NOT VOTING—2

Thomas Wellstone

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 96, the nays are 1. Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn having voted in the affirmative, the motion is agreed to.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, what is the pending business?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate is now in morning business.

EMBARGO ON CUBA

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, this morning we voted on cloture on the motion to proceed to the Treasury-Postal appropriations bill. I rise to address an issue that will certainly arise in the debate. The issue is the U.S. embargo on Cuba as it relates to food and medicine.

Earlier this month, I traveled to Havana along with Senators ROBERTS and AKAKA. It was a brief trip, but it gave us an opportunity to meet with a wide range of people. We met with Cuban Cabinet Ministers and dissidents, with the head of the largest NGO in Cuba, and also with a good number of foreign ambassadors, and with President Fidel Castro himself. I might say that was a marathon 10-hour session, about half of it dining.

I left those meetings more convinced than ever that it is time to end our cold war policy towards Cuba. We should have normal trade relations with Cuba. Let me explain why.

First, this is a unilateral sanction. Nobody else in the world supports it. Not even our closest allies. Unilateral economic sanctions, don't make sense unless our national security is at stake. Forty years ago Cuba threatened our national security. The Soviet Union planted nuclear missiles in Cuba and aimed them at the United States. Twenty years ago, Cuba was still acting as a force to destabilize Central America.

Those days are gone. The missiles are gone. The Soviet Union is gone. Cuban military and guerilla forces are gone from Central America. The security threat is gone. But the embargo remains.

My reason for my opposing unilateral sanctions is entirely pragmatic. They don't work. They never worked in the past and they will not work in the future. Whenever we stop our farmers and business people from exporting, our Japanese, European, and Canadian competitors rush in to fill the gap. Unilateral sanctions are a hopelessly ineffective tool.

The second reason for ending the embargo is that the US embargo actually helps Castro.

How does it help Castro? I saw it for myself in Havana. The Cuban economy is in shambles. The people's rights are repressed. Fidel Castro blames it all on the embargo. He uses the embargo as the scapegoat for Cuba's misery. Without the embargo, he would have no one to blame.

For the past ten years I have worked towards normalizing our trade with China. My operating guideline has been ''Engagement Without Illusions.'' Trade rules don't automatically and instantly yield trade results. We have to push hard every day to see that countries follow the rules. That's certainly the case with China.

I have the same attitude towards Cuba. Yes, we should lift the embargo. We should do it without preconditions and without demanding any quid pro quo from Cuba. We should engage them economically. But we should do so without illusions. Once we lift the embargo, Cuba will not become a major buyer of our farm goods or manufactured products overnight.

We need to be realistic. With Cuba's failed economy and low income, ending the embargo won't cause a huge surge of U.S. products to Cuba. Instead, it will start sales of some goods, such as food, medicine, some manufactures, and some telecom and Internet services.

In addition, ending the embargo will increase Cuban exposure to the United States. It will bring Cubans into contact with our tourists, business people, students, and scholars. It will bring Americans into contact with those who will be part of the post-Castro Cuba. It will spur more investment in Cuba's tourist infrastructure, helping, even if only a little, to further develop a private sector in the economy.

In May of this year, I introduced bipartisan legislation that would repeal all of the Cuba- specific statutes that create the embargo. That includes the 1992 Cuban Democracy Act and the 1996 Helms–Burton Act. I look forward to the day when that legislation will pass and we have a normal economic relationship with Cuba.

Until that day, I support measures such as this amendment which dismantle the embargo brick by brick. The sanctions on sales of food and medicine to Cuba are especially offensive.

Last year, legislation to end unilateral sanctions on food and medicine passed the Senate by a vote of 70 to 28. That legislation was hijacked by the House in conference. This year we passed similar legislation again as part of the Agriculture appropriations bill. I hope our conferees stand firm and ensure its passage this year, with one correction.

This year the sanctions provisions of the Agriculture appropriations bill contain a new requirement. The bill requires farmers who want to sell food to foreign governments of concern to get a specific license. That is needless red tape which will make it harder to export. Last year the bill we passed had no such licensing requirement. We should strike that provision in the Agriculture appropriations conference this year.

When we begin debate on the bill, one of my colleagues will offer an amendment to address unilateral sanctions on food and medicine from a different angle. The amendment will cut off funding to enforce and administer them. The House passed a similar measure by a substantial majority. We should do the same in the Senate.

Mr. President, I hope that all of my colleagues will vote in favor of this amendment and will support the ultimate lifting of the entire Cuba trade embargo.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona is recognized.

Mr. DOMENICI. Will the Senator yield for a unanimous-consent request?

Mr. MCCAIN. Yes.

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent when Senator MCCAIN and Senator GORTON are finished, I might be recognized thereafter. Senator WYDEN is here and he has no objection. He is joining me.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is the consent request that after Senator MCCAIN and Senator GORTON speak——

Mr. DOMENICI. I be recognized to introduce a bill, and then that Senator WYDEN follow me.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. And Senator VOINOVICH after that?

Mr. DOMENICI. Yes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Arizona is recognized.

(The remarks of Mr. MCCAIN and Mr. GORTON pertaining to the introduction of S. Res. 344 are located in today's RECORD under ''Submission of concurrent and Senate Resolutions.'')

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico.

(The remarks of Mr. DOMENICI and Mr. WYDEN pertaining to the introduction of S. 2937 are located in today's RECORD under ''Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.'')

UNANIMOUS-CONSENT AGREEMENT

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, I now ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding rule XXII, following the 11:30 cloture vote the Senate proceed to consideration of the conference report to accompany H.R. 4576, the Defense appropriations bill. Further, I ask consent that there be up to 60 minutes for debate under the control of Senator MCCAIN and up to 15 minutes under the control of Senator GRAMM, with an additional 6 minutes equally divided between Senators STEVENS and INOUYE, and 20 minutes for Senator BYRD, and