constitutional amendment alternative as a last resort. I can think of a great example, the previous Senator from Illinois, Senator Simon, who I know only turned to this alternative, I am sure, out of sheer frustration with the process. He turned to that alternative prior to the progress we made in 1992 through 1996.

I am afraid for others who pushed this amendment, the agenda is not so much a balanced budget but some political advantage. During the debate, we will have an opportunity to see who really wants to reduce the deficit and who is a little more interested in political posturing. I am going to offer an amendment, for example, that would reduce the time for ratification from 7 years to 3 years to prevent unnecessary delay by the States and ensuring Congress does not hide behind a protracted ratification process during which Members could say, ''Well, we are going to get to this balancing of the budget later, after the States get done doing their job.''

Mr. President, if this amendment is more than just a political exercise, my proposal, my modification of going from 7 years to 3 years for ratification should sail through the U.S. Senate.

I have to say I have some doubts about it because the proposed amendment to our Constitution is, at its core, really political. We should not be shocked by that. Congress, by its nature, is a political beast. What is disturbing, though, is the growing willingness on the part of some to place in jeopardy our Constitution in this manner to get some momentary political advantage.

Sadly, using our Constitution as a political foil is becoming increasingly popular. The so-called balanced budget amendment is only one of many proposed changes to our Constitution. During the last Congress alone, over 130 changes were proposed to the U.S. Constitution. Many of them, I am afraid, were offered for political ends. Many of them are entirely unnecessary. In fact, I say virtually all of them are entirely unnecessary to solve the problems at which they are directed.

One of them, an amendment to require a supermajority to raise taxes, was brought to the other body's floor solely because it was tax day, April 15, so the proponents could stand up on tax day and make some speeches about it. I am troubled by that use of the constitutional amendment process. The thought that an amendment to our Constitution could be offered because it presents the opportunity for a really timely sound bite is indefensible. Many of the advocates of a balanced budget amendment may be sincere in their support for the proposal, but their sincerity does not address the practical problems with the amendment with a fundamental flaw underlying a constitutional approach.

The Constitution, Mr. President, will not solve our budget problems. That says it all. The Constitution cannot solve our year-to-year and day-to-day budgeting problems. It will not give us the courage or the answers we need to balance our books.

As President Clinton said in his State of the Union Address, all that is needed to balance the budget is our vote and his signature. The President's budget is a good starting place. I look forward to working with my colleagues on the Budget Committee to build on the President's budget and move beyond to reach balance, without using the Social Security surplus. We don't have to amend the Constitution to do that.

As I noted on the Senate floor last year, for over 200 years, the Constitution has served this Nation very, very well. It is essential to the continuing development of our young Nation that the Constitution remains a statement of general principles, not a budgeting document.

In charting a different course, one which allows the Constitution to serve as a method of addressing each difficult challenge we face in this Nation, inevitably, Mr. President, we will sacrifice the integrity of the most fundamental document of our Nation. This process will sacrifice the integrity of our Constitution.

We must guard against the U.S. Constitution becoming what James Madison feared would be, in his words, ''little more than a list of special provisos.''

Mr. President, the Constitution remains the cornerstone of our freedom. Its power is its brilliant simplicity. The spate of constitutional amendments offered over the past few years are at odds with the fundamental notion that our Constitution establishes the framework or great outlines of our society. By seeking to use that document to address specific problems, no matter how severe, the Constitution will become something much less than it was intended to be and that it has been.

Although our Nation faces many problems—and I think the issue of balancing the budget may be our most important problem—no problem can really be attributed purely to a constitutional deficiency. We should quell our desire to amend this great document and, instead, address the problems that confront this Nation.

Mr. President, I suggest, after the process of the balanced budget amendment debate is over, that we get, as fast as we can, to the real work of balancing the budget and leave the Constitution alone.

I yield the floor.

Mr. KENNEDY addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time between 12 and 1 p.m. is divided between the Senator from Rhode Island and the Senator from Massachusetts.

The Senator from Massachusetts is recognized.

Mr. KENNEDY. I thank the Chair. As I understand it, the time reverts, at 1 o'clock, back to the proponents of the amendment, am I correct?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. That is correct.

Mr. KENNEDY. I ask unanimous consent to be able to proceed until 1 o'clock.

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

SOCIAL SECURITY

Mr. KENNEDY. The Social Security program is America's time-honored commitment to our senior citizens that we will care for them in their golden years. It says to our seniors that you have worked hard and faithfully paid into Social Security for all those years of labor, and when you finally retire, Social Security will be there for you. It will help you pay the rent, buy your groceries, and maintain a reasonable standard of living throughout your retirement.

But under the proposed balanced budget constitutional amendment, the Social Security contract with America's senior citizens is broken. If this amendment is added to our Constitution, then no one can assure you of a Social Security check every month.

The Rock of Gibraltar, on which our Nation's senior citizens have depended for the past 62 years would be reduced to shifting sand.

The Reid amendment, which will be considered later this month, prevents this unacceptable outcome by protecting Social Security from the proposed constitutional amendment.

The Reid amendment is needed because millions of the Nation's retired citizens live from check to check. They need that check to arrive on time at the beginning of each month to pay their bills.

Martha McSteen, who headed the Social Security Administration during the Reagan administration, and now is president of the National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare, said recently,

> Keeping Social Security safe from budget tampering is frankly a matter of life and death for millions of Americans. For 10 million Social Security beneficiaries age 65 and older, their monthly Social Security check amounts to 90 percent or more of their income. Those checks keep 40 percent of America's seniors out of poverty.

But under the proposed constitutional amendment, if Government revenues fall unexpectedly or Government expenses go up, payment on Social Security checks could stop.

If the balanced budget constitutional amendment is enacted, senior citizens may well find that the check is not in the mail after all.

Three months ago, in November 1996, the House sponsors of the balanced budget constitutional amendment agreed that this could happen. As Congressman DAN SCHAEFER and Congressman CHARLES STENHOLM said, under the proposed constitutional amendment ''the President would be bound,

at the point at which the Government runs out of money, to stop issuing checks.''

And now we learned just this week that this unwise constitutional amendment could deny the Social Security program access to the trust funds in the future. American workers have contributed their payroll taxes to build up the trust so that when the baby boomers retire, there will be enough money there to pay for their Social Security. But now we learn from the experts in the Congressional Research Service that the proposed constitutional amendment could place the trust fund off limits. The money will be sitting there, and the Social Security program will need it to write Social Security checks. But if the balanced budget amendment is adopted, the Constitution will just say no.

Here is what the Congressional Research Service concluded in an analysis provided to Senator DASCHLE on February 5:

> Because the balanced budget amendment requires that the required balance be between outlays for that year and receipts for that year, the moneys that constitute the Social Security surpluses would not be available for the payments of benefits.

Clearly, Social Security benefits are at risk under the proposed constitutional amendment.

There are those on the other side who don't want America's seniors to know that this proposed constitutional amendment puts Social Security on the budget chopping block. They say that our concern about Social Security is a scare tactic.

But economists say there is a 50–50 chance in any given year that the budget projections will be wrong and that under this constitutional amendment, the Government will run out of money. Economic forecasting is not an exact science. The projections of budget experts could be off by only 1 percent. But under this constitutional amendment, that is enough to throw the budget out of balance and put Social Security checks at risk.

Senator HATCH, the chairman of the Judiciary Committee, agrees. When the committee was debating this constitutional amendment on January 30, he said that under the proposed constitutional amendment, ''Social Security would have to fight its way, just like every other program.''

Senator HATCH went on to say that he believes Social Security ''has the easiest of all arguments to fight its way.''

I don't believe we should take that gamble when the future of the Social Security program is at stake.

There is nothing—nothing—to assure our seniors that their Social Security checks will survive the budget battles that lie ahead.

Senior citizens deserve more than speeches of good will by supporters of the constitutional amendment. If those who support this unwise constitutional amendment are committed to protecting Social Security, they should write that protection into their proposal and adopt the Reid amendment.

President Clinton wrote to the Senate Democratic leader on January 28 about the risk to Social Security. He said to Senator DASCHLE:

> I am very concerned that Senate Joint Resolution 1, the constitutional amendment to balance the budget, could pose grave risks to the Social Security System. In the event of an impasse in which the budget requirements can neither be waived nor met, disbursements or unelected judges could reduce benefits to comply with this constitutional mandate. No subsequent implementing legislation could protect Social Security with certainty because a constitutional amendment overrides statutory law.

In the State of the Union Address, President Clinton added:

> I believe it is both unnecessary and unwise to adopt a balanced budget amendment that could cripple our country in time of economic crisis and force unwanted results such as judges halting Social Security checks or increasing taxes.

But supporters of the balanced budget amendment are ready to cast Social Security to the winds. They say to the Nation's senior citizens, ''We are going to toss your retirement, your safety net into the rough seas of Federal budgeting and see if it can stay afloat.''

We cannot let that happen.

The balanced budget constitutional amendment turns its back on almost a decade and a half of bipartisan progress in protecting Social Security.

In 1983, the Greenspan Commission recommended that we should place Social Security outside the Federal budget. The Commission said we need to build up a sufficient surplus in the trust funds to have enough money to provide checks to baby boomers when they begin to retire. And we can't do that if Social Security is subjected to the same ups and downs as the rest of the Federal budget.

Both Democrats and Republicans supported this proposal. The Commission's recommendations were introduced as bill S. 1 sponsored by Senator Dole and Senator MOYNIHAN. That bill required Social Security to be placed off-budget within 10 years. A bipartisan 58-to-14 vote, including 32 Republicans and 26 Democrats adopted the conference report.

In 1985, Congress accelerated the process of placing Social Security outside the rest of the Federal budget. The Deficit Control Act of 1985—the so-called Gramm–Rudman-Hollings law—exempted Social Security from across-the-board cuts or sequestration.

Even more important, the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings law said Social Security could no longer be included in the unified budget of the U.S. Government.

As Senator GRAMM of Texas emphasized during the Senate debate on the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings proposal:

> This bill takes Social Security off budget. So if you want to debate Social Security, go to the museum, because that debate is over. . . . The President cannot submit a budget that says anything about Social Security. It is not in order for the Budget Committee to bring a budget to the floor that does anything to Social Security. Social Security is off-budget and is a free-standing trust fund.

From that point on, when Congress has adopted the annual Federal budget resolutions, Social Security is not included. The last time the Congress of the United States voted on a budget that included Social Security was 1985.

Congress supported this change by wide bipartisan majorities. The Gramm-Rudman-Hollings law was approved by a 61–31 vote in the Senate and a 271 to 154 vote in the House of Representatives.

In 1990, some Members of Congress proposed to put Social Security back into the Federal budget. But Senator HOLLINGS and Senator Heinz rejected this unwise suggestion. They insisted that Social Security remain off budget, and the Senate approved an amendment to protect Social Security by a 98 to 2 vote. In fact, the final Budget Enforcement Act of 1990 speaks forcefully of Congress's intentions to continue to protect Social Security. In section 13301 of that act, the title reads, ''Exclusion of Social Security From All Budgets.'' It says plainly that Social Security,

> . . . shall not be counted as new budget authority, outlays, receipts, or deficit or surplus for purposes of—
>
> (1) the budget of the United States Government as submitted by the President,
>
> (2) the congressional budget, or
>
> (3) the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

Again in 1995, section 22 of the congressional budget resolution amended the budget act even further to protect Social Security. In a provision entitled the ''Social Security Fire Wall Point of Order,'' it said that any effort to include changes in Social Security in the Federal budget were subject to a 60-vote point of order in the Senate.

The proposed balanced budget constitutional amendment would reverse these years of progress in protecting Social Security. These efforts to protect Social Security and insulate it from the annual battles over the Federal budget were started by the Greenspan Commission. Senator Dole sponsored the bill in 1983 that got us started. And Democrats and Republicans alike rallied to preserve the Nation's Social Security system.

But now, supporters of the balanced budget amendment are prepared to turn their backs on this important history.

For almost 15 years, they joined Democrats in arguing that Social Security should be protected. But now they have decided that Social Security should be left to its own in the budget battles that lie ahead.

Some argue that if we fail to include Social Security in the proposed constitutional amendment, it will cause even steeper cuts than necessary in other programs like education or health care or highways. They say that even President Clinton's balanced

budget—while holding Social Security outside the overall Federal budget—still counts the Social Security surplus to bring the overall Federal budget into balance.

But under current law, Social Security is protected, whereas under a constitutional amendment it is not.

Under current law, even when the President counts Social Security in calculating whether the budget is balanced, neither he nor Congress nor the courts can use the budget process to change Social Security. Even if Republicans tried to use the Federal budget to cut Social Security, they could not under current law.

A balanced budget constitutional amendment would end these protections. Including the Social Security trust funds on the Government's balance sheet may be a useful way to reach a balanced budget today. But what about the year 2020 or 2030, when baby boomers retire and trust funds decline? If Social Security is not off-budget, we would have only three choices. First, we could cut Social Security benefits. Second, we could raise taxes. Or third, we could cut billions of dollars from education, health, national defense, and other priorities to keep the Social Security checks flowing.

We must—and we will—balance the budget. We must—and we will—take steps to ensure the solvency of Social Security well into the future. But it makes no sense to jeopardize Social Security by subjecting it to the requirements of this blunderbuss constitutional amendment.

I urge my colleagues to protect Social Security by supporting the Reid amendment.

So, Mr. President, I am going to look forward, in the next few days—certainly before the end of the month—to join with my colleague and friend, Senator REID, and other Members of the Senate, in urging support for the amendment that Senator REID will propose, which will effectively remove the Social Security trust funds from the balanced budget amendment.

I offered that amendment in the Judiciary Committee. We ended up with a tie vote, 9 to 9. We had the support of a Republican on that amendment. But the Judiciary Committee was virtually evenly divided on that issue, virtually evenly divided.

What we hear from our friends and colleagues in the House of Representatives is there is increasing recognition of the importance of separating the Social Security trust funds from the consideration of the balanced budget amendment. I think that is wise. I believe, hopefully, that the Senate will reach that conclusion.

Mr. President, we can ask ourselves, is the Social Security trust fund of such special importance that we ought to consider it separately from the overall budget considerations? I suggest that it is, and not just because it is a lifeline for our senior citizens, and has been depended on for over 60 years by those who reach their golden years to be able to live in peace, dignity, and security. I think that would be a compelling enough reason to separate out the Social Security.

But, Mr. President, for another very important reason, which has been understood by Republicans and Democrats alike, since the report of the Greenspan Commission in 1983 where, virtually unanimously, the members of that commission recommended that Social Security be separated from various budget considerations, and it was only a year or so after that that a bipartisan leadership amendment was offered and supported overwhelmingly by Republicans and Democrats alike, that they would put this off budget for a period of some 10 years. Later, in 1985, under Gramm-Rudman measures, Republicans and Democrats—if you read the history of that debate, one of the prime reasons that that particular proposal was passed was because Social Security would be removed from the considerations of the budget, and that was, again, the position that was accepted in the U.S. Senate by a vote of 98 to 2 back in 1990. So we have the recommendations of the Social Security Commission, you have the action that has been taken by the Senate, and in a bipartisan way, in 1984–85, and repeated in 1990.

Now, why do the Members of this body believe that that fund ought to be different? Well, I say that it is a very different fund, for a number of reasons. The most powerful one is because, as I mentioned before, of that contract that will be out there and exists between the seniors and the Federal Government, when it was established that there would be a guarantee that those funds would be there as long as people paid in. That was the contract. People understood it. The elderly understood it.

But, now, under the balanced budget amendment, by including the Social Security trust funds in that—and if that amendment were to pass and be ratified by the States—that would be at risk like all the other spending would be at risk, because of the language of the balanced budget amendment. And that is recognized by the floor manager of the bill, Senator HATCH. It was recognized by those that were the principal spokesmen. Mr. Miller ,formerly of OMB, recognized that that would be part of the spending limitation. Now we receive assurances from those that propose the balanced budget amendment, ''well, that is going to be OK because there will be more support for Social Security, so we really don't have to worry about it.''

Well, Mr. President, all we have to do is look at the assaults on Social Security in the last Congress by many of our good Republican friends. Look at the period of the 1980's. I was here on the floor of the Senate when there were other assaults on Social Security. I am not one that is prepared to say, well, we are going to just let the dice roll and see whether this continues to remain in the balanced budget amendment and the trigger is pulled on the balanced budget amendment, that Social Security will be out there trying to do the best it can in terms of the spending limitations. Look at what happened in the last Congress—increased funding for defense over what was recommended by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and assaults in terms of the Social Security trust system. That was the record, Mr. President.

I don't think the seniors ought to have to be put in the position where their futures, their livelihoods, their whole security is going to be put at risk, based upon what action is going to be taken here. I don't believe that should be the case for a very important reason, Mr. President, which is that unlike other spending proposals in the budget, the fact is that this is the one aspect of the budget where people pay in, with the agreement that they will be able to receive.

Nobody battles stronger than I do in terms of trying to make education more accessible and available. No one will struggle more in terms of fighting and helping and assisting academic accomplishments or teacher training in the schools in my State of Massachusetts or in the country. The fact of the matter is that those students didn't pay into this fund. They didn't contribute to this fund. We recognize, as a matter of national policy, the importance of enhancing education opportunity and access for the young people of this country, because it is vitally important for our Nation to be able to compete in the world, and it is vitally important in terms of our social responsibilities to the young people of this country, in terms of their future.

But, Mr. President, they didn't contribute. But Social Security did. Social Security did. The beneficiaries of the NIH research didn't contribute either. I am all for NIH and for investing in that research. But Social Security recipients paid in. Big difference. Major difference. Major difference. Why are we going to treat both of the different groups the same? That is wrong. It is wrong on the face of it. Most important, it is a basic and fundamental potential violation of a very fundamental contract made between the President of the United States, the Congress of the United States, and the American people. That was a contract, not just between two individuals; it was made by a Nation, establishing that system that said if you pay in during your working years, you are at least going to be able to live out of poverty during the time of your retirement. That is a solemn commitment that we have made year after year after year. And, yet, those who are promoting the balanced budget amendment are saying, ''well, that is all fine and all well and good, but we want to make sure we put Social Security on because, if we do

not, maybe our economy is going to deteriorate, and it will threaten somehow the Social Security recipients.''

The problem for our economy is not our senior citizens. Sure we have to deal with what is going to happen after the year 2029 in terms of Social Security. Although the fact remains that for the next 40 years after that, three-quarters of the benefits could be paid without any changes in it, I want to make sure those recipients are going to get the full benefits. So I am going to work to try to make sure that we are going to do that.

But the problem in terms of 2003, 2004, and 2005, during that period of time, is not Social Security. It may be another factor. But why hold our Social Security recipients hostage to that factor? Why hold them hostage? That is basically the issue that is included in this amendment. I believe that the American people wisely are understanding the significance and the importance of this effort by Senator REID and other sponsors, the importance of this debate and this discussion.

Now we will hear from our colleagues on the other side. ''Well, it is very nice of you to point that out, Senator KENNEDY, but look at what the President has done. The President has put Social Security into his budget when he makes that recommendation, and, therefore, don't you think that we ought to do that?''

Well, Mr. President, it is an entirely different system. We have what we call the walls that exist under the Federal budget that have been put there since 1990. So you cannot violate the funding of the Social Security system. Those walls exist, and they exist by statute. But you pass a constitutional amendment and, as every Member of this body understands, a constitutional amendment supersedes those statutes. They are off. It is an entirely different situation.

So, Mr. President, I have listened over the period of the last days to those—Senator REID, Senator DORGAN, and others—who have taken the floor and supported this. I have listened to the responses and find them woefully inadequate in terms of the power of this particular argument.

I think both in terms of fairness, in terms of justice, in terms of decency, and in terms of our commitment to our seniors that this amendment, which is going to remove the Social Security trust funds from the balanced budget amendment, is absolutely essential if we are going to maintain our commitment to our senior citizens. And I am going to welcome the opportunity to be a part of this debate that will take place in these next several days and toward the latter part of February because I think this is really one of the very, very most important, if not the most important, amendments that we will have on the balanced budget amendment.

Mr. President, I see my time is almost up.

I yield the floor.

Mr. SPECTER addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania is recognized.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I may proceed in morning business for a period of up to 10 minutes.

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

THE NOMINATION OF ANTHONY LAKE

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, there has been considerable discussion in the public media and otherwise about the pending nomination of the Director of the CIA with the President having submitted the name of National Security Adviser Anthony Lake.

Last year the Senate Intelligence Committee did an extensive inquiry into a matter involving the sale of Iranian arms to Bosnia which involved Mr. Lake. I have written a ''Dear Colleague'' letter which I would like to read into the RECORD, and I ask unanimous consent that, at the conclusion of my statement, the Intelligence Committee report, a bipartisan report although there were some dissents, be printed in the RECORD.

We are checking to see how much of that may be printed in the RECORD under the rules.

The ''Dear Colleague'' letter which I am submitting today is as follows:

DEAR COLLEAGUE: Since the media is filled with commentary about National Security Adviser Anthony Lake's nomination to be CIA Director and a pro-Lake ''Dear Colleague'' letter has been circulated, I consider it important to give my fellow senators and others my thinking from last year's Intelligence Committee hearings, which I chaired, on his activities in connection with the sale of Iranian arms to Bosnia.

In my opinion, an indispensable qualification to be CIA Director is a mindset to keep Congress fully and currently informed on intelligence matters. Mr. Lake acknowledges he was a part of a plan by officials of the State Department and National Security Council to conceal from Congress and other key Executive Branch officials a new Administration policy to give a ''green light'' on the sale of Iranian arms to Bosnia when a U.S. and UN embargo prohibited it.

Secretary of Defense William J. Perry, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff John M. Shalikashvili and CIA Director R. James Woolsey told the Senate Intelligence Committee they knew nothing about that ''green light'' or the change in U.S. policy.

In concluding that Congress should have been informed about this matter, the bipartisan Intelligence Committee report stated:

''By keeping from Congress the full truth about U.S. policy, the Executive branch effectively limited Congress's ability to responsibly debate and legislate on the Bosnia issue.''

Rejecting the argument that the matter involved traditional diplomatic activity, the bipartisan Intelligence Committee report stated:

''But it was not traditional diplomatic activity to: (1) give a response to a foreign head of state which effectively contradicted stated U.S. policy on isolating a country, in this case Iran, against which U.S. law imposed sanctions; (2) implicity turn a blind eye to activity that violated a United Nations Security Council resolution which the United States had supported and was obligated to obey; and (3) direct a U.S. Ambassador not to make a written report of a conversation with a foreign head of state.''

Even though I heard Mr. Lake's version during the Intelligence Committee's proceedings and have talked to him in a private meeting since his nomination, I believe he is entitled to be heard at his confirmation hearing before a final judgment is made on his nomination.

I strongly disagree with the practice of abandoning nominees like Lani Guinier, Douglas Ginsburg and Zoe Baird or reaching a conclusion on their nominations until they have had their day in court. If we are to persuade able people to come into government, nominees are entitled to state their case in Senate hearings so that the charges will not stand alone without an appropriate opportunity to respond.

It is beside the point that the Department of Justice concluded Mr. Lake did not commit perjury or obstruction of justice in the inquiries on the sale of Iranian arms to Bosnia. There never was any basis, in my opinion, for the referral by the House Committee on those issues.

Nor am I concerned about the ancient history of Mr. Lake's so-called leftist activities which have drawn considerable attention. I had thought the stock sale issue was of lesser importance until he agreed to pay a $5,000 fine, so that issue calls for an inquiry; and it may be that other questions merit investigation such as the recent report that a member of his staff engaged in fundraising.

There is no doubt that Mr. Lake is a man of considerable ability, and I do not question the sincerity of his motives in acting in what he considered to be in the national interest on the Bosnia issue. But the critical question remains as to whether Mr. Lake can be counted upon to keep the Congress currently and fully informed.

The Congress must have positive assurance on that issue in the light of a half century's experience with the CIA including the Iran Contra affair.

And this ''Dear Colleague'' letter is signed by me and circulated to my colleagues.

In order to have a complete understanding of this issue, which as I say I consider to be central to whether Mr. Lake ought to be confirmed as Director of the CIA, it is necessary to review in some detail and in some depth the bipartisan report filed by the Intelligence Committee. I advise my colleagues that the report is available from the Intelligence Committee, and encourage all Senators to read it.

I thank the Chair, yield the floor, and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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