SEC. . SENSE OF THE CONGRESS REGARDING FITZSIMONS ARMY MEDICAL CENTER, COLORADO.

(a) FINDINGS.—The Congress finds that—

(1) Fitzsimons Army Medical Center in Aurora, Colorado has been recommended for closure in 1995 under the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990;

(2) The University of Colorado Health Sciences Center and the University of Colorado Hospital Authority are in urgent need of space to maintain their ability to deliver health care to meet the growing demand for their services;

(3) Reuse of the Fitzsimons facility at the earliest opportunity would provide significant benefit to the cities of Aurora and Denver; and

(4) Reuse of the Fitzsimons facility by the local community ensures that the property is fully utilized by providing a benefit to the community.

(b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—Therefore, it is the sense of Congress that upon acceptance of the Base Closure list—

(1) The federal screening process for Fitzsimons Army Medical Center should be accomplished at the earliest opportunity;

(2) The Secretary of the Army should consider on an expedited basis transferring Fitzsimons Army Medical Center to the Local Redevelopment Authority while still operational to ensure continuity of use to all parties concerned;

(3) The Secretary should not enter into a lease with the Local Redevelopment Authority until he has established that the lease falls within the categorical exclusions established by the Department of the Army pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.);

(4) This section is in no way intended to circumvent the decisions of the 1995 BRAC;

(c) REPORT.—180 days after the enactment of this Act the Secretary of the Army shall provide a report to the appropriate committees of the Congress on the Fitzsimons Army Medical Center that covers—

(1) The results of the federal screening process for Fitzsimons and any actions that have been taken to expedite the review;

(2) Any impediments raised during the federal screening process to the transfer or lease of Fitzsimons Army Medical Center;

(3) Any actions taken by the Secretary of the Army to lease the Fitzsimons Army Medical Center to the local redevelopment authority;

(4) The results of any environmental reviews under the National Environmental Policy Act in which such a lease would fall into the categorical exclusions established by the Secretary of the Army; and

(5) The results of the environmental baseline survey and a finding of suitability or nonsuitability.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, this amendment is one that we have worked with members of the Armed Services Committee to tailor. It is only a sense of the Senate, but it expresses a strong hope that this country will move quickly to develop another use for the Fitzsimons hospital.

Mr. President, I might point out that it was my wish we offer legislation on this bill to transfer the hospital so it could be immediately turned over to another beneficial use. Unfortunately, I am advised that it is the wish of the committee that we not proceed in that fashion. While that alternative use is desirable, both for the Federal Government and for the community, it is the wish of the committee to follow a procedure set forth in law.

The problem with doing so, Mr. President, is that a delay could cause the loss of this alternative use. Fitzsimons Medical Center is a vital and important part of our economy. It will be shut down. It will be closed. It is the thought of the community that it should be immediately put to new use. And, fortunately, the University of Colorado's Health Science Center happens at the moment to be looking for an alternative facility. It is a serendipitous circumstance that this reuse is available just at the time the facility is being shut down.

So, what we had hoped to have is an immediate authorization for it to be used by the University of Colorado Health Science Center. It could provide significant savings because you would not have the long delay and expense of the shutdown and the closedown. It could provide immediate and beneficial use of the facilities, saving not only the University of Colorado money but the Federal Government money as well.

Mr. President, that is not what this amendment does. I wish it did. What this amendment does is simply express the sense of Congress that this alternative has merit and ask for its prompt consideration. My hope is, though, that we will see the Pentagon act expeditiously in developing this as the alternative use. It is of enormous benefit to the community to have this facility reused as a medical center. It not only makes the best use of the facility, but it also helps the community by saving jobs, medical jobs, that had been at Fitzsimons. Many of them can be saved by this alternative use by the University of Colorado.

Mr. President, last, let me close with this thought. The delegation from Colorado did not come in as others have in some areas and said, ''No, do not look at our facility. Do not consider us in trying to save money.'' We said, if closing down Fitzsimons makes sense, it ought to be done. But if it does not, if it is not the most cost-effective alternative to save money, then do not do it. And our delegation itself asked for studies to indicate whether or not it was economically feasible to keep it open.

The objective studies done by the Pentagon independently indicated it was cost effective to keep the facility open. It provides medical services for the entire region.

After that objective study was done, questions were again raised. We again asked for a second objective study. That second objective study came back. Again, it identified that it was cost effective to keep this facility open. Fitzsimons was one of those facilities kept open between World War I and World War II. It was kept open, I believe, because it services an entire region of the country in terms of health care for our veterans and for our service men and women. It was kept open between World War I and between World War II and kept open after World War II and before Korea and kept open after Korea and before Vietnam and kept open after Vietnam.

When it was put on the closure list, we asked one thing of the Commission: to review the independent studies, and if they disagreed with those studies, tell us where they did disagree. Mr. President, they did not do that. All the objective studies that looked at Fitzsimons indicated it was responsible to keep it open and functioning. When the Base Closure Commission looked at it, they did not address those studies.

Mr. President, this is a mistake. It is a mistake to close the facility. It is not a cost-effective move on the part of the military. What is more, the Base Closure Commission has never addressed the independent studies and findings that showed it was cost effective.

Mr. President, I support the Base Closure Commission. I will vote for their report. But, Mr. President, I do not agree with all of their suggestions. It will be a sad day when this facility is closed. I am happy, though, to see that there is a positive, significant, alternative use for it. It has the broad support of the full delegation of Colorado and the broad support of the entire community. But, Mr. President, I continue to feel it is a mistake for the U.S. military to close a facility that is a most cost-effective alternative to health care needs that they are committed to supply.

Mr. President, I yield the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time?

Mr. THURMOND addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Carolina.

Mr. THURMOND. Mr. President, we would like more time to look into this amendment. We cannot go undermining what the Base Closure Commission has done, but we would like to study this amendment further.

I ask unanimous consent that it be set aside and let us consider it further during the day.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent, since there is a lull on the floor, that I be allowed to speak as in morning business.

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

STOCKPILE STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I first want to say, when I was in the House of Representatives, I supported the nuclear freeze. I also want to say initially, I think the problem in the world today is not nuclear testing, but nuclear weapons.

Having said that, I feel it is appropriate for me to comment on the most

recent issue of the National Journal, the September 2 issue, wherein there was a discussion of a recent debate that occurred on this floor. The debate was on hydronuclear testing and the need for additional funds to support the safety and reliability of our nuclear weapons stockpile. Mr. President, the Senate ultimately voted to sustain those funds, and I am a strong supporter of the decision that the Senate made.

The National Journal noted that the proponents of a strong nuclear deterrent stated that the JASON study team supported some of the experiments that were at issue in the Senate debate.

The article also noted that some of my colleagues and the chairman of the JASON study committee believe its findings had been misrepresented.

I am not a Ph.D. scientist and I may not be a weapons expert, but I can read English, and I read it very well. If the JASON study findings do not reflect the panel's intent, then the authors did not do a very good job of making their views clear. As I said earlier, we need to get on with treaty compliant experiments, not nuclear tests. The JASON study clearly endorsed treaty compliant experiments. I would not generally look to the JASON's for guidance on nuclear testing or stockpile stewardship issues. This is not their area of expertise, and they have not had a credible track record in this area.

I do want to say, however, that since the proponents of hydronuclear experiments or treaty compliant experiments have relied heavily on the JASON's to push their agenda, it seems appropriate to use their experts to challenge their position.

Since the debate, I have looked into this matter more deeply. I now understand the views of some of the experts on the committee and of the experts who provided data to the committee more clearly than I did a month ago. I have found that the JASON report has been used to misrepresent the views of some of the experts and some of the study group members. This is not surprising in a highly political report that is trying to reach consensus. Sometimes the only way to reach consensus is to be unclear, and that lack of clarity can then be used by both sides to press their interpretations.

I assure you that although there are some in the study group that oppose hydronuclear experiments, there are also some who support hydronuclear experiments.

Many of the experts who provided input to the study would disagree with some of its conclusions. I understand that. Nevertheless, the report did clearly support the subcritical experiments with real nuclear material, experiments that some have characterized as hydronuclear experiments, experiments that fall within the range of experiments being debated that day on the floor of the Senate.

Mr. President, for those who still question the issues, let me again quote from the report. I am reading directly verbatim from the report. This is a quote:

> Underground testing of nuclear weapons at any yield level below that required to initiate boosting is of limited value to the United States. However, experiments involving high explosives and fissionable material that do not reach criticality are useful in improving our understanding of the behavior of weapons materials under relevant physical conditions. They should be included among treaty consistent activities that are discussed more fully in the text.

Mr. President, that is as clear as the English language can be. If people on the committee want to disagree with the report as it is written, that is their privilege. But I read from the report a month ago, and I am reading from it again. The language is very clear. In plain English, that clearly supports tests or experiments that opponents were trying to prohibit. More importantly, it should be understood that the JASON study report is a political report, not a technical report. It was created for political reasons, and its conclusions were generally preordained. Using the report as a so-called consensus of nuclear weapons experts is a misrepresentation. There may have been an expert or two on the committee, but that does not mean it represents the expert opinion on the issue.

On the technical level, there is still much for the Senate and the public to evaluate. The technical issues are complex and do not lend themselves easily to public debate. I will, though, Mr. President, do the best I can to make the key issues clear to the Senate and to the American public. Bits and pieces of the issue have been addressed in various studies, and the whole picture has not been laid before the Congress.

In particular, the loss of confidence that will come from the end of testing has not been adequately reviewed. No one who even superficially understands the issue will claim that we can maintain the current level of confidence in our nuclear weapons system without testing. The question is how much confidence do we need.

When that issue is fully understood by the Congress and the American people, we can then properly assess the value of testing and the need for testing. My view is clear. We must have the utmost confidence in the safety and reliability of our nuclear weapons, and anything we can do to achieve that confidence should be done. Second-class confidence is irresponsible and unacceptable in a first-class nation.

In the best case, this means we should continue with nuclear testing. In the case we debated last month, it meant getting on with whatever experiments the President was prepared to allow. We must continue to explore this issue. The debate on testing, stewardship, treaty compliant experiments is not over and should not be over until all the facts are out.

I look forward to the JASON report being finalized and published. That should help us all understand the basis for the conclusions of the study group and perhaps clear up some of the controversy on this issue.

I also, Mr. President, look forward to the weapons laboratory report called for in section 3164 of the Senate version of the National Defense Authorization Act, the matter that is now before this body. I look forward to it being completed and presented to the Congress. This report promises to be a credible technical report, written by real nuclear weapons experts.

In the meantime, I urge the President to get on with the stockpile stewardship plan that he has developed, including the treaty compliant experiments endorsed by the JASON's and called for in the current test ban negotiating positions. The $50 million added by the Senate should allow these experiments to begin without further delay. It is time for action with respect to implementing all elements of our Nation's Stockpile Stewardship Program.

Mr. President, I appreciate very much the managers of this bill allowing me to speak out of order, but certainly this is of relevance to the matter before this body.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time?

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be allowed to speak for up to 5 minutes as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? Without objection, it is so ordered.

UNDERGROUND NUCLEAR TESTING

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, this afternoon at 5 o'clock, the Senate will vote on final passage of the Defense appropriations bill, which will then go to conference. One of the provisions contained in that bill, which was added by amendment, I think is worthy of note and has not received significant attention, either by Members of the Senate or by the public at large.

So I wanted to call it to the attention of both of my colleagues and of the public and indicate my strong support for it. It is an amendment that Senator AKAKA offered, amendment No. 2406 on behalf of himself and Senator PELL. The amendment was adopted by voice vote and puts the Senate clearly on record with regard to nuclear testing contemplated by the Republic of France. Let me just read the amendment as it was adopted by the Senate before we went out of session earlier in August. It says:

> Sense of the Senate regarding underground nuclear testing.
>
> Findings. The Senate makes the following findings:
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> (1) The President of France stated on June 13, 1995, that the Republic of France plans to conduct eight nuclear test explosions over the next several months.
>
> (2) The People's Republic of China continues to conduct underground nuclear weapons tests.