

AMTRAK REFORM BOARD  
NOMINATIONS

• Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, for the last three years, this Congress struggled with many of the difficult issues in the Amtrak reauthorization bill. We finally reached an agreement late last year and sent legislation to the President for his signature, which he signed on December 2, 1997.

In the process, my state, and its neighbors, lost a valuable service on the route of the Pioneer. I fought hard to keep that service running but citizens of eastern Oregon continue to feel frustrated over the loss of this service.

I want Amtrak to succeed and I want to make sure that the legislation we enacted last year is properly implemented. The Administration is late in submitting its nominations for the Amtrak Reform Board which was created in last year's bill. Although I hear that the Administration has begun the process of picking candidates for the seven positions that are required by law, I am concerned that the names under consideration will not represent the various regions of the country that make up the Amtrak system. If the restoration of the Pioneer is to receive fair consideration, it must be by a Board of Directors that reflects the regional needs of all sections of the country. My friend, the Majority Leader, who also sits on the Commerce Committee has made clear on more than one occasion that if Amtrak is only a series of regional corridors and not a national system, it will not continue to receive the support of Congress.

While I believe the new Amtrak Board should meet the qualifications spelled out in the Act, they should also have a sense of geographical balance. I fear the loss of support for a national system if we wind up with a Board that represents only one region of the country. In particular, the west and mid-western states again appear to be left out of consideration as sources of Amtrak director candidates.

As a member of the Senate Commerce Committee, I will be looking for regional balance when these nominations are submitted and encourage my colleagues to do so as well. •

APPOINTMENT BY THE MAJORITY  
LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair, on behalf of the majority leader, in consultation with the Democratic leader, pursuant to Public Law 102-246, appoints Bernard Rapoport, of Texas, to the Library of Congress Trust Fund Board for a term of 5 years.

The Senator from New Mexico is recognized.

INDIA'S NUCLEAR BLAST

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, I regret that I have to take a few moments and keep the distinguished Senator here, but I don't know whether I will

get a chance to talk about the India nuclear blast if I don't do it today. I will be as brief as I can.

Yesterday, two committees of the Senate held hearings on India's recent underground nuclear tests. It is my understanding that those committees, particularly the Select Committee on Intelligence, which heard testimony from CIA Director Tenet, are most interested in why the United States had no advance warning of India's plan. I think the Senate needs to be very careful as it reviews the India situation not to kill the messenger.

The simple fact is that covert nuclear operations are extremely difficult and sometimes impossible to detect. Even before its tests, we knew a great deal about India's nuclear weapons program. We were cognizant of the readiness of their weapons, that because their test site had been prepared for tests in 1995, they could test on very short notice, and that the newly elected party had campaigned on a platform that included the development of nuclear weapons—all signs that should have made this week's tests less surprising. Yet, we were caught off guard. But I do not think that it is entirely the responsibility of our intelligence agencies.

Since the fall of the Soviet Union, U.S. policymakers have been subject to two sets of pressures, both of which have led us to consider reducing our nuclear stockpile to the lowest possible levels and have reduced our vigilance.

One of those pressures comes from an anti-nuclear movement which feels a moral imperative to abolish nuclear weapons. Everyone knows that we would like to abolish nuclear weapons, but what is going on in the world indicates that that will not occur just because the United States decides to do so.

The second pressure comes from our military, and it is felt largely in the authorization and appropriations process in the Congress.

Today, the emphasis in the Pentagon is on readiness, warfighting capability and nuclear weapons, and the strategic command which is responsible for their use has taken a second-class status to those branches of the service interested in tanks, planes, ships and troop readiness. As a result, we are seeing a diminution of the strategic command within the Pentagon and across policymakers in the Congress, as well as the administration, and a failure to recognize how attractive and important nuclear weapons are.

It takes the actions of an India to remind us that for a nation that perceives itself as threatened, wants to threaten, demonstrate its technical prowess or simply wants to join the elite nuclear club, nuclear weapons are extremely attractive. That is a deplorable situation, but it is a fact.

Unfortunately, in taking the actions it has of the last 2 days, India has destabilized an already precariously balanced region of the world. Although

Pakistan and China were previously aware of India's nuclear capability, India's demonstrated willingness to further develop and demonstrate those capabilities is, by its nature, threatening to Pakistan and China. In turn, China and Pakistan, but Pakistan in particular, may also take steps to demonstrate their nuclear willingness.

The United States is correct to impose sanctions on India and to prepare to do so on Pakistan if they test. I hope that Pakistan will recognize by evaluating the situation in Russia that superpower status built on economic prowess is significantly more desirable than superpower status achieved through nuclear weapons at the expense of economic prowess.

Regardless of the achievements of the high-level U.S. delegation dispatched to Pakistan yesterday, it is obvious that there could be under consideration by both Pakistan and China the effect of nuclear weapons in the hands of India, which might force both countries to proceed with nuclear weapons.

We learned about India's tests first through a press announcement and then through our seismic monitors. India could just as well have tested their devices thousands of miles offshore on ships or drone planes. We would certainly have registered the tests, but we might never have known who tested. That was the situation in 1978 when a device exploded in the Indian Ocean and it took us many years to determine whose it was.

Incidentally, although today our satellites can detect atmospheric nuclear explosions, there has been some consideration of not replacing that capability when our current systems reach the end of their true lifetimes. This is just one symptom of our lax policy and declining attention to the threat of nuclear weapons.

Until they are disproved, and by that I mean something more than reassurances from the Indian Government which has already demonstrated a willingness to be misleading about these issues, we need to consider the possibility that India cooperated with other countries in conducting these tests.

We currently assume that all the devices that were detonated were Indian, that all the technicians on the site were Indian, and that the data has not been shared with other nations, but we cannot base our final analysis on assumptions.

India's tests cast a long shadow over the ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. To date, Chairman HELMS, chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations which has jurisdiction over all treaties, has indicated he is not in a hurry to report the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. I know some in arms control may have been frustrated by his position. Today, I think they are fortunate that the treaty will not be considered in the near future.