

facility, alternatives to NIF, consideration of starting with a smaller facility, and planning for the Broader stockpile stewardship program. All these elements are important, but the bill does not specify how these reviews are to be conducted.

Previous supposedly independent DOE reviews of NIF have been strongly criticized in the recent GAO report and in a recent article in the journal *Nature*, and have even been subject to lawsuits for violating the Federal Advisory Committee Act. I believe it is critical for the credibility of these reviews that they be conducted by an independent body, such as the National Academy of Sciences, and that they be organized as independent studies under FACA rules. This is a troubled program, and we need the very best thought of independent experts to help us get it back on track or to scale it back as needed.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I agree with my colleague and want to emphasize how important it is to Congress that these be outside, independent reviews. DOE has unfortunately lost credibility on this issue and needs to bring in outside experts to regain it. I have already conveyed my expectations on this point to Madelyn Creedon and am happy to join my colleagues in clarifying this today.

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, our country has very important needs that many hope NIF can solve. The credibility of outside experts will be crucial as we consider the future of this program.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, all time is yielded back.

Mr. DOMENICI. I now ask unanimous consent the vote occur on the adoption of the conference report at 5:30 p.m. on Monday.

Mr. REID. Reserving the right to object, I say to my friend from New Mexico, I am disappointed that we are not voting on this tonight. I think it would be an opportunity to get a bill to the President's desk and speed up things around here. I think it is a shame we are waiting until 5:30 Monday night. It is going to consume too much time in the process.

I hope whoever has caused this, whoever that might be who is responsible, recognizes that they are responsible for slowing up what goes on around here. We have to move these appropriations bills. Senator DOMENICI and I and especially our staffs have worked night and day all this past week, and I literally mean night and day. We were looking forward to completing this bill tonight.

Having said that, I have no objection. The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. GRAMS. 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. GRAMS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period for morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

U.S.-CUBA RELATIONS

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. President, I would like to bring to the attention of the Senate a relatively new organization designed to enhance U.S.-Cuba relations. The Alliance for Responsible Cuba Policy was created in early 1998 to foster better political, economic and cultural relationships between our country and Cuba. Its board is comprised of distinguished Americans, including some of our former colleagues in the Congress.

Clearly the time has come to bring "responsibility" to the debate regarding U.S.-Cuba relations.

The Alliance has briefed me and my staff regarding their first-hand experience in Cuba. I encourage them to continue their fact finding and information gathering missions to Cuba.

I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD an Activities Report of the Alliance.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

ALLIANCE FOR RESPONSIBLE CUBA POLICY ACTIVITIES REPORT—FACT-FINDING MISSION; REPUBLIC OF CUBA, JULY 10-12, 2000

This report summarizes the activities of a fact-finding mission to the Republic of Cuba conducted on July 10-12, 2000. The fact-finding mission was organized by the Alliance for Responsible Cuba Policy (the "Alliance"), a non-partisan, non-profit organization incorporated in the District of Columbia. The delegation included former Congressman Beryl Anthony, partner, Winston & Strawn; Mr. Albert A. Fox, Jr., President of the Alliance, Mr. Paul D. Fox, Vice-President Atlantic Region, Tysons Food, Inc. and Managing Director, Tyson de Mexico; Ms. Nanette Kelly, President and Mr. John Spain, Managing Director, The Powell Group of Baton Rouge, Louisiana; Mr. Edward Rabel, former news correspondent with CBS and NBC, and currently Senior Vice President of Weber McGinn; and Gregory J. Spak, partner, White & Case LLP.

This fact-finding mission was the second such trip organized by the Alliance. The first mission occurred on September 26-29, 1999. An Activities Report related to that mission is available from the Alliance's web site at www.responsiblecubapolicy.com.

During the July 10-12, 2000 mission, the delegation met with the following persons and entities in Cuba:

- Ministry of Foreign Trade
- Ministry of Science, Technology, and Environment
- Ministry of Agriculture
- Ministry of Foreign Investment and Economic Cooperation
- Mr. Ricardo Alarcon de Quesada, President of the National Assembly
- Ministry of Justice

The following summarizes the discussion at each of these meetings.

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN TRADE

The delegation met with Maria de la Luz B'Hamel, Director of the North American Division of the Foreign Trade Ministry, and with Mr. Igor Montero Brito, Vice President of ALIMPORT. Ms. B'Hamel's division is responsible for international trade issues relating to the United States and Canada, and the Foreign Trade Ministry in general has jurisdiction over all foreign trade issues, including issues arising in the World Trade Organization and other international and regional trade agreements. Ms. B'Hamel noted that Cuba is a founding member of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade ("GATT") and the World Trade Organization ("WTO").

The Foreign Trade Ministry has a practical role in foreign trade through its authority to grant licenses to Cuban enterprises engaging in international trade. Ms. B'Hamel described two important trends that have emerged since the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the resulting rupture of Cuba's traditional trading relationships:

(1) Diversification of Cuba's foreign trade. Currently, Cuba's two largest trading partners are Spain and Canada, and no more than 10-12 percent of Cuba's trade is with any one country. As part of this diversification process, Cuba has been negotiating trade agreements with its regional trading partners in order to promote Cuba as a strategic bridge to the Caribbean region.

(2) Decentralization of foreign trade issues. Ms. B'Hamel stated the Foreign Trade Ministry is deemphasizing its direct involvement in international trade transactions, and is assuming more of a trade regulation role. Companies engaged in foreign trade today in Cuba include state enterprises, private enterprises, and international joint ventures or branch offices of foreign companies. More than 250 private and state enterprises are actively engaged in foreign trade, and there are approximately 600 Cuban branch offices of foreign companies engaged in trade in Cuba.

Ms. B'Hamel explained that, since 1994, Cuba has experienced steady improvement in foreign trade and GDP growth. Her Ministry forecasts continued GDP growth, even assuming no relaxation of U.S.-imposed trade restrictions. She stated that the U.S. trade restrictions (which she called the "blockade") have affected Cuba, but that other trends in business and world trade were creating new opportunities for the Cuban economy.

One particularly dynamic sector of the Cuban economy is tourism, which is growing by 16-20 percent per year. These statistics do not include U.S. tourists, which Ms. B'Hamel estimates to have numbered approximately 180,000 last year. She noted that this increase in tourism will have a ripple effect on the Cuban economy and will increase the demand for food goods, and other services.

Mr. Igor Montero explained that ALIMPORT is the principal Cuban state enterprise dedicated to importing foodstuffs into Cuba and distributing imports to the public. ALIMPORT is dedicated almost exclusively to the primary foodstuffs which are considered to be staples of the Cuban diet (e.g., rice, beans, etc.). Cuba currently imports approximately \$1 billion in foodstuffs annually, \$650 million of which is imported through ALIMPORT. Principal food imports are wheat, soybeans, and rice.

Cuba currently is importing approximately 400,000 metric tons of rice per year, principally from China, Thailand, and Vietnam. Delivery time for rice imported from these countries is approximately 60 days, and the quality is considered only fair. Mr. Montero acknowledged that transportation costs to