

President Clinton who wins reelection, I can almost guarantee that the first thing he will do will call for the creation of a blue ribbon commission to resolve the Medicare crisis. It is an issue that should be debated this year. It should have been resolved this year, but it will not be.

I take hope, Mr. President, when I look at leaders such as TOM DASCHLE and TRENT LOTT. I know, again, what the reaction was when Senator Mitchell, my colleague from Maine—again, I point out he was one of the most effective majority leaders in the history of this body—when he left, there was a great expression of woe. “What will we do?” When our distinguished colleague, Bob Dole, left, all of us felt the pang and the anxiety of saying, “What are we going to do now?” Bob Dole is no longer with us—a master at bringing people together.

I believe that we are still in good hands. I am impressed with the majority leader, with his drive, intelligence, and determination and, yes, his pragmatism, his willingness on key issues to reach across the aisle, and to say, “Can't we work this out? We have our differences, but can't we at least come to some kind of consensus on the major issues confronting this country?” I am enormously impressed with his talents, and those of Senator DASCHLE as well, both men of outstanding ability and good will.

To those people who declare that “the center can no longer hold; things are going to fall apart; the best are lacking in conviction while the worst are full of passion and intensity,” I say nonsense. There are going to be people who will come to this Chamber who will be filled with passion, to be sure, who will argue strenuously for their positions. But I believe it is inevitable that they will come back to the center.

The center may have shifted slightly to the right. People are more conservative today than they were 10 or 20 years ago. But the center has to hold. If the center does not hold, then you will have stagnation. If the center does not hold, then you will have paralysis. If the center does not hold, you will have Government shutdowns. When that takes place, the level of cynicism that currently exists will only deepen to a point that is so dangerous that it will afflict us for generations to come.

Mr. President, Alistair Cooke summed it up for me in his wonderful book called “America.” In one of his chapters, he made the inevitable comparison between the United States and Rome. He said that we, like Rome, were in danger of losing that which we profess to cherish most. He said liberty is the luxury of self-discipline; that those nations who have historically failed to discipline themselves have had discipline imposed upon them by others. He said America is a country in which I see the most persistent idealism and the greatest cynicism, and the race is on between its vitality and its decadence. He said we have—paraphras-

ing Franklin—a great country, and we can keep it, but only if we care to keep it.

I believe based upon the many friends that I have made here—the people that I admire and who are leaving with me, but those, more importantly, who are staying and those who will come—that there is a genuine desire to keep this the greatest country on the face of the Earth, a country that is still a beacon of hope and idealism throughout a world that is filled with so much oppression and darkness, and this will remain the greatest living institution in all of the world.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. GORTON). The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

SENATOR BILL BRADLEY

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, I rise to pay tribute to my friend, colleague, and the senior Senator from New Jersey, BILL BRADLEY, as he leaves the U.S. Senate. I have served with BILL BRADLEY for nearly 14 years, my entire tenure in this body, and it is difficult to imagine what it will be like without him. Although we have different styles, rhythms, and backgrounds, we formed an effective team which fought together for our State's and our Nation's interests.

Throughout his life, BILL BRADLEY has achieved remarkable success as a scholar, an athlete, an author and an outstanding public official. And whether he was helping his team to championships at Princeton University, the Olympic arena, or the floor of Madison Square Garden, or helping to pass landmark legislation on the floor of the Senate, BILL BRADLEY always strives for the best. He has performed always as a rising star, and I know that this is not his apex.

Mr. President, in the Senate, BILL BRADLEY concentrated on a few areas and helped to translate his own vision into public policy. As a member of the Finance Committee, he continually fought for fair tax policy, honest budgeting, and economic policies that enhance growth. He is widely known as the author of the fair tax, which was the foundation of the Tax Reform Act of 1986.

BILL also knew that the single best economic advantage is a good education. So he designed a new way to help pay for college. His self-reliance loans give all students, regardless of income, the chance to borrow money from the Federal Government.

He has been a strong voice against gun violence and crime in our communities and a creative thinker in developing opportunities for urban youth.

His efforts are reflected in the enactment of community banking and urban enterprise zone legislation, educational reforms and community policing programs.

But what many of us will remember most is BILL's passion when it comes to issues involving equality. BILL established himself as a serious and badly needed voice in the national dialog on racism, pluralism, and discrimination. He has challenged every American to confront the festering sore of racism. In his keynote at the 1992 Democratic convention, he warned that “We will advance together, or each of us will be diminished.”

One of his most powerful moments in the Senate, and one which I will never forget, was his denunciation of the horrifying beating of Rodney King. I will always remember BILL standing at his podium, pounding it 56 times with a bunch of pencils. His blows were meant to represent the beating administered by the police to Rodney King. The sound, resonating through the Senate Chamber, was a powerful reminder of just how far we need to go on the road to equality.

In the international arena, BILL BRADLEY was so energetic and committed that he traveled to the former Soviet Union for a weekend—to try to facilitate understanding between the superpowers, and to foster peaceful co-existence through economic cooperation.

With all of his achievements, BILL's chief goal in the Senate was to further the interests of New Jersey. He has written that he once received a special gift, a collection of every variety of rock found in our Garden State. I, too, think that it is the perfect gift, because what could better symbolize a man whose commitment to New Jersey's interests and her people was always rock solid?

His hard-working schedule would, on occasion, take BILL to New Jersey twice in a single day, in order to fulfill his obligations to meet with constituents, to help solve a problem, to deliver a talk to students, or to simply stay on top of the Garden State's needs. And his famous New Jersey beach walks, which he took during every one of the past 18 years, are symbolic of BILL's constant presence and consistent commitment to our State.

BILL has written that he prefers moving to standing still, well I know that wherever his journey takes him, his ultimate destination will be success, and all of us will benefit from his efforts. To my friend, colleague, and fellow New Jerseyan, I thank you for the contributions you have made, and for those yet to come. I offer my wish for continued success and happiness.

Mr. HEFLIN addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

REVISION AND EXTENSION OF REMARKS

Mr. HEFLIN. Mr. President, on Wednesday, September 25, 1996, notice