

response to the Senator, we don't need to get into the business of trying to convert this discretionary program into one where the Congress, by massaging the language and putting in additional criteria, ends up taking the discretion away or limiting the discretion that ought to be exercised by the Department. Many characteristics are going to be considered, but we hope we won't try to tie the hands of the administrator so tightly that this program loses its significance.

High threat urban areas, we recognize, are entitled to Federal support in managing the threats to those communities, and it may cost more than States or local jurisdictions can manage to more fully and successfully protect the security interests of people in those areas.

I am hopeful the Senate will reject the amendment. Specifically, the amendment is an add-on of \$20 million without any offset. So it is subject to a point of order and would have to overcome that point of order. The Senate could waive the point of order, could approve a motion to waive, but that would be one way to join issue with this.

I think our discussion here—the Senator's comments and the response I have made—can be interpreted as a colloquy that clarifies the authority the Secretary has to give consideration to the special vulnerability of cities and other localities that have a high degree of tourist population. He specifically mentioned Las Vegas. I am thinking specifically, too, about the gulf coast of Mississippi where we have a large number of tourists who come visit the resort areas and the tourists hotels, other attractions along the Mississippi gulf coast.

That area might very well also qualify for consideration as a vulnerable area for funding under this provision. I think the Senator points out something the Secretary and the Office for Domestic Preparedness specifically ought to consider as they make these grants to so-called high-threat urban areas. These are discretionary, but we think the criteria we have listed and described in the committee report and in the colloquy we have had on this amendment the Senator offered will help guide the Department in making these grants and enable them to fully consider the vulnerability of areas with high density or high levels of tourist population. We think that would be appropriate.

Mr. REID. Will the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. COCHRAN. Yes.

Mr. REID. How much is set aside in this bill for these discretionary grants?

Mr. COCHRAN. Seven hundred and fifty million dollars.

Mr. REID. I appreciate very much the statement of the Senator from Mississippi. I am one of Secretary Ridge's fans. I came to Washington with him in 1982. Under very trying circumstances, I think he has done a very good job.

I also want to elaborate on some of the problems we have in Nevada. We have about 2.4 million people who come from overseas to Las Vegas. So on any given day there are 60,000, 70,000, 80,000 people from other countries in Las Vegas. I misspoke before when I said there were 130,000 hotel rooms; it is really closer to 150,000 hotel rooms in Las Vegas. It goes without saying that in those hotel rooms, which average about 90 percent occupancy, there are a lot of extra people.

I do appreciate not only what the Senator from Mississippi said but how he said it. Probably \$750 million for discretionary grants isn't enough, but it is certainly a lot of money. I hope those who work with Secretary Ridge will do what they can to protect people in destinations no matter how they got there or why they are there. Whether you are a resident of Georgia and you are in Nevada or a resident of Nevada and you are in Georgia doing a little tourist work, you still have to be protected; and whether you are from England or Memphis and you are in Las Vegas, there is still a requirement to take good care of the people who are there, make sure they have police and fire protection and emergency medical personnel.

So I appreciate the work of the subcommittee, as I stated when I started my remarks. We have a problem in America today with security needs, and we in Congress have an obligation to do what we can to help State and local governments with problems that are national in scope. This is one area where we need help.

At an appropriate time, after further discussion with the chairman and ranking member of the committee, I will make a determination as to whether this amendment should require a vote or whether I want to work on the basis of the colloquy with the Senator from Mississippi and withdraw the amendment. That decision will be made at a subsequent time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi is recognized.

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I appreciate the comments of the distinguished Senator from Nevada. We will continue to work with him to be sure that we take into account the observations he has made, and the urban areas in his State will be dealt with fairly by the Office for Domestic Preparedness in the consideration of the allocation of grants from this fund.

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

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

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I am going to propound two unanimous consent requests which we understand

have been cleared on both sides of the aisle, and I make this request at the suggestion of the majority leader.

I ask unanimous consent that the committee substitute amendment be agreed to and considered as original text for the purpose of further amendment, provided that no points of order be waived by virtue of this agreement; provided further that the amendments that are now pending be modified so they are considered as pending to the bill.

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

The committee amendment in the nature of a substitute was agreed to.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at 12:30, the Senate stand in recess until 3:30 this afternoon. This would allow all Senators to attend an important briefing this afternoon, in addition to the party lunches at 12:30.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. REID. Reserving the right to object, I wonder if it would not be to the benefit of especially the Senator and myself, but the Senate generally, if as soon as the Senator completes these unanimous consent requests we go into recess at that time rather than wait until 12:30?

Mr. COCHRAN. I have no objection to that and so modify my request in that way.

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

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will now stand in recess until the hour of 3:30 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:22 p.m., recessed until 3:30 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. SUNUNU).

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2004—Continued

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, we are on the Homeland Security appropriations bill. We have two amendments pending for consideration. It is my understanding a briefing is being held right now and Senators are expected to be in the Chamber soon to either debate these amendments or make other comments about the bill.

We encourage those who do have amendments to let us know about them. We have some indication that there are amendments that will be offered before we complete action on this bill, but we intend to push ahead and work as late tonight as the leader permits and complete action on this bill tomorrow, if possible. That is our intention. We hope to have the cooperation of all Senators.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.