

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, before the Chair announces the recess for the policy luncheons, I have eight unanimous consent requests for committees to meet during today's session of the Senate. They have the approval of the majority and minority leaders. I ask unanimous consent that these requests be agreed to and the requests be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the hour of 12:30 p.m. having arrived, the Senate will stand in recess until the hour of 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:31 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. VOINOVICH).

EMERGENCY SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS ACT FOR DEFENSE, THE GLOBAL WAR ON TERROR, AND TSUNAMI RELIEF ACT, 2005—CONFERENCE REPORT—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I believe, by unanimous consent, I am to be recognized at 2:15 for 15 minutes.

I allocate 2½ minutes of that time to the Senator from Wisconsin, Mr. KOHL.

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

The Senator from Wisconsin.

Mr. KOHL. Mr. President, although I will vote for this conference report, I feel obliged to alert my colleagues to a serious flaw. This bill does not provide enough international food aid. And if emerging reports are correct, I fear we are about to enter a spring and summer of agony in some of the poorest parts of the world.

This situation troubles me a great deal. Here we are, the strongest nation on Earth, and we are rightfully appropriating funds to maintain that strength. But with enormous strength comes a moral obligation to respond appropriately to pain and suffering. This bill fails to respond appropriately.

When the supplemental was first considered in this body, Senator DEWINE and I and others offered an amendment to provide a total of \$470 million for PL-480 food aid. That may sound like a lot to some, but it totaled merely six-tenths of 1 percent of the total spending in the bill.

Mr. President, \$346 million of our amendment was intended to meet the U.S. share of world-wide food emergency needs as already identified by the U.S. Government. Another \$12 million was slated to restore Food for

Peace resources diverted to address the tsunami. Finally, \$112 million was intended to restore food aid development projects that the United States has already pledged to other countries this year.

It troubles me, and it should trouble everyone here, that we may not be able to deliver on those pledges. What a disturbing message that sends to the rest of the world. It says that while we may talk a good game on food aid, you cannot be too sure just where we stand when the going gets tough.

The numbers in our amendment were not pulled out of thin air. They were the result of close analysis of the world situation. In light of new reports from Ethiopia, I worry that even the amounts included in our original amendment may have been, in fact, too conservative.

Sadly, the conference reduced the food aid total to \$240 million, a level that is well below a split with the level proposed by the administration and adopted by the House.

I ask unanimous consent that an alert I received from several faith-based organizations about the situation in Ethiopia be printed into the RECORD.

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

FLASH ALERT FROM JRP MEMBERS

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA—APRIL 2005

The three Churches and two Church-related agencies (Ethiopian Orthodox Church, Ethiopian Catholic Church, Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus, Catholic Relief Services and Lutheran World Federation) who make up the ecumenical Joint Relief Partnership feel compelled to bring to the public's attention a situation that if not immediately addressed in a forceful manner will bring about widespread disaster resulting in untold suffering and death for a number of people—a number that is rapidly approaching the 8-10 million mark of Ethiopian people at risk in 2005.

This humanitarian situation has thus far received little international attention for a variety of reasons, which in addition to the reluctance of the Ethiopian Government to advertise it are the following: Severe drought conditions. The late start-up of the Ethiopian government's national Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP) which is meant to provide multi-year support to over 5 million chronically food insecure people. The lack of adequate resources to provide food and non-food assistance to 3.1 million acute food insecure people.

Drought Conditions: The current reality is that the early belg rains (February/March) have failed in many areas, including East and West Hararghe and Arsi zones of Oromiya, parts of Southern Nations Nationalities and Peoples (SNNP) and parts of Tigray. The situation is severe, with many pocket areas showing high levels of global acute and severe acute malnutrition in children under 5. As an example, reports from the Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Commission (DPPC) indicate that large numbers of severely malnourished children are entering one hospital in East Hararghe from three woredas seriously affected by malnutrition.

There are rising and alarming levels of distress migration in certain areas, water is particularly scarce in some areas and cereal prices are high.

Delays in Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP): This is a program designed to overcome people's dependence on food assistance. While this is an important step, continued robust response to emergency conditions is critical to ensure the success of more developmentally oriented programs. Unfortunately, this program, which was meant to begin in January 2005, didn't start until late March in most areas of the country and, in some areas, still has not begun. Without going into details of why this foul-up occurred, the fact is that people targeted under the PSNP have, in most cases, not yet received the planned assistance and there are now deteriorating health conditions, especially in women and children. Many of the chronically food insecure now face acute conditions, themselves.

Poor Resourcing of 2005 Appeal: Current figures indicate that 66% of food needs are pledged and only 10% of non-food needs. It must be noted, however, that this includes an un-guaranteed WFP pledge. With the number of people requiring assistance continually increasing, the level of resources required is certain to increase significantly. While 66% sounds promising, it should be noted that, using current assessments going on, this figure may not adequately represent the real need.

Among the reasons for the low level of resources are: Donor attention being focused on other emergencies (Darfur and tsunami), greater emphasis being placed within the country on PSNP rather than ongoing emergency needs, pressure to demonstrate that the country is moving away from annual Emergency Appeals, misleading recent WFP/FAO crop assessment suggesting a 25% increase in yield over last year, and traditional food donors having their own constraints.

Unless commitments of food and non-food items are made immediately, the JRP will not be able to pre-position food in the most severely affected areas prior to the rainy season which starts in June because of poor road conditions at that time. This will lead to further setbacks and great loss of life.

It is with the above in mind, that the JRP is appealing to its traditional Partners to bring this situation to the world's attention and to act as promptly as possible.

With every best wish, we remain, the JRP Members:

ETHIOPIAN ORTHODOX
CHURCH,
ETHIOPIAN CATHOLIC
CHURCH,
ETHIOPIAN EVANGELICAL
CHURCH MEKANE YESUS,
CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES,
LUTHERAN WORLD
FEDERATION.

Mr. KOHL. This situation is not going to go away. I have grave fears that images coming out of places such as Ethiopia in the coming months may reveal a tragedy unfolding before our very eyes. And what is most troubling is that this may be a tragedy that we could have helped avoid.

I will soon be sending a letter to the President encouraging him to consider other emergency authorities to address this dire situation. Specifically, we will ask him to utilize the Bill Emerson Humanitarian Trust to address this pain and suffering. I urge all my colleagues to join us in sending this message to the President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I commend my colleague from Wisconsin. I