I say this on the floor of the Senate—and I will pick up the pace of this later—if we cannot do that, then we ought to start shutting these doors, really. If we cannot have two officers per station and give them the support they deserve—I am talking about appropriations—then we basically ought to just close the doors.

I think on the Senate side we have bipartisan support. I do not know what is happening on the House side. I must say, today I am pessimistic, in terms of what I have heard, that we might even be looking at cuts. But whatever we need to do, whether it be paying overtime or hiring additional officers, we need to do it so we do not lose any lives and we give the Capitol Hill police officers the support that we promised to give them.

I say to my colleagues that I am worried that on the House side, in particular, we are not going to get the support. I think it should be bipartisan. I do not think anybody should have any question about this. Everybody says they are for police officers, and everybody says they are for protection and safety, and everybody says they will never forget the two fine officers whose lives were lost, and yet when it comes to digging in our pockets and doing it through appropriations, we are not there. Something is amiss.

I will try to keep bringing this up every week and hopefully we can get this work done.

I thank my colleagues and yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I will be very brief because my good friend, the distinguished Senator from Florida, is on the floor. I know he wishes to speak as in morning business. I do not want to hold him up on that.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to proceed as in morning business.

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

TREATMENT OF FEDERAL LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I have to take issue with the extreme rhetoric that some are using to attack our Federal law enforcement officers who helped return Elian Gonzalez to his father.

For example, one of the Republican leaders in the House of Representatives was quoted as calling the officers of the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, the U.S. Border Patrol, and the U.S. Marshals Service: ''jack-booted thugs.'' The mayor of New York City, a man who is seeking election to this body, called these dedicated public servants ''storm troopers.''

I know both men who made these remarks. I hope they will reconsider what they said because such intemperate and highly charged rhetoric only serves to degrade Federal law enforcement officers in the eyes of the public. That is something none of us should want to see happen.

Let none of us in the Congress, or those who want to serve in Congress, contribute to an atmosphere of disrespect for law enforcement officers. No matter what one's opinion of the law enforcement action in south Florida, we should all agree that these law enforcement officers were following orders, doing what they were trained to do, and putting their lives on the line, something they do day after day after day.

Let us treat law enforcement officers with the respect that is essential to their preserving the peace and protecting the public. I have said many times on the floor of this body that the 8 years I served in law enforcement are among the proudest and most satisfying times of my years in public service.

Thus, this harsh rhetoric bothers me even more. I do not know if I am bothered more as a Senator or as a former law enforcement official. But I am reminded of similar harsh rhetoric used by the National Rifle Association. In April 1995, the NRA sent a fundraising letter to members calling Federal law enforcement officers ''jack-booted thugs'' who wear ''Nazi bucket helmets and black storm trooper uniforms.''

Apparently, the vice president of the NRA was referring to Federal Bureau of Investigation and Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms agents involved in law enforcement actions in Idaho and Texas.

President George Bush, a man who is a friend of ours on both sides of this aisle, was correctly outraged by this NRA rhetoric, and he resigned from the NRA in protest. At the time in 1995, President Bush wrote to the NRA:

> Your broadside against federal agents deeply offends my own sense of decency and honor. . . . It indirectly slanders a wide array of government law enforcement officials, who are out there, day and night, laying their lives on the line for all of us.

I praised President Bush in 1995 for his actions, and I praise him again today.

President Bush was right. This harsh rhetoric of calling Federal law enforcement officers ''jack-booted thugs'' and ''storm troopers'' should offend our sense of decency and honor. It is highly offensive. It does not belong in any public debate on the reunion of Elian Gonzalez with his father.

We are fortunate to have dedicated women and men throughout Federal law enforcement in this country. They do a tremendous job under difficult circumstances, oftentimes at the risk of their lives and, unfortunately, too often losing their lives. They are examples of the hard-working public servants who make up the Federal Government, who are too often maligned and unfairly disparaged. It is unfortunate that it takes high-profile incidents to put a human face on Federal law enforcement officials, to remind everyone that these are people with children and parents and friends, spouses, brothers and sisters. They deserve our respect. They don't deserve our personal insults.

In countless incidents across the country every day, we ask Federal law enforcement officers who are sworn to protect the public and enforce the law to place themselves in danger, in danger none of us has to face. These law enforcement officers deserve our thanks and our respect. They do not deserve to be called jack-booted thugs and storm troopers. I proudly join the Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association in condemning these insults against our Nation's law enforcement officers. The public officials who used this harsh rhetoric owe our Federal law enforcement officers an apology.

I also want to note the misplaced swiftness in those calling to investigate the law enforcement action needed to reunite Elian Gonzalez with his father. The same congressional leaders who broke speed records calling Attorney General Reno to Capitol Hill and now call for Senate Judiciary Committee hearings to investigate this law enforcement action are the same congressional leaders who stalled the juvenile justice conference for nearly a year. With just a word, these congressional leaders can order politically charged meetings and hearings, though they remain silent when it comes to moving a comprehensive youth crime bill toward final passage into law. Unfortunately, we are in a Congress that is quick to investigate but slow to actually legislate a solution that could improve the quality of our constituents' lives. I think this is a misplaced priority on politics over commonsense legislation. I hope we will calm down the rhetoric.

There are those who feel strongly about where Elian Gonzalez should be, either with relatives in Miami or with his father. I am one who has stated from the beginning that the little boy should be with his father. The fact is, he is with his father. I hope we can all just let them be alone, let them reestablish the bonds that a father and child naturally have. Let him enjoy the company of his new brother. Let him be out of the TV cameras. Let's stop seeing this little boy paraded out several times a day before crowds, even adoring crowds. Let him be a normal little 6-year-old. Let him hug his father. Let his father hug him back. Let them read stories. Let them do things together.

I ask his family, his relatives in Miami—I have to assume they love him—let them have this time alone. Back away. Don't let your own egos or feelings get in the way of what is best for this little child. Let him be with his father. There will be a time where all of them will be together again. Right now, this little boy needs his dad.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. MACK. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

THE RAID IN MIAMI

Mr. MACK. Mr. President, in the early morning hours of Holy Saturday, a little piece of America died. America's shining beacon of freedom faded in the Florida sky as many of us grieved over the astounding actions of the United States Government. This administration betrayed America's past and joined history's inglorious list of governments that have chosen to use excessive force against its own law-abiding citizens.

Our founding fathers believed in a Government of, for, and by, the people, a Government designed to serve and benefit the people, not to serve and benefit the needs of Government, and certainly not to substitute brute force for the rule of law. These are reminiscent of the tactics used by tyrants and despots. The decisions by this administration that led to the events of last Saturday will be remembered as a day of shame in our American history.

My comments today are not directed toward the law enforcement officers who carried out the operation; I understand they are charged with a duty and must follow the directives of the Attorney General and the President of the United States. My comments today are not directed at the ultimate disposition of Elian's residency or custody, and they are not intended to be partisan or political, but they do go directly to the heart of who we are as a Nation and what we expect of our Government.

As most people know, the Elian Gonzalez matter is pending in Federal court. Just last Wednesday, the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals ordered that Elian Gonzalez must remain in the United States during the review of his Federal court case. The opinion of the court suggests the INS and the Department of Justice were wrong in not granting Elian an asylum hearing. In the final footnote of the opinion, the court encouraged the parties to avail themselves voluntarily of the Eleventh Circuit's mediation services. The court believed that mediation was an appropriate avenue to resolve this heart gripping situation.

The Attorney General did not listen to the court. She was obsessed with reuniting Elian with his father at any cost. Perhaps she would have been wise to listen to the words of Daniel Webster: ''Liberty exists in proportion to wholesome restraint.'' Perhaps she should have listened to her own words: ''I'm trying to work through an extraordinary human tragedy. And the importance of working through it is that we do so in good faith, without violence, without having to cause further disruption to the little boy.'' This statement was made nine days before the raid.

The night before the raid, mediation between the Department of Justice, the Miami family and Juan Miguel Gonzalez had gone on all night and into the wee hours of Saturday morning. Even as the negotiations continued on the telephone with all parties, agents of the administration dressed in fatigues and masks exploded into the home of Lazaro Gonzalez with machine guns drawn—and one machine gun that was pointed dramatically in the face of a screaming child.

The Government held all the power, and the Government used intimidation to force a family, a loving caring family, into a corner. Remember this is the family originally selected by the Attorney General to care for Elian.

The administration offered ultimatums when fair mediation was needed. This administration resorted to the power of a machine gun to intimidate an American family. What possible benefit could come from this act?

Tactics such as these deserve a full explanation. Why would the Department of Justice stage a raid when mediator Aaron Podhurst stated that a deal between the parties was ''minutes to an hour away''? Why would they be so impatient with a solution so near? The Attorney General said that they had a window during which to conduct the raid of Saturday through Monday. Why could they not have waited for negotiations to play out.

What credible information existed to suggest this level of force needed to be used?

Another question that deserves fuller explanation speaks to the impact of the raid on the boy. Wouldn't any psychologist or psychiatrist who actually examined the child say this action would further traumatize the boy? But sadly, the INS team of experts never did examine the boy to make an informed evaluation.

How could such tactics possibly be in the best interests of a child who has suffered so much? What right did this administration have to add this trauma to the terrible loss Elian has already suffered? And why did he have to suffer at the hands of the people who are supposed to defend the rule of law, the INS, the DoJ, and the President of the United States.

Let's think for a moment about the decision the father and the Justice Department made in putting Elian's life at risk with the plans for the pre-dawn raid. I have never questioned the father's love for the boy, but I cannot imagine any father would choose to put his son's life at risk a second time. But it is not an unloving father who put his son in harm's way-the father is as much a victim as Elian in many ways. The father had a simple choice: travel to a safe house in Miami and have Elian voluntarily transferred into his custody or insist on remaining in Washington and have the U.S. government seize his son in a violent, dangerous raid. Just as it wasn't the father's decision not to come to his boy's side for the first four months of this ordeal, it was not his decision to remain in Washington, forcing a raid at gunpoint. Castro would not allow the father to travel then and he would not allow him to travel last weekend.

President Clinton promised my colleague Senator GRAHAM that Elian would not be seized in the middle of the night, and now we must ask again, why did he promise one thing and yet do another?

Elian deserves access to all of his legal options, Elian deserves an asylum hearing, and he deserves the protection of U.S. law. Yet that is for another day. The use of force must be dealt with today. Does the end justify the means? Will these means ever be justified?

There have been accusations of playing politics with this issue.

But perhaps we ought to recognize what several of the Attorney General's long-time supporters have said. The four mediators from Miami that were involved in the negotiations with Janet Reno have clearly challenged the administration's characterization of the events of last Saturday. They said they were close to an agreement and felt confident a peaceful solution could have been reached.

We cannot simply sweep these issues away and dispense of them in the name of politics. This is a long, sad story and I'm sure many would wish it would simply fade away. But if we accept and commend the actions of our government for acting hastily in choosing excessive force over peaceful mediation, we have traveled down a very troubling road. We dare not condone such use of force to settle legal disputes. This strikes at the very heart of the balance of power and the integrity of our judicial process.

This child and no child should face the intimidation and trauma of an automatic weapon in his face—especially when perpetrated by the American government—a government that has always stood for freedom and human rights throughout the world. As a father and grandfather, I am heartbroken for the frightened, vulnerable child in that photograph. My hope is that no other administration official utter the words, ''I am proud of what we did'' and instead express regret and sorrow for the trauma and pain suffered by the entire Gonzalez family.

What happened saddens me as an American, a father, and a Senator. Mr. President, last Saturday morning, a little bit of America died in that raid and I hope we never again dim the light of freedom for those who look to us for hope. I yield the floor.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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