support. This is part of the original centrist package.

We also have a 30-percent bonus depreciation. That is something that was in everybody's package, Republican or Democrat, House or Senate.

We have also a 5-year net operating loss carryback. That was not in the President's package. That was not in the Senate Republican package. That was in the Senate Democratic package.

On corporate alternative minimum tax, there is no repeal, no retroactivity, like was lambasted when it came out of the House that way. There is no corporate AMT repeal, retroactive or otherwise, in the White House-centrist package. There are some well thought out reforms that cost about one-twentieth of what the House bill did on alternative minimum tax. That is a very major movement. That is why the centrists support this compromise.

The White House-centrist package extends expiring tax provisions by 2 years.

Finally, the White House-centrist package includes bipartisan tax relief proposals for victims of terrorism and business in New York City. These are much needed, and they are urgent matters. I believe the Senators from New Jersey, New York, and Connecticut ought to find it inviting that these things are in there for their constituents and support this package.

Let's get the record straight. Let's have a good debate. Let the votes fall where they may. I can't help but ask our distinguished majority leader, Senator DASCHLE, to give the people what they want—a bipartisan economic stimulus bill with the largest aid going to dislocated workers in a generation.

It is clear that the people and the President don't want stalling, don't want muddling, don't want delay and, most important in this state of war we are in, don't want partisanship.

I urge the Senate majority leader to do the right thing: End this session by delivering a bipartisan priority. By doing it, we put the people's business first. If I were the majority leader, I would not know how to explain to the American people, as I returned home to the State of Iowa to enjoy the holiday season there with my family on the farm at New Hartford, why millions of Americans are desperately waiting for the Senate to pass an economic and job security bill that has been in this body for the last 2 months. If I were the majority leader, I don't know how I would explain to the people of Iowa, how I could look my constituents straight in the eye, and all of my taxpayers and all the small business owners of Iowa, and explain, by not passing this bill, how I would choose politics ahead of people.

It is time to get the job done. There is still time to do it. If people are allowed to vote their conscience and not have the restriction of party, we can get the job done, I believe.

I yield the floor.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, on behalf of Senator DASCHLE, I announce there are no more votes tonight.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—CONFERENCE REPORT TO ACCOMPANY H.R. 3061

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at 9:30 a.m. on Thursday, December 20, the Senate proceed to the consideration of the conference report to accompany H.R. 3061; that there be 90 minutes for debate equally divided between Senators HARKIN and SPECTER or their designees; that an additional 20 minutes be given to Senators MCCAIN and BROWNBACK—that is 10 minutes for each of them, for a total of 20 minutes—that there be 10 minutes each for Senator DOMENICI and Senator WELLSTONE; that upon the use or yielding back of time, the Senate vote on adoption of the conference report.

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—CONFERENCE REPORT TO ACCOMPANY H.R. 2506

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the majority leader, after consultation with the Republican leader, may turn to the consideration of the conference report to accompany H.R. 2506 and that there be 1 hour 5 minutes for debate divided as follows: Senator LEAHY, 10 minutes; Senator BYRD, 45 minutes; Senator MCCONNELL, 10 minutes; that upon the use or yielding back of time, the conference report be agreed to, the motion to reconsider be laid on the table, and any statements related thereto be printed in the RECORD at the appropriate place, with no intervening action or debate.

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

The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to proceed as in morning business for up to 10 minutes.

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

ECONOMIC STIMULUS

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, before I speak on what I came over to the floor to discuss today, I would like to respond in 60 seconds to the Senator from Iowa.

I don't think the stimulus bill is about partisanship. The stimulus bill is about whether we are going to take care of workers and displaced people because of the economy or whether we are going to reward corporate entities that are not going to reinvest instantly in the economy and stimulate the economy. How can we stimulate the economy if what we are going to be ''spending'' through either tax expenditures or direct expenditures doesn't spend out for 2 years or more?

This is about fairness. The stimulus package I have seen so far is not remotely bipartisan and is in fact a serious mistake, based on what I know, unless there is some iteration in the last 12 hours of which I am unaware.

MAINTAIN OUR BALKAN COMMITMENT

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, I rise today to take issue with Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld's comments yesterday in Brussels, in which he called for reducing NATO forces in Bosnia by one-third by the end of next year.

I find Secretary Rumsfeld's proposal both faulty in its logic, and dangerous in its implications.

Mr. Rumsfeld based his suggestion upon the allegation that the size of the NATO mission in Bosnia, known as SFOR, is ''putting an increasing strain on both our forces and our resources when they face growing demands from critical missions in the war on terrorism.''

From this assertion, one might think that the United States and NATO have massive numbers of troops in Bosnia. In fact, SFOR's strength is now about 18,400 troops. The U.S. contingent is only 3,100.

According to the Pentagon's new Quadrennial Defense Review, we must be able to ''swiftly defeat aggression in overlapping major conflicts while preserving the option of decisive victory, including regime change or occupation and conduct a limited number of smaller-scale contingency operations.''

By any calculation, therefore, we should have plenty of troops and materiel to handle the smaller-scale operation in Bosnia and still meet our commitments elsewhere in the war on terrorism.

In short, Secretary Rumsfeld's argument that Bosnia is a serious drain on our war-fighting capabilities simply doesn't wash.

I should also point out that we have already greatly reduced the size of the NATO-led operation in Bosnia. The current level of 18,400 troops is down from an original 60,000. The 3,100 Americans are down from an original 20,000.

Moreover, why should we quit a game in the fourth quarter when we're winning? Bosnia and Herzegovina still has many problems, but even the harshest critic of our policy there must admit that significant progress has been made since the Dayton Accords were signed six years ago. For example,

there non-nationalist, multi-ethnic coalitions now govern both the Federation and the national parliaments. All of the political, economic, and social progress has been made possible by the umbrella of SFOR.

But the victory is not complete. In that context, I'm rather surprised that Secretary Rumsfeld juxtaposed Bosnia with the war on terrorism, because al-Qaeda is known to have cells in Bosnia. The Saudi Arabian who co-starred with Osama bin Laden in the grotesque video from Afghanistan, which nauseated the civilized world, had previously fought with the mujahedin in Bosnia.

Mr. President, extirpating al-Qaeda from Bosnia is reason enough to keep the three thousand American troops there.

I have been to Bosnia nearly every year since the outbreak of hostilities in 1992. I have talked with most of the leading politicians of all ethnic groups. I have visited the headquarters of the combined Muslim-Croat Federation Army outside Sarajevo and reviewed the troops there. I have met with local officials from Banja Luka and Brcko in the north to Mostar in the south. No one, Mr. President, no one—thinks that the current peace and progress in Bosnia could survive a premature withdrawal of NATO, especially American, troops.

Rather than setting an artificial date for withdrawal of NATO forces from Bosnia, we should concentrate on finishing the job, and then withdraw victoriously.

Moreover, the United States is sending a totally confusing message to the world, friends and foes alike. The same week that we reopen our embassy in Kabul, and James Dobbins, our envoy to Afghanistan, declares that we are there to stay, we announce that we will leave Bosnia within twelve months!

How seriously can Afghans take Mr. Dobbins' declaration? Can the Afghans possibly think that we will stay the course there when we won't do it in the Balkans?

Or are we perhaps planning to transfer some American troops from Bosnia to peacekeeping duty in Afghanistan? I don't think so. Secretary Rumsfeld and others in the Administration frequently declare that peacekeeping duty is a poor use of the American military.

Unfortunately, however, the Administration's mantra runs afoul of the so-called Strategic Concept, the document which guides overall NATO strategy. The Strategic Concept lists ethnic and religious conflicts like Bosnia among the greatest threats to the Alliance.

If we're going to opt out of NATO peace enforcing missions, and we're going to exclude NATO from our anti-terrorist military campaigns as we have done in Afghanistan, then what does that tell our allies about our commitment to NATO? I suppose we'll agree to keep an American general as Supreme Allied Commander Europe.

Unfortunately, Secretary Rumsfeld's arbitrary deadline-setting in Bosnia fits right into the Administration's announcement that we will withdraw unilaterally from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty with Russia, a decision whose folly I criticized on this floor less than a week ago.

This administration's foreign and defense policy is driven by ideology, not by a realistic threat assessment. A stable Europe is the precondition for our pursuing terrorists in Central Asia, the Far East, or the Middle East. Since we continue to preach ''in together, out together'' in the Balkans, what will we do if our European NATO partners point out twelve months from now—as is likely to be the case—that there is still need for SFOR to remain in Bosnia?

In that case the administration's theory will collide with the hard facts of reality. Whether reality or ideology will win out will be more than an academic question. The future, both of the Balkans, and of NATO, may depend on the answer.

The American people should recognize the risky gamble that Mr. Rumsfeld's rigid ideology asks us to embark upon.

I thank the Chair and yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida is recognized.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, I wanted to comment to the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee about how much I appreciate his leadership, how much of a privilege it has been for me to be a member of that committee, along with the distinguished Senator from Connecticut, another leader of the committee, and how much you have taught me and how much you have encouraged me.

With that background, I am going to Afghanistan on January 3, and I am really looking forward to bringing back a report to the committee that might be of value as we discuss the future of the coalition, keeping it together, of all of those countries in the region that we will visit, as well as for the future of Afghanistan.

I commend the chairman of the committee for how he has been so steadfast in his insistence for the role of women in the new Government of Afghanistan. Afghanistan has a history of having very prominent women in the professions. Of course, all that disappeared with the Taliban. It is time to reassert the rights of women and, particularly, in our case, to insist on that as they form the government. It is with a great deal of appreciation I say to my chairman and to the chairman of the subcommittee how much I thank them for their leadership.

TERRORISM INSURANCE

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, I wanted to speak briefly on the subject of terrorism insurance because in the closing couple of days of this session, there is some question as to whether or not we will even get a bill. I want to say if we don't, that is a mistake. It is a mistake because to do nothing would leave us in the condition that we are in now, where so many of the businesses and homeowners and automobile owners of America would be in a position of not knowing if they are covered by terrorism or not because a number of companies have already filed with the insurance commissioners of the 50 States, withdrawing terrorism as a risk that would be covered.

The flip side of that is where terrorism may be covered, and with no plan, the opportunity is ripe for the rates to go up considerably. Take, for example, the issue of Giant Stadium in the Meadowlands. I am told that they have upwards of a 400-percent to 500-percent increase in the rates. Is that a fair rate? Only the insurance commissioners of the 50 States would know, but an insurance commissioner has to determine if a rate is fair by looking at data and looking at experience.

In this particular case, we have precious little data or experience. Therefore, the insurance departments of the 50 States are simply not going to know or, even if they thought a rate was excessive and arbitrary, they are not going to be able to deny the rate because they can only deny it if they went into court and proved to a judge in an administrative law court, or in a court of law, that it was excessive. But they don't have those tools.

So what should we do? Well, let me say as a backup, if all else fails, and I hope it doesn't—and I am talking to the Senator from Connecticut, who is a leader; I want to talk about his bill—instead of us doing nothing, we ought to take a period of time and pass a bill that would say that the Federal Government will treat this as an act of war for this short period of time, and assuming the terrorism risk for insurance purposes, that there would be no rate hikes and there would be the guaranteed terrorism coverage on all the insurance policies—in other words, a moratorium on the cancellations that are going on right now on terrorism coverage, and a rate freeze on the rates that are presently being jacked up sky high in many cases.

That is what I would suggest that the Congress consider as a backup, but we should not have to get to the backup.

I want to talk to the Senator from Connecticut and the rest of the Senate to say that if we took a vehicle such as the Dodd-Sarbanes bill—it could be that or it could be the Fritz-Hollings approach but an approach that blends the risk being shared by insurance