

Now, Mr. President, lets look at who then nominee Federico Peña responded to my question regarding the responsibility of the DOE to begin removing spent nuclear fuel from my state. He said in testimony before the Energy and Natural Resources Committee:

... we will work with the Committee to address these issues within the context of the President's statement last year. So we've got a very difficult issue. I am prepared to address it. I will do that as best as I can, understanding the complexities involved. But they are all very legitimate questions and I look forward to working with you and others to try to find a solution.

Does that sound familiar? I suspect Secretary O'Leary had something equally vague to say about nuclear waste storage as well. Secretary Peña, I believe, said it best when he stated, "I will do that as best as I can, understanding the complexities involved." Those complexities, Mr. President, are not that complex at all. Quite simply, the President of the United States, despite the will of 307 Members of the House of Representatives and 65 Senators, does not want to keep the DOE's promise and does not want to address this important issue for our nation. His absence in this debate is all the complexity we need identify.

Mr. President, I want to be very clear that I am sincere in these complaints. My concern is for the ratepayers of my state and ratepayers across the country. They have poured billions of dollars into the Nuclear Waste Fund expecting the DOE to take this waste. They have paid countless more millions paying for on-site nuclear waste storage. Effective January 31, 1998, they are paying for both of these cost simultaneously even though no waste has been moved.

Mr. President, when the DOE is forced to pay damages to utilities across the nation, the ratepayers and taxpayers will again pay for the follies authorized by the DOE. Some estimate the costs of damages to be as high as \$80 to \$100 billion or more. The ratepayers will also have to pay the price of building new gas or coal fired plants when nuclear plants must shut down. And, if the Administration gets its way, my constituents will pay again when the Kyoto Protocol takes effect in 2008—exactly the same time Minnesota will be losing 20% of its electricity from clean nuclear power and replacing it with fossil fuels.

Six years of rudderless leadership in the White House with regard to nuclear energy holds grave consequences for the citizens of my state. I cannot merely sit by now and tell my constituents I tried. I must take whatever action I can to raise this issue with this Administration and with this Congress.

The Administration has admitted nuclear waste can be transported safely. They have admitted they neglected their responsibility. They have admitted nuclear power is a proven, safe means of generating electricity. And they have admitted there is a general consensus that centralized interim

storage is scientifically and technically possible and can be done safely. If you add all of these points together and hold them up against the Administration's lack of action, you can only come to one conclusion: politics has indeed won out over policy and science.

If the Senate would have voted on the Richardson nomination I would have voted no. I like Bill Richardson and I think he will do a fine job as Secretary of Energy—but my state and my constituents need someone to take substantive action at the DOE to begin removing nuclear fuel from my state. Regrettably, as long as Bill Clinton occupies 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, I do not believe it will happen. I do not believe Bill Richardson will have the opportunity to do what is needed to resolve these problems. I know he will have to advocate the policies of President Clinton and Vice President GORE. And in my opinion, that is the problem. This Administration has made this a political issue at the expense of the electricity needs of the country. Until this Administration wants to deal with policy and not politics, I will not support its continued lack of action.

#### LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will return to legislative session.

#### EMERGENCY FAMINE RELIEF FOR THE PEOPLE OF SUDAN

Mr. GORTON. I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Res. 267 submitted earlier by Senator FRIST.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 267) expressing the sense of the Senate that the President, acting through the United States Agency for International Development, should more effectively secure emergency famine relief for the people of Sudan, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the immediate consideration of the resolution?

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I rise to speak on behalf of a Sense of the Senate which, with the help of Senators FEINGOLD, DEWINE, ASHCROFT, and GRAMS, I have brought before this body in an effort to more clearly define the role of the United States Agency for International Development in the ongoing multinational effort to address the needs of the people of southern Sudan. At least 1.2 million Sudanese are hovering on the brink of starvation, with an additional 1.4 million being targeted by the World Food Program in an effort to stave off the famine conditions which may soon threaten them.

This Sense of the Senate we offer both urges the President to go forward with a more aggressive approach to our

contribution to that effort, and it gives him explicit Senate backing for the efforts which the Administration is already undertaking to that end. The underlying premise of the legislation is simple: the United States' role in that relief effort and in other, proactive self-sufficiency programs has general recognized the constraints placed upon the members of Operation Lifeline Sudan—the United Nations' agreement with the government of Sudan in Khartoum, where the regime holds veto authority over the member's specific deliveries of humanitarian relief. This flawed arrangement has allowed Khartoum to use that very humanitarian relief as a weapon in their war on the South, and with devastating effect. Indeed, the current famine conditions now threatening the lives of over 2 million Sudanese is largely created by the massive disruptions to the fragile agrarian and pastoralist populations in the South these acts of war represent. While the United States should continue to provide relief through the established channels of Operation Lifeline Sudan, it must also seek to use other distribution channels to reach populations to which Khartoum has routinely and with devastating calculation denied relief agencies access. Additionally, the United States must also begin to plan how we can help in preventing future threats of famine.

To realize these goals and directives, the Sense of the Senate recommends that the President take three specific actions. First, through the Agency for International Development, he should begin to more aggressively utilize relief agencies which distribute famine relief outside the umbrella of Operation Lifeline Sudan, thus unimpairing by the restrictions of Khartoum. Second, the Agency for International Development should begin to incorporate areas of southern Sudan which are outside of Khartoum's control into its overall strategy for sub-Saharan Africa in an effort to prevent future famine conditions and assist in helping the region realize a greater level of self-sufficiency—both in food production and in rule of law. Finally, the President is urged to use the current tentative cease-fire in Sudan, and international attention the famine has created, to push for the United Nations and the State Department to revamp the terms under which Operation Lifeline Sudan operates. It is especially important to guarantee that food cannot be used as a weapon and thus end Khartoum's veto authority over shipments of humanitarian relief in southern Sudan.

Mr. President, I am grateful for the support this critical piece of legislation has received on both sides of the aisle, and I am especially thankful for the effort and support of the Senators who have cosponsored this Sense of the Senate. It is important that the Administration and the Congress work together to ensure that the United States relief effort is the most effective it can possibly be.