

wireless broadband. Not only are 3G speeds approaching or even meeting administration broadband standards, but 3G will soon be replaced with 4G broadband, which will far exceed current standards. Subtracting the number of homes that had existing access to 3G wireless leaves only seven households in the Gallatin County service area unserved by broadband. It cost the U.S. taxpayer an astounding \$7,112,422 per household to provide broadband service to the truly unserved population.

I wish I could say this project is the exception, but I cannot. This funding was provided through the stimulus' \$3.5 billion Rural Utility Service Broadband Initiative Program. On average, this program cost the taxpayer over \$1,000 per household. In the projects analyzed by the Navigant study, 85 percent of the households served already had access to broadband.

Unfortunately, rural broadband subsidization has been long mismanaged by the Rural Utility Service. A 2009 inspector general report found that just 2 percent of Federal broadband buildout funds provided between 2005 and 2008 went toward unserved communities. The same IG report found that funds were also going to areas that were not rural at all. In fact, 148 of the communities provided with subsidized broadband between 2005 and 2008 were within 30 miles of cities with at least 200,000 inhabitants. We continued to see this occur in the stimulus funding, where in my home State, Cook County, home of Chicago with a population of 2.79 million, and suburban Will County received funds.

Ensuring connectivity in rural America is a worthy endeavor that will bring much needed economic development to small communities around the country. But as we face budget shortfalls and a crippling debt, we cannot afford to subsidize duplicative broadband service to urban and suburban areas.

Now, during the stimulus debate when the bill was considered by the full Appropriations Committee, I raised concerns with the then chair of the Agriculture Subcommittee, ROSA DELAURO on this issue. I said it was a waste of money. I said that we should probably redirect the funds. I said that we should not support this legislation.

I was defeated in the House of Representatives and the stimulus bill was put forward. I even wrote a memo highlighting the waste in this rural broadband initiative.

Unfortunately now seeing—especially in Gallatin County, where we have now subsidized each recipient of unserved broadband services at a cost of \$7,112,422 per person—we have seen that the remarks that I made in opposition to this funding when I was a member of the House dramatically understated the waste to the U.S. taxpayer.

As we face a future of deficits and debt, we need to highlight the waste of the Rural Broadband Program, which

is why the July Silver Fleece award went to this program in Gallatin County, MT.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

CUT, CAP, AND BALANCE ACT

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, you should see the folks back in Montana and across this country as they watch the news and read the papers, shaking their heads. I do not blame them. I am shaking my head too because we just wasted 2 precious days debating a plan that wipes out Medicare and Social Security, a plan that guts veterans' benefits.

Yes, that is exactly what the plan did. That is exactly why I opposed it. It is incredible to me that some folks have no problem turning their back on America's seniors and America's veterans while at the same time preserving tax loopholes that benefit millionaires and Big Oil and Wall Street and corporations that ship our jobs overseas. That is why Montana and folks across this country are shaking their heads. They do not think much of what is going on in Washington, DC, these days.

My friends in the House know full well this bill is no friend of the seniors and it is no friend of the veterans. They know full well it would force deep cuts in Medicare and Social Security. They know this all so very well. So you know what they did. What do career politicians do when they want people to believe their plan to cut Medicare somehow exempts Medicare? They add language saying "exempt Medicare." That is what they did. Montanans deserve better, and Americans deserve better.

Let's look at the whole truth. Let's first talk about the cuts that are in the cut, cap, and balance plan.

This plan locks in cuts proposed by the controversial House budget plan—otherwise known as the Ryan plan in the House—and it locks them in for a full decade. That means you are going to see more than \$111 billion in cuts this year alone. That is 10 percent. Will it be a 10-percent cut to veterans health care or highway or water infrastructure or education? They will not tell us how they plan to make those cuts. Maybe they will take a little less out of our veterans but at the expense of the police and firefighters. Maybe they will take a few less dollars out of agricultural research but then kick a few more kids out of Head Start.

Now let's talk about the "cap." The plan caps Federal spending at 18 percent of gross domestic product, requiring even further spending cuts. Now, 18 percent brings us to a level this country has not seen since 1966, about the same time Medicare was created. Even Ronald Reagan advocated for a higher rate than 18 percent.

Here is the kicker: The small print you will not hear from the people who already voted for this bill is that the

annual interest on our debt and the very things this bill claims to exempt—Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, veterans' benefits—will cost more than what is allowed under the cap. That means there is to be nothing left to spend on any other program—nothing. That includes the military, our infrastructure, homeland security, and just about everything else. So how is that going to work so that this bill protects Social Security and Medicaid? It will not unless you invent your own math. What are the lawmakers going to do? Do they really intend to close down the Pentagon? I doubt it. But that means they are going to have to go back and cut Medicare and Social Security. Under this bill, it is their only choice. The numbers simply do not add up.

The fact is, we were wasting time even giving it daylight in the Senate, and it is exactly why the folks back home are shaking their heads. They expect us to get a job done responsibly, using common sense in a way that does not dismantle Medicare, Social Security, or hurt our veterans.

I look forward to debating a bipartisan plan to responsibly cut the debt and cut spending. There is one being worked on right now. But the bill the Senate just voted on was not responsible. The Senate rejected it, and rightfully so. Now we need to move to a bipartisan plan that comes out of the middle, not from the partisan extremes.

I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

THE BUDGET

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, occasionally, political people say things they probably wish they hadn't said because they are quite foolish.

It is with great disappointment that I focus on something our President recently said. I do so not out of disrespect for him but because what was said is so fundamentally wrong that it deserves to be put out into the public for discussion and, frankly, to get some response from the President if he wishes to do that.

According to the National Journal, an article by Rebecca Kaplan, from July 21, the President said this:

I think what's absolutely true is that core commitments that we make to the most vulnerable have to be maintained. A lot of the spending cuts that we are making should be around areas like defense spending, as opposed to food stamps.

We are in a great debate about how we should figure out a way to end our deficit spending, get our debt under control. We have to raise the debt ceiling here in a few days. We have had a

lot of discussion about the best way to do that. Most people approach the problem by saying: What are the core functions of government, the most important things that are critical to America? You build a budget from that point up. As every family does, you finally get to some things that are good to have, if you can, but sometimes you cannot afford them or not in the same way you have been paying—maybe not going to a movie or going out to dinner.

I think most people would believe that when we all take our oath of office to defend the country, probably the first obligation the Federal Government has is to defend the people, provide for our national security. If we are not able to provide for our national security, there is not much point in trying to protect anything else. That is why the defense of the United States has always been pretty well supported in a bipartisan way, by people in both political parties, in times of peace and in times of war. That is not to say there haven't been debates about defense spending, and whether defense spending sometimes can be cut but, rather, to at least acknowledge that if any function of the government is a core function or, as the President said, "core commitments," it surely ought to be providing for the defense of the American people.

We have also decided over the years that there are ways in which we can help to take care of American citizens who have trouble meeting their own needs. We start with people who are very sick and infirm, or elderly, and we have programs such as Social Security, Medicare, and the Medicaid Program for those economically less fortunate. Over the years, we have developed programs to provide other benefits to American citizens. We provide some housing benefits. We provide what is called food stamps. There is another name for it in the agriculture budget: "Nutrition assistance." It is known as food stamps for people having trouble making ends meet. The government will actually provide them an ability to buy at the grocery store what they need to eat. That is important.

America got along without food stamps for the first couple centuries of its existence. Certainly a lot of people endured hardship. When a country is wealthy enough to be able to afford to do things for its people, it is certainly an appropriate thing to do. That is certainly the category of food stamps.

But I find it remarkable that the President would conflate the obligations of the government for national security and a program such as the nutritional assistance program the way he has. To describe one as a core commitment of the country—food stamps—and to say the rest of it we can go talk about making cuts that should be around areas of defense spending as opposed to food stamps—I am not trying to pick on food stamps, but the President is the Commander in Chief. He,

among all Americans, is responsible for our national security. And for him to suggest that food stamps is a core mission of the government and that national security is less than that, so that if we need to make cuts we should take them from national defense, I find remarkable.

Are food stamps close to what is the core of the American people? As I said, we got along without food stamps for a long time. Churches and families and others took care of folks. When the government was wealthy enough to be able to help folks with food stamps, we decided to do it. We have all been supporters of programs that provide that kind of assistance. But when you have to begin trimming expenses—and, by the way, I am not suggesting there is a proposal here on the table to trim food stamps. What I am saying is that what you don't do is to say there is one thing we are going to protect above all else, and that is food stamps, and we can, instead, get our savings from the defense budget. We have already effectuated enormous savings from the defense budget over the last 3 years.

I thought it might be useful to quote a few things that our most recent Secretary of Defense said. He is retired now. For the last 3 years, he acted as Secretary of Defense, and now he has been out of that job for the last couple of weeks. But at the end of his term as Secretary of Defense, he gave several speeches, and in each one of those he stressed the commitment of the United States not only to the security of the American people but to peace around the world and reminded us there is evil in the world. There are always those who would do us harm. And unless there is somebody in the world—a country such as the United States—willing to stand up to these despots, these troublemakers, we are likely to end up with trouble on our own shores sooner or later. He cautioned, therefore, against further reductions in defense spending, as the President has said.

On several occasions, Secretary Gates said defense had already had cut as much as was advisable. So the question is, Why should we automatically be assuming it is easy to cut another \$400 billion out of defense, for example; that our key mission here is to protect the core mission, as the President put it, such as food stamps?

I am going to select a few things Secretary Gates has said and then I will ask to have printed in the RECORD a couple of the pieces.

On May 24, Secretary Gates made some remarks to the American Enterprise Institute, and here is a sampling of what he said. In this first quote he is talking about the inventory of military weapons in our arsenal:

The current inventory is getting old and worn down from Iraq and Afghanistan. Some equipment can be refurbished with life-extension programs, but there is no getting around the fact that others must be replaced. When it comes to our military mod-

ernization accounts, the proverbial "low hanging fruit"—those weapons and other programs considered most questionable—have not only been plucked, they have been stomped and crushed. What remains are much-needed capabilities—relating to air superiority and mobility, long-range strike, nuclear deterrence, maritime access, space and cyber warfare, ground forces, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance—that our nation's civilian and military leadership deem absolutely critical.

He gave examples of a new tanker. He noted the ones we have are twice as old as many of the pilots who are flying them. A new generation strike fighter, the F-35. He said we have to build more ships. The size of the Navy has sunk to the lowest number since prior to World War II. The Army and Marines are doing the bulk of our fighting on the ground. Their combat vehicles and helicopters are worn down after a decade of war. He points out that, at some point, we have to replace our aging ballistic missile submarines, and he calls that a program that illustrates the modernization dilemmas we face.

He said this—again at the speech he gave at AEI:

So as we move forward, unless our country's political leadership envisions a dramatically diminished global security war for the United States, it is vitally important to protect the military modernization accounts—in absolute terms, and as a share of the defense budget.

Let me quote once more from his speech at AEI, and then I wish to move to some remarks he made at some commencement addresses.

One thing Secretary Gates noted is that when we decide we want to reduce defense spending, we have to remember our potential enemies always have a vote. We can assume certain things are of a low probability to happen around the globe, but we can't always be sure that some despot isn't going to try to create trouble somewhere. Here is how he concluded this speech to AEI:

If we are going to reduce the resources and the size of the U.S. military, people need to make conscious choices about what the implications are for the security of the country, as well as for the variety of military operations we have around the world if lower priority missions are scaled back or eliminated. They need to understand what it could mean for a smaller pool of troops and their families if America is forced into a protracted land war again—yes, the kind no defense secretary should recommend any time soon, but one we may not be able to avoid. To shirk this discussion of risks and consequences—and the hard decisions that must follow—I would regard as managerial cowardice.

Then he said this:

In closing, while I have spent a good deal of time on programmatic particulars, the tough choices ahead are really about the kind of role the American people—accustomed to unquestioned military dominance for the past two decades—want their country to play in the world.

That is a serious and sobering reminder by the Secretary of Defense that the American people expect the leaders of the country to understand that when we need our military, it is

there, it is capable; that we are being fair with people we have put into harm's way; and that we have given them the very best training and equipment possible.

By the way, my colleague from Arizona, JOHN MCCAIN, has visited Iraq, Afghanistan, and other places where our military men and women have been fighting for many years. One of the thoughts that always strikes me most about his observations when he returns is the quality of our fighting force—the quality of their equipment and their training. They are, clearly, the best military force ever fielded.

We expect that. We have come to expect it. But it doesn't happen automatically. It requires stewardship, and we here in the Congress, as well as the Presidents, are stewards of our national security and all of those who provide it. That is a lesson we can't forget, even in the context of a deficit and debt debate where we are trying desperately to find more ways we can achieve savings.

When Secretary Gates spoke to the Notre Dame graduates on May 22, here are a few of the things he said:

The lessons of history tell us we must not diminish our ability or our determination to deal with the threats and the challenges on the horizon, because ultimately they will need to be confronted. If history—and religion—teach us anything, it is that there will always be evil in the world, people bent on aggression, oppression, satisfying their greed for wealth and power and territory, or determined to impose an ideology based on the subjugation of others and the denial of liberty to men and women.

He continued:

... make no mistake, the ultimate guarantee against the success of aggressors, dictators, and terrorists in the 21st century, as in the 20th, is hard power—the size, strength, and global reach of the United States military.

He also discussed what we are doing around the world, and he said this:

All of these things happen mostly out of sight and out of mind to the average American, and thus are taken for granted. But they all depend on a properly armed, trained and funded American military, which cannot be taken for granted.

He concluded those remarks by saying:

Throughout this process we should keep in mind historian Donald Kagan's observation that the preservation of peace depends upon those states seeking that goal having both the preponderant power and the will to accept the burdens and responsibilities required to achieve it. And we must not forget what Winston Churchill once said, that "the price of greatness is responsibility . . . and the people of the United States cannot escape world responsibility."

Another way of saying this was one of Ronald Reagan's famous sayings—that the best way to preserve peace was to have strength. "Peace through strength." That is, when you become weaker, you tempt the despots around the world to see whether they can gain some territory or some advantage, and to make trouble. You are then playing catchup, having to fight a problem that

could have been avoided, perhaps, if that despot knew you had the strength and will to defeat him if he had made any kind of aggressive move. Having the ability to deter is at least as important as the ability to win if the fight occurs because you can avoid a lot of trouble, expense, casualties, and problems if you deter aggression in the first place.

At North Dakota State University, in another commencement speech on May 14, Secretary Gates said this:

... while I don't foresee a repeat of the Cold War days—when we faced off against another military superpower—I believe there is a growing competition underway for global leadership and influence.

It was part of the same message he had spoken of earlier about the importance to be prepared and why we should not just look to the defense budget for savings; that we had to keep our priorities in mind. One of those priorities was our role and responsibility around the world, confirming again what he said, which was:

If the political leadership of this country decides that it must reduce the investment in defense by hundreds of billions of dollars, then I don't think we can afford to have anything that is off the table.

It would seem to me that would include something such as food stamps. Again, what Secretary Gates said was that "defense had already cut as much as was advisable."

All right. I get back to my original point. Maybe I am making too much of a casual observation of the President here, but when the President of the United States describes a core commitment as food stamps and says that, instead, the cuts we are making should be around areas such as defense spending, it tells me the President has his priorities turned around, that they are wrong. His first responsibility is to the American people as Commander in Chief, and our first responsibility in the Congress is exactly the same—for the security of our country.

We are not going to be a strong country if we are bankrupt. One of the key components to a strong defense is a strong economy so we can generate the wealth we need to produce the kind of military equipment and to field the kind of forces we need to protect our interests. That is why we are focusing so much on the deficit, on spending, and the like. But when we talk about areas that need to be cut, let's remember what the former Secretary of Defense said—defense has been cut enough already. If we are going to keep our commitments around the world, we have to prioritize our spending. I submit that putting food stamps on a higher level of commitment than the national security of the United States is to grossly misplace our priorities. So I hope the President and others within the House and the Senate, in getting about the serious business of finding where we can make cuts—and we surely have to do that—will help to prioritize those things that are abso-

lutely critical and essential to the core of the United States; and those things where, if we have the wealth to do them, we definitely should; and where we can make cuts, we need to; but that the end result of that equation, those tradeoffs, will mean the first priority is the security of the United States.

As we make our decisions here going forward, I will be speaking more about the areas in which we have already slashed defense spending and the areas in which, as Secretary Gates noted, defense spending is going to have to be enhanced if we are going to have the kind of force the American people have come to rely upon.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD two publications. One is from the Weekly Standard, dated July 18, by Max Boot; and the other is a piece by Jamie Fly, posted on July 8 on National Review Online.

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

[From weeklystandard.com, July 18, 2011]

GRAND OLD DOVES?

(By Max Boot)

Opinion polls consistently show that the U.S. military is the most trusted institution in America. Republicans have benefited indirectly from that hard-won reputation because since the 1970s they have been seen as the strong, hawkish party, while Democrats have had to fight the stigma that they are weak and dovish. Republicans wouldn't throw away that aura—one of their strongest electoral assets—just to reach a budget deal with President Obama. Or would they?

There are persistent and worrisome reports that they might. The Hill newspaper, for instance, claims that Republican budget negotiators have been discussing cutting defense by \$600 billion to \$700 billion—considerably more than the already indefensible \$400 billion in cuts that Obama has said he would like to see over the next decade.

Obama's proposed cuts are bad enough; as former Defense Secretary Robert Gates implicitly warned before leaving office, such deep reductions would seriously impair the military's ability to meet its global commitments. Going beyond what Obama has proposed is simply suicidal—on both substantive and political grounds.

Start with substance: The defense budget did experience a rapid increase during the past decade because of the post-9/11 wars. But the budget is already shrinking—down from \$708 billion this fiscal year to \$670 billion in the next fiscal year. That's a \$38 billion cut, and the budget will decline even more as troops leave Iraq and Afghanistan.

Already the military is feeling the strain of maintaining all of its commitments, including a new war in Libya. Those who suggest, with a straight face, paring back a whopping \$700 billion more—even over the course of a number of years—should be forced to explain which missions currently performed by the U.S. armed forces they are willing to sacrifice.

Should we completely pull out of Afghanistan? Even with the overly hasty withdrawal of surge forces ordered by Obama, we still will have 70,000 troops there at the end of next year, costing at least \$70 billion. Pulling out troops even faster risks giving jihadists their biggest victory since 9/11.

Perhaps we should stop fighting pirates off the coast of Africa? Stop fighting in Libya so

that arch-terrorist Muammar Qaddafi can claim a victory over the West? Stop targeting al Qaeda in Pakistan and Yemen and elsewhere? Stop deterring China, North Korea, or Iran? Stop patrolling the Persian Gulf through which much of the world's oil flows? Stop fighting cyberattacks emanating from China and Russia? Stop developing missile defenses to protect the American homeland? Stop supporting Mexico and Colombia in their fights against narcotraffickers? Stop holding military exercises with friendly armed forces from Egypt to the Philippines—exercises that allow us to exert soft power at low cost?

Maybe advocates of budget cuts think we should continue performing all, or most, of those missions with less resources. But that's a cop-out. It's a recipe for stinting on training and personnel, thus creating a "hollow force" of the kind that we last saw in the late 1970s.

The reality is that there is no way the armed forces can perform all, or even most, of their current missions with less money. In fact, despite the growing spending of the past decade for contingency operations, the military has already cancelled a number of important procurement programs. These include the Army's Future Combat System and the Air Force's F-22, the best-in-the-world stealth fighter that was canceled just before China unveiled its own stealth fighter.

For the most part, the armed forces remain reliant on weapons systems designed in the 1960s and 1970s and procured in the 1980s: aircraft such as the A-10, F-15, and F-16, helicopters such as the Apache and Black Hawk, warships such as Los Angeles-class submarines and Ticonderoga-class cruisers, and armored vehicles such as Abrams tanks and Bradley Fighting Vehicles. These are all superb weapons, but they are rapidly aging—and are either being overtaken, or soon will be, by competing models produced abroad that are certain to fall into the hands of our enemies.

Moreover, competing powers such as China and Russia are designing weapons such as computer bugs and antisatellite missiles that could render much of our current equipment useless. We will have to develop defenses. And that won't be cheap.

At the same time, the Department of Defense must take care of its people—our most precious asset. There are 1.5 million active-duty military personnel, 750,000 civilian Defense Department employees, and 1.5 million personnel in the Reserves and National Guard. We already spend more on personnel costs (\$157 billion this year) than on weapons procurement (\$151 billion) and the imbalance is likely to grow in future years, thereby making it even harder to increase our power-projection capabilities. Yet Congress rebuffed Gates's attempts to institute modest co-payments for the fiscally unsustainable Tricare medical system. That was deemed too politically sensitive.

This is part of a pattern: Congress finds it difficult or impossible to cut specific defense programs because they all have powerful constituencies. But mandating "top-line" cuts may be politically palatable as part of a budget deal because lawmakers won't have to make tough choices about which programs to eliminate and which areas of the world to leave undefended.

Cutting defense won't solve our budget woes. The "core" defense budget, \$553 billion, is small as a percentage of GDP (3.7 percent) and of the federal budget (15 percent). Nor is it the reason why we are piling up so much debt. To reduce the deficit, lawmakers will have to do something about out-of-control entitlement programs.

If Republicans acquiesce in ruinous cuts to the defense budget, they will cease to be

known as Ronald Reagan's heirs. Instead they will be remembered as the party of William E. Borah, Hamilton Fish III, and Gerald Nye. Remember those GOP giants of the 1930s? They thought a strong defense was unaffordable and unnecessary. But their reputations collapsed on December 7, 1941, when we learned (not for the last time) the price of unreadiness. That is a lesson today's Republicans should remember as they negotiate over the budget.

[From nationalreview.com]

SHORT-SIGHTEDNESS ON DEFENSE CUTS

(By Jamie M. Fly)

As the debt-limit talks enter their final stages, reports are emerging that significant defense cuts may be part of the negotiated package. President Obama, for his part, already proposed cutting \$400 billion in security spending over 12 years in his April 13 speech on fiscal policy. The White House is now apparently trying not just to lock that proposal in, but possibly convince Republicans to even go beyond it via the debt-limit negotiations.

Now that Secretary of Defense Gates—who had warned of the implications of the \$400 billion in cuts—has left the Pentagon, the White House is increasingly highlighting defense as a potential source of significant savings.

On Wednesday, at his "Twitter Town Hall," Obama said, "the nice thing about the defense budget is it's so big, it's so huge, that a one percent reduction is the equivalent of the education budget. Not—I'm exaggerating, but it's so big that you can make relatively modest changes to defense that end up giving you a lot of head room to fund things like basic research or student loans or things like that."

Obama's statement was very misleading. One percent of the president's proposed defense budget for 2012 equals only a fraction of his \$77.4 billion education budget request—that is, 7.1 percent. Also, the Obama administration has significantly increased education funding (by more than 50 percent), over the course of its three budgets, while defense spending increases have barely matched the rate of inflation.

Indeed, defense has been targeted by the White House Office of Management and Budget each year as the administration compiled its budget requests. It has not been spared the axe by the appropriators on Capitol Hill, who have consistently funded defense at levels less than those requested by the president. In fact, projected defense spending over the next ten years in the current House budget resolution is already \$315 billion less than the amounts the Obama administration projected in its FY2011 request.

All of this is despite the fact that the defense budget is not the source of America's current fiscal woes. Unfortunately, it appears that in the debt-limit talks, both Republicans and Democrats are tempted to avoid the difficult choices posed by significant entitlement reform. Instead, they are contemplating going after defense spending, perhaps assuming there is not a constituency to defend the defense budget at a time when the nation is weary of overseas commitments and many Americans want a renewed focus at home.

This short-sightedness is not a surprise coming from the White House. It is, however, sad to see Republicans heading down this path.

Congressional Republicans should ask themselves whether they want to enter 2012 by surrendering the GOP's traditional credibility on national security. If they endorse Obama's ridiculous \$400 billion in defense cuts—or even worse, agree to deeper cuts—

Republicans risk assisting the president's management of American decline, just as the United States enters a very turbulent and uncertain period.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

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

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

VISIT TO THE SENATE BY PARLIAMENTARIANS OF BRITAIN

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, we have a group of British parliamentarians meeting with us. I see the distinguished Republican leader on the floor. Senator COCHRAN and I are leading a delegation to meet with them, and I am about to ask to put the Senate in recess subject to the call of the Chair, which will only be a matter of minutes, I assure my colleagues, so we can bring them on the floor.

I ask unanimous consent that the Senate stand in recess, subject to the call of the Chair.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 12:03 p.m., recessed subject to the call of the Chair and reassembled at 12:13 p.m., when called to order by the Presiding Officer.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MANCHIN). The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, now that we are back in session, I thank my fellow Members, and Senator COCHRAN especially, for their courtesy in letting us go into recess so that we could bring a group of very distinguished British parliamentarians on the floor.

I would note for the Senate that we meet every 2 years, American Senators and British parliamentarians of both the House of Commons and the House of Lords. We will do it once in England, once here. Two years ago we were over there, and this year we are meeting here. Four years ago, as Senator COCHRAN will recall, we met in the State of Vermont. But with changes in the Senate session, we are going to meet here in the Capitol.

I thank you very much for the courtesy.

I yield to the Senator from Mississippi.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi is recognized.

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, it is a distinct honor and pleasure to join Senator LEAHY in welcoming our guests from the United Kingdom to the Senate. This is a tradition we have really enjoyed and benefited from—the close opportunity to talk and discuss issues of mutual interest and concerns—and I think we reflect credit on the good relationship of both of our countries in that process. It is an honor