

of this material, much like the effects down range from the Chernobyl explosion in Ukraine where hundreds of thousands of acres will not be farmed for our lifetime and many after that, or, if they are farmed, may have devastating health consequences, given the spoiling of the soil, the trees, the animals—everything that was involved. In short, this is the danger.

I think our officials understand this. But I am hopeful that as we proceed in subsequent years with our military appropriations, and our Department of Energy appropriations, and our State Department appropriations—because all of these efforts are divided in several ways, each one of them vital to the overall objective—that we have an understanding of how large a proposition this is.

This does not for a moment negate the need for the very best trained and paid American troops we have, and support of them, and all of the instruments of conventional warfare that are now being produced. But I am saying that once again the bottom line of the war, as I perceive it, is that even as we are very successful with these so-called conventional means, and with remarkable, talented American service personnel, on the homefront, here in the home defense situation, we need to understand the vulnerability we have in the same way that we explained it to those in Moscow and London and Rome and other beautiful capital cities of our world that are at risk if in fact this intersection between cells of terrorism and materials and weapons of mass destruction should develop.

There are people who say this is so pervasive and so comprehensive that school is out, it is beyond remedy. The numbers of terrorists, the numbers of countries, numbers of programs, regimes all believing they must have weapons of mass destruction or at least the threat of these to stave off whoever—and I understand that, as the Presiding Officer does. But our objective, at least, as policy leaders in this country, has to be a “go to it” spirit.

If at this point we simply accept it is there, we have to accept that at some point a very large part of one of our cities or our basic institutions could be under attack and this time could disappear, with absolutely devastating results for our country or any other country that was victimized in this way.

If we ask the basic questions we would have asked before September 11—Who could possibly do this? And for what reason?—we are staggered as we watch the tape of Osama bin Laden or listen to interviews with people who seem to be committed to a very different course of action that most of us find even remotely conceivable, morally or as human beings.

Unless we are prepared simply to forget September 11, roll the clock back

into a simpler time, then we will have to deal with more complex times.

I thank the Chair for allowing me to proceed in morning business with a message that I believe is important.

I yield the floor.

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

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

PROGRESS ON THE FARM BILL

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I come to the floor for a couple of minutes prior to the time we finish our Senate business for the week to, first, compliment the Presiding Officer who has been our floor manager on the farm bill now for 1 entire week.

This afternoon marks 1 complete week of deliberation on the farm bill. I know this has not been easy on many, nor easy on the ranking member, as they have attempted to deal with the bill itself.

I compliment the Chair for his outstanding leadership and patience and the extraordinary effort he has made to manage this bill in a way that accommodated virtually every Senator.

I am disappointed that we weren't able to achieve cloture on the bill. I have indicated that we are going to keep trying to reach that point where we can bring debate to a close. I know there are a number of other amendments. We accommodated those on the other side of the aisle who wish to bring up an alternative to the committee-passed bill, the so-called Roberts-Cochran bill.

I believe we have had a good debate. I hope we can complete our work this coming week. I would not want to have to come back after that, but we will entertain the possibility of coming back additional days after Christmas, if need be, to get this job done. There is nothing that says we can't keep coming back until the 23rd of January, if necessary. We will look at all the options. But we need to bring this bill to a close. As I have said on other occasions, we need to do it for a number of reasons. Some of us have outlined those reasons throughout the week.

I think as we close out the week and mark the fact that we have now spent a week on the bill, we remind all colleagues that we have a budget window that may close. If that budget window closes and we are precluded even by a few billion dollars from dealing with all the needs in this bill, what a mistake that would be. What a moment of admission of failure that would be. I hope we can avoid doing that and avoid that scenario.

Secondly, I know, based on many conversations the managers and I have had and others have had with regard to the continuity, of the need to have a clear roadmap on how we transition from Freedom to Farm to whatever it is that Congress ultimately passes, something that every farmer and rancher would like to know.

I think that is the reason I got calls again this morning from farmers and ranchers in South Dakota who said: Please pass this legislation as quickly as you can because we need to know. We need to plan.

There is so much uncertainty in farm legislation as it is. There is so much uncertainty with agriculture as it is. To exacerbate that uncertainty by refusing to act, or not acting as quickly as we should, is compounding the problem unnecessarily.

We have seen a 75-percent reduction in farm prices since 1996. That is a remarkable demonstration of the need to do something now.

I hasten once again to note the importance of completing our work. I also say that as complicated as farm administration is, it is important that the Department of Agriculture be given as much lead time to make the transition as smoothly as they can.

There is no question, from a farm income point of view, from a farm certainty point of view, from the smoothness in transition point of view, and from the budget point of view, one could add more and more reasons that it is important for us to finish our work. No one has said it more eloquently or passionately than the chairman of the committee, my friend from Iowa, Senator HARKIN.

I simply come to the floor to again reiterate that we are determined to finish this bill. We are determined to do all we can to finish it not only on the floor but in conference. We will do whatever it takes to stay, to work, to cooperate, and to find ways to compromise. But it has to be a two-way street.

We have to continue to keep the pressure on. That is certainly my intention. I know it is the intention of the distinguished chair of committee. It has been 1 week. If necessary, it will be 2 weeks. And, if necessary, it will be 3 weeks, or more. But we are going to get this bill done.

I am just reminded that while we have been on the bill for a week, we actually made the motion to proceed 2 weeks ago. One could argue that we have been on the bill in one form or another for 2 whole weeks already. I do not know what the record is, but, clearly, we have a lot of work to do. With the holidays coming up, it certainly warrants putting all the time and effort we possibly can into getting this job done. I know there is interest in doing that.