this afternoon. I hope it is not necessary, but we are going to make sure that games will not be played with the veterans of this country. I thank the Senator from North Carolina for yielding me this time for this very important subject.

I just want to say to the veterans of America, we will take care of you. We will make sure that our commitment to you is kept. It is the highest priority that I have.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, first I ask the distinguished Senator from Texas if she and Senator SIMPSON would add my name as a cosponsor.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Certainly.

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, will the Senator from North Carolina yield for a moment so I can propound a unanimous consent?

Mr. HELMS. I am sorry, I did not hear.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wisconsin is asking if you will yield for a moment so he can offer a unanimous-consent request.

Mr. HELMS. Just so the time is not charged to me.

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent I be recognized to speak after the Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. KYL. Reserving the right to object, the Senator from Wisconsin was here before I was, but I would like to add to that request that I be recognized following the Senator from Wisconsin.

Mrs. BOXER. I would like to add to that request that I be allowed to follow the Senator from Arizona and after that the Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, I am going to have to object. Senator FAIRCLOTH is the cosponsor of the bill that I am about to introduce. I think he is entitled to be heard, too.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is objection to the request.

The Senator from North Carolina is recognized for 5 minutes.

MR. HELMS. I thank the Chair.

(The remarks of Mr. HELMS and Mr. FAIRCLOTH pertaining to the introduction of S. 1413 are located in today's RECORD under ''Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.'')

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wisconsin.

Mr. FEINGOLD. Thank you, Mr. President. I ask unanimous consent to be allowed to speak for up to 5 minutes as if in morning business.

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

EXECUTIONS IN NIGERIA

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, last Friday nine leaders of the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People [MOSOP], including renowned playwright Ken Saro-Wiwa, were executed by the brutal Nigerian military regime. The human rights leaders and environmental activists were hanged after a blatantly unfair trial, and in the face of numerous international appeals to General Abacha to commute the death sentences. That Nigeria carried out these executions during the meeting of the Commonwealth countries in New Zealand, which they attended, is particularly chilling. What a failure of international policy toward Nigeria.

This latest gross human rights violation is convincing evidence that General Abacha, the military leader who seized control of Nigeria in 1993, has no interest in overseeing a 3-year transition to genuine democratic rule as he announced in his notorious October 1 proclamation. Instead, it appears he is seeking to obliterate—by killing—any opposition that could possibly challenge his authority.

The political situation in Nigeria is undoubtedly fragile and difficult. Since its independence from Britain in 1960, Nigeria has been held together by the military, and in fact it has enjoyed civilian rule for only short, punctuated periods in its entire history. Then, as the rest of Africa was sweeping toward democracy, Nigeria too held Presidential elections in 1993. They produced a major sea change in Nigerian politics when a Southern Yoruba, Moshood Abiola, was elected President, after years of domination of the political structure by northern Hausa/Fawlani. It was this shake-up that ultimately precipitated Abacha's takeover of the government in 1994.

Since then, he has ruled the Government with a corrupt hand. While much of Africa is producing good news, Abacha's Nigeria stands in stark contrast. Nigeria's 110 million people live under a totalitarian regime. National and State elected officials have been removed from office, political parties dissolved, newspapers shut down, labor unions disbanded, and thousands detained for their political opinions. This summer he commuted the death sentences of General Obasanjo and others, but his mercy extended only to life imprisonment.

Now Abacha has killed Ken Saro-Wiwa and some of the most well-known human rights and environmental activists, after a flagrantly unfair trial, and despite international pleas to retry the defendants. Some observers have said the executions last week were a function of a domestic military crisis where Abacha had to look strong, lest he face revolt from his own troops. While I could be sympathetic to Abacha's challenge of keeping his country together, this cannot justify nine executions: indeed, such abuse can only lead to further instability in Nigeria.

The environmental and human rights movement for which Ken Saro Wiwa lost his life goes back to 1990, when the first seeds of anger against foreign oil companies began surfacing in Ogoniland. The 6 million Ogonis living among the rich swamps, fertile farmland, and gorgeous rainforests of the Niger River delta has been poor forever. But as oil companies plundered their land, seeking resources, polluting their water, uprooting the soil—leaving the Ogonis with nothing but thousands of ugly oilwells and deteriorated pipelines—the indigenous population began protesting. At first, they were peaceful demonstrations, but then Shell Oil called out the notoriously brutal police force to massacre 80 people and destroy 495 homes. The communities held Shell responsible for choosing to contact the police rather than even to begin to negotiate with them.

That spawned a strong protest movement, and by 1992, when Shell still refused to engage the Ogonis, the police were once again called out, and shot 30 people.

This is when Ken Saro-Wiwa founded the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People. In its constitution, MOSOP called for compensation for loss of their resources to Shell. MOSOP also called for self-determination of Ogoniland, the demand that made Saro-Wiwa threatening to the government.

As the Ogonis were being tortured by arson, beatings, and forced resettlement by the Government, Shell Oil removed itself from responsibility and shoved the issue off as a domestic Nigerian problem, in which it could not engage.

When elections were held in 1993, the Ogonis split their vote: while older more conservative folks favored Abiola, Saro-Wiwa and younger activists supported a boycott of the elections as a farce. With this display of defiance, the Nigerian military government essentially moved into occupy Ogoniland. During a public discussion on whether the Ogonis would send representatives to Abacha's constitutional conference, four Ogoni chiefs were killed.

Saro-Wiwa and eight others were charged with the murder of the chiefs. Many believe Abacha used the deaths as a pretext to eliminate his most outspoken and effective opposition.

A military tribunal was established especially for this trial, a tribunal which, according to State Department and other observers of this case, was neither impartial nor independent. Further, the defendants were not permitted access to a lawyer of their choice, and there is even evidence that witnesses were paid off to testify against Saro-Wiwa. After all this, there was no right of appeal.

Predictably, the defendants were found guilty and sentenced to death. After a flurry of international activity, which included several phone calls and faxes to Nigerian officials from United States Senators, such as myself, which were never answered—the Provisional Ruling Council, headed by Abacha, confirmed the sentences. Once again, we called the U.N. Ambassador, appealed to our administration, wrote letters to Nigeria urging Abacha to commute the

death sentences and re-try the defendants in accordance with internationally recognized human rights standards. To our shock, the executions were carried out 48 hours later.

This kind of behavior, this kind of brutality is unconscionable. It calls out for a tough international response. Later this week, I will be joining a bipartisan group of Senators in introducing sanctions legislation against Nigeria. While details are still be worked out, the bill is intended to ratchet up the pressure against General Abacha. His murderous regime must be stopped and isolated. The continued butchery of his country can only destabilize the region, harm international interests in the continent, and force suffering upon the 110 million people of Nigeria.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona is recognized.

THE PRESIDENT AND CONGRESS MUST WORK TOGETHER

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, this morning I was asked by a reporter from a radio station why the President and Congress cannot work out this budget impasse, why the Government has to shut down.

That is a good question, and it deserves an answer. Of course, the answer is we will work it out, but it is going to take a little time, and here is why.

Yesterday, my offices received about 600 telephone calls from constituents, and they were running about 10 to 1 in favor of the Congress staying the course to achieve a balanced budget in 7 years.

The letters and the phone calls, all had a common theme: Do not give in. Do this for our grandchildren. We need a balanced budget. We have to get the fiscal house in order. Do not cave in to the President.

Those were the general sentiments of the people who were calling my office yesterday, and today, just before I came to the floor, I noted the same general theme and the same relationship of numbers in these calls.

So many of us, particularly those of us who were elected in the last election and heard the message from the people that they want to stop business as usual in Washington, DC, and get the Federal budget balanced, are committed to achieving a balanced budget in 7 years. I do not understand why the President will not concede that point.

I think part of the reason why it is taking time is that the President is looking good in the polls and op-ed pieces, and so on. He is finally standing firm for something, and so he is getting a lot of press. So there is not a great deal of pressure on the President to concede anything at this point, and that is why we have the impasse. We feel the pressure from our constituents to stay the course and have a balanced budget and, on the other hand, the President is not willing to agree to a balanced budget.

The first thing the President said when he vetoed the bill which would allow the Government to keep on operating was that he did it because we had Medicare cuts in the legislation.

That is not true. The Medicare legislation which we included with the bill to keep the Government running, because we knew the President would veto it if it was part of our reconciliation bill, called the Balanced Budget Act of 1995, that bill provides for precisely the same percentage of premium payment for part B Medicare as you have today and you have had for the last 5 years. The President would like, he says, to reduce that to 25 percent of premium instead of 31 percent. But that is the difference between the two of us as to the percent. We are not increasing the percent of premium. It is at 31.5 percent today. It will be 31.5 percent under our bill, and so that is not true.

I submit, by the way, that in the end the President will have to agree with us that it is fair to ask the seniors who are paying voluntarily for part B Medicare benefits to pay 31 percent of it after our children and our grandchildren are paying the other 68 or 69 percent. I submit that it is an unfair burden to ask them to pay any more of the part B Medicare.

So the bottom line here is the balanced budget. The President has said he agrees with the balanced budget, but he just does not agree with the numbers we would use to calculate it. And yet the numbers are precisely the numbers he asked us to use in his State of the Union speech, the Congressional Budget Office numbers. He said those were more accurate.

We said, OK, we will use them. Now that we have used them, he said, no, he wants to use a different set of numbers. And some people have said it is the rosy scenario numbers which would enable us to get a balanced budget without making some of the tough decisions which we have tried to make.

Let me conclude by noting why it is so important for us to have a balanced budget. If we can achieve this balanced budget by the year 2002, we will have reduced interest rates by about 2 percent in this country, and that means that a family of four with a $75,000 home mortgage, for example, a $15,000 car loan, an $11,000 student loan, could save about $2,000 a year in interest costs. My grandson Jonathan was just born this year, and he immediately took a burden of $187,000 just to pay the interest on the national debt during his lifetime. That is unfair.

What this debate is all about is stopping the spending in Washington, DC, that creates this kind of liability for our children and grandchildren. It is time to stop handing the blank credit card to the big spenders in this city.

And so what this impasse between the President and the Congress is all about is getting to a balanced budget in the year 2002, reducing interest rates so that our citizens can enjoy the savings that are achieved as a result and stopping this additional spending which requires our children and grandchildren to continue to pay for our debts.

Mr. President, I find it ironic that at the very time we are trying to get to this balanced budget in the year 2002, the President is talking about committing an additional $2 billion to the quagmire in Bosnia without congressional authorization of any kind in direct violation of the principle that the Congress and the President should both consult before we commit United States troops to this kind of an operation.

And so I find it ironic that that is the action the President is taking at the same time that he shut the Government down by vetoing the legislation and refusing to agree with us to balance the budget in 7 years.

It is time to get serious about balancing the Federal budget.

Mr. DORGAN addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota is recognized.

BUDGET PRIORITIES

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President I have great respect for my friend from Arizona. It is interesting, and this is a good example of the differences in the way we approach things. He is talking about spending, and he is absolutely right. We need to cut spending. Everybody agrees with that. There is no disagreement about goals. We ought to have a balanced budget. Nobody disagrees with that. I happen to think we ought to spend money in education and other investments. The Senator from Arizona and I have had a debate on this floor about star wars. He thinks we ought to build star wars. We will have that debate again later, I guess, but everybody seems to have their own set of priorities. It is interesting to me; this whole disagreement is being recast as a question of whether some want to balance the budget. That is not the question. Everybody wants to balance the budget. The question is what plan to do you use to get there.

I say this to my colleagues, that the journey we are on at the moment, that is, the journey that leads to the shutdown of the Federal Government, is not a spur-of-the-moment trip.

It has been planned for and packed. Back in April, April 3, Speaker GINGRICH vowed to ''create a titanic legislative standoff with [the President] by adding vetoed bills to must-pass legislation increasing the national debt ceiling.''

September: ''I don't care what the price is,'' Speaker GINGRICH says. ''I don't care if we have no executive offices and no bonds for 30 days—not this time,'' he says. Speaker GINGRICH has said he would force the Government to miss interest and principal payments for the first time ever to force Democrat Clinton's administration to agree to his 7-year deficit reduction.