate

(Legislative day of Monday, June 5, 1995)

The Senate met at 9:15 a.m., on the expiration of the recess, and was called to order by the President pro tempore [Mr. THURMOND].

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Lloyd John Ogilvie, offered the following prayer:

Almighty God, we praise You that it is Your will to give good things to those who ask You. You give strength and power to Your people when we seek You above anything else. You guide the humble and teach them Your way. Help us to humble ourselves as we begin this day so that there will be no need for life to humiliate us because of any vestige of arrogance in us. We ask for the true humility of total dependence on You.

You know what we need before we ask You, and yet, encourage us to seek, knock, and ask in our prayers. When we truly seek You and really desire Your will, You do guide us in what to ask. We ask for Your indwelling Spirit to empower us.

Our day is filled with challenges and decisions beyond our own knowledge and experience. We dare not press ahead on our own resources. In the quiet of this magnificent moment of conversation with You we commit this day. We want to live it to Your glory. We ask for the wisdom of Your Holy Spirit for the decisions of this day.

Make us maximum by Your Spirit for the demanding responsibilities and relationships of this day. We say with the Psalmist, "Blessed be the Lord, who daily loads us with benefits, the God of our salvation!"—Psalm 68:19. Lord, anoint our minds with the benefits of vision and discernment. Thank You in advance for these blessings. Amen.

RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MAJORITY LEADER

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

SCHEDULE

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, this morning the leader time has been reserved, and there will be a period for morning business until the hour of 9:45 a.m. At 9:45, the Senate will immediately resume consideration of S. 652, the telecommunications bill.

Under the order, the Senate will vote on the motion to table the Dorgan amendment at 12:30 today. Following that vote, the Senate will stand in recess until the hour of 2:15 for the weekly policy luncheons to meet. Also, Senators should be reminded that under the provisions of rule XXII, Members have until 1 p.m. today to file first-degree amendments.

I yield the floor.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will now be a period for the transaction of morning business not to extend beyond the hour of 9:45 a.m. with Senators permitted to speak therein for 5 minutes each.

Mr. BYRD addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The distinguished Senator from West Virginia is recognized.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I only need about 10 minutes for my remarks. Would the distinguished Senator from Wyoming be using more than 5 minutes? If not, I will be glad to yield and let him proceed ahead of me.

Mr. THOMAS. I expect to use 5 minutes.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I may follow the Senator from Wyoming and that I may proceed for 10 minutes.

Mrs. BOXER. Reserving the right to object, and I will not object. I wonder if we can amend that so that I can have 7 minutes following the Senator from West Virginia in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CAMPBELL). Will the Senator from West Virginia amend his request?

Mr. THURMOND. Reserving the right to object. I would like 5 minutes following the Senator from California.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Does the Senator from West Virginia amend his request?

Mr. BYRD. Yes, I so amend it.

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

SETTING PRIORITIES

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, let me move quickly into what I thought might be appropriate. I, of course, spent my time at home during the Memorial Day recess, and I returned again to Wyoming this weekend. I would just like to comment very briefly on my impression of what we are doing here, after having been here nearly 6 months, and the impression that I received from those at home.

First of all, let me say that I think there is an anxiousness in the electorate for the Congress to move forward. I wish, for example, and I want to just observe things as they occurred in 6 months from some previous experiences in the House.

It seems to me we have a difficulty in setting priorities. It is too bad. There are some things surely most Members would agree are more important than others. It would seem we really do not have a set of priorities. I wish we could do that. Priorities on issues are fairly well-defined in the country, not certainly so well-defined here.

It seems to me we ought to be able to manage time better than we do. Time, after all, is the resource that we have here, and certainly we consume too much doing many things. Time becomes sort of a political strategy, not particularly useful in debate, but rather being used to posture ourselves one way or the other.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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The balanced budget debate, for example, and certainly the issues, were exhausted relatively early, but the decisions did not come until the Members were exhausted. Perhaps that is the way it works. It does not seem like a good use of time.

I suspect there is a great deal of posturing for the media. I have a hunch, and of course I was not here before the activities of the floor were shown on TV, but I suspect the conversations were somewhat shorter than they are now.

It is difficult, and this is an irony. I do not know what we do about it. We have a better opportunity to communicate much more quickly than we have had in the history. Captain O'Grady shows up, and everyone knows about it 10 minutes afterward. That is wonderful, and that is the kind of communication we have. Yet we still seem to communicate in sound bites, where people really do not know the facts. That is too bad.

I happened to see the Chief of Staff of the White House on "Meet the Press" the other day. It is almost as if a robot pushed a button and the same thing came forward time after time.

I think it is exciting that we have an opportunity. I think there are issues out there. People are still concerned about taxes and spending. They think this Government is too big and costs too much.

I think people sincerely want a balanced budget although there will be some pain. I think people are willing to undertake that pain, to be responsible in a financial area.

I think regulatory relief is something that almost everyone would agree with. Most anyone would say we are overregulated in this country and we need to move more quickly to do something about that.

Real tort reform. We have played with that some. It is not true yet, but it is real tort reform on the edges. We need to do something. Our folks say we need to do something about that.

Welfare reform, I understand, will come next. I am pleased for that. It is something that surely needs to happen.

Health care has moved off of the highest level of visibility, but it does not mean we do not have to do something. It does not mean that health care does not need some restructuring. We ought to have a chance to do that.

States rights. Everyone understands that, if we can move Government a little closer to people, we will have better decisions, Mr. President.

Those are, I believe, clearly the agenda of people in this country. I think the agenda of this body and the agenda of the Congress ought to more properly reflect that.

I am a little discouraged. We have lots of efforts to block what is going on simply for the purpose of blocking. I am discouraged we do not have more leadership from the White House in terms of issues we are working on.

I am encouraged, on the other hand, that there is a willingness to change.

There is a willingness to move forward, particularly, I think, on the part of new Members. I think there is a willingness to make fundamental changes in the way the Government works and, for the first time in a very long time, to analyze some of the programs and say, is there a better way? Can we do it? Indeed, does it need to be done by the Federal Government?

Mr. President, that is a quick, personal analysis of where we are. Obviously, it is thrilling and exciting to be here. I think this session has new opportunities to look at things.

I urge that we do set a priority. I urge we do move forward with full debate, but not skidding our feet and trying to stop things from happening. People expect more of Government than that. I think the real measure of good Government is responding to what the voters have said.

Mr. President, I look forward to the next 6 months. I hope it is at least as productive, and hopefully more productive, than the past. I yield the floor.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, under the order I was to be recognized at this point for 10 minutes. The distinguished President pro tempore has an appointment, and I ask unanimous consent that he may precede me, and I may then follow.

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

CONCERNING THE RESCUE OF CAPT. SCOTT O'GRADY

Mr. THURMOND. Mr. President, I wish to thank the able and distinguished Senator from West Virginia for his courtesy and kindness.

Mr. President, I do not think it is an exaggeration to say that each of us breathed a sigh of relief when we learned last Friday of the rescue of Air Force Capt. Scott O'Grady, whose F-16 was shot down over war-torn Bosnia earlier this month.

Probably no one was more relieved by the rescue of Captain O'Grady than the young pilot himself. After spending 6 days eluding hostile forces, enduring the wicked weather of the rugged Bosnian mountains, and surviving on bugs, rainwater, and vegetation, Captain O'Grady summed up his feelings when he yelled to his rescuers, "I'm ready to get the Hell out of here." I am confident that was a sentiment that would be shared by anyone else who went through the experience Captain O'Grady did.

Six days in the woods, hiding from enemy soldiers and surviving on things that you or I would rake up out of our garden or spray to exterminate is certainly an amazing feat. It is primarily thanks to the skills and knowledge that Captain O'Grady learned through Air Force escape and evasion training that he was able to come through this experience alive and unharmed.

At every step of Captain O'Grady's 6 day ordeal, training was key. It was training that allowed Captain O'Grady

to beat the Serbs in a high-stakes match of hide and seek; it was training that taught Captain O'Grady how to survive the elements with only the clothes he wore when he ejected from his plane; and it was training in tactical operations that allowed the U.S. Marines to fly into hostile territory and pull Captain O'Grady out of the reach of the Bosnian Serbs. If nothing else, this ordeal has hammered home the maxim "train hard in peace to avoid mistakes in combat."

Mr. President, let me change tack just for a moment to praise the efforts of all the individuals involved in this rescue operation, especially those of the U.S. Marines. Though each of the services have their own special operations forces, each with their important and vital missions, the Marines have once again demonstrated their worth as a force capable of going anywhere at anytime. I have no doubt that Captain O'Grady now has a special understanding of just what exactly the phrase, "The Marines have landed," means.

In many ways, what has transpired over the last week is a testament to the investment the United States has made in its Armed Forces, beginning about 15 years ago. Captain O'Grady's survival efforts were aided by the fact that he wore clothing designed to help withstand the harshest elements and he carried sophisticated communications and homing equipment that aided those searching for the captain in finding him. Had O'Grady actually had to defend himself against the enemy, he was carrying a modern sidearm that packs more than a dozen rounds in its magazine, a far cry from the .38 pistol that pilots of just a generation ago relied on as a survival and defense tool. Perhaps most impressive is that with a minimal amount of preparation and planning time, a rescue operation was mounted that required the combined efforts of at least the Marines, Navy, and Air Force. Such interservice cooperation and efficiency was not in existence just 12 years ago when the United States intervened in Grenada.

Regrettably, all the things that we have worked so hard to achieve—a professional, well educated, well equipped military—that worked so well in Panama, Desert Storm, and now in Bosnia, are being threatened by those who would cut the defense budget. This is simply unacceptable, the United States needs a strong military that is ready and capable of meeting any enemy, anytime, anywhere.

Let us hope that there is one more happy circumstance to come out of Captain O'Grady's survival and rescue—that President Clinton realizes we must keep defense spending at a level which ensures we maintain the best military forces ever known to man. That is the only appropriate course of action for our Nation to pursue.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia.