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House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Thursday, October 1, 1998, at 2 p.m.

Senate

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 1998

(Legislative day of Tuesday, September 29, 1998)

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m., on the expiration of the recess, and was called to order by the President pro tempore [Mr. THURMOND].

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Lloyd John Ogilvie, offered the following prayer:

Blessed be the Name of the Lord: God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel. We thank You for this sacred Yom Kippur, the day of atonement. We hear Your whisper in our souls, "I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions for My own sake; and I will not remember your sins."—Isaiah 43:25.

Guide our confession, Holy God. Remind us of those things that need Your atonement. Forgive us for our sins of omission and commission, for the drift of our culture from Your moral absolutes. Situations should not shape our ethics but Your ethics must shape our situations. Cleanse us from the acts and attitudes that contradict Your will for us. We have broken Your commandments, denied Your justice, and resisted Your righteousness.

As a Nation on this holy day, we ask for Your forgiveness; as individuals, we claim Your forgiveness for the ways we have broken Your heart.

May the assurance of Your grace give us fresh courage to forgive others as You have forgiven us. Liberate our memories from harbored hurts. We commit this day to communicate Your love and forgiveness to others. Through our Lord and Savior. Amen.

RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The able acting majority leader is recognized.

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Good morning, Mr. President.

Under the previous order, there will now be 20 minutes under the control of the Senator from Alaska, Senator MURKOWSKI.

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I thank the Chair.

SCHEDULE

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, the leader has asked me to announce that this morning there will be a period of morning business lasting approximately 3½ hours. Following morning business, it is hoped that the Senate may proceed to the Department of Defense authorization conference report, or the American Wetlands Conservation Act, under a 1-hour time agreement.

Members are reminded that no votes will occur during today's session of the Senate in observance of the Jewish holiday. Any votes ordered today will be postponed to occur at approximately 10 a.m. on Thursday, and all Senators will be notified as soon as Thursday's voting schedule becomes available.

The leader thanks colleagues for their attention.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. THOMAS). Under the previous order, there will now be a period for the transaction of morning business not to extend beyond the hour of 12:30 with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

INTERIOR APPROPRIATIONS RIDERS

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss an issue that was brought up on this floor yesterday by my friend, the senior Senator from Montana, Senator BAUCUS, who proceeded to give us certain views on a number of amendments to the Interior appropriations bill that he proposed be stripped from that particular package.

Mr. President, I think it is appropriate that this body have an opportunity to view the arguments on the other side of the issues, and I think it is fair to perhaps provide a little history on what these amendments are and the rationale associated with the arguments for or against their merits.

There were originally nine proposed amendments in the Baucus package. Two of them have been removed. So we are addressing amendments to strip the Glacier Bay language, King Cove language, and the Tongass language, road decommissioning, section 321 of the forest planning, the issue of the re-introduction of grizzlies in Idaho and Montana, and the Columbia and Snake River Dams, and the likely removal. I am going to enunciate a little further on these as I go along, but I wanted to give you a view of the issues in their

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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entirety so that we can, first of all, recognize that these have certain environmental overtones.

I think it is appropriate that we recognize the extent to which the environmental community has gone to encourage these be stricken. Approximately 2 weeks ago, there was a press conference downtown in one of the restaurants where the media was invited. There was a presentation condemning these issues, and obviously an effort to try to generate a one-sided view from the media.

As chairman of the Energy Committee, and representing the State of Alaska, to which three of these particular amendments to strike are associated, and not having an opportunity to have an invitation extended to me, we felt it necessary to balance the process at that point. So we proceeded with a small press conference in the Energy Library. We invited basically the same media. We had a good attendance. I also invited my friend from Montana to attend in the hopes that we could respond to some questions from the media on these individual points. Unfortunately, he was unable to be there. As a consequence, we have each had an opportunity to express our views to the media.

I think it is also appropriate to recognize that there used to be, more or less, a gentleman's agreement in this body relative to resource issues and issues that affected a particular State. When Senators from the State made specific recommendations with regard to what was in the best interests of their State, it usually stood. But that has changed over the years. I recognize that. Now we have the input of the special interest groups relative to issues. That is kind of where we are today.

What I have done here is attempted to set the stage a little bit. I think it is fair to recognize that there are other influences. I noted today a statement of our Vice President in the White House Briefing Room from yesterday. It is relatively brief, but it does criticize the Republican Congress, the Republican leadership, and I think the third paragraph bears some attention. It suggests that there is a sneak attack being perpetrated by the Republicans and by their special interests riders in the budget bills where they hope no one will find them. He further indicates that the proposals are to carve roads through the wilderness, force overcutting in the national forests, sell the taxpayers short, and keep us from addressing global warming, and that these issues cannot stand the light of day.

I think it is appropriate to recognize that there are other influences. I was checking with my staff before I was recognized this morning. Mr. President, I am advised that the Congressional Budget Office has scored all of these particular riders as revenue neutral.

Since we are in the interest of full disclosure, I think it also is important

to recognize another fact; that is, the accusation of putting anti-environmental riders on the Interior appropriations bill for fiscal year 1999. It seems to be a pretty one-sided argument, because I am sure the Senator from Montana would not object to the process of riders, recognizing that there are 150—150—riders on the Interior bill.

From the standpoint of the special interest groups, maybe the Vice President, and others, we could remove all such riders, including the moratorium of offshore oil drilling off the coast of California, and items on mining. I think it is fair to point out that the National Forest System—at least the first 21 million acres of the Forest System—was created by riders and amendments to the 1897 appropriations bill.

So, indeed, we have a history of riders. I think if you look at the issues from the standpoint of the environmental groups, they would say, well, the riders that I have mentioned are good riders. So I think it is fair that we recognize we have a time-honored tradition of riders. And if riders are under attack, so be it. But it is clearly not a reality because many of these riders could be perceived as anti-environment suggests that somehow there is a sleight of hand here.

I think it is appropriate to note that my friend from Montana did not care to go into that, to recognize that all the riders in question here have had hearings. Hearings have been held, which suggests that this was not done in the dark of night, somehow by subterfuge.

So again I would like to examine this a little bit more so that we can get, I think, a better understanding of just what is going on here, and the question of merit: Do these particular seven issues have merit? I am not going to go into detail on all of them because a few of them are not necessarily related to my State, but I think it fair to highlight certainly a few. I am going to start with the issue of Glacier Bay.

The issue of Glacier Bay started a long, long time ago. Back in 1885, long before Glacier Bay was declared a national monument, commercial fishing was recognized as a way of life by the residents around the area.

I should point out, Glacier Bay is in southeastern Alaska. It is west of Juneau. Juneau is over here. I was a little chagrined yesterday in the debate when my friend from Montana could not find Juneau, which is our State capital. I made a point to make sure I knew where Helena is before this morning, before I started the debate.

But in any event, it is in the area across icy straits. It is an extraordinary area of great beauty. As you move out of Glacier Bay and go out west, you run into the Gulf of Alaska or the Pacific Ocean. On a map of Alaska, it would be the northernmost point of southeastern Alaska. But the significance of it is that it is a national monument. As such, it is under special

consideration relative to the regulations of the Park Service, which manages Glacier Bay.

Over the years, local residents in the area—and I am suggesting to you there are very few local residents. There is no population in Glacier Bay. There is a lodge there but no year-round population, with the exception of those who are associated with the lodge and a few people in Gustavus, which is out on the edge of Glacier Bay. The general feeling in Alaska was that there would be a compatibility between the Park Service, the management of Glacier Bay, and the traditional uses, and there was no prohibition, no anticipated prohibition, on commercial fishing in the marine waters of Glacier Bay.

I have a small picture here, Mr. President, that shows one of the fishing vessels in Glacier Bay. It gives you an idea that these are small one- and usually two-person operations. This is a small boat, with probably a skipper, a deckhand, maybe the skipper's wife, and this is the kind of fishing that is done there. It is relatively insignificant in the overall magnitude of fishing in southeastern Alaska. The fishery consists of a few vessels fishing salmon, halibut, crab, a few bottom fish; and these fisheries pose no threat—there is no danger to these resources. All are carefully managed for a sustainable harvest by the State of Alaska and most are under a limited entry, which means that you can't expand the fishery, or particularly a fishery associated with that type of vessel.

Arguments that this fishing is somehow incompatible with the use of kayaking or some other activity by the concession operators who favor a prohibition is a little hard to justify in real terms. Commercial fishing is important to the smaller communities of Gustavus and Hoonah. Fishing provides a few jobs and local employment. All the communities urge continuation of commercial and sports fishing in Glacier Bay.

We have had our local environmental groups working with us, and we have reached a consensus that management of commercial fishing under the State regulation is entirely appropriate and entirely adequate and the fisheries can be managed on a sustained basis. The interest of the Department of Interior's insistence on an administrative rule-making instead of legislation has really been a roadblock, and it has had a detrimental effect, if you will, on working together within the local groups. There is a lot of criticism and fear in the communities that both commercial fishing and subsistence fishing will be terminated as a consequence of the pressure by the environmental community.

When we look at the communities we are talking about—I mentioned Gustavus; it has about 346 residents, 55 of whom are engaged in fishing; Elfin Cove, 54 people—that is total residents—47 engaged in fishing; Hoonah,

which is a Tlingit Indian village, has 900 people, about 228 in fishing; Pelican has 187 residents, 86 in fisheries.

That might not sound like much, but in reality, if you are one of those people and you are dependent on fishing—that is the livelihood you know—it is recognizable that these communities cannot survive without fishing. And what this appropriation language does as to Glacier Bay is to allow discussions to proceed at the local level and reserve the right of the Congress to make a decision on fisheries in Glacier Bay.

Now, what the Park Service is attempting to do is to phase it out over a 7-year period. Well, to phase it out is to ultimately do away with it, and the rationale behind that is that the Park Service wants to regulate the area. These are inland waters in the State of Alaska, and to suggest the Park Service should initiate another level of regulation I think is without any justification.

We talk about how a fishing boat or a small amount of activity in Glacier Bay would somehow detract from a visitor's experience. Let's talk a little bit about the visitor's experience, because between Memorial Day and Labor Day cruise ships go into Glacier Bay—as I indicated, a very large body of water. The cruise ships pick up at Inlet Bay a Park Service lecturer and proceed up the bay and may go into Tarring or may go up Muir Inlet, depending on whatever the particular direction is that day.

But it is important to note that these are commercial passenger ships. There is a commercial activity associated with this. These are paying passengers. These ships carry 2,500, 3,000, 3,200 passengers. It is a commercial activity that is going on in a national park. It is taking place, if you will, in this general area of the so-called wilderness.

Now, the wilderness, of course, is on the land, and we have yet to have a determination of just what "wilderness waters" means. I am not going to go into that in this debate today. But the point I want to make is, the small amount of commercial fishing that takes place there and the residents in the surrounding area who depend on access into Glacier Bay is what we are talking about.

Now, the Senator from Montana would suggest that somehow this commercial activity is foreign or inappropriate to take place in a national monument. We have nowhere in the United States any body of water as unique as Glacier Bay. It is open to the ocean. Commercial vessels can come in. It is State of Alaska waters. But within the area, of course, is the national park of Glacier Bay.

The point I want to make is that the Park Service is attempting to eliminate the small amount of commercial fishing and, equally important, the small amount of subsistence fishing that takes place in the park by the Native residents of Hoonah and some of

the other communities nearby. There is no justification for this in the sense of any detrimental effects on the fisheries resources which are basically overseen by the State of Alaska.

I might point out that in this area there are no major anadromous streams, that being streams that will support salmon fry. The salmon don't go into these areas because this is all glacial types of water.

As a consequence, they simply cannot survive in the runoff from the glaciers. As a consequence, this is not considered an area that supports significant salmon runs. There is some halibut in here, some salmon, some crab. Again, it is a relatively small area, but the point is, what we are seeing here is more big government, more takeover from the local people who have had access to commercial fishing, who have had access to sport fishing, as well as access to subsistence.

In summary, the objection that I have is here is Big Brother encroaching more and more upon authority that has been vested within the State of Alaska to manage the fisheries in this area. It just simply makes no sense, and there is no justification for it.

I want to turn now to another issue that is on the list of my friend from Montana, and that is the issue of King Cove, Cold Bay. Many people, of course, are not aware of just where this area is.

Roughly, it is about halfway out in the Aleutian Islands, about 700 miles west of Anchorage. We have a small village of about 700 residents in King Cove. The area is on the Pacific Ocean, and it is surrounded by mountains. It lends itself to a situation where if you want to get out of King Cove, you have to fly over to Cold Bay or go by boat. It doesn't look like much on the map, but the problems we have are extraordinary weather conditions associated in the King Cove/Cold Bay area.

There is a small gravel strip at King Cove. Sometimes we have a windsock blowing one way at one end of the runway and a windsock at the other end blowing the opposite way because of the various types of winds that come over the mountains. The people of the area have suggested it would be appropriate to have a road come over to Cold Bay.

There is going to be an extended debate on this issue tomorrow, so I am not going to go into great detail other than to say that we have had 11 lives lost in the last 10 years in plane crashes half of which involved medivacs. This chart shows pictures of some of the individuals who have passed away in aircraft accidents trying to get over to Cold Bay to get a medivac to Anchorage, AK.

What these people are asking for is simply access out by road. What would this consist of, Mr. President? It would consist of extending the road in an area that is currently a wilderness. The proposed legislation which we are going to be offering tomorrow suggests that we

would take the area in the wilderness and do a land exchange. We would take the area out of the wilderness, approximately 85 acres, and put it into a refuge. That will add about 580 acres additional into the wilderness. It would be a net gain into the wilderness of some 580 acres. This road would be about 7 miles long and would allow the residents of King Cove to have access for medical evacuations and transportation when the weather is so severe that the airplanes cannot fly.

Let me show you a picture of the current method by which the medivacs take place, and you can get some idea of the extremes we are up against. Here is what a small boat trying to get across water in that area in the winter-time looks like. You don't get very far doing that. We have other pictures that will make you seasick. This is one of the vessels going across. That is a schooner going across in the winter-time.

You cannot appreciate the terror associated with making one of those trips. Not only do most people get deathly seasick, but there is a fear the storm is going to progress and damage the vessel or sink the vessel. I have been on some of those trips, and I could not begin to describe the terror of the situation where you are trying to get people out so that they can get medical care in an emergency and are subjected to this type of exposure when 7 miles of road circumventing a wilderness area would be adequate.

This airport at Cold Bay was built during the Second World War. It has crosswind runways and is operational virtually year-round. What we have is a small village, less than 700 people, simply trying to have the same right of access for medical evacuation that you and I take for granted, and it is being denied them by objections from some in the environmental community that say that this is striking in the heart of the wilderness.

It is not in the wilderness, Mr. President. We are taking this area out of the wilderness, putting it in the refuge and proposing a right of way that could be used for a road going through and actually adding 580 acres to the wilderness. That, to me, seems like a fair and justifiable proposal.

I will also add that we do not require any funding for this. This is simply a land exchange. The road would be under the control and jurisdiction of the refuge manager and, basically, under the control of the Secretary of the Interior.

The weather in the King Cove area is something that is pretty hard to imagine. It is the third windiest city in the United States. It is the cloudiest city in the United States. It has the third highest number of days of rain, and one can argue it has the worst weather in the Nation. To take a boat or small plane out of King Cove when winds are 60 to 70 miles an hour, with a 10-to-20 foot sea is a tough situation.

We have had babies born in fishing boat galleys on a table, and we have

had people who have had to be taken up off the boats in slings. This land exchange will allow a one-lane gravel road to be built. It will be at the option of the State. The State is evaluating the merits of this. We are simply proposing that the State has the ability to consider this option through the land exchange. We see no justification for those who object to what is really a win, win, win for the environment.

I also think it fair to point out that we have seen and have a long history in this body of changes in boundaries. To suggest somehow this is a precedent is, again, unrealistic and is unfounded by fact. We have had boundary adjustments on many existing wilderness areas. In the State of Montana alone, we had 67 acres of land that was deleted from Absaroka Bear Tooth Wilderness; 28 acres have been deleted from the U.L. Bend Wilderness. The boundary changes were made to exclude private lands, portions of existing roads, parking areas and public facilities that were inadvertently included when the wilderness area was established in 1978.

The U.L. Bend deletion was made to reinstate access through a wildlife refuge wilderness area. What for? For access to a popular fishing spot at nearby Fort Peck Reservoir. This history says to me that Montanans didn't object to a boundary change in the wilderness when it met their needs. So I fail to understand why my friend, the Senator from Montana, believes that moving a wilderness boundary to access a fishing hole is OK, but moving 85 acres to save the lives of my constituents is not.

That is, basically, what we are looking at, Mr. President, an issue of equity. I think I have made the point that, indeed, we are not setting a precedent. We can look back also to the Lee Metcalf Wilderness Management Act of 1983 where there was a land exchange.

Hopefully, I have countered with factual information some of the points that were made and the allegations from my good friend who has not been to either Glacier Bay, nor has he been to King Cove and does not speak from personal knowledge.

The last point I want to make is on the issue of Tongass National Forest. I have a couple charts to show the President and my colleagues at this time—let me have the small chart first, if I may—because it addresses the Tongass which is the largest of all our national forests.

Very briefly, what we have here in the red are the areas that are withdrawn in wilderness areas in the Tongass National Forest. You know, that is probably 58 percent or thereabouts. The green areas are the areas for multiple-use lands which provide timber harvest. And the gold areas are Native withdrawals, basically private land.

If you look at this, you can immediately tell that most of the Tongass is already reserved in perpetuity in wil-

derness areas. I think that makes the point that 84 percent of the Tongass is currently reserved for nontimber harvesting purposes.

Ninety-three percent of all the old-growth forest remain standing in the Tongass today. And it is pretty hard to communicate to my friends who have never been there, but forests live and die. And a large percentage of the Tongass National Forest is either dead or dying. About one-third, 30 percent, of the standing trees are dead or dying. The reality of how you utilize those trees is a matter that has been under discussion for some time.

Basically, the value of that particular timber is in wood fiber, and most of that either goes into chips or is used to go into pulp mills. But because of environmental pressures, we closed our own two year-round manufacturing plants in the State, and they are down permanently. And those were pulp mills. So now we face a difficult situation of trying to determine what we are going to do with that old growth.

There is a possibility of that dead and dying timber to be put in veneer. But nevertheless, the point I want to make here today is to counter the argument that somehow we are proposing to increase the harvest 50 percent over last year.

In order to respond to that criticism, I think you have to look at the harvest in the Tongass since—well, modern times began in about 1947, after the war. The allowable cut was somewhere about 1.375 billion board feet. That was the allowable cut in 1947. These are set by the Forest Service. Then under statehood we came in and the allowable cut was 1.3 billion. Then when we had the Alaska Native Settlement Claims Act and we dropped down to 950 million. Now, this basically in this timeframe supported two pulp mills and a half dozen sawmills.

Then when we came in with the ANILCA legislation and the volumes dropped, and the allowable cut went down to 450 million. We were able to maintain an industry at that level, but it was marginal. Then we came down to the Tongass Timber Reform Act in 1991, and it dropped down to about 310 million. And then we came under what is known as the Tongass Land Management Plan or TLUMP, which was to settle at 267 million board feet. And the Forest Service has not been able to put that up.

Currently, they have this year about 30 million that they have been able to put up and anticipate somewhere in the area of another 100 million. So to suggest that—in this proposal, what we have done is we have simply said that if the Forest Service does not put up what they said they were going to put up under the TLUMP, which took 10 years and \$13 million to develop, why then that differential that previously went to the boroughs and school districts comes out of the Forest Service budget.

But this is an effort to try to get the Forest Service to commit on what they

said they would provide. And to suggest, as my friend from Montana has, that suddenly we are trying to double the harvest is not only misleading, it is an absolute falsehood, because clearly the Forest Service says under this study that took them 10 years to complete and \$13 million, that they would provide an allowable cut of 267 million. We are saying, "OK, do it. And if you don't do it, there ought to be some penalty," because we have lost the revenue to continue to offset from the standpoint of our boroughs and our schools associated with that harvest under the formula that provides some of the funds from the timber harvesting back to the communities. We are not doubling, Mr. President, by any means, the amount of timber—

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ROBERTS). The amount of time allotted to the Senator from Alaska has expired.

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to proceed for another 5 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MURKOWSKI. I thank the Chair.

So, Mr. President, where we are today is we are fighting a battle to maintain an industry on a substantially reduced basis. As I have indicated, that industry has declined dramatically over the last 10 years. And the Forest Service clearly has not been acting in good faith to get out the timber that they promised. And the fact that the Forest Service has seen fit to initiate over a 10-year period this extraordinary evaluation of what the TLUMP would provide and the assurance of whatever figure they set they would be committed to is what this issue is all about.

So, again, in conclusion, on the Tongass issue, it is not a question by any means, Mr. President, of doubling the cut. And that is what some of our friends on the other side would like to make this issue seem like. If we were going to double the cut, we would go back to 450 million board feet. That is not what we are talking about today.

Finally, a couple of other issues that I think need some clarification very briefly, and that is the requirement of decommissioning our unauthorized roads. It is not an issue that is unique to my State by any means, but under this provision the Forest Service is prohibited from using funds for decommissioning National Forest System roads until the regional forester certifies that unauthorized or so-called ghost roads have either been decommissioned or reconstructed to standard.

Funding is appropriated for decommissioned roads including roads which are not part of the transportation Forest Service, and it is not prevented from addressing or pursuing stabilization of these roads. So what we have here is a recognition that the administration says that they have a backlog over the last 5 to 10 years of over \$10 million.

They have said in reported stories they have discovered 60,000 miles of ghost road that they did not even know they had. What we propose is that they go ahead and address the ghost roads and get rid of them before they start proceeding on decommissioning their so-called map roads. If you have a situation where you have so-called unauthorized roads, then you should take care of those first before you start decommissioning map roads.

The other issue revolving around the Forest Service, and not necessarily addressing the needs of my State, is the prohibition of forest plans until the administration publishes new regulations.

Late in 1995, the Secretary of Agriculture promised a revised forest plan. He promised cost-effective changes. Well, these plans are not completed today. And as a consequence, we see no justification for proceeding in publishing new regulations until you get your current Forest Service revision plan done.

The last issue I want to talk about, and again it is not unique to my State, but it is to some of the areas involved, and that is the reintroduction of the grizzly bear into Idaho and Montana. I think that is a matter that should be addressed by the individuals from these States. But I know the ranchers and others have certain views about reintroduction of the grizzlies.

And one thing about the bears, the moose, and the elk, and so forth, there are no boundaries or State lines that prohibit their crossing. They move in ranges depending on a lot of factors, including regulations on hunting. So to suggest that somehow reintroduction of the grizzly bears in the Sellway-Bitterroot areas of Idaho and Montana should be proceeded by the Department of Interior over the objection of the residents is something that is best left up to those in Idaho and Montana. What we are proposing to do is to refrain from reintroducing those bears at this time pending an evaluation and input from the local people.

In the Columbia/Snake River Dams—remove language that requires congressional approval for changes in the dam system to the Columbia and Snake River and tributaries. We are saying the disposition of dams should come before the Congress. The Secretary of the Department of the Interior should not have the authority to arbitrarily proceed. After all, these dams were built with public funds. The merits and contributions of these dams have provided an extraordinary level of standard of living for many in these areas, and have created agricultural areas of prosperity. As a consequence of the water and power, we have the aluminum industry.

To suggest that somehow Congress should not be a part of any decision to eliminate these dams is unrealistic. What we would propose here is that there would be a requirement that any change in the dam system must be ap-

proved by the Congress of the United States.

I appreciate the additional time allotted to me. I see several colleagues on the floor are looking for recognition. I do want to advise my colleagues, I think late tomorrow morning, that we will be proceeding with the disposition of the King Cove Road. We have 6 hours proposed for debate on the issue. It is my understanding that we anticipate about 3 hours, 1½ hours equally divided.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will now be 30 minutes under the control of the distinguished Senator from Arizona, Mr. MCCAIN.

Mr. MCCAIN addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is recognized.

DEFENSE PREPAREDNESS

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, 7 months ago, three out of the four service chiefs testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee that the President's fiscal year 1999 defense budget was well balanced and that the operating and maintenance accounts and manpower accounts were about correct.

Yesterday, in a hearing held by the Senate Armed Services Committee, there was a dramatic reversal of those statements that were made by three of the four Service Chiefs. Yesterday, the Service Chiefs acknowledged that there is a long-term degradation in our ability to fight and win a war and that immediate action, indeed, emergency supplemental funds are called for.

I am sure that there were a number of factors that contributed to this incredibly candid display yesterday before the Senate Armed Services Committee. I have the utmost respect and regard for every one of the military leaders of our services. But the reality is that this problem has been building for years, not just 7 months. I believe that some of the problems that we are going to have to address in emergency fashion now could have been addressed in a much more measured way if the Joint Chiefs had been more candid in their testimony before the Armed Services Committee and the Congress in the past years, not to mention 7 months ago.

The preparedness problem within the military is compounded by both the "can do" attitude of the military, which I admire, and the pressure that senior leadership puts on its ranks to not report bad news. Our men and women in uniform have a history of making do, of adjusting to civilian decisions, and working out potential solutions even at the cost of assuming higher risks. But we commit a grave disservice to those very men and women when we fail to provide the resources they need to do their job, and when political considerations prohibit our military leaders from telling Con-

gress and the American people the truth about their ability to execute our National Military Strategy. At yesterday's Senate Armed Services Committee hearing, the Joint Chiefs of Staff told us the truth about our declining military readiness—something that has long been apparent to those of us who hear regularly from lower-level officers and enlisted personnel in the field, who risk their careers by making Congress aware of the readiness gaps not acknowledged by their superiors.

In mid-July, I sent letters to each of the Service Chiefs expressing my concern about the military's overall state of readiness. In order that I might gain a better understanding of current readiness and readiness trends in the military, I asked each Chief to address key readiness issues in his Service, and to provide me with written answers to a series of questions that addressed these problems. I requested that the responses to the questions also include an assessment of National Guard and Reserve readiness. I have now received answers from each of the Chiefs. Their responses are thoughtful and thorough, and I was grateful that they and their staffs took the time to describe in detail our current state of military readiness.

I have now received answers from each of the Chiefs. Their responses are thoughtful and thorough, and I was grateful they and their staffs took the time to describe in detail our current state of military readiness.

These responses do not reveal a single reason for the continued degradation of the Services, or a single set of answers as to how these problems can be solved. Each service has a unique mix of readiness problems and has made different trade-offs in efforts to compensate. The data provided by the Service Chiefs clearly demonstrate that both the Executive Branch and the Congress are to blame. They show that the Administration is to blame for underfunding some aspects of readiness at the expense of others, and that Congress is to blame for using readiness for parochial and other special interest projects. Moreover, for two years now, we have turned down pleas by the Secretary of Defense and the President for additional base closure rounds, causing money earmarked for readiness and modernization accounts to be used instead to maintain bases built to sustain a Cold War force structure. The central issue is not, however, who is to blame, but how to reverse these alarming trends.

The world is a very tough neighborhood and requires a tough cop. As the world's sole superpower, we have no choice but to patrol this beat in order to defend our interests. Safeguarding our security and advancing the cause of freedom may well require us to send young Americans into battle against the enemies of peace. The very least we can do is to make sure that the men and women we send into harm's way are equipped and trained to fight and