

The bottom line is that we need this position filled since he is the right man for the job. He has the President's confidence, and it is about time we confirmed him as drug czar. I hope my colleagues will act on that quickly.

Those are two bits of good news: The victory of the Arizona Diamondbacks and my hope that we will quickly confirm John Walters and conclude the confirmation process of the President's Cabinet.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be dispensed with.

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

NICARAGUAN PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, yesterday our neighbors to the south in Nicaragua went to the polls to elect a new President. The liberal party candidate, Enrique Bolanos, appears to be the winner. With part of the vote counted this afternoon, he has 53 percent of the vote, while Sandinista leader, Daniel Ortega, trails with 45 percent. Although votes still remain to be counted, Ortega has conceded defeat.

But right up to yesterday, when people actually went to the polls in Nicaragua, the candidates were running neck and neck, we are told, in a very heated and very tight race. It is disconcerting that the race was even close at all. The very fact that Ortega, a Marxist Communist sympathizer, could come close to regaining power tells us that it is time for the United States to wake up and start paying attention to our neighbor to the south. If we do not, we will see Daniel Ortega or another leftist radical regain power sometime in the future.

The fact is that unless we pay attention, unless we take notice, history may well repeat itself. Sometimes we in the United States have a tendency to go from crisis to crisis. We try to deal with the crisis and then, once the crisis is over, we forget about that region or that part of the world or that country. That is what I think we have done in Central America.

In the 1980s, when I was a member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, the world's spotlight, and this Congress' spotlight, the country's spotlight was on Nicaragua; it was on El Salvador; it was on many of our neighbors in South and Central America.

The 1980s and the 1990s brought a very significant increase in democracy in this hemisphere. Many of us have come to the Chamber and talked about that. We have talked about the fact

that this hemisphere is so much more democratic today than it has ever been in the past. Today, all but one of our region's 33 countries have democratically elected heads of state. But we have seen a retrenching of that in the last few years.

While we justifiably are worried about many other parts of the world, we should not forget about our neighbors to the south. In fact, a recent poll indicates a steep decline in support for democracy among Latin American and Central American countries. If we look at Nicaragua, that same poll shows that only 43 percent of Nicaraguans support democracy. That figure was at 72 percent just 3 years before, nearly a 30-percent drop.

In the same poll, Nicaragua registered the largest increase in support for authoritarian government, a 16-percent increase over the previous year's figure.

Maybe these startling figures should come as no surprise. History does offer us a sober reminder that oppressive regimes often spring from misery, despair, and joblessness. Nicaragua has never recovered from the war of the 1980s, the earthquake of the early 1970s, the droughts, the hurricanes, the political corruption, the economic collapse. If we look at the per capita income today, what we find is per capita income in Nicaragua in real terms is still less than 25 percent of the level reached in the 1970s—an absolutely unbelievable figure.

Nicaragua today is still the second poorest country in the hemisphere behind Haiti.

There is something wrong with this picture. Yes, democracy won out in Nicaragua in the 1980s, but the economic environment and political leadership were not stable enough to allow that democracy to fully take hold and thrive. In the recent election, the apparent winner was clearly handicapped by the fact that he had been Vice President for President Aleman, who has certainly been a disappointment to his country and a disappointment to the United States and other people who care about democracy.

We should think about this. Just yesterday that nation, Nicaragua, came all too close to sending Daniel Ortega back to the Presidency, the very leader under whose direction inflation rose as high as 33,000 percent.

Regretfully, the United States has not done as much as we should have over the last decade. We have done some things. We have been involved. We tried to help but, candidly, not as much as we should have. We tried to implement judicial reforms and change in the rule of law, but democracy is not a hobby; it is a lifetime commitment. It is not enough to believe in it; it has to be practiced every day, day in and day out.

Yesterday's elections represent a close call but also a new opportunity

for democracy in Nicaragua. I believe the United States must do what we can to help our friends in Nicaragua.

With the election of Enrique Bolanos, we have a unique opportunity to bring about lasting change for the people of Nicaragua. We need to support and work closely with USAID in that effort to create economic and social conditions that will produce a greater margin of safety for the poor. Hurricane Mitch demonstrated how vulnerable the country is to natural disasters. Overall economic losses were estimated at \$1.5 billion.

While growth rebounded to about 7 percent in 1999, low world coffee prices and an internal financial sector crisis caused Nicaragua more than 10-percent drop in GDP in the year 2000. There is an urgent need for Nicaragua to pay systematic and immediate attention to environmental issues and problems, including watershed management, natural resource management, reforestation, and land use. We also need to expand our food-for-work programs, strengthen our education and training initiatives, and encourage alternative crop development.

Furthermore, we need to foster economic growth by strengthening our microenterprise programs and increasing the number of rural credit unions. I know my colleague in the Chair has been a great supporter of microenterprise programs. They work in Nicaragua as they work around the world. I think we have to do more to promote them.

These are efforts that we have supported in the past, and we need to support in the future. We need to provide individual Nicaraguans the tools to permanently free themselves from poverty. We should also support soon-to-be-President Bolanos in any attempt to scale back some of the electoral and judicial reforms brought about in the late 1999 pact between the Aleman government and the Sandinistas. Specifically, we need to work towards: No. 1, restoring the autonomy of the judicial branch; No. 2, restoring the autonomy of the comptroller; No. 3, reducing barriers for third party participation and increased accountability of the Supreme Electoral Council; and finally, we need to also develop increased accountability of government officials and make aid contingent on a transparent government that proactively works to root out corruption.

Finally, we should take advantage of opportunities for bilateral and multilateral counterdrug operations with the Nicaraguan military. Operations such as these, closely monitored, not only can produce tangible results in the form of interdictions and deterrence but also could help increase the skills and professionalism of the indigenous forces in Nicaragua.

Ultimately, we need to keep a very close watch on the entire hemisphere

to see what we can do to help the democratic forces. They need our help. It is in the best interests of the United States to see these countries remain democratic.

We also need to understand how very closely economic progress for the poor is tied to democracy. If we expect democracy to flourish and to grow in our neighbors to the south, it is essential that we do what we can to help their economies grow so everyone in those countries, whether it be Nicaragua, El Salvador, Honduras, or any of our neighbors to the south, anyone who lives in these countries will see they do have opportunity under democracy.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

The distinguished Senator from Michigan.

THE ABM TREATY

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, until recently, the Bush administration appeared to be engaged in a headlong rush to unilaterally withdraw from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty—the ABM Treaty—and deploy a national missile defense system. That headlong rush had some serious negative implications for the security of the United States and for our relations with other nations.

If the United States decided to unilaterally withdraw from the ABM Treaty, it could:

First, lead Russia to stop dismantling nuclear weapons, and to retain or eventually increase its multiple warheads on long-range missiles;

Second, lead other nations, such as China, to speed the deployment, or increase the number, of their long-range nuclear missiles; and

Third, strain our relations with allies and friends in Europe and Asia who recognize that the ABM Treaty has allowed nuclear arms reductions and has promoted stability for many decades.

Those reactions to a unilateral withdrawal from the treaty on our part would be serious because they could result in more nuclear warheads on the territory of other nations and could lead to an increased risk of the theft or proliferation of such warheads or their materials to rogue states or terrorists.

In addition, Russia and China could respond to unilateral United States withdrawal from the ABM Treaty by producing, deploying, and possibly even selling missile defense countermeasures and decoys to our potential adversaries. A spiraling competition of

countermeasures and counter-countermeasures could then ensue.

I have believed for some time that these serious negative consequences for our national security argued against our unilateral withdrawal from the ABM Treaty, and I have long been concerned by the Bush administration's unilateralist approach to this question.

As recently as August 23 of this year, for instance, President Bush declared, "We will withdraw from the ABM Treaty on our timetable, at a time convenient to America."

Then came the horrific attacks of September 11. To its credit, the administration then set out to build and sustain a broad international coalition, which includes Russia, to fight terrorism. Despite its unilateralist go-it-alone approach so prevalent before those September 11 attacks, the administration appears to have recognized that in a world of terrorism and weapons of mass destruction, the United States is more secure when we work cooperatively with allies and with nations with whom we have common interests than we are if we go it alone.

We have already witnessed that welcome new approach to foreign policy in areas as diverse as the newfound support for South Korea's effort to improve relations with North Korea, and in the administration's recent reversal and decision to join the international effort to improve the worldwide Biological Weapons Convention. This new approach has already influenced the administration's approach to national missile defense, the ABM Treaty, and our relationship with Russia, with whom the President seeks a "new strategic framework."

At his October 11 press conference, the President twice avoided giving direct answers to questions about whether he would unilaterally withdraw from the ABM Treaty. The discussions between Presidents Bush and Putin in Shanghai gave some hope that the United States and Russia can reach agreement on missile defense and reductions in offensive nuclear weapons.

Then, on October 25, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld announced that the administration had "decided not to go forward" with missile defense tests in late October and early November that might have violated the ABM Treaty. That is a significant change because the administration had said previously that we would not be constrained by the ABM Treaty but, rather, we would withdraw from it.

Last week, we read in the newspapers that the United States and Russia are near agreement on an interim arrangement that would achieve three things: No. 1, allow the administration to continue with its robust program of missile defense research, development, and testing; No. 2, preserve the ABM Treaty; and, No. 3, set goals for reducing by some two-thirds the number of each

nation's strategic nuclear warheads. The story quoted one unnamed official as saying: "Testing will go on, but there will be no announcement of a U.S. withdrawal from the ABM Treaty."

If the administration has, in fact, now decided not to unilaterally dismantle a mutual security structure before a new structure is put in place, it would represent a wise shift in U.S. policy.

Presidents Bush and Putin would then have a genuine opportunity at their summit next week to make real progress towards a new security arrangement that permits both missile defense testing and significant nuclear arms reductions, and that would have strong bipartisan support in Congress.

As I mentioned, on October 25, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld announced that the Pentagon had decided not to proceed with four planned missile defense test activities because they might conflict with the ABM Treaty. But, in fact, prior to Secretary Rumsfeld's announcement, the Pentagon had already decided to delay three of the test activities for technical reasons wholly unrelated to the ABM Treaty. In addition, the fourth test planned for November 14 was not a missile defense test, but a Navy radar tracking of a satellite launch vehicle, which is not covered by the ABM Treaty.

Confusing this history even further, back on June 13, LTG Ronald Kadish, the Director of the Ballistic Missile Defense Organization, briefed the Armed Services Committee on the Defense Department's missile defense plans and informed the committee that, to the best of his knowledge, there were no ballistic missile defense activities planned for fiscal year 2002 that would be in conflict with the ABM Treaty.

Then, on July 17, Deputy Secretary of Defense, Paul Wolfowitz, testified before our Armed Services Committee that three missile defense activities could "bump up" against the ABM Treaty, in his words, "in months rather than in years." One of the examples was the use of a Navy Aegis SPY-1 radar to track a strategic ballistic missile. However, his written explanation of that possibility said plainly:

Plans to use an Aegis SPY-1 radar to track long-range ballistic missiles are currently under development and are only at a preliminary stage.

So after saying there were no tests planned that would violate the ABM Treaty, the administration then planned a series of tests that might violate the treaty. Then they changed direction for a second time on October 25 and said they would not proceed with tests that would violate the ABM Treaty. So why did the administration first strain to put these tests on the calendar and then strain to remove them from the calendar?