AMENDMENT NO. 3505

(Purpose: To direct the Secretary of the Treasury to instruct the United States executive directors of international financial institutions to use the voice and vote of the United States to support the purchase of American agricultural commodities)

On page 49, insert ''(a)'' before ''The''.

On page 50, line 11, add the following: ''(b) The Secretary of the Treasury shall instruct the United States Executive Directors of international financial institutions listed in paragraph (a) of this section to use the voice and vote of the United States to support the purchase of American produced agricultural commodities with funds appropriated or made available pursuant to this Act.''

Mr. MCCONNELL. I believe there is no objection to the two Kempthorne amendments.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the amendments? Without objection, the amendments are agreed to.

The amendments (Nos. 3504 and 3505) were agreed to.

Mr. LEAHY. I move to reconsider the vote.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I do not believe we have an amendment at the moment. We are still checking around. I urge Members if they have amendments to bring them to the floor because I have a feeling we are probably not that far away from third reading.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCONNELL. 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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.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. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, moments ago, we adopted amendment No. 3503 by the Senator from Arkansas, Senator BUMPERS. I ask unanimous consent that Senator HUTCHINSON of Arkansas be added as a cosponsor.

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

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BYRD. 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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.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. BYRD. Mr. President, has the Pastore rule expired?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Pastore rule will expire at 12:30.

Mr. BYRD. I thank the Chair. I ask unanimous consent that I may speak out of order.

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

GULF WAR ILLNESSES

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, Senator SPECTER announced earlier today the release of a voluminous and comprehensive report of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs special investigation unit on Gulf War illnesses. I commend the Senator from Pennsylvania and the other Members of the Committee, including my colleague from West Virginia, Senator ROCKEFELLER, on this report, which was over a year in the making. In great detail, this report and its appendices provide the justification for legislation that Senator SPECTER, Senator ROCKEFELLER, and I introduced on July 28, S. 2358, the Gulf War Veterans Act of 1998.

The history of this sorry saga of war, illness, and bureaucratic bungling it details has not improved with time. Indeed, age has turned this victory wine into sour vinegar, not a vintage to be savored. Since the signing of the cease fire in Iraq in 1991, soldiers have been complaining of symptoms that have been poorly dealt with by the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs. As the years have passed, we have learned that these soldiers, sailors, and airmen had to operate in a toxic atmospheric cocktail of environmental and battlefield hazards, topped off with a chaser of vaccines and pills that may have interacted poorly with all the other hazardous exposures. We have learned that our equipment to detect and protect our troops may not be good enough, and that their training and doctrine is inadequate. We have even learned of the role that the U.S. played in arming Iraq with chemical and biological warfare technology and materials. Finally, DOD and the VA record keeping was poor, the databases inadequately designed and incompatible, so that the ability to identify battlefield exposures—when known—is not available to the VA when requested by a sick soldier. We won the war, but the price paid by these soldiers has been unacceptably high, perhaps needlessly high. And DOD and the VA have done little to correct the problems. The official motto seems to be ''That which does not kill us, we ignore—unless forced to address it.''

Like other Members, I have tried to correct these matters as they have come to light. I successfully offered an amendment to ensure DOD and the Intelligence Community consultation when pathogens useful to a biological warfare program are approved for export, so that we have a better opportunity to track countries that have the capability, if not the intent, to produce biological warfare agents. I obtained funding for the first peer-reviewed scientific studies of the possible health effects of exposure to low levels of chemical warfare agents. An amendment I authored that was adopted by the Senate but rejected in conference would have provided military health care to the children of Gulf War veterans born with birth defects that might be linked to their parent's wartime exposures.

This year, I offered amendments to the Department of Defense authorization bill to improve the oversight and approval process for granting waivers to use investigational drugs without informed consent of the troops, and to require a review of chemical warfare defense doctrine to address exposure to low levels of chemical warfare agents. This last effort is based on a soon-to-be released General Accounting Organization (GAO) study that I requested last year in conjunction with Senator LEVIN and Senator GLENN. I am sorry to say that, despite DOD's 1996 show of concern over possible chemical exposures at Khamisiyah [Kam-ih-see-yah] and other Iraqi sites that may have resulted in the exposure of U.S. personnel to varying levels of chemical warfare agents, little has been done to address the lack of training that should better enable our troops to recognize and take effective action to protect themselves from these potential health threats. We have also requested GAO to look into the adequacy of U.S. detection and protection equipment and efforts to address hazardous, but not lethal, levels of chemical and biological warfare agents. This study will be completed next year.

While I hope that my efforts and the efforts of other Members and Committees can push DOD and the VA into facing the serious new health consequences of war on the modern battlefield, even these cannot adequately substitute for an epiphany in those departments that will result in a sincere and thorough examination of this issue, and in proactive and coordinated steps to correct the deficiencies outlined in this comprehensive report.

There is no smoking gun in this report, no explosive new evidence that says ''whodunit'' and why. But like previous reports by Congress, the GAO, and the Presidential Advisory Committee on Gulf War Illnesses, this report confirms that our veterans were exposed to a poison cocktail of hazardous materials, that many are now ill, and that the bureaucratic response has been slow and stumbling. It is likely that there will never be a clear and final answer for our sick soldiers and their families as to exactly what ails them. But this report does offer many corrective recommendations aimed at preventing the veterans of the next war from having to go through the years of frustration and outrage that the sick veterans of the Persian Gulf War have endured. It also offers a solid foundation to move forward and address the legitimate health concerns of Persian Gulf veterans that are contained in S. 2358, the Persian Gulf Veterans Act of 1998. Gulf War veterans in West Virginia and across the country are getting sick as a result of their participation in the Gulf War, which may have exposed them to a variety of hazardous materials and chemicals while serving their country. But instead of receiving medical care, these veterans are given bureaucratic excuses. It is time to end

the litany of excuses and to give our veterans the health care they deserve. I again thank my friend from Pennsylvania, Mr. SPECTER, for his efforts, and the efforts and my colleague from West Virginia, Mr. ROCKEFELLER. I congratulate and thank the committee for its efforts. I look forward to the successful passage of S. 2358.

Mr. President, I thank my friend, Mr. SPECTER, for his courtesy in allowing me to proceed at this point. I now yield the floor.

Mr. SPECTER addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SESSIONS). The Senator from Pennsylvania.

FOREIGN OPERATIONS, EXPORT FINANCING, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1999

The Senate continued with the consideration of the bill.

AMENDMENT NO. 3506

(Purpose: To provide funding for the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty Preparatory Commission)

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, I send an amendment to the desk and ask for its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. If there is no objection, the pending amendment is set aside. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Pennsylvania [Mr. SPECTER], for himself and Mr. BIDEN, proposes an amendment numbered 3506.

At the appropriate place in the bill, insert the following:

SEC. . Of the funds appropriated by this Act, or prior Acts making appropriations for foreign operations, export financing, and related programs, not less than $28,900,000 shall be made available for expenses related to the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty Preparatory Commission; Provided, That such funds may be made available through the regular notification procedures of the Committee on Appropriations.

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, this funding is very important so that the processing of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty may go forward. This treaty is an important component of nuclear arms control and nonproliferation policy.

On behalf of the United States, President Clinton signed the treaty on September 24, 1996, the day it was open for signature, and thereafter transmitted it to the Senate on September 22, 1997, for advice and consent or ratification.

The treaty has been signed by 149 nations, ratified by 15. The treaty will enter into force after 44 states specified in the treaty have ratified it. The initial signatories to the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty established a preparatory commission to carry out the necessary preparations for implementation of the treaty as its entry into force. The preparatory commission will ensure that a verification regime is established that can meet the treaty's requirements.

The need for this treaty came into very, very sharp focus earlier this year when on May 12 of 1998 we had the detonation of nuclear devices—actually it was on May 11—by India and two more on May 13. Then Pakistan responded with five tests on May 28 and one on May 30. The issues posed by India and Pakistan engaging in nuclear tests is one of overwhelming importance to the feuding which has been going on between those two countries for years and the possibility of nuclear war being initiated as a result of those two nations now having publicly announced their nuclear powers, having tested nuclear devices.

I saw firsthand the issues relating to these two countries when Senator Hank Brown and I visited both India and Pakistan back in August of 1995. On August 28, 1995, Senator Brown and I sent the following letter to President Clinton:

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: I think it important to call to your personal attention the substance of meetings which Senator Hank Brown and I have had in the last two days with Indian Prime Minister Rao and Pakistan Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto.

Prime Minister Rao stated that he would be very interested in negotiations which would lead to the elimination of any nuclear weapons on his subcontinent within ten or fifteen years including renouncing first use of such weapons. His interest in such negotiations with Pakistan would cover bilateral talks or a regional conference which would include the United States, China and Russia in addition to India and Pakistan.

When we mentioned this conversation to Prime Minister Bhutto this morning—

That is on August 28—

She expressed great interest in such negotiations. When we told her of our conversation with Prime Minister Rao, she asked if we could get him to put that in writing.

When we asked Prime Minister Bhutto when she had last talked to Prime Minister Rao, she said that she had no conversations with him during her tenure as Prime Minister. Prime Minister Bhutto did say that she had initiated a contact through an intermediary but that was terminated when a new controversy arose between Pakistan and India.

From our conversations with Prime Minister Rao and Prime Minister Bhutto, it is my sense that both would be very receptive to discussions initiated and brokered by the United States as to nuclear weapons and also delivery missile systems.

I am dictating this letter to you by telephone from Damascus so that you will have it at the earliest moment. I am also telefaxing a copy of this letter to Secretary of State Warren Christopher.

After sending that letter to President Clinton, I have had an opportunity to discuss the issue with President Clinton on a number of occasions, and the President has stated an interest in trying to work with both India and Pakistan. Of course, the President has communicated with both India and Pakistan, at least following their nuclear detonations. But that is a matter which I think might profitably involve substantial activity by the United States.

But the succession of events have followed so that in May of this year, the time had arisen for India to make a public disclosure, a public test, and then it was followed immediately by Pakistan. It is a matter where those in India might well question the intensity of interest of the United States in the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty when the United States is not a party to the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that this letter of August 28, 1995, be printed in the RECORD at the conclusion of my remarks.

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

(See Exhibit 1.)

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, I later wrote to the President on May 12 of 1998 enclosing a copy of that letter of August 28, 1995, urging him to move on the matter. I ask unanimous consent that a copy of this letter of May 12, 1998, be printed in the RECORD at the conclusion of my remarks.

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

(See Exhibit 2.)

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, on May 14, 1998, I wrote to Senator HELMS as follows:

I write to urge you to act as promptly as possible to conduct a hearing or hearings and to bring the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty to the Senate floor for a ratification vote. In my judgment, the events of the past several days make that the Senate's number one priority.

Following India's nuclear tests, Pakistan is now preparing for similar tests. North Korea has stated its intention to move forward to develop nuclear weapons and Iran and Iraq are lurking in the background.

At a hearing before the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee yesterday, Secretary of Defense Cohen urged Senate consideration and ratification of the treaty.

As you know, the President submitted the treaty to the Senate on September 22, 1997, and the only hearings which have been held were conducted by the Governmental Affairs Subcommittee on International Security, Proliferation and Federal Services on October 27, 1997, and March 18, 1998, and the Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development on October 28, 1997.

I noted the comment in your letter to the President on January 21, 1998, that this treaty is very low on the Committee's list of priorities, and I also heard your staffer on National Public Radio this week state that the Foreign Relations Committee did not intend to move ahead on the treaty.

I am concerned that inaction by the Senate may have led the government of India to think that the United States is indifferent to nuclear testing which, I believe, is definitely not the case. The events of the past several days threaten an international chain reaction on the proliferation of nuclear weapons and an imminent threat to world peace.

From comments on the Senate floor and in the cloakroom, I know that many, if not most, of our colleagues share my concern about action on the treaty.

I realize that there is some opposition to the treaty; if it is the will of the Senate not to ratify, so be it; but at the very least, the matter should be submitted to the full Senate.

Sincerely,

ARLEN SPECTER.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that a copy of that letter be printed in the RECORD at the conclusion of my remarks.

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