

I really say to the Senate that this is a great loss. He suffered the loss of his father this year, very dramatic for Mike Boorda. And we talked a lot about that. But I hope that this is something that we can find a way to deal with very quickly because he is going to be sorely missed in this mix of our national defenses.

I think that from what I have heard, what the assistant majority leader just said, that we are in a different circumstance now. This is hard for us to take for certain what we have heard, which I hope is not true. It is a very difficult situation.

Mike Boorda I think was one of the bright stars of our military system today as it stands and is responsible for a lot of the initiatives that would have brought the Navy back to its prominence of days gone by. So I am really sad to be here.

I am pleased you have made the announcement, Senator LOTT. But that it is a most disturbing development is all I can tell the Senate, very disturbing.

Mr. BOND addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I also had the privilege, just several months ago, to be traveling with Admiral Boorda, and a couple weeks ago visited with him in my office again.

He was truly an outstanding person, had great ability and great dedication to this country, and was more than willing to make any kind of contributions he could. All we can say is that our thoughts and our prayers are with his family and loved ones. And it is with deep, deep sorrow and shock that we receive this news.

Mr. EXON. Mr. President, suffice it to say I still have not recovered from the shock. I find myself in one of those positions that maybe we have all found ourselves in sometimes, having some kind of a bad dream but you know it will all turn out right and you will wake up. I am asking myself, am I having a dream? Obviously, I am not. This is a terrible, terrible shock. I simply want to join the others in wishing the best to the family. Our prayers are with all of them during these very, very difficult times.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I add my words of condolences. My memory of Admiral Boorda is coming to a meeting with women Senators with a number of other leaders from the military and being so concerned about making sure that this military moves forward in a way that is fair to women as well as to men. I will always remember that meeting.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, as a member of the Armed Services Committee, I was here when Admiral Boorda was first announced as the Chief of Naval Operations, the first man to come up through the ranks to become the Chief. I worked with him then on a variety of issues, but especially on his mind was the aftermath of Tailhook. As the only woman on the

Armed Services Committee, we had a chance to sit down and talk about what had happened and what could be done to get the Navy going in the right direction.

The Navy is very special to me because it is the service that my husband chose during the Korean war. I love the Navy, and Mike Boorda loved the Navy.

I want to say that I thought he did as much as any human being could do to be in charge of a service during the downsizing time, which everyone knew had to be done. He did it in a way that would plan for the future, to make sure that the strategic part of what the Navy does for our national defense and our security were strong. Yet, he had the compassionate side that worried very much about sexual harassment. He wanted to make sure that he instilled in the men and women that he served as their leader, that, in fact, the value system that was instilled in the men and women of the Navy was the most important part of their service. He did everything a human being could do to instill that value system in them. Every time a problem arose, I would talk to Mike Boorda and he would be showing concern and saying, "What more can we do?"

I think that he was a fine leader. I am stunned, as every one of us is, that we have lost this fine leader. I hope that his memory will be served as the person who was a man of his word, who served his country well, and who had the respect of everyone that met or touched his life. I yield the floor.

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION ON THE BUDGET

The Senate continued with the consideration of the concurrent resolution.

AMENDMENT NO. 3971

Mr. EXON. Mr. President, how much time is remaining on each side of the amendment offered by the Senator from Missouri?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nebraska is advised each side has approximately 8 minutes remaining.

Mr. EXON. Mr. President, I yield 4 minutes to the Senator from California.

Mrs. BOXER. I thank my friend for yielding.

Mr. President, I have a heavy heart about this amendment, because I think if we do anything on this floor we should cross party lines and honor the children of this country.

What this amendment will do is hurt the children of this country and hurt them badly. We know that right now one in five children in America lives in poverty. Yet, this amendment would turn these children against the veterans in this country. That is not what we should be doing.

The fact is, we are talking here about assistance to disabled children. We ought to think about what I mean when I say a disabled child. We are talking about a child with cerebral

palsy. We are talking about a child with spina bifida. We are talking about a child with heart problems. We are talking about children who are so vulnerable they cannot even get up in the morning without assistance. And we are going to cut from their sustenance? I do not know how we do that.

The irony about this amendment, it does not increase the caps on discretionary spending. So even if we vote for this, the chances that veterans will get more are not very good.

I think I really have to say there is something that I think my friend from Missouri is missing in his amendment. Maybe he does not realize that half a million veterans are on welfare. Half a million veterans are on welfare. So when he cuts welfare to give to veterans, he forgets that half a million veterans are going to get hurt by this. We know who they are—veterans who just cannot make it back, who were suffering from disabling diseases, be they physical or mental, half a million of whom are on welfare, some form of welfare. So we cut this. We are saying we are cutting it in order to help veterans, yet we are cutting 500,000 of the most vulnerable veterans.

I really believe there are other ways we can help the veterans. I would like to cut corporate loopholes. I would like to cut corporate welfare. That is what I am going to vote to do. We have a lot of corporate loopholes out there that need to be closed, businesses that get favorable tax treatment if they leave the country, people escaping taxation who were very wealthy. We should go after corporate welfare, not go after the disabled children, the disabled veterans. Then, we should spend it on the veterans.

I think we, on the Democratic side, will have an opportunity to honor our veterans by increasing what we spend on them by taking the money out of corporate loopholes, corporate tax loopholes. I think everyone can get behind that. However, we should not hurt the most vulnerable children, the most vulnerable veterans.

I really do believe that my ranking member is going to have an excellent amendment, instead of this one, which turns our veterans against the most severely disabled children and the most severely disabled veterans.

I yield the floor.

Mr. COHEN. I ask unanimous consent to proceed for a few minutes as in morning business.

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

ADMIRAL BOORDA

Mr. COHEN. Mr. President, Senator LOTT a moment ago spoke about the life and death of Adm. Jeremy Mike Boorda. I think all of us were stunned by this revelation.

Yesterday, most of us, Republican and Democrat alike, were shocked, and saddened, in some respects, at the announcement of another man of character and courage who decided to leave

a position he loved most to achieve a higher dream.

Today, just moments ago, we are advised of another man in our public service, one of the best and brightest that the Navy has ever had to offer, took leave of life. The reports at this point have not been confirmed. On one network they have indicated that it was a self-inflicted wound. I hope that is not the case. We are trying at this particular point to verify rumors. No such confirmation has been forthcoming at this point. We do not wish to add to the speculation any further than what is on the television at this moment.

I say a few words about Admiral Boorda from a personal point of view. He was a very close friend of mine. He attended my wedding a few months ago. Our relationship goes back several years, at least, when we were in Munich together, the Wehrkunde conference. It was memorable to me because one night while we were there, Sarajevo had been shelled. There was a great loss of life. Admiral Boorda took charge immediately. He ordered C-141's to get to Sarajevo. He did so over the objection of the U.N. command at that point. Akashi could not be reached. They said, wait until tomorrow; do not send any aircraft down. Mike Boorda said, "I am not waiting for anything. Get those planes in there. Get those wounded people out of there and get them to the hospital."

That was the kind of man of action and passion that I came to know and admire. He, over the last several years, demonstrated that time and time again in terms of his commitment to the Navy.

Yesterday, Senator DOLE talked about life being a hardship. Nothing came easy to Senator DOLE. I might say that for Mike Boorda. Life was a hardship as well. He was not born into wealth. He was not a man of privilege, but he is what we call a common man. He rose through the ranks of common men and women to the highest position in the U.S. Navy. He was admired by everyone who ever came within his presence. He was inspiring to those men and women who now served in our U.S. Navy. All of them will be equally stunned and shocked, as we were, to learn of the news of his death. I can only hope that the reports I have heard to date are not correct.

I pray for the members of his family who are alive today and no doubt in a state of shock and grief. I can only indicate to them that every person who has ever been touched by Jeremy Mike Boorda will remember him for the rest of their lives. I can only express my condolences at this moment and hope to have further comments about the life and times of Mike Boorda at a later time.

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION ON THE BUDGET

The Senate continued with the consideration of the concurrent resolution.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time?

Mr. BOND. How much time do I have?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri has 8 minutes, and the Senator from Nebraska has 2 minutes 55 seconds.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I yield myself 3 minutes.

We have heard a lot of straw men set up by opponents on the other side. We have heard about all kinds of horrible cuts that would come if we get a responsible budget number for welfare. This body should know that the \$53 billion cut, which we propose in this amendment to include in reconciliation instructions, is equivalent to the \$53 billion cut that was passed by an 87-vote majority in this body when we debated welfare previously.

Now, there could have been as many as 13 Members of the body that did not like what was in that welfare bill. But I can assure you, with 87 Members of this body voting for welfare reform, the horrible, tragic things that we hear about that could happen if we have to achieve reconciliation savings of \$53 billion in welfare are so much smoke and mirrors. What we are concerned about in the numbers is assuring that veterans health care does not take an impossible hit, a \$12.9 billion reduction. There is no way that one can work out.

My colleague from California, who has argued so eloquently for the veterans and has talked about them, did not propose any changes when she voted for the amendment that would slash Veterans' Administration spending by almost \$13 billion in the Budget Committee. The Senator from Minnesota had said we should not worry about the cuts in veterans. We just cannot adopt a budget number that is consistent with the previous welfare reform that 87 Members of this body, on a bipartisan vote, supported when we first passed welfare reform.

Mr. President, budgets are about setting reasonable expectations for Government so that we can carry out our functions in a responsible manner and not continue to add to the deficit. All of the horror stories, all of the very difficult and compelling cases that were cited are not the ones that would be hit by the budget reconciliation proposal that this amendment contains.

Mr. President, I yield the floor and reserve the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time?

Mr. EXON. How much time is left on each side?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Five minutes for the majority, and 2 minutes 55 seconds on the Democratic side.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I yield 4 minutes to the distinguished chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming is recognized.

Mr. SIMPSON. Mr. President, I want to associate myself with the comments of the distinguished chairman of the

VA--HUD and Independent Agencies Subcommittee on Appropriations, Senator KIT BOND of Missouri. He does a tremendous job. I have watched him through the years. He is attentive, he does his homework, he is impressive, and he gets quite involved in every way and in every issue in a most positive way.

What has been curious to me, as chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, is the remarkable behavior of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Jesse Brown. He is continually distancing himself and the VA from the President's budget. I understand he testified early last month before the House Veterans' Affairs Committee that he "felt the President's budget would be devastating for veterans."

Later in the month, April 24, the Secretary appeared before the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, which I chair, and which I oversee as chairman. In response to a question from my friend, Senator CRAIG of Idaho, the Secretary stated that the VA budget described in a document submitted to the Congress—over the signature of the President and entitled "Budget of the United States of America"—does not represent the policy of the President.

I ask, whose policy does it represent? Did an employee of the Government Printing Office change the numbers for the proposed VA budget on his or her own, making the President of the United States and the Congress the victims of some wild practical joke? Did some cyber surfer hack his way into the White House computer system and change the numbers? Did somebody forge the signature of the President of the United States on a document submitted to the Congress in his name? My Heavens, we may have a real scandal here on our hands.

The Secretary of Veterans Affairs told the committee that VA's future medical budget will be subject to annual renegotiation by the President. He tells us he has received the President's assurances that the budget numbers are not binding. Well, that makes quite a puzzle.

The President of the United States has proclaimed to the American people that he will balance the budget in 7 years. His plan, like any budget, includes difficult decisions allocating limited resources between many worthwhile programs.

But, according to the Secretary's testimony, the President does not stand behind the parts of that plan relating to the Department of Veterans Affairs.

There are only 2 ways the President can deliver on his commitment to Secretary Brown. He can increase the VA spending by abandoning the goal of the balanced budget. But the President has made a commitment to the American people to present a balanced budget. We have heard that discussion for several hours. So I am sure that he would not take that course. Or, in the alternative, the President could increase the VA's budget by reducing the budget of other programs.