He vetoed it, and we have a couple of options. We can vote to override the veto—in all likelihood, we do not have the votes to override the veto, and so then we will work with colleagues to see if we can come up with a proposal that will pass and get his signature. And that is the proper way to do it. It is not the proper way to do it to try to pass it by unanimous consent, a bill designed by one Senator. I, for one, would object because I think it spends too much money not even related to the two objections that my colleague from North Dakota had outlined.

Mr. DORGAN. Will the Senator from Oklahoma yield just for a point?

Mr. NICKLES. I will be happy to yield at this point.

Mr. DORGAN. I appreciate the Senator's statement. The bill that I asked unanimous consent to have considered was not a bill written by me. It was the exact conference report just reported out by Congress, minus the two contentious provisions. So I do not want people to think it was a bill written by me. It was exactly what the conference did, leaving out the two very controversial provisions.

Mr. NICKLES. Madam President, I understand my colleague did not like two provisions. Maybe the President did not like two provisions. It may well be the President will look at the rest of the bill and he will not like other provisions. My point being, we have two branches of Government, both equal, and the President can make a request and Congress disposes of it and he has the right to veto it. Evidently he has done that. I understand the majority leader of the Senate is trying to get in contact with him today and maybe some discussions will ensue.

I also just happened to be looking at this report. The initial request was $4.5 billion in discretionary outlays. The committee report, the committee report as it came out of the Senate was $7.6 billion, so, in other words, $3 billion more than originally requested. The conference report, after it went to conference, was $8.6 billion. And if you add budget authority with the mandatory it was over $9.5 billion.

So this, like a lot of urgent supplementals, grew, and many times they grow at the request of the administration. They did not make it in their initial request, but they asked for more money, and somebody else said, well, I think we should fund this and everyone was in agreement, both Democrats and Republicans, so we go ahead and fund it. What we wind up doing is we fund things in an urgent supplemental that, frankly, should be funded in the normal appropriations process. We should be in the process of passing normal appropriations bills now for next year so they do not have to be in the supplemental; we do not have to prefund them. We should fund it through the process. And I, for one, since evidently the President's vetoed this bill, hope we come in with a very streamlined, strictly urgent supplemental bill.

And I, for one, have serious questions whether or not we should be funding Bosnia assistance in this. How can the Bosnia assistance be urgent? We have had the troops over there. We have known about it. You cannot say that is not expected. We have known the troops are over there. I know that they are raiding operation and maintenance accounts; they are drawing down those funds. We have underfunded defense in the past. But we have known we have had a significant peacekeeping force in Bosnia and we do not fund it. And so then we start saying, well, we need to fund it all of a sudden because we did not put enough money in for defense last time.

We have known those troops are over there and should be funded. But the costs have risen significantly. We should get control of those costs. I have some reservations about whether or not we should have had those troops in the international peacekeeping force in the first place. The President puts them over there, underfunds them and asks us to bail him out with an urgent supplemental. I have some reservations about it.

Mr. President, there is only two issues of dispute. One is on the census language, one is on whether or not we would have a continuing resolution to keep the Government open should we reach an impasse on appropriations.

Just a couple of final comments. We have reached an impasse in appropriations the last 2 years, in 1995 and in 1996, prior to the last election. The way that was solved in 1996, prior to the election, was the President basically said I am going to shut Government down unless you give me a lot more money. Unfortunately, in my opinion, we succumbed to that temptation; we gave the President about $8.5 billion so we could get out of town. I hope we do not repeat that failure.

Who was the real loser in that? Maybe Congressmen and Senators weren't, but I think the taxpayers lost. We wrote big checks. Discretionary spending really went up. It went up in some cases, Madam President, even more than the President requested so we could get out of town. I hope we do not replay that.

So the essence of this continuing resolution was, if for whatever reason we have an impasse, let us at least continue operations at this year's level so we will avoid that disaster, so we will not have the curtailment, so we will not have the shutdown, and I still think it is good policy. I regret the President vetoing it for that reason. I think that was a mistake. He has that right to do it.

I think it is important we follow constitutional procedures and keep in mind constitutional prerogatives. The President is President. He does not have the right to dictate every detail in an appropriation bill. He can veto every appropriation bill he does not like. I want to preserve that right. But likewise, we are an equal branch of Government and we have a right to put on language that a majority of Senators are supportive of.

So I will work with my colleagues from North Dakota. I see another colleague, Senator CONRAD, is here and wishes to speak on the issue, and I will not detain him. I know he has very strong feelings, as Senator DORGAN does, as well. And so I will work with my colleagues. Hopefully, we will be able to come up with another bill, one that will not cost taxpayers as much as the previous bill, and hopefully we will be able to break the impasse and provide needed relief in a timely manner.

I yield the floor.

Mr. CONRAD addressed the Chair.

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

Mr. CONRAD. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent for 15 minutes.

Mr. NICKLES. Madam President, reserving the right to object, what was the request?

Mr. CONRAD. I was asking for 15 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is an order already standing for Senator COVERDELL to be recognized at 4 o'clock.

Mr. CONRAD. All right, then I will withdraw my request.

DISASTER RELIEF

Mr. CONRAD. Madam President, the President of the United States has now vetoed the disaster relief bill. He has done so because there were unrelated provisions put in that legislation.

Madam President, the time for political games is over. This is a headline from the largest newspaper in our State over the weekend. The headline is: ''You Are Playing with Our Lives.'' The woman quoted is a Renee Steffan. The article said, ''She has strong words for Members of Congress who think flood victims can wait while bickering continues in Washington over a disaster relief bill.''

She goes on to say, ''You are playing with our lives.''

She issued that warning from the sweltering travel trailer that she and her family now call home. She says, ''This isn't some game. You should come here and walk in my shoes for a day.'' Homeless for a month, out of work, and bounced from one temporary shelter to another, the wife of two is fed up with lawmakers who think Grand Forks residents are getting along just fine.

Madam President, Grand Forks residents are not getting along just fine. Not only are Grand Forks residents not getting along just fine, nor are the residents of East Grand Forks. In these two communities, 50,000 in Grand Forks, 9,000 in East Grand Forks, nearly every single soul was evacuated 6 weeks ago. Thousands of them are still homeless. Their homes are destroyed. Their jobs are destroyed. And their lives are on hold waiting for us to act.

The President vetoed this bill. He said clearly these unrelated provisions ought not to be in a disaster relief bill.

That is the plea and the request of the people from Grand Forks and East Grand Forks. Send a clean bill to the President, one he can sign so that the relief can start to flow.

Now, the Washington Post this morning, in the Novak column, he reported, and I quote:

At a contentious meeting of Republican leaders after adjournment Thursday, Lott argued that this time, unlike 2 years ago, the GOP would win 'the PR battle.' He claimed Americans did not care much about the supplemental appropriations bill providing help for victims of Red River flooding in the Dakotas and Minnesota.

I do not know if that is really the position of the majority leader. I hope it is not. But if it is, let me just say that he is wrong. People do care. The outpouring from across the United States has been unprecedented.

People of the United States care a lot about helping people hit by a disaster. They have proven it time after time after time. The fact is, if the majority leader really believes that the American people do not care, he is wrong. The American people are better than that.

And for those who do not think it makes any difference, let me just quote from the Republican Governor from South Dakota. The Republican Governor says, ''If you've got a disaster bill, you ought to deal with the disaster.''

For those who say that delay does not matter, Janklow—

Again, the Republican Governor of South Dakota—

said the delay in the legislation is blocking reconstruction of sewage facilities, highways and a State-owned rail line in South Dakota.

It is not just the Republican Governor of South Dakota who understands that delay matters, but there is a Republican Congressman from Minnesota, JIM RAMSTAD, a former North Dakotan, by the way, a member of the Ways and Means Committee, who said over the weekend: ''Those who argue that there is money in the pipeline are being disingenuous at best.''

This is a Republican Congressman from Minnesota. He said, ''There's no money for housing, no money for livestock, no money for sewage systems, no money for water supply, no money for housing buyouts. There is no money in the pipeline for those things. They can't really rebuild without the funds that are tied up in the disaster relief bill.''

And he concluded by saying, ''Let's end the Washington games.''

Madam President, the people of North Dakota and Minnesota and South Dakota and the 30 other States that are affected by this disaster make one request. Send a disaster relief bill that is clean, that does not have these unrelated provisions, send it quickly so the relief can begin to flow. The people in our areas need it. As that woman said from a sweltering trailer, the time for these political games is over. People have been hurt and they need help. Now is the time to respond.

I thank the Chair and yield the floor.

Mr. COVERDELL addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ALLARD). The Senator from Georgia is recognized.

Mr. COVERDELL. Parliamentary inquiry. It is my understanding that the hour from 4 to 5 has been designated under my control, or any person that I shall delegate time to?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct.

Mr. COVERDELL. Mr. President, in light of the presentation we have just heard and the recent veto of the emergency aid by the President, I am going to yield 10 minutes of my time to the distinguished Senator from Texas, and then I will return to the original content of the purpose of the hour from 4 to 5 after she has responded.

I yield 10 minutes to the distinguished Senator from Texas.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas is recognized for 10 minutes.

THE SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS BILL

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Thank you, Mr. President. I thank the distinguished Senator from Georgia, because I do want to respond and make sure that everyone is singing from the same page.

I appreciate very much what the distinguished Senators from North Dakota are feeling right now, and what they must feel every time they go home. I, too, have visited disaster areas in my home State in the last week, and it is a devastating situation.

Mr. President, I want to make it clear that all of us are going to make sure that the victims of disasters in all the 35 States that are covered will have all of the help they need, and they will have it in the absolute minimum time it takes to get that to them. In fact, the disaster victims in North Dakota and Minnesota and South Dakota are getting help right now. They are getting the SBA loans, they are getting the agriculture help, they are getting the assistance that they need, and it is there now, and we have $2 billion in the pipeline waiting to come in to them, not waiting for us to act. That is in the pipeline now. So the money is there, make no mistake about it.

But it is very important that everyone know that this is a supplemental appropriations bill. It is the first appropriations bill that has gone through this year. There are many items that must be covered. We are covering the replenishment of FEMA funds, the Federal Emergency Management Agency funds, because they are being depleted right now as we speak, going to the victims of North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota, California and other States. We are giving that money to them, and we are going to replenish it with this supplemental bill.

But there are many other things covered in this bill. It is not as if this is just a disaster relief bill for those areas. It is also a $1.9 billion expenditure for overseas peacekeeping, to replenish the funds that have gone into the protection of Bosnia. There is $928 million for veterans compensation and pensions, $29.9 million for plane crash investigations, $6.4 million to the FBI to reimburse New York State and local jurisdictions for assisting in the investigation of Flight 800, $197 million for the National Park Service, $103 million for the Fish and Wildlife Service, $67 million for the Forest Service, $20 million for the Bureau of Indian Affairs, $585 million for the Army Corps of Engineers, $510 million for the U.S. mission in Southwest Asia, $58 million for the Women, Infants, and Children Program. Mr. President, it goes on.

This is a supplemental appropriations bill. These are funds that are to replenish funds that have already been spent. In addition to that, we are setting the process by which we do appropriations this year. That is why we have the Government Shutdown Prevention Act. That is why we are saying if we do not come to agreement on October 1 for all of the appropriations bills, that Government will continue to function, that people will not have to worry about their paychecks, that veterans will not have to worry about their pensions, that people going on vacation will not have to worry about it. We are saying right now, here is how we are going to proceed.

I think it has been portrayed that Congress is playing games. Congress has passed a bill. It is not absolving the President of all responsibility to veto anything he wants to veto, and then say, well, I didn't like it and it's your responsibility.

He has a responsibility. The President can sign this bill. I would like for the President to explain why he wants the ability to shut down Government. I would like the President to explain what is unreasonable about providing for the ongoing Government expenditures at today's levels while Congress and the President might continue to negotiate on an appropriations bill that has not been passed by September 30.

Mr. COVERDELL addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. COVERDELL. Will the Senator yield for just a moment?

Mrs. HUTCHISON. I will be happy to yield.

Mr. COVERDELL. Is it not the Senator's understanding that the emergency appropriations Congress passed and sent to the President last week was voted for by the Senate majority leader?

Mrs. HUTCHISON. I think that is correct, Mr. President.

Mr. COVERDELL. It was voted for by the Senate minority leader?

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Absolutely.

Mr. COVERDELL. Voted for by a majority of the Republican Senators?