

pricing of heroin, cocaine and all the rest—because I think that misses the point. There are a few simple considerations that come to mind in judging whether to decertify Mexico.

First, do we believe that the political leadership in Mexico is honestly committed to solving this problem and working with us toward that goal? I believe the answer is “yes”. President Zedillo appears willing to engage in comprehensive efforts to seize and eradicate drugs destined for our streets. He’s committed to arresting and prosecuting major traffickers and kingpins . . . and I understand that such individuals have received stiff sentences recently, ranging from 9 to 40 years. He’s scrapped the discredited National Drug Control Institute and replaced it with a new Special Prosecutor’s Office. He’s begun the process of weeding out corrupt officials in the Mexican judicial system, dumping three judges so far. He’s helped to increase marijuana eradication to record levels, and armed law enforcement allowing cocaine seizure rates to jump 47%. And Mexico has worked closely with us in developing new overflight clearance procedures, while common ground is being established in the areas of money laundering controls and asset forfeiture issues.

Second, will economic and diplomatic sanctions on Mexico improve our chances of stemming the tide of drugs? The answer is no.

Let’s be clear on this point: sanctioning Mexico will likely invite retaliation in a variety of forms . . . anti-Americanism . . . additional political ostracism in the hemisphere . . . and could, over the long-term, have the consequence of creating a broader national security threat right on our border.

Third, a Democrat House colleague thoughtfully observed in today’s Los Angeles Times that “It’s hard for the United States to cast the first stone.” Perhaps it’s time we take a stone-cold look in the mirror and admit that until we take massive, comprehensive steps to address the demand side of this problem, trying to sort it out, principally on the supply side is doomed to failure.

Fourth and lastly, sometime soon I hope we can carefully examine whether we should annually engage in this painful exercise in self-flagellation by openly ripping countries with which we might have strong disagreements on the drug issue but share a great deal in common as well. The present mechanism for evidencing our concerns is self-defeating when it comes to Mexico and deleterious, I believe, to the overall relationship.

Mr. President, Mexico’s record on drug interdiction has to improve, and I don’t fault colleagues in the Senate for demanding results. Many of their concerns are legitimate and deserve to be heard. Like them, I am particularly concerned about the lack of extraditions of Mexican nationals from Mexico, and have been personally assured by officials at the highest level of our

government that they will redouble their efforts to get the ball moving in this area. I understand five individuals are presently appealing their extraditions, and I intend to watch closely to see that the Mexican government lives up to its part of the bargain should those appeals fail.

For now, however, I believe decertifying Mexico will do more to reverse the limited progress we’ve made to date, and virtually eliminate any hope we have about future cooperation. That’s a risk too great to take.

Let’s treat Mexico as a friend and partner in this process, instead of blaming it for a problem that starts and ends with the insatiable appetite for drugs on our own streets.

We are just about to vote on this particular issue. Mr. President, I must confess I came very close to agreeing with the decertification provision that we are going to be voting on this evening. But upon more mature reflection, I have decided that the consequences for our friends in Mexico and the efforts that President Zedillo and others are putting forward, that would be counterproductive for a neighbor with whom we share a 2,000 mile border and for the kind of reaction that it would elicit from not only our neighbors in Mexico, who are trying, but from neighbors throughout South America.

So I urge my colleagues on this particular resolution to vote against the resolution, notwithstanding the fact that I share very real concerns, particularly the failure to extradite a single Mexican national to the United States on drug charges to date. I know there are some in the pipeline. Hope springs eternal. I may come to a different conclusion on this same resolution next year.

With that, Mr. President, I yield any time remaining to the distinguished Senator from Delaware and I yield the floor.

Mr. COVERDELL. Mr. President, I yield the time remaining.

Mr. BIDEN. I yield back whatever time is left.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time has expired.

Are the yeas and nays requested?

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on the engrossment and third reading of the joint resolution.

The joint resolution was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading and was read the third time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on the passage of the joint resolution. The yeas and nays have been ordered. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. NICKLES. I announce that the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE) is necessarily absent.

The result was announced, yeas 45, nays 54, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 47 Leg.]

YEAS—45

| | | |
|-----------|------------|---------------|
| Allard | Faircloth | Moseley-Braun |
| Ashcroft | Feingold | Murkowski |
| Bond | Feinstein | Murray |
| Boxer | Frist | Nickles |
| Brownback | Gramm | Santorum |
| Byrd | Grams | Sessions |
| Coats | Gregg | Shelby |
| Collins | Harkin | Smith (NH) |
| Conrad | Helms | Snowe |
| Coverdell | Hollings | Specter |
| Craig | Hutchinson | Stevens |
| D’Amato | Kempthorne | Thomas |
| Dorgan | Kohl | Thompson |
| Durbin | Leahy | Torricelli |
| Enzi | McConnell | Wyden |

NAYS—54

| | | |
|----------|------------|-------------|
| Abraham | Ford | Lieberman |
| Akaka | Glenn | Lott |
| Baucus | Gorton | Lugar |
| Bennett | Graham | Mack |
| Biden | Grassley | McCain |
| Bingaman | Hagel | Mikulski |
| Breaux | Hatch | Moynihan |
| Bryan | Hutchison | Reed |
| Bumpers | Inouye | Reid |
| Burns | Jeffords | Robb |
| Campbell | Johnson | Roberts |
| Chafee | Kennedy | Rockefeller |
| Cleland | Kerrey | Roth |
| Cochran | Kerry | Sarbanes |
| Daschle | Kyl | Smith (OR) |
| DeWine | Landrieu | Thurmond |
| Dodd | Lautenberg | Warner |
| Domenici | Levin | Wellstone |

NOT VOTING—1

Inhofe

The joint resolution (S.J. Res. 42) was rejected.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote by which the resolution was rejected.

Mrs. BOXER. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. FRIST). The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there now be a period for morning business with Senators permitted to speak for up to 5 minutes each.

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

THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business yesterday, Wednesday, March 25, 1998, the federal debt stood at \$5,544,337,068,114.14 (Five trillion, five hundred forty-four billion, three hundred thirty-seven million, sixty-eight thousand, one hundred fourteen dollars and fourteen cents).

One year ago, March 25, 1997, the federal debt stood at \$5,374,777,000,000