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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. STEVENS).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Sovereign God, whom to know is life eternal, speak Your transforming words to us. Speak words of encouragement to lift us from pessimism. Speak words of strength to prepare us for temptation. Speak words of warning to keep us from evil. Speak words of comfort to heal our hurts. Speak words of guidance to lead us on the right path.

Speak words of power to our Senators today to equip them to meet challenges and to lift burdens. Remove from us everything that prevents us from hearing Your voice.

We pray in Your powerful Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The PRESIDENT pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will be a period for the transaction of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, today we will be in a period of morning business in order for Senators to make statements. Yesterday we completed our work on the Tax Relief Act with a vote of 54 to 44. We had a good debate—a great debate—on the importance of this extended tax relief, this progrowth policy put forth by the President and supported by this body yesterday. We had a lot of Senators participate on both sides of that important debate of the direction of the country to continue this strong economic growth with the creation of over 5.3 million jobs in the last 30 or so months. I congratulate Chairman GRASSLEY for his tremendous work in helping bring that tax relief package to the floor which will ensure continued economic growth and job creation.

Yesterday, unfortunately, we missed an opportunity to assist small businesses across this Nation. We all know it is in those small businesses that we find the engine of economic growth and the creation of new jobs. We had an opportunity to assist them with lowering their health care costs by allowing them to group together, to band together to capture marketing clout, which would lower prices for health care for their employees. We were unsuccessful in that particular effort, although it is one that will come back again and again because the cost of health care is skyrocketing and is getting increasingly out of the reach of everyday working Americans.

I wish to thank Chairman ENZI, who has worked tirelessly on this bipartisan bill which would attempt to do just that and would have accomplished that if we had been able to pass it yesterday. Chairman ENZI has done a tremendous job in pulling people together and in educating people broadly on it. I thank him for his work.

As we stated yesterday, we will return on Monday to a very important bill, the importance of which is cap-

tured by the passion expressed across the country, whether it is on television or in newspapers, on talk shows or on the streets or at the workplace, and that is the immigration debate. As we all know, we need to tighten our borders and we need to focus on our borders. But we also need to approach the issue in a comprehensive way because we are a magnet attracting people across that border, and then people are hiring them illegally, so many employers are breaking the law. We need to tighten up there and address the temporary worker program, as well as the people who have come here illegally in the past.

As we talked about yesterday morning, we will have a robust debate, an open debate, and Senators will have ample opportunity to offer their amendments. But as the Democratic leader and I said on the floor 24 hours ago, it is important for people to bring their amendments right now to the leadership in language so we can start the process and so that process, with debate and amendment, is not pushed off for a few days but literally starts on Monday. We should consider several amendments on Monday and then begin voting on those on Tuesday. So I do encourage our colleagues to come forward.

On Tuesday morning, we have locked in a vote on a circuit court nomination that will begin around 10 o'clock in the morning, and I expect we will have votes on the immigration bill shortly thereafter. It is my hope that we will have votes over the course of Tuesday and, indeed, on each day next week. We may be working into the evenings because we will finish this bill prior to the Memorial Day recess.

With that, Mr. President, over the course of the day, I expect there will be a number of Senators coming down to make statements, reflecting on what has occurred over the past week and celebrating the great victory for the American people in the bill that passed

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



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yesterday in terms of tax relief. The passage of that bill yesterday will affect about 7 million people who report on capital gains each year, about 20 million people who report on dividends each year, and another 7 million, almost 8 million people who would otherwise see their taxes go up because of the alternative minimum tax.

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

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MARTINEZ. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRADE WITH CUBA

Mr. MARTINEZ. Mr. President, yesterday, I introduced a measure which is a companion to one introduced in the House of Representatives by Congresswoman ROS-LEHTINEN relating to the business of trade with Cuba. This morning, I wanted to speak a little on the issue of my bill as well as on the overall need for us to file this bill.

Many years ago, perhaps too long for some in this Chamber to remember, as a result of hostile acts by the state of Cuba, under the government of Fidel Castro, who today continues to terrorize his people and to be a very negative influence on the world and is one of the longest reigning dictatorships in the history of the world—certainly the modern history of the world—because of hostile acts by the Cuban Government against the United States and against the interests of the United States in Cuba, the Government of the United States felt it necessary to begin trade sanctions against the Cuban Government. These trade sanctions were designed as retaliation for the actions of the Cuban Government.

Those actions included, among other hostile actions, the expropriation without adequate compensation of properties of citizens of the United States on the island of Cuba. They included the property of oil companies such as Texaco and Standard Oil and other interests of the United States that had large refineries in Cuba, that had oil exploration interests, and that also had, of course, retail outlets on the island.

As a result of Cuba's action, the United States imposed the sanctions. The sanctions were designed to help the Cuban Government understand that it had to live by international law and by international standards, which were to pay just compensation, fair compensation, for the expropriated properties. Unfortunately, the Cuban Government chose not to do so, and to this day these claims of the nationals of the United States for the unfair, unlawful, and uncompensated expropriation by the Cuban Government continues unsettled. The Cuban Govern-

ment has never taken steps to recognize allegations under international law or obligations under international law or obligations to a neighbor with whom it purports to want better and improved relations.

So the United States began a policy of an embargo or trade sanctions against Cuba. It really wasn't an embargo, it was simply: We will not trade with Cuba. The Government of the United States will not trade with Cuba. That has been in effect even until today. It was done by Executive order for many years, but then many years ago, with the Helms-Burton Act, it was codified into legislation. It became part of the law of the land as a result of congressional action.

That legislation also provided a path by which these sanctions could be ended. It provided a path by which more normal trade and other relations could be had, and they had to do with the issue of something simple, something this President has so eloquently spoken about: democracy, rule of law, elections—a quaint thought, that the people of a country ought to elect their leader. The thought that the people of a country would have an opportunity on a given day in life to go to a booth and in private exercise that universal right to vote, to say whom they want their leader to be—Cuba doesn't permit that.

There might be a free press. Wouldn't that be a nice thing? People could speak their mind. Folks would have an opportunity to go into a public square and debate the issues of the day. Cubans are denied that. That is no longer an opportunity and continues not to be so.

In addition to those problems, the actions of the Cuban Government over its history have been anything but benign. They have been quite hostile to the interests of the United States.

This is to not go into all of the details of the actions of the Cuban Government toward its own people—human rights and its denial of the most basic human rights—but as we look to other issues such as the issues of actions in the world, Cuba has tried to export revolution, to foment and foster revolutions throughout the world. They were very active in Africa as a surrogate for the Soviet Union in Angola, working hostile to the interests of the United States. In addition to that, they proceeded to encourage and foster wars in Central America which caused countless thousands of deaths in the 1980s.

Thanks to the determined and decided action of the United States, it was possible for these countries to live in peace and for these countries to have Democratic and normal elections.

Fast forwarding to now, even as recently as a few days ago, the U.S. State Department continues to have Cuba on the list of States that are sponsors of terrorism. There are probably 180-some nation states in the United Nations. Of those, there are only a half dozen that are on the list of terrorist states around the world. Cuba is one of them.

In addition to that, Cuba now is part of an axis, an axis that works in partnership with Hugo Chavez, the somewhat democratically elected President of Venezuela but someone who increasingly governs as an autocrat. This is someone who, in partnership with Fidel Castro, has encouraged and helped Evo Morales to be elected as President of Bolivia. What have these countries under the tutelage of Castro done? Morales, in the past few days, has shown or expressed his intentions to nationalize the gas industry, to nationalize the natural resources of his country, beginning with gas. Yet in Europe he made some very clear statements that he believed that for 500 years Europeans have pillaged his country and that all natural resources ought to belong to the people of Bolivia, and therefore more expropriations are sure to come of the natural resources as defined by Mr. Morales, President Morales, and they include natural gas, and he will move on to others.

Yesterday as well, or the day before, the Congress in Venezuela said that they also believe they should be nationalizing all the natural resources of Venezuela. This includes, of course, the investment that the U.S. oil companies have had in Venezuela for a number of years.

So what is the suggestion and answer that some would have to our dependence on foreign sources of oil, to our dependence on unstable foreign governments, to our dependence on foreign governments that are hostile to the United States? To enter into business with the country of Cuba in order to partner with them in oil exploration, a little less than 50 miles off the shores of Florida. Why is this not a good idea? Simply for the fact that to enter into a partnership with a government that does not observe the rule of law, to enter into a partnership and encourage American companies to invest in a country where we have very strained, if any, diplomatic relations, is not only not a good idea—to enter into a partnership for oil exploration with a country that has in the past expropriated American oil companies' properties in Cuba would be only to repeat a cycle of mistakes made in the past. It would be only to come back into the fold of a dictator who does not observe or understand the rule of law. To go into a business in a country that does not have a judicial system that is independent, to go into business with a country that does not recognize the fact that foreign investors have a right to their property when they purchase it, who will not honor the rule of law, will not honor private property rights? With this kind of country, it is suggested we go into a partnership in order for us to have sufficient energy, in order for us to be independent in our resources.

These efforts are sadly misguided. What we must do is do things such as explore for oil—and I know the Presiding Officer, our President pro tempore, so passionately cares about this—