

and then outside shocks hit us in the form of a terrorist attack that devastated large segments of the economy that have still not recovered.

Those of us who are so sure that we control this economy, and what it does by virtue of what we pass here, need to have a little more humility and a little more understanding and realize once again that the most important thing the Government can do in order to maximize Government revenues is to create an economic climate in which market forces can produce the greatest beneficial result. But even at those times, when the atmosphere is most conducive, the business cycle is still with us and will humble us if we keep thinking that, like Lucy Van Pelt, we can go through life with nothing but ups, ups, and ups, and never face the reality of the occasional down.

I appreciate the indulgence of my fellow Senators. I will have more to say on this at another time when we have a sufficient amount of morning business. I recognize the time has come to return to the debate of the bill on the floor.

I yield the floor.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. LINCOLN). Under the previous order, morning business is closed.

HOMELAND SECURITY ACT OF 2002

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the hour of 2 p.m. having arrived, the Senate will now resume consideration of H.R. 5005, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 5005) to establish the Department of Homeland Security, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Lieberman amendment No. 4471, in the nature of a substitute.

Gramm/Miller amendment No. 4738 (to amendment No. 4471), of a perfecting nature, to prevent terrorist attacks within the United States.

Nelson (NE) amendment No. 4740 (to amendment No. 4738), to modify certain personnel provisions.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada is recognized.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I have spoken with Senator THOMPSON and he has indicated that he has a statement to make. There may be others on his side wishing to make statements on the bill. He indicated that there will be no unanimous consent requests related to this bill.

The leaders have announced there will be no votes today. My friend from Tennessee, I am sure, is aware of that. I look forward to his statement and whoever else wants to speak on this most important legislation.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee is recognized.

Mr. THOMPSON. Madam President, I thank my friend from Nevada. I concur in his analysis. There will be no unanimous consent request or additional amendments brought up, or anything of that nature. I also agree with him that we should have our colleagues down here discussing this bill, if they desire to do so. I encourage anyone who may be listening, if they have comments on this bill, come to the floor. There will be plenty of time this afternoon for us to continue to engage in this discussion. It is a very important discussion.

I think with regard to the several points of disagreement that we have, we should keep in mind the points of agreement we do have. I think, for example, all concerned agree that we need to bring many of these agencies that have to do with homeland security under one umbrella and that we must do it in a much better and more efficient way than we have carried out the operations of Government in many other respects. So let's build on that.

I hope we can build on that and address the points of disagreement and see if we cannot come together. I am still hopeful that in the waning days in which we have to address this issue, we will be able to come together and agree on not only the principle I just enunciated with regard to the merger, but also with regard to issues concerning the President's proper authority and appropriate flexibility that is going to be needed to manage this gargantuan enterprise we are setting out on. It is really a major endeavor. Nothing has been done like this in several decades in this country, and we are going to need all hands on deck, all the tools, all the resources, and all of the attention that we can bring to bear on this problem in order to make this country safer.

I think most of us realize now that we will probably never again be able to believe we are totally safe and that we can cover every border and every bolt and every automobile and every airplane, all to the extent that we will have a failsafe situation and that we will not need to constantly keep our guard up.

There is a lot we can do. A lot has already been done. The President has taken charge and Tom Ridge in the Office of Homeland Security has taken charge. They have issued Executive orders that have addressed many of the burning issues that we face. I think our border situation is already better. Our transportation situation is better. But there is an awful lot to be done before we get to the point where we can say that we have done all that we can do.

It is a very difficult proposition. I said last week that one of the things that impresses me most about this body, about the Government in general, is how difficult it is to make any really substantive change to anything. If there is any difficulty connected with it at all, if it comes to spending money, or something like that, we can

usually come together because it benefits those of us who are spending the money, benefits our constituents, and we get some short-term benefit from that all the way around. We sometimes pay long-term consequences for it, but spending money seems to be an easy thing to do.

Here, we are actually stepping on some people's toes and we are acknowledging some dysfunctional aspects of our Government and we are saying, let's change that. But there are a lot of vested interests out there who don't want to change. They want the status quo. In the abstract, they want the same end result we do—we want a better system—but they don't want to change things in order to achieve a better system.

We have been looking, listening, watching, and absorbing for many years in this Congress and in this Senate the various negative aspects of many of the agencies of our Government and how they are not working, how they are not doing what they are supposed to be doing, how they are rife with waste, fraud, and abuse, and billions of dollars are being sent out for things—like people who are deceased, for example. We find that we cannot incorporate high-tech information systems that have been incorporated in the private sector for years and years, to good effect. We cannot seem to bring that into the Government. The IRS has wasted billions and billions of dollars trying to get their computers to talk to each other. They are making real progress now, but for a long time they did not. And there are human resources problems, human capital problems.

We are losing people we ought to be keeping in Government, and too often keeping the people we ought to be losing because of old rules and regulations that were set up decades ago. We have seen all of this happen, all of this evolve as Government got bigger and bigger and more complex, with levels and upper levels—every Deputy Assistant Secretary has an assistant to the Deputy Assistant Secretary, and they have two, three, and four, and it keeps growing. It makes us less efficient and less responsive to the people we are supposed to be serving.

Now, we understand it is not just money and inefficiency and lack of service we have to be concerned about. We have to be concerned about our very safety—the No. 1 job of Government, self-protection.

Yet there are those who want to incorporate that system, this bureaucratic mess that has evolved into the new Homeland Security Department because they do not want to make any changes.

Unfortunately, a part of what has to be addressed. Governmentwide is our civil service system. No one wants to deal with that because it is politically difficult, politically volatile, and you are going to be stepping on some people's toes. Yet there is unanimity