

Moscoso is a woman of the highest personal character and possesses an astute political intellect. I am confident of her ability to lead Panama into the 21st century and to positively contribute to the security and economic growth of the Western Hemisphere. I believe there is probably no better time than while this new administration is in its infancy to engage Panama in discussions to address the concerns I have described.

As this resolution calls for, the United States should request that the Moscoso government investigate the charges of corruption or improprieties related to the granting of the Panama Canal contract to operate the ports by the previous administration.

Prior to the awarding of these leases, several consortiums—some of which included U.S. bids—had submitted bids to operate the ports that were better than offers made by Hutchison-Whampoa. Without warning, Panama twice closed and reopened the bidding process, changing the rules and accepting higher bids after the bidding was supposed to have been closed. At one point, it is said that Panama asked a U.S. company to rescind its bid, citing a potential monopoly of firms in Panama. The sudden rules changes and unusual requests, at the very least, raised suspicions. Our Ambassador to Panama vigorously protested this bidding procedure and fought hard against it. The matter is even more troubling because the contracts have, by the passage of laws in Panama, extended them to the length of 25 to 50 years. It is called Law No. 5 in Panama.

Therefore, this resolution also requests that if President Moscoso, along with her government, finds illegal or improper dealing in this bidding process, they take steps to ensure a new process be undertaken; that it be transparent and fair to all parties.

The final provision of this resolution addresses the security issues. The canal, its mechanism of locks and dams, is fragile at best. By their own admission, Panama doesn't have the necessary resources to protect it. It disbanded its military after the U.S. invasion in 1989 to oust the Noriega regime. Now, as the United States has withdrawn its military forces—there are only a few hundred troops remaining today—drug trafficking through Panama has begun to increase. Panama's national police force is ill equipped by all admissions and is not prepared to counter this threat.

The Colombian civil war is spilling over Panama's eastern border and the threat of terrorism is growing daily. Russia and other organized crime groups are developing bases in the isthmus. Further, China's newfound foothold in the Americas has affected the flood of illegal immigrants who are coming in, using Panama as the staging area for their journey to the United States.

As a U.S. attorney, around 1990 I prosecuted a major international alien smuggling case involving a planeload of Chinese citizens who were brought to Panama and then secreted into the United States. They were able to be stopped, arrested, and people were prosecuted for it. Even at that time, China was using Panama as a conduit to bring illegal aliens into the United States. There is evidence that there is a Chinese role in this smuggling.

Our resolution calls for the negotiation of security arrangements to protect the canal and Panama on a mutual basis, respecting the sovereignty of each nation to protect Panama and the canal from any outside forces that might undermine it and undermine the free trade on which we have come to depend that goes through the canal.

The United States must not abrogate its leadership responsibilities when we relinquish control of the canal. We must emphasize to Panama our legitimate interest that sound security standards be maintained, and we must work with Panama to fight corruption, illegal drug activity, gun running, and illegal immigration rings. The United States must also send a clear message to China, or any other entity with designs on the canal, that we will guarantee the security and neutrality of the canal through all necessary force.

China's influence in Latin America has been expanded. We certainly don't want to see a resurgence of Communist activity in the Western Hemisphere at this time in history.

I see the majority leader is here. I thank him for his leadership and interest in so many areas, particularly in this matter.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I say to my colleague from New York, I will be brief. I have a cloture motion to file.

But I do also want to comment just briefly on the remarks of the Senator from Alabama. I thank him for his remarks. He is raising very important concerns—ones that I have discussed with the Chairman of the Armed Services Committee, and I have written to the Secretary of Defense expressing my concerns. As a result of the correspondence with the Secretary of Defense, and our worry about the Chinese involvement in the Panama Canal through a particular company having control of port facilities on both ends of the Panama Canal, our concern is about what is their relationship with the Chinese Government as well as other concerns as we move toward turning over the Panama Canal on December 31.

Narcoterrorism is of concern in the area, as well as corruption in the government. We do, at this very moment, have a hearing underway in the Senate Armed Services Committee. We have had Members of Congress testify about their concerns. We have a panel now

that includes General Wilhelm, who has jurisdiction for our military over that region; Ambassador Gutierrez from the State Department, answering questions; as well as the Honorable Aleman Zubieta who is Deputy Administrator, I believe, of the Commission. That testimony is underway right now. Secretary Weinberger is there. I know they are looking forward to Senator SESSIONS returning to ask questions.

There may be no problem here, although there is clearly a problem with narco-terrorism and corruption in the government. But I think we have an absolute responsibility to ask questions and get into the law about how this is going to work.

There is a provision in Law No. 5, as it is described in Panama, that raises some questions about how U.S. military vessels would have access to the Panama Canal after December 31. To the extent they say they would have right of passage provided it didn't interfere with the operations of the Panama Canal, we need to make sure we know what is happening there. We are going to carry out our responsibilities in that effort. I thank Senator SESSIONS for his work in that also.

AFRICAN GROWTH AND OPPORTUNITY ACT—Continued

Mr. LOTT. I thank the chairman of the Finance Committee and ranking member for being here and being willing to proceed on this important legislation. I do think we have an opportunity with this CBI and African free trade legislation to be able to have better relations and trade with Central America, with the Caribbean, and with Africa. I believe it will be in the interests of all countries concerned. It is the right attitude.

There are a lot of terms being thrown around in recent weeks about isolationism. This is clearly a case where, by trading with countries in Central America, the Caribbean and Africa, we can open up not only trade but relationships and opportunities for peoples in all the countries involved, including the United States. So I am glad we have proceeded to this legislation.

The Senate has been debating the motion to proceed because there had been objection to going to the bill itself. That is as a result of the objection to its immediate consideration by Senator HOLLINGS. I wanted to see if maybe we could go ahead, get started, have some debate and amendments and then not have to debate the motion to proceed and then debate the bill itself, but it looks as if we are not able to at this time proceed in that way. Since there has been objection and this is an important trade bill, one with major implications, one I discussed with the President three times this week alone, about his interest and concern and support of this legislation, I think it is important we file cloture and try to find

a way to stop a threatened filibuster and move to the substance of the bill.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to proceed to Calendar No. 215, H.R. 434, an act to authorize a new trade and investment policy for sub-Saharan Africa:

Trent Lott, Bill Roth, Mike DeWine, Rod Grams, Mitch McConnell, Judd Gregg, Larry E. Craig, Chuck Hagel, Charles Grassley, Pete Domenici, Don Nickles, Connie Mack, Paul Coverdell, Phil Gramm, R.F. Bennett, Richard G. Lugar.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, this cloture vote will occur on Tuesday, October 26. I will notify all Senators as to the exact time of the cloture vote. In the meantime, I now ask unanimous consent the mandatory quorum under rule XXII be waived.

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

Mr. LOTT. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 15 minutes as in morning business.

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

THANKING THE MAJORITY LEADER

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, before he leaves the floor, I want to tell the majority leader I very much share his view about this threat of narcoterrorism, and also to express my appreciation to the majority leader for the work he is doing with several of us on this matter of secret holds, which are so relevant at the end of a session. We have made a lot of progress already with the work done by the majority leader and with Senator DASCHLE. The majority leader knows we are trying to work out some of the last kinds of questions. I want the majority leader to know I think we have already made a real difference in this area.

I express my support to him and look forward to wrapping up the last remaining issues. I think we all know, as we go into the last few days of the session, we can have 100 of these secret holds and Senators rushing about trying to figure out what is going on. Senator MOYNIHAN, in his landmark study on secrecy, has really made the case that secrecy is the most expensive kind of regulation we could have.

Before the majority leader leaves the floor, I want him to know I really ap-

preciate all the progress we have made in working with his staff, Mr. Wilkie doing yeomen work on this, and I look forward to wrapping it up.

Mr. LOTT. I thank the Senator.

HEALTH CARE POLICY

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, rare is it to have an opportunity to talk about health care policy when the chairman of the Health Care Subcommittee is on the floor with Mr. MOYNIHAN, a long time expert, and Dr. FRIST is in the chair. So you have three of the most influential people in the health care policy field before you.

I will not abuse this opportunity. But I wanted to take just a few minutes to talk about this prescription drug issue and its importance, in terms of coverage under Medicare. There is now one bipartisan bill before the Senate on this issue, and that is the legislation that Senator OLYMPIA SNOWE and I have proposed.

What I have said—this is the fifth time I have come to the floor in recent weeks—is I am actually going to, as this poster says, “Urge Senior Citizens To Send In Copies Of Their Prescription Drug Bills,” so we can show just how critical this issue is and come together on a bipartisan basis before the end of this session and get prescription drug coverage added to Medicare.

What Senator SNOWE and I have proposed, on a bipartisan basis, uses marketplace forces to hold down the cost of these prescriptions. We have an “ability to pay” feature in the program. That is something I have heard Senator MOYNIHAN and Dr. FRIST talk about. My sense is, it is critically important that we get this coverage, not just because senior citizens suffer so, but because this is the next breakthrough in preventive health care. The drugs we are seeing today help to lower blood pressure; they help to lower the cholesterol level.

I have heard Senator MOYNIHAN and Chairman ROTH talk, for example, about how costs are exploding in Medicare, particularly under Part A, the hospital portion of Medicare. It seems to me if we can come together on a bipartisan basis and address this prescription drug issue, a lot of these new drugs, these preventive drugs, will help us save money and hold down some of the costs in Part A of Medicare, the hospital and institutional portion of the program.

The Wall Street Journal pointed out yesterday, again, how staggering some of these costs are and how we might prevent them with thoughtful policy work in the health care area. For example, yesterday in the Wall Street Journal they noted that one-third of all stroke survivors are permanently disabled. But doctors can now prescribe anticoagulants to protect the high-risk patients from stroke. The Journal goes on to say:

The lifetime cost of a severe stroke is \$100,000, while treatment with anticoagulants costs \$1,095. This is a chance to get good coverage for vulnerable people in our country and save taxpayers’ money at the same time.

I am just very hopeful; Senator ROTH’s staff and Senator MOYNIHAN’s staff have spent a lot of time with us already. Senator SNOWE and I want to do this in a bipartisan way. We want to act in this session of Congress, not put it off until after yet another round of electioneering and more slugging back and forth between Democrats and Republicans. I am hopeful seniors, by sending in copies of their prescription drug bills, as Senator SNOWE and I advocate, will help us come together in a bipartisan way.

In wrapping up, as I have indicated to the Senate before, I am going to bring to the floor each time I come three cases of what I am hearing from seniors at home in Oregon, to dramatize how important it is we act on this matter.

I just heard yesterday from a 75-year-old widow from Salem, OR. She wrote me that her income is \$8,218 a year; her prescription drug bill is \$2,289.

She spent that on three drugs—Fosamax, Relafen, and Paxil. Three drugs, \$2,289 from her \$8,118 income. That is an elderly woman in Salem.

A woman in Portland wrote me:

My mother is 97 years old and will soon be required to file for Medicaid because the ever-increasing cost of her care and medications have depleted her savings. Currently, her expenses exceed income by over \$1,000 per month. In some months, her medication costs over \$300. Last year, her prescription drug bill was \$2,746.

As we saw in a recent study, more than 20 percent of the Nation’s elderly are spending over \$1,000 a year out of pocket on their prescription medicines. This story was not at all something we found to be rare or out of the ordinary.

Finally, the third case I want to mention this morning comes from a woman in Seaside, OR. She has an income of just over \$1,000 a month. She wrote me yesterday:

I am supposed to take 20 milligrams of Lipitor, but I do not have enough money to buy it.

These are the kinds of cases I know we are going to hear when seniors send in copies of their prescription drug bills. The question is, Can we come together in a bipartisan way to address this issue?

Senator SNOWE and I used the Federal Employee Health Benefits Plan as our model. There are other good ideas out there. Our bill is called SPICE, the Senior Prescription Insurance Coverage Equity Act. We are not saying this is the last word on how to address this issue, but I would like to see the Senate look at an approach that utilizes marketplace forces, along the lines of what we do in the Federal Employee Health Benefits Plan and one