

The balanced budget debate, for example, and certainly the issues, were exhausted relatively early, but the decisions did not come until the Members were exhausted. Perhaps that is the way it works. It does not seem like a good use of time.

I suspect there is a great deal of posturing for the media. I have a hunch, and of course I was not here before the activities of the floor were shown on TV, but I suspect the conversations were somewhat shorter than they are now.

It is difficult, and this is an irony. I do not know what we do about it. We have a better opportunity to communicate much more quickly than we have had in the history. Captain O'Grady shows up, and everyone knows about it 10 minutes afterward. That is wonderful, and that is the kind of communication we have. Yet we still seem to communicate in sound bites, where people really do not know the facts. That is too bad.

I happened to see the Chief of Staff of the White House on "Meet the Press" the other day. It is almost as if a robot pushed a button and the same thing came forward time after time.

I think it is exciting that we have an opportunity. I think there are issues out there. People are still concerned about taxes and spending. They think this Government is too big and costs too much.

I think people sincerely want a balanced budget although there will be some pain. I think people are willing to undertake that pain, to be responsible in a financial area.

I think regulatory relief is something that almost everyone would agree with. Most anyone would say we are overregulated in this country and we need to move more quickly to do something about that.

Real tort reform. We have played with that some. It is not true yet, but it is real tort reform on the edges. We need to do something. Our folks say we need to do something about that.

Welfare reform, I understand, will come next. I am pleased for that. It is something that surely needs to happen.

Health care has moved off of the highest level of visibility, but it does not mean we do not have to do something. It does not mean that health care does not need some restructuring. We ought to have a chance to do that.

States rights. Everyone understands that, if we can move Government a little closer to people, we will have better decisions, Mr. President.

Those are, I believe, clearly the agenda of people in this country. I think the agenda of this body and the agenda of the Congress ought to more properly reflect that.

I am a little discouraged. We have lots of efforts to block what is going on simply for the purpose of blocking. I am discouraged we do not have more leadership from the White House in terms of issues we are working on.

I am encouraged, on the other hand, that there is a willingness to change.

There is a willingness to move forward, particularly, I think, on the part of new Members. I think there is a willingness to make fundamental changes in the way the Government works and, for the first time in a very long time, to analyze some of the programs and say, is there a better way? Can we do it? Indeed, does it need to be done by the Federal Government?

Mr. President, that is a quick, personal analysis of where we are. Obviously, it is thrilling and exciting to be here. I think this session has new opportunities to look at things.

I urge that we do set a priority. I urge we do move forward with full debate, but not skidding our feet and trying to stop things from happening. People expect more of Government than that. I think the real measure of good Government is responding to what the voters have said.

Mr. President, I look forward to the next 6 months. I hope it is at least as productive, and hopefully more productive, than the past. I yield the floor.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, under the order I was to be recognized at this point for 10 minutes. The distinguished President pro tempore has an appointment, and I ask unanimous consent that he may precede me, and I may then follow.

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

#### CONCERNING THE RESCUE OF CAPT. SCOTT O'GRADY

Mr. THURMOND. Mr. President, I wish to thank the able and distinguished Senator from West Virginia for his courtesy and kindness.

Mr. President, I do not think it is an exaggeration to say that each of us breathed a sigh of relief when we learned last Friday of the rescue of Air Force Capt. Scott O'Grady, whose F-16 was shot down over war-torn Bosnia earlier this month.

Probably no one was more relieved by the rescue of Captain O'Grady than the young pilot himself. After spending 6 days eluding hostile forces, enduring the wicked weather of the rugged Bosnian mountains, and surviving on bugs, rainwater, and vegetation, Captain O'Grady summed up his feelings when he yelled to his rescuers, "I'm ready to get the Hell out of here." I am confident that was a sentiment that would be shared by anyone else who went through the experience Captain O'Grady did.

Six days in the woods, hiding from enemy soldiers and surviving on things that you or I would rake up out of our garden or spray to exterminate is certainly an amazing feat. It is primarily thanks to the skills and knowledge that Captain O'Grady learned through Air Force escape and evasion training that he was able to come through this experience alive and unharmed.

At every step of Captain O'Grady's 6 day ordeal, training was key. It was training that allowed Captain O'Grady

to beat the Serbs in a high-stakes match of hide and seek; it was training that taught Captain O'Grady how to survive the elements with only the clothes he wore when he ejected from his plane; and it was training in tactical operations that allowed the U.S. Marines to fly into hostile territory and pull Captain O'Grady out of the reach of the Bosnian Serbs. If nothing else, this ordeal has hammered home the maxim "train hard in peace to avoid mistakes in combat."

Mr. President, let me change tack just for a moment to praise the efforts of all the individuals involved in this rescue operation, especially those of the U.S. Marines. Though each of the services have their own special operations forces, each with their important and vital missions, the Marines have once again demonstrated their worth as a force capable of going anywhere at anytime. I have no doubt that Captain O'Grady now has a special understanding of just what exactly the phrase, "The Marines have landed," means.

In many ways, what has transpired over the last week is a testament to the investment the United States has made in its Armed Forces, beginning about 15 years ago. Captain O'Grady's survival efforts were aided by the fact that he wore clothing designed to help withstand the harshest elements and he carried sophisticated communications and homing equipment that aided those searching for the captain in finding him. Had O'Grady actually had to defend himself against the enemy, he was carrying a modern sidearm that packs more than a dozen rounds in its magazine, a far cry from the .38 pistol that pilots of just a generation ago relied on as a survival and defense tool. Perhaps most impressive is that with a minimal amount of preparation and planning time, a rescue operation was mounted that required the combined efforts of at least the Marines, Navy, and Air Force. Such interservice cooperation and efficiency was not in existence just 12 years ago when the United States intervened in Grenada.

Regrettably, all the things that we have worked so hard to achieve—a professional, well educated, well equipped military—that worked so well in Panama, Desert Storm, and now in Bosnia, are being threatened by those who would cut the defense budget. This is simply unacceptable, the United States needs a strong military that is ready and capable of meeting any enemy, anytime, anywhere.

Let us hope that there is one more happy circumstance to come out of Captain O'Grady's survival and rescue—that President Clinton realizes we must keep defense spending at a level which ensures we maintain the best military forces ever known to man. That is the only appropriate course of action for our Nation to pursue.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia.