

Mr. CRAIG. I know you had referenced some slowing down of the process. This process must not slow down. We have decisions that need to be made in the field. We have citizens waiting for decisions to be made by agencies of our Government who now are not making them or are making them not with Bush appointees but with former Clinton appointees. I don't think that is the way either of us want that to happen.

I hope that clearly we can confirm a substantial number before the August recess. We are going to pursue this and work certainly with you, and I and my colleague from Arizona will work with our leadership and with the assistant Republican leader. Time lines are critical.

I must tell the Senator that if what I am told is true, that when a nominee engages the staff of one of the committees to ask when he might be scheduled—and he has been there since May 22—and he is told, in essence, when we get around to it in November or December, that sounds to me like something other than timely scheduling. That sounds to me like a great deal of foot dragging on the part of the Judiciary Committee, its chairman, and its staff. If that is the case, and that can be determined, my guess is, there will be less work done here than might otherwise be done in the course of the next number of weeks, if we can't determine to move these folks ahead with some reasonable timeframe both for hearing and for an understanding of when they can come to the floor for a vote.

With that, I do not object.

Mr. REID. Let me say to my friend, we believe nominees should be approved as quickly as possible. I say respectfully to my friend from Idaho, this is not payback time. We have indicated, and I have indicated to the Senator personally, the majority leader has indicated to the minority leader—I spoke to my counterpart, Senator NICKLES—this is not payback time. We will not compare what happened to President Clinton to what has happened to President Bush.

We are going to do our very best. We are working as rapidly as we can.

I think what we have done is quite commendable. You are going to have to work with your side because a number of the holds on some of these important nominations are on your side.

We are doing the best we can. We appreciate your interest. I have taken the assignment given to me by my leader, as Senator NICKLES has by his leader, as being serious. We are doing our very best to come up with a product that will satisfy the body.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to confirmation of the nominee? Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, reserving the right to object.

Mr. REID. I have a parliamentary inquiry. I want to make sure the time is running against the cloture motion. If it is not, then we are not going to bother with this nomination because we don't have the time. Is this counting?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The time is being charged to the 30 hours under the cloture motion.

Mr. KYL. I don't mean to take any time.

Mr. REID. We have a lot of time.

Mr. KYL. That is not the object. Reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, I want to ask the assistant majority leader one, maybe two questions. This nomination is a great nomination, as the Senator from Nevada pointed out. It would not be my intention to object. What it demonstrates is, my understanding is that the President, or someone on his behalf, called and said can't we shake this nominee loose, for the reason the Senator from Idaho indicated. It illustrates the fact that we have held up the nominations so long that really important things are beginning to happen that require that we put these people in place.

Therefore, I think it is commendable to bring this nominee to the floor now. I ask the distinguished assistant majority leader—there are also some important efforts at the United Nations which require the attendance of John Negroponte, the nominee for Ambassador of the U.N. The President deserves to have his Cabinet filled out finally. John Walters, the nominee for drug czar, is somebody of great importance to the White House. I spoke yesterday with the Attorney General who asked if we could please get Tom Sansonetti, an assistant from the Department of Justice, confirmed as quickly as possible.

I ask the assistant majority leader, since there are 15 nominees who I think are on the Executive Calendar now, we can do all of those right now if he would agree not only that we could ask unanimous consent on this one nominee, but the others who are at least pending on the Executive Calendar before us.

Mr. REID. I don't think you can list in order of priority which of these nominations are more important than another. If you asked people before the committee, the Environment and Public Works Committee, it may not be, in the minds of some, as important to some under the auspices of the Judiciary Committee because that person is changing their lives to have a new assignment in life. It is very important. So we are doing everything we can to move through these quickly. We want to make sure that the chairmen and the chairwomen of these committees and subcommittees have the opportunity to do whatever they need to do

to make sure it is brought before the Senate in the fashion they believe appropriate.

I say to my friend, in answer to the question, Senator NICKLES and I have been working and at an appropriate time we will report to the two leaders as to what we expect to happen on both sides in the next few hours.

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, then I will ask for a second question with the indulgence of the Senator. With all due respect, the answer is a nonanswer. It doesn't tell us when we might consider these nominees. The distinguished assistant majority leader said phrases such as "as quickly as possible" and "as rapidly as we can accommodate." Is it not true that there are 15—if I am incorrect, please give the correct number—15 people pending on the Executive Calendar who don't await anything except our action? We can do it now or at the end of the day. Nothing stands in the way—no committee chairmen, no further vote, nothing. As far as I know, there is no controversy with respect to any of these.

Is there any reason that this number, whether it be 14 or 15, could not be agreed to today?

Mr. REID. We hope before the day's end there are more than that on the calendar. Some will be reported today.

This is not quite as easy as the Senator from Arizona has indicated. The Department of the Treasury—these four people who have been reported out by the committee, by Senator GRASSLEY and Senator BAUCUS, are really important, we think—the Deputy Secretary, Assistant Secretary, Under Secretary, and another Under Secretary. These are being held up on your side. We are trying to work our way through this. I say to my friend that we are trying to do our best. We are acting in good faith. That is why we interrupted the proceedings for Mr. Schieffer.

Senator NICKLES and I have been given an assignment. I know you will accept what I say. He and I have been working hard, but I ask you to meet with him. We have had a number of discussions relating to the nominations. I am confident it is going to bear fruit very quickly.

Mr. KYL. I will not object. I appreciate the response of the assistant majority leader, although it suggests to me that these nominees are being held hostage to the legislative process. I hope we can get these confirmations as quickly as possible.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the confirmation?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The nomination was confirmed.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will return to legislative session.