

SENATE—Thursday, July 15, 1999

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

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Today's prayer will be offered by our guest Chaplain, Reverend J. Blaine Blubaugh, Graham Road United Methodist Church, Falls Church, VA.

We are pleased to have you with us.

PRAYER

Almighty God, as we gather here to execute the function of our responsible positions, we are reminded of Your generosity in blessing us with this great Nation of vast human and natural resources and count it a privilege to live and serve here.

We lift before You today these women and men who lead our Senate and express gratitude for their labors. We pray for our President, the President of this Senate, Members of this Senate, and all who serve with them. May they serve with compassion and hope. Empower them to realize their potential in this service.

May all who serve here carry both the privileges and burdens of authority with well-founded responsibility and duty. May they use their influence with honor and dignity and serve to be examples to citizenry wherever they travel so that all with whom they come in contact may realize that service to our Creator and humanity is an honorable work of life. May concrete and effective help be delivered from the votes on various issues and encouragement for those who are attempting to provide a better life for all.

We pray for wisdom, sensitivity, clarity of vision, and a correct perspective which avoids superficial or temporary solutions. We express gratitude for all who make a positive impact in our world, those who lead, build, and contribute to make a difference.

We pray for the families of those who serve in this Senate and ask for a measure of strength and grace for them to cope during their separation and a sense of joy when they are reunited. May all who serve here temper their toil with periods of rest, refreshment, and recreation, and may the spirit of peace and goodwill be the order of the day for this U.S. Senate session. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Senator CRAPO of Idaho is designated to lead the Senate in the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CRAPO) 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.

RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, I would like to make opening remarks on behalf of the distinguished majority leader to the following effect, that today the Senate will immediately proceed to a period of morning business until 10 a.m. Following morning business, the Senate will resume consideration of the Patients' Bill of Rights, with Senator NICKLES or his designee to be recognized to offer an amendment. Under the previous agreement, there will be 100 minutes of debate on that amendment. Further amendments will be offered and debated in anticipation of completing the bill today. Senators can expect votes throughout the day.

As a reminder, a cloture vote on the Social Security lockbox legislation will take place during tomorrow's session of the Senate.

I thank my colleagues for their attention.

Now, Mr. President, a parliamentary inquiry. May I proceed with the 15-minute order which has been allotted to me?

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate is in morning business. The Senator is recognized for 15 minutes.

Mr. SPECTER. I thank the Chair.

Mr. President, I had requested this time on behalf of myself and Senator BIDEN. We had originally requested 30 minutes, but because of the crowded schedule today, the time was set at 15 minutes. But I will be delighted to share the 15 minutes with Senator BIDEN if he arrives before the expiration of the time.

ELECTRONIC FILING OF SHIPPERS' EXPORT DECLARATIONS

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, I have sought recognition in this special order to introduce legislation, on behalf of Senator HELMS, the Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee; Senator BIDEN, the ranking Democrat; Senator DORGAN and Senator SCHUMER, which

would provide for electronic filing of Shippers' Export Declarations. This legislation takes up a recommendation of the Commission on Weapons of Mass Destruction and is directed to assist in our export control to stop those who would acquire the material for weapons of mass destruction from accumulating those weapons. At the present time, there are very sophisticated ways of ordering the component parts of weapons of mass destruction which are not known and cannot be readily ascertained because of the voluminous paper filings.

This legislation would call for electronic filing and would enable our Government to be able to regulate in a desirable fashion, without undue burden on exporters, materials which can be used for nuclear, biological, or chemical weapons. This is a recommendation of the Commission on Weapons of Mass Destruction which filed its report yesterday with copies to the President and to the legislative leaders.

This Commission was established by legislation under the Intelligence Authorization Act signed into law in October of 1996 when I chaired the Senate Intelligence Committee. This legislation was designed to deal with the enormous threat posed to the United States by weapons of mass destruction.

When I chaired the Intelligence Committee in 1995 and 1996, I was aghast at the kinds of problems which I saw with respect to rogue nations having ballistic capabilities for the delivery of nuclear weapons. Since that time, it has been publicly commented that North Korea has nuclear capability; that they have trajectory and ballistic capability to reach parts of the United States; that they pose an enormous threat. It is well known that other rogue nations seek ballistic capability as well. We now find that a nuclear device can be carried across national borders in a suitcase. We have seen in the experience of the Tokyo subway catastrophe the potential for biological and chemical warfare.

Those capabilities are so important that there needs to be preventive action to deal with them in advance of a catastrophe. Regrettably, our Government customarily reacts, instead of acting in anticipation.

The Commission was formed because there are now some 96 separate agencies dealing with weapons of mass destruction, and the Commission filed in its report a recommendation urging Presidential action with the suggestion that the authority be concentrated in the hands of the Vice President. There have been jurisdictional disputes, turf