

would not want to have a report submitted to the Congress about the impact of his provision, or, for that matter, why he would not want assurances from the Secretary of Defense, that his provision would not detrimentally impact on the ability of the U.S. Armed Forces to defend themselves.

Mr. President, in his remarks on the Senate floor on the deployment of United States Armed Forces to Bosnia, the Senator from Vermont raised concerns about the great number of landmines that are in and around Bosnia. I might point out that this conference report contains \$20 million for humanitarian demining activities, and \$20 million that would provide for advanced detection systems to find mines, so they do not pose such a great threat to our Armed Forces, and the forces of our allies, as well as innocent women and children. These provisions would be lost if the conference report is not adopted.

Mr. President, I hope common sense will prevail in this matter and that the Senate will approve this conference report.

Mr. President, I yield the floor and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. THOMAS). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. DOLE. Mr. President, what is the pending business?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The pending business is the conference report to the Defense authorization bill.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. DOLE. Mr. President, I know the chairman is on the floor and prepared to enter into debate or discussion, whatever. There may be Members opposed to the conference report. If they would like to speak, we would like to have them come to the floor and do that. As I understand, we are not able to get a consent agreement on when the vote will come. We hope it will be tomorrow morning.

I know today is a holiday, so there will be no votes today, and I know that tends to increase the absentee rolls.

In any event, I am going to recess subject to the call of the Chair, and we will stay in touch with the chairman of the committee. If there are those who desire to speak on this matter, they can certainly be able to come back into session very quickly.

Before I do that, I will say the President has now vetoed this morning the Interior appropriations bill and the VA-HUD appropriations bill. What he said to the 133,000 Federal workers who are covered by the Interior appropriations bill is, "You can't come to work."

What he said to the 293,000 Federal employees that are covered by the VA-

HUD bill is that "You can't come to work." And later today, I understand he will say to 194,000 Federal workers who are covered by Justice, State, Commerce, that, "You can't come to work."

With the stroke of a pen, all of these Federal employees could have been back to work today. They could have been back to work yesterday or the day before and we would not have had a shutdown for that many, because he has had the bills on his desk.

I always said until the Congress sent him the bills, we had to share the blame. But he has had these bills and he has vetoed them with some of the usual rhetoric coming from the White House these days, surrounded by little children saying we were about to endanger the lives of millions of children with the toxic waste dumps and all the exaggerated rhetoric they can think of in the White House. The result is that people, Federal employees, right before the holidays, are not going to be able to go back to their work because of President Clinton's veto. That is all it is. He had the bills. He could have signed the bills and the people would have been working and assured nothing would happen until the end of the fiscal year next October.

So I am disappointed that President Clinton is again playing politics instead of looking at the policy. It seems to me that he is making matters more and more difficult. He refuses to talk seriously about a 7-year balanced budget which most Americans would like to accomplish, and now he is vetoing appropriations bills which would put Federal workers back on the job because he said the cuts are too deep.

Again, it is the same old deception: Scare the American people, scare the children, scare the senior citizens, scare the veterans, tell everybody the sky is falling in, do not talk about the balanced budget, do not talk about the fact we would lower interest rates 2 percent. It means you would pay less for a student loan, a car loan, farm loan, machinery loan, whatever.

These are the advantages of a balanced budget over 7 years. That is why Republicans are insisting, because we believe most Americans, regardless of party, want us to balance the budget. In fact, most do not understand why it is going to take 7 years. They would rather do it in 3, 4, 1, or 2 or 5 or 6. But we have agreed on 7 years. The President has agreed on 7 years.

But ever since he agreed on that some 27 days ago, he has been backing away from it, confusing the American people with different numbers and different scenarios. I really believe unless we can accomplish something serious by Friday, it is probably not going to happen this year.

I am not in a position to announce the schedule for the balance of the year, but the balance of the year is about here.

New Year's Eve is not far off. I assume we will be here because we have

a number of items we would like to take up. We do want to get to the budget agreement yet this year. I do not believe it will ever happen unless the President—who is the President—exerts the leadership and calls the majority leader of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives and asks us to come to the White House and sit down, without staff, without press, and say, OK, let us work this out, let us agree to some parameters, the three of us, and let us have other people come in and put the details together. If he would do that, I think we can probably make some progress.

We have waited now for several days. The President certainly could find a telephone when he had a problem with Bosnia. He knew how to reach a lot of us. I wish he could use the same determination when it comes to balancing the budget.

RECESS SUBJECT TO THE CALL OF THE CHAIR

Mr. DOLE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now stand in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 12:20 p.m., recessed subject to the call of the Chair.

The Senate reassembled at 3:08 p.m., when called to order by the Presiding Officer [Mr. KEMPTHORNE].

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 1996—CONFERENCE REPORT

The Senate continued with consideration of the conference report.

"NO" VOTE ON DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I will reluctantly be voting against the Defense authorization bill—reluctant, because I know of the hard work which many Members, particularly the majority side, put in on this bill, the fact that this is the first Defense bill under the leadership and the guidance of our chairman, Senator STROM THURMOND.

I will vote against the bill for reasons which I will set forth this afternoon. A few months ago when I voted against the Senate version of the bill, I said that the bill was out of step with our real security requirements. The conference report is even worse in that regard, and it is worse in a number of ways which I will illuminate in the next few minutes.

It is not a good-government bill. It is not a responsible bill. It is not arrived at in the bipartisan fashion that has long characterized legislation in this area. The Senate should reject it, and if it goes to the President he should veto it. As a matter of fact, I have been informed that he will veto it.

The conference report is out of step with the priorities of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Secretary of Defense, the President, and I believe the Nation. It is as fiscally irresponsible as the Senate bill was, and the conference made