

Just a few years ago, I was proud to vote in the United States Senate to enlarge NATO to include Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic. This enlargement was to help integrate the states that had thrown off the yoke of the Warsaw Pact into Western European institutions. It helped to cement democracy and give those countries a stake in the defense of Europe. I want to see more East European countries join NATO, particularly the long-suffering Baltic countries of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia. I am afraid that will not happen if the United States pulls back from its commitment to NATO.

After the United States led Europe and NATO to stop the Yugoslavian wars, are we to pull back? After the United States led NATO to expand the fold of democratic, market-oriented states committed to Europe's defense, are we to leave?

I believe the answer to those questions is a resounding no.

It is time to address the hardships of those in the military as the management issues that they are and stop claiming that the United States can no longer handle vital national security missions like our involvement in the Balkans because of those hardships.

Let's stop hiding behind the many differing deployment statistics and debate policy. This Administration has kept our commitment to NATO and to Europe, while it has continued to contain Saddam Hussein, and protected our vital interests in protecting Japan, South Korea, and the Taiwan Strait. Those aren't "vague, aimless, or uncertain" missions. These missions are at the heart of our national security and our leadership role in the world today.

I close by pointing to one particular thing that has come up in the last 2 weeks in the Presidential campaign. For months, Governor Bush's senior foreign policy advisers have been complaining that the U.S. military is overextended and engaged in too many peacekeeping operations. It is this last deployment in the Balkans that has drawn Governor Bush's ire, even though the 10,000 troops represent, as I said earlier, less than 1 percent of the U.S. military.

Recently, Governor Bush's foreign policy adviser, Condoleezza Rice, called for withdrawal of U.S. forces from the Balkans as a "new division of labor" under which the United States would "handle a showdown in the Gulf, mount the kind of force needed to protect Saudi Arabia and deter a crisis in the Taiwan Strait," while Europe would be asked to do peacekeeping on its own.

I have always been in favor of burden sharing, and I believe the Europeans and every other group across the world who need our assistance should not only pay for that and defer the costs to American taxpayers but put the lives

of their young men and women on the line.

I believe it is naive of Governor Bush to suggest that America's commitment to NATO is just a statistical commitment. America's commitment to NATO makes it work, and the suggestion that Governor Bush, if he had the chance, would diminish the American role in NATO, has raised concerns all across Europe because for over 60 years now, NATO has been a source of stability and pride and defense for our European allies.

The U.S. involvement is much more than just bringing men and women to the field. It is a symbol of the force and commitment of the United States. I am proud of the fact, as I stand here, that in modern times the United States has never engaged in these military conflicts hoping to gain territory or treasure. We are there for what we consider the right reasons: to protect democratic values, to provide opportunity for the growth of business opportunities, and free trade. That has basically been the bedrock of our policy in NATO for many years and will continue to be. I hope we can continue to make that commitment in years to come.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. DURBIN. I ask for 3 additional minutes under the time allotted on the Democratic side.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is recognized for 3 minutes.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I close this segment by saying if we are going to maintain the superiority of the United States in the world, we must maintain a military force second to none, and that is a fact. For those who suggest we have somehow diminished our power, I suggest to them: Which military would you take in place of the United States? It is not just our technological advantage—that is amazing—what is amazing is the commitment of the men and women in this military to this country and to the defense of our values. I am proud of the fact that as a Member of Congress, in the House and the Senate, I have been able to support this buildup of military strength, which has meant we have conquered communism, we have allowed countries to see their freedom for the first time in decades, and we have built alliances, like NATO, into the envy of the world.

For those who suggest the American military is somehow understaffed, overmanned, underutilized, overutilized—whatever the criticism may be—I do not think that is a fact. I also think those who want to rewrite the history of the last 50 or 60 years and try to define a new role for NATO are causing undue concern among our allies in Europe. NATO is important. I know this because of my own experience dealing with the Baltics.

My mother was born in Lithuania. I followed the arrival of democracy in

Lithuania, Estonia, and Latvia. I know they are concerned about their future and security. They are counting on NATO. They are praying for the day when they can become part of it.

When Governor Bush suggests we are somehow going to diminish America's role in NATO, it raises serious questions not only in the United States but around the world. It goes back to the point I made earlier: If being the President of the United States and Commander in Chief of our forces was an easy job then many people could fill it. If it is a tough job demanding experience and good solid judgment, then I think the American people should best look to someone involved in that. Vice President GORE has tried to stand not only for the strength of NATO in the past but in the future. I believe as leader, if he is elected on November 7, he will continue in that proud tradition.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I yield 10 minutes to the Senator from Iowa, Mr. HARKIN.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa is recognized for 10 minutes.

EDUCATION BUDGET

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I have now served on the Senate Appropriations Committee and the Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Subcommittee. I have been on that committee 15 years. Each year when we pass the budget for education and health, there are always tough negotiations, but we always manage to get through it and we get it to the President and move ahead.

This year we had some long and tough negotiations on our bill. The first part of the year, the majority leader of the Senate said education was going to be their priority. Yet here we are at the end of the year—actually at the beginning of the new fiscal year; we are a month into the new fiscal year—and we still do not have our education budget through yet. It is going to be the last bill through.

We have been working very hard over the last several weeks to bring this bill to its final conclusion. First of all, the chairman of our appropriations subcommittee, Senator SPECTER, worked very hard this year to get it through our committee and to get it through the Senate. Then we went to conference, and we have been locked in conference now for the better part of 3 months, most of it over the last month working out these differences, as we do on bills.

Last night, Sunday night, we met for what was supposed to be our final negotiating process on the education budget. We started meeting last night after our vote in the Senate, so that must have been around 8 or 9 p.m. We met until almost 2 a.m. There were tough

negotiations. Senator STEVENS, as chairman of the Appropriations Committee, Congressman BILL YOUNG from Florida on the House side, Congressman PORTER, Congressman OBEY, the ranking Democrat on the House Appropriations Committee and on the subcommittee that deals with education, and I and, of course, the Director of OMB, Mr. Lew, was there also.

As I said, we had tough negotiations, but we had it down to about four or five issues, finally, and we hammered them out.

Finally, at about 1:30 a.m. this morning, we reached our agreement. As is usually true of any agreement or compromise, there are things in the compromise that I do not like. I am sure there were things in there Senator STEVENS does not like. There are items in there that Congressman PORTER, a Republican from the House, and Congressman OBEY do not like. Together we decided this was the best package we could do, and we all shook hands on it.

Today, thinking we had finally reached an agreement on this important education bill, I find out that Majority Whip DELAY has turned his thumbs down on it, and so did Majority Leader ARMEY turn his thumbs down on it. Evidently, Speaker HASTERT has said the same thing.

What are we doing here? Why do we even have committees? Why don't we just let Speaker HASTERT and Congressman DELAY and Congressman ARMEY deal with everything?

The reason we have the committees is because people such as Senator STEVENS know these issues. He has been working on these issues for years. And Congressman PORTER and Congressman YOUNG and Congressman OBEY and Senator SPECTER and myself, we know these issues. We know the ins and outs of these issues. We have been working on them a long time.

I am not on the Commerce-State-Justice Committee, so I could not negotiate on that because I do not know all the ins and outs of it, and neither does Congressman DELAY or Congressman ARMEY or Congressman HASTERT know that. Yet they turned thumbs down on this deal we struck last night.

Senator STEVENS worked long and hard to reach this agreement. I am sure he was not happy with everything that was in it, just as I was not. But Senator STEVENS dealt in good faith. We gave our word. We shook hands on it. So did Congressman BILL YOUNG. I have worked with Congressman YOUNG for 15 years—and Congressman PORTER and Congressman OBEY. We reached our agreements. We walked out of the room at 1:30 a.m. And today, Congressman DELAY and Congressman ARMEY say: No.

I do not know. I feel very badly for Senator STEVENS and the others who worked very hard on this, gave their word, shook hands. We had the agreement.

What is at stake here? Is this all just an inside ball game, that it shouldn't bother anybody outside the beltway? Here is what is at stake.

In education: Pell grants, some of the largest increases ever in Pell grants; Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, giving money out to the States to help pay for the education of kids with disabilities; class size reduction, hiring more schoolteachers to reduce class size; school modernization so we can get money out to our schools so they can repair and fix up their schools. The average age of our schools in America is 42 years. They need to be fixed up. We had money for that.

In health care, medical research: All the money for NIH for medical research; all the money for our community health centers that are doing so much to help our uninsured people in this country with health care; an important cancer-screening program for breast and cervical cancer for women.

Child care: One of the biggest increases that we have ever had for child care.

These issues are too important to be playing politics at this late moment. That is what is happening on the House side—pure politics.

Again, I hope this is just a temporary setback. Congressman ARMEY, Congressman DELAY, and Speaker HASTERT are talking about things that they do not understand. I am hopeful they will meet with Congressman YOUNG and Senator STEVENS, who understand that we had an agreement. Not everyone liked it, but it was a good agreement. It was one that we could live with, and one that I felt the President could sign.

So these issues are much too important for our Nation's future, for our kids' future, for the health of women—too important for these kinds of partisan games this late in the year.

I just want to take this time to urge our friends on the House side to not play games with this important education bill. We have to get this money out. We are already a month into our fiscal year. Our colleges, our school boards, our State departments of education need to know, need to have this money out there, so we can continue to hire teachers and reduce class size and modernize our schools.

We need to get the money out there for breast and cervical cancer screening for women all over America. What we do not need is the kind of interference that we have had by Congressman DELAY and Congressman ARMEY and Congressman HASTERT on the House side.

Now is the time to pull together, as we did last night. This was a true bipartisan effort. Republicans in the House, Democrats in the House, Republicans in the Senate, and Democrats in the Senate worked together and we got an agreement. That is the way this

place should work. Senator STEVENS led it on the Senate side, Congressman YOUNG on the House side. We got our agreements. It is too bad we see this last minute kind of partisan bickering from the House leadership.

Again, I am hopeful this is a temporary setback. Let's get our education bill done. Let's get it to the President so he can sign it, so we can move ahead with the necessary task of educating our kids in this country. It is, indeed, a sad day today when we see what happened in education.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, before I yield to the Senator from Louisiana the remainder of the time, I just want to say to the Senator from Iowa, who is the subcommittee ranking Democrat, who has done such a remarkable job, I could sense from your voice in your presentation you were up most of the night working on this. It is not just last night that you worked on it; you have worked on this bill for months—

Mr. HARKIN. Months.

Mr. REID. And months and months. It is a great bill. It does so much for the American people. And there are no accolades here for you today, as there should be, because you have done such a remarkably good job of not only working that bill but making sure that the people in this Senate and the people around the country understand those people who have no voice.

This subcommittee, of which you are the ranking member, is a subcommittee that does not have a lot of lobbyists working for the underprivileged. There are a lot of people working against them. We depend on you. We, on this side of the aisle, depend on you. And you are very dependable. I personally appreciate, as we all do over here, the great work you have done.

Mr. HARKIN. I thank the Senator from Nevada for his very kind remarks. I would just say to him, also, that, quite frankly, we had great cooperation from Senator STEVENS on the Republican side in getting this bill through. He worked very hard on it, too. I just want to make that point because it is just a darn shame that in these last hours we have gotten thrown into this partisan thing on the House side by the House leadership.

I thank the Senator.

Mr. REID. Senator STEVENS works very hard on everything he does.

Mr. HARKIN. Yes.

Mr. REID. I yield the remainder of our time to the Senator from Louisiana.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, how much time is remaining on our side?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Six minutes.

Ms. LANDRIEU. I thank the Chair.

TAX CUTS

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I associate myself with the remarks of the