

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

RECESS

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, I ask the Senate recess for no longer than 10 minutes and at the end of that recess period the senior Senator from West Virginia be recognized.

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

Thereupon, at 4:16 p.m., the Senate recessed until 4:25 p.m.; whereupon, the Senate reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. SESSIONS).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senator from West Virginia is to be recognized.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I may yield to the distinguished senior Senator from North Carolina for such time as he may require to introduce some guests.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. The Senator from North Carolina is recognized.

Mr. HELMS. I thank the Chair and certainly thank the distinguished Senator from West Virginia for whom I have the greatest admiration.

VISIT TO THE SENATE BY PARLIAMENTARIANS OF THE REPUBLIC OF CHINA ON TAIWAN

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, today we have in this Chamber a distinguished group of parliamentarians from the Republic of China on Taiwan. I invite Senators who have not already done so to come over and say a quick hello to our visitors.

RECESS

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate stand in recess for 3 minutes.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 4:26 p.m., recessed until 4:30 p.m.; whereupon, the Senate reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. SESSIONS).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia is recognized.

Mr. BYRD. Thank you, Mr. President.

NATO: THE NEXT GENERATION

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, this weekend, the 19 member nations of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization will gather in Washington to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the establishment of NATO. Some may see the juxtaposition of this summit against the images of NATO airstrikes over Yugoslavia as being ironic. I see it differently. I see it as prophetic.

The world has changed in the past 50 years, but as the events in Kosovo so graphically illustrate, the world has

grown no less dangerous. NATO, likewise, has undergone significant changes over the years but remains no less important to the security of Europe. The key challenge facing NATO today is the dramatic change in the nature of the threat. The cold war is history; the Soviet Union is defunct; the Berlin Wall is just a pile of rubble. Forces massed along the borders have given way to flash points dotted around the globe. The tense but symmetrical standoff in Europe between the East and the West has been exchanged for the capriciousness of terrorists and tyrants.

Just as the nature of the threat has evolved, so must the structure and mission of NATO metamorphose if it is to remain relevant into the 21st century.

In 1949, when the alliance was formed, the Soviet Union and its satellites posed the only credible threat to Western security. It was the chilly dawn of the cold war era, and NATO was precision-tuned to meet the cold war challenge. In the ensuing decades, as NATO expanded from the original 12 to 16 member nations, the alliance grew in strength and stature to guard Western Europe against the formidable forces of the Warsaw Pact nations.

Conflict in Korea and Vietnam, turbulence in the Middle East, the growing influence of China—none of the cataclysmic events of the second half of the 20th century deterred NATO from its focus on the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. And, in the end, NATO's intensity and single-mindedness paid off handsomely, with the fall of the Berlin Wall and the subsequent collapse of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact.

Through the years, NATO has adjusted its strategy and its mission to meet changing circumstances, but never has the challenge been as great or as far reaching as it is today. Where once NATO contended with the shifting fortunes of a cold war enemy massed along a single front, today the alliance is confronted with brush fires in its backyard, the threat of terrorism from geographically remote nations and organizations, and the proliferation of nuclear weapons in virtually every direction.

To meet this shifting political and military landscape, NATO has expanded on its primary focus of defending its members against the threat of attack by reaching out to its former foes to promote European stability and security. Only last month, Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic were welcomed into the alliance. And nine other nations are clamoring for membership.

It is in this context that the 19 members of the alliance will gather in Washington to mark the anniversary of NATO and to discuss the future of the alliance. And it is in this context that the conflict in Kosovo can serve as a

useful template for many of the challenges that the alliance is likely to face in the early years of the 21st century.

The lessons learned in Kosovo, preliminary though they may be at this point, should be brought to the summit table. The lessons that are still to come, as NATO prosecutes the attack on Yugoslavia, must be accommodated in any future strategy.

Several specific issues arising from the Kosovo conflict deserve careful consideration by the members of the alliance. And these include the following:

First, NATO should discuss the wisdom of establishing a more robust forward operating presence in Europe beyond alliance headquarters. Given their history, the Balkans are a logical choice. The time and logistical constraints built into ferrying people and equipment from the United States, Britain, France and elsewhere to the front are formidable. The result is a potentially serious disconnect in the ability of commanders in the field to respond rapidly and effectively to changing circumstances. One example of the problems this remote staging has caused is the agonizing wait for the U.S. Apache helicopters to arrive in theater—a delay that has cost NATO in terms of tactical flexibility and has given the Serbs in Kosovo a lethal window of opportunity to carry forward their ethnic cleansing activities.

Second, and in conjunction with a more aggressive NATO forward operating presence, the allies must accelerate their efforts to field common systems and increase interoperability. This does not mean that the United States should become an open-ended pipeline for the transfer of technology to our NATO allies, but there are basic military tools that should be available to, and designated for, NATO operations.

Third, the Kosovo operation should be the genesis for a top-to-bottom review of the NATO decisionmaking process. While the system seems to be working reasonably well considering that it is a conflict being fought by committee, there is no doubt in my mind that decisionmaking must be streamlined. It is, for example, far too cumbersome to give each of the member nations veto power over the list of military targets. It may be well for NATO to consider establishing subgroups of responsibility defined operationally and perhaps even geographically. At all costs, NATO should not blunder into the decisionmaking no-man's-land that has paralyzed the effectiveness of the United Nations.

And finally, NATO should continue to engage Russia as a vital partner in its quest for stability and security, and redouble its efforts to bring other former Soviet bloc nations into the alliance once they have met NATO membership criteria. This is the time to

reach out, not to pull back. NATO's sphere of interest and influence no longer spans just the Atlantic Ocean; it spans a vast and complex territory never contemplated in 1949. In this new operating arena, a broader but still solid base will mean a stronger, more vigorous alliance.

We would be foolhardy to believe that Kosovo is an anomaly, just as we would be foolhardy to believe that Kosovo will be the only model of future conflict. The threats that face the NATO alliance at the beginning of the 21st century are many and varied, and they will doubtless proliferate in the coming years. The threat of nuclear attack from rogue nations, the possibility of so-called "loose nukes" falling into the hands of terrorists, the danger of chemical or biological warfare, the prospect of cyber-attack, the reality of increasing ethnic tensions amid shifting resources and contested borders—these are some of the threats that the United States and its NATO allies face in the coming years. And these are just the threats we can predict today. Who knows, ten years or twenty years from now, what perils the world will face and what shape our defenses will have to take. But as the conflict in Kosovo so sharply indicates, we must be prepared for the unexpected, even the unimaginable. If NATO has the staying power to celebrate its centennial fifty years from now, it will be in a world that few of us can imagine today.

NATO has served a worthy purpose since its inception in 1949. Its role in the future security and stability, not only of Europe, but also of the United States as well as far-flung corners of the world, is equally essential. And so I salute NATO on its 50th anniversary, and I urge its representatives to weigh carefully the future goals and mission of the alliance. NATO is at a crossroads: it can remain a force for security and stability in the world, or it can become just another relic of the cold war. For the sake of us all, I hope that NATO charts a course of action that will steer it safely through the turbulence of today and into the 21st century.

Mr. President, I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative assistant proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

GUIDANCE FOR THE DESIGNATION OF EMERGENCIES AS A PART OF THE BUDGET PROCESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the pending business.

The legislative assistant read as follows:

A bill (S. 557) to provide guidance for the designation of emergencies as a part of the budget process.

The Senate resumed consideration of the bill.

Pending:

LOTT (for Abraham) amendment No. 254, to preserve and protect the surpluses of the Social Security trust funds by reaffirming the exclusion of receipts and disbursements from the budget, by setting a limit on the debt held by the public, and by amending the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 to provide a process to reduce the limit on the debt held by the public.

Abraham amendment No. 255 (to amendment No. 254), in the nature of a substitute.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, I was about to ask what business we were on, and the Chair has answered the question.

What I will do now is talk for a few minutes about the reasoning behind the amendment I brought on behalf of myself and Senators DOMENICI, ASHCROFT, LOTT, NICKLES and several others, the so-called Social Security lockbox.

First, I think it is important for our constituents to understand exactly what process happens now and what has been happening to their Social Security payroll taxes.

If you are a working American, Social Security payroll taxes are taken out of your paycheck. Most Americans rue that little FICA box, as they know it means a reduction in the amount of take-home pay they have. The money that falls under the Social Security component of the FICA tax goes into the Social Security trust fund. From there it is used to pay Social Security benefits to retirees.

Right now, however, the Social Security trust fund is taking in more money in taxes than it is paying out in benefits. We are doing that because in 1982 and 1983, as a result of the Bipartisan Commission's recommendations, we came up with an increase in the payroll taxes, the goal of which was to begin to build a surplus that could be used to meet the retirement demands, in terms of the system, of baby boomers.

As a result, over the next 10 years, starting this year, Social Security will build up a surplus of \$1.8 trillion. That means 1.8 trillion more payroll tax dollars are going to go into the Social Security trust fund than will be needed to meet the retirement benefit paychecks that will be paid during that time-frame.

As I think most Americans know, and it seems at least virtually every senior or person nearing senior citizen age in my State that I meet with knows, Social Security surpluses have, in recent years, been used to mask the size of the Federal deficit and basically to finance other Government spending—everything from foreign aid to

funding for the bureaucracy in the Internal Revenue Service.

Now, however, Mr. President, as a result of the hard work this Congress and previous Congresses have done in the last several years, we are on the verge of balancing the budget without using the Social Security surplus. In fact, over the next 10 years, the Federal Government will accumulate a total budget surplus of \$2.7 trillion—\$1.8 trillion, as I mentioned, in the Social Security trust fund and \$900 billion in non-Social Security surpluses.

The question, then, is what should we do with the Social Security surpluses that we are contemplating generating over the next 10 years? Should we continue spending those surpluses on other Government programs, on new spending programs, or on increases in existing programs? Or should we save those dollars for Social Security? Remember, that was the intent of developing the surplus, to set aside additional surplus Social Security dollars for the day when Social Security income is no longer meeting its outflow in terms of paychecks.

Well, those of us bringing this amendment today say, very simply, let's save it all. We want to save every penny of every dollar to fix the Social Security program, to modernize the program, so that it is ready to meet the demands of the 21st century. If we don't pass a Social Security modernization plan, then it is our belief that that money should be used to reduce the public debt and not used for new spending programs, for tax cuts, or for anything else.

That is the purpose of the legislation we are offering in the form of this amendment—to set up, in effect, a safe-deposit box into which we would put Social Security surpluses to guarantee that they are used solely to modernize Social Security or to pay down the debt.

Mr. President, this protection is needed. It is needed because, without it, the Social Security surplus will be spent. President Clinton said in a press statement of November 15, 1995, that he wanted "to assure the American people that the Social Security trust fund will not be used for any purpose other than to pay benefits to recipients."

"Under current law," he went on to say, "the Secretary of the Treasury is not authorized to use the fund for any purpose other than to pay benefits to recipients. There will be no exceptions under my watch. None. Not ever."

That is pretty unequivocal language: The Social Security trust fund will not be used for any purpose other than to pay benefits to recipients. Unfortunately, in 1998, as you will recall, the President threatened to shut down the Government if we didn't appropriate \$21 billion in new Federal spending, to