CONGRESSIONAL RECORD—SENATE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, this is a two-front war—we need to advance on both fronts. Clearly, we can’t continue the administration’s pattern of ignoring this crisis.

I agree that we should increase education, prevention, and treatment efforts, as well as law enforcement efforts. But, will that effort pay off, if we do so at the expense of attacking the source country problem?

It is pretty clear that after seven years of doing nothing, the administration is trying to play catch up in this crisis.

If we look at trends and commitments, during the Reagan Just-Say-No years, drug production and use plummeted.

This trend sharply reversed in 1992 which was exactly when Clinton was asked, “If you had to do it over again, would you have inhaled?” He answered, “Sure, if I could have.”

Since 1992, and this unfortunate remark, drug use has soared and production has tripled.

We need to attack both fronts in this war—here, at home, and abroad.

I think we have recommended a good balance for the battle abroad.

Let me remind everyone it is a very different package than the request made by the administration—I have much more confidence in the bill before the Senate than I did in the request.

The most important difference is our emphasis on a regional strategy. Just as we saw production spike in Colombia when pressure was applied to traffickers in Peru and Bolivia, I believe we would see the problem shift back to Peru, Bolivia, and to Ecuador if we don’t increase our regional support.

Without compromising vital support for Colombia, we provided $205 million in support to Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, and other nations in the region. This more than doubles the administration’s request of $76 million.

A second key difference between the bill and the request is the support we offer for human rights programs. As the tempo of operations against the traffickers pick up, I am concerned that abuse will increase.

Colombia’s judicial system is weak and court officials are regularly threatened by civilian courts. Moreover, the military has undermined attempts to prosecute traffickers in Colombia.

We paid for these increases by changing the helicopter package.

Again, let me say, striking the right balance is the key to our success.

This bill strikes the right balance between domestic and international law enforcement—the right balance between Colombia and the other countries in the region—and the right balance between our support for Colombian law enforcement and Colombian human rights advocates.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The time of the Senator has expired. The Senator from Minnesota.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I have a copy of Senator LEAHY’s statement. I am going to read a little from Senator LEAHY’s statement. This is a portion of his statement:

I have repeatedly expressed concerns about the administration’s proposal, particularly the dramatic increase in military assistance. I am troubled about what we may be getting into. The administration has yet to give me sufficient details about what it expects to achieve, in what period of time, what the long-term costs are, or what the risks are.

That is, of course, part of the position that a number of us have taken today. I thank Senator LEAHY, who has a tremendous amount of expertise in this area, for his statement. He goes on to say:

I commend Senator WELLSSTONE for his amendment. It would provide $225 million for substance abuse prevention and treatment programs in the United States.

According to the Office of National Drug Control Policy, drug abuse kills 52,000 Americans each year. It costs our society nearly $100 billion annually. It has strained the capacity of our courts and our medical facilities, and brought violence and tragedy to families, schools, and communities throughout this country.

I could not have said it better. Mr. President, 80 percent of adolescents and other youth who will, if not provided treatment, sustain the demands for drugs in the future—today—in our country cannot get it. Some 50 percent of adults in our country who are in need of a drug treatment program are not receiving it. Many treatment programs have lines out the door.

And the conclusion of Senator LEAHY’s statement:

We should help Colombia. I support President Pastrana’s efforts to combat the violence, corruption, and poverty which plague his country. But I am not convinced the administration’s request for “Plan Colombia” will effectively address those problems, nor is it likely to reduce the flow of drugs into our country or ameliorate the drug problem here at home.

We do know, however, that substance abuse treatment and prevention programs work. A frequently cited Rand study showed that, dollar for dollar, providing treatment for cocaine users is 10 times more effective than drug interdiction efforts, and 23 times more effective than eradicating coca at its source. Scientific advances promise to make treatment and prevention programs even better. Ultimately, reducing the demand for drugs, which is what these programs do—is the only long-term solution to reducing the flow of illegal drugs from Colombia and elsewhere.

Mr. President, I commend Senator Wellstone—

Nice of him to say—for his leadership on this issue and I urge other Senators to support his amendment.

I urge other Senators to support this amendment.

I yield the floor.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, is all time yielded back?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time has been yielded back.

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, we are going to have two votes shortly.

I ask unanimous consent that the Senator from Alabama be recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senator from Alabama be recognized for 5 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? Is that a unanimous consent request?

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the Senator from Alabama be recognized for 5 minutes.

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

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, we are going to have two votes shortly.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I send a modification to the desk. I would like to share a few thoughts about this situation.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, the amendment will be modified.