A bill (S. 936) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 1998 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe personnel strengths for such fiscal year for the Armed Forces, and for other purposes.

The Senate resumed consideration of the bill.

Pending:

Cochran-Durbin amendment No. 420, to require a license to export computers with composite theoretical performance equal to or greater than 2,000 million theoretical operations per second.

AMENDMENT NO. 420

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The pending question is the Cochran amendment No. 420.

The Senator from South Carolina.

Mr. THURMOND. Madam President, I would like to remind the Members of the Senate if they have amendments to this bill, the Defense authorization bill, they come down and offer them. Now is the time. There is no use to put it off. We have set aside this morning to consider these amendments, and we hope they will not delay.

I yield to the able Senator from West Virginia.

Mr. BYRD. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that I may speak out of order.

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

## EGYPT AND THE MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS

Mr. BYRD. Madam President, the Republic of Egypt has been an outstanding leader in the Arab world in bringing an historic reconciliation between the state of Israel and its neighbors, including the Palestinians. Egyptian leaders, including President Sadat as well as the present leader, President Mubarak, have dedicated substantial energy toward such a reconciliation. There has been constant, difficult opposition to this process in the region. President Sadat's tireless and courageous dedication to peace in the Middle East cost him his life. He paid the supreme sacrifice at the hands of an assassin. And he left a lasting legacy in fashioning the Camp David Accords together with Prime Minister Begin of Israel, through the good offices of President Jimmy Carter.

In the Middle East it has always taken three to tango. Advancing the process of making peace has required the dedication of the leaders of all three countries, Israel, Egypt and the United States. What is so dangerous about the current period is the apparent flagging of this dedication on the part of the government of Prime Minister Netanyahu, which has promoted the construction of new, and entirely unnecessary Jewish settlements in Arab portions of Jerusalem, a development sure to engender violence and the disruption of the peace process. Indeed, as I have said before on this floor, it was just when there appeared to be hopeful momentum toward resolving the outstanding issues between Israel and her neighbors that the right wing in Israeli politics initiated settlement construction activities and pulled the rug out from under this momentum. Unfortunately, attempts by President Clinton to revive this process were less than successful, in part, because of deep inconsistencies in the approach of the United States which appeared only half-heartedly—only halfheartedly—to protest the settlement construction activity on the part of the Netanyahu government. Unfortunately, the United States vetoed United Nations Security Council Resolutions protesting the settlement construction, which has, in effect, taken the United States out of the strong intermediary role that it needs to play for lasting progress to be made.

It was precisely at this point—with the Israeli right acting to put the brakes on the peace process, and only a perfunctory attempt, only a half-hearted attempt by the United States Administration to revive the peace process—that Egypt has stepped in again to use its influence to infuse new energy into the complicated dance steps of the Middle East peace process. President Mubarak arranged for meetings last month at Sharm el-Shiek between Palestinian and Israeli leaders and has shown himself to be in the Egyptian tradition in exercising courage and creativity to bring the parties together again. Indeed, President Mubarak has assigned a key aide to act as a troubleshooter and intermediary between the Israelis and Palestinians, and has sponsored an ongoing dialogue which has been praised by U.S. and Israeli officials alike. This Egyptian initiative, in fact, appears to be the only game in town at this time.

So I think it is very unfortunate that just at the time when Egypt is playing this central and responsible role, the Foreign Operations Subcommittee of the Appropriations Committee has chosen to take the extraordinarily unfair and puzzling step of removing the earmark of funds in the Foreign Operations Appropriations bill for Egypt, while at the same time preserving the earmark for Israel. As my colleagues are aware, those earmarks have been the practice ever since the Camp David Accords, the peace treaty between Israel and Egypt, were signed in 1979.

I was at the signing, and I had had the pleasure and the privilege of talking with President Sadat, the President of Egypt, in 1978, in Egypt. A courageous man, President Sadat, was leader in breaking the ice, and thus giving peace a chance, a chance in the Middle East.

So, the subcommittee action, now, sends precisely the wrong signal to the Egyptians, whose assassinated leader was the pioneer in this peace process, who gave his life that there might be peace in the Middle East.

Egypt should be commended for its diplomatic actions vis-a-vis the Palestinians and Israelis, not seemingly punished for her courage. Is Israel to be symbolically rewarded for the unnecessary and provocative action it has taken in building entirely unnecessary housing settlements in sensitive Arab lands? To add insult to this injury, the subcommittee has also taken the controversial step of approving $250 million for Jordan out of what is understood to be Egypt's account in the bill. While I certainly do not take issue with rewarding Jordan and King Hussein for signing the 1994 peace treaty with Israel and for helping on the matter of Israeli partial withdrawal from the West Bank city of Hebron earlier this year, it is far preferable and much more fair that the money for Jordan come equally from both Egypt's and Israeli's earmarks.

Madam President, I do not agree with the concept of earmarks of the very large magnitude that we have been making for both Israel and Egypt.

In my view, too much money goes to both nations—too much money. For years, this has been considered as something that was due them.

I think such a foreign entitlement program should eventually be phased out and eliminated. But if we are going to give such earmarks as a tool of American diplomacy and foreign policy, at the very least they must fairly reflect this Nation's goals.

These earmarks have been looked upon virtually as entitlements by both nations, Egypt and Israel. And while we in this Chamber struggle annually over the budget deficits in attempts to get them under control, while we cut discretionary spending for America, for the American people, while both the administration and the Republican regime on Capitol Hill continue to reduce discretionary spending, discretionary caps, and to ratchet down the spending for programs and projects beneficial to the American people, the taxpayers of this country, and help to build infrastructure in this country, all kinds of questions are asked and the game of one-upmanship is played as to who can cut the most.

I am an admirer and supporter of Israel. But are there any questions asked when it comes to funding programs in Israel? Are there any questions asked when it comes to this being looked upon as an entitlement figure for Israel and Egypt? No questions asked.

Are the American taxpayers fully aware that Congress and the Administration, every year, without any questions asked—no questions asked—provide $3 billion to Israel and $2 billion to Egypt, no questions asked, while we cut funding for water projects, sewage projects, highways, harbors, bridges, education, health, law enforcement, and Indian programs? We cut those programs. But no questions are asked when it comes to this entitlement of $3 billion annually for Israel and $2 billion annually for Egypt.

I am against those earmarks, but if we are going to have them, at least they must fairly reflect the Nation's goals.

What has been done as of yesterday on this matter by the subcommittee is flagrantly unfair and does a disservice to Egypt, to the United States, as well, and to our national interests in the basic process of making peace in the Middle East. I strongly oppose this action, and I hope that it can be corrected when the bill gets to the full Appropriations Committee next week, and if it isn't corrected there, then the attempt will be made at least to correct it on this floor. The action has not gone unnoticed.

The Ambassador from Egypt and I have discussed this matter. He came to my office a couple of days ago, and then we have been in discussions since on the telephone. I received a thoughtful letter from him which I may wish to share with my colleagues. The Ambassador is disappointed and perplexed by the subcommittee action, as am I, and as true friends should be, true friends of Israel and Egypt should be. I hope it can be corrected before even more damage is done.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that a letter to me, this date, from the Honorable Ahmed Maher El Sayed, the Egyptian Ambassador, be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the letter was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

EMBASSY OF THE
ARAB REPUBLIC OF EGYPT,
*June 20, 1997.*

Hon. ROBERT BYRD,
*U.S. Senate, Senate Hart Building,*
*Washington, DC.*

DEAR SENATOR BYRD: It was, as usual, an intellectual delight to talk to you last Wednesday to share with you the lessons of wisdom from the Bible and ancient Greece, and their meaning in the present circumstances. I particularly appreciate your giving me so much time, in a very busy schedule, so that I may appreciate again your sense of objectivity and fairness, as well as your deep insight of things.

Unfortunately, action was taken by the Foreign Operations Subcommittee to strike the earmark for assistance to Egypt, while keeping it for Israel.

While I know your general position regarding the aid program to Egypt and Israel, I also know that your sense of fairness would not support treating Egypt in such a discriminatory manner.

I would also like to set the record straight concerning Egypt's position in response to certain allegations which were made:

1. The non-attendance by President Mubarak, of the summit held in Washington last September was based on his assessment that Prime Minister Netanyahu was not ready, at this meeting, to take steps conducive to the advancement of the cause of peace. President Clinton clearly understood the motives of President Mubarak, and King Hussein of Jordan was quoted, after the meeting, as saying that in, hindsight, President Mubarak was justified in not attending.

2. The role of Egypt in reaching an agreement on Hebron was crucial. It was an Egyptian proposal which constituted the basis of the agreement. The Jordanian officials have recognized publicly that their proposal which led to the agreement is built on an Egyptian suggestion of a compromise. The American Peace Team recognized the Egyptian vital contribution to the solution.

3. Egypt did not lead an effort to reimpose the boycott on Israel. What happened is that at a regular meeting of the Arab League at its seat in Cairo, a unanimous decision was taken to revise steps taken toward normalization with Israel if it persisted in policies clearly contradicting its obligations. The resolution did not include countries bound by Treaties with Israel, i.e. Egypt and Jordan.

4. Relations between Egypt and Israel are normal, which does require neither subscribing by one party to the policies of the other, nor mandatory trade and travel. There exists on our part no restriction on trade and travel to Isreal, and far from stagnating, the two fields have seen in the last years, significant progress. A warm relation is one that is built through the years given the right circumstances; what is required, and in existence, are normal relations. It is not an unusual state of affairs that relations between countries fluctuate with the acuity of political problems. Egypt and Israel are bound by 16 agreements and protocols which have been implemented or being normally implemented.

5. I would like to remind you that Egypt out of its deep commitment to peace in the region, has embarked on a major effort to create conditions to bring the Palestinians and the Israelis back to the negotiating table. President Mubarak is personally involved in this effort. He has met with Prime Minister Netanyahu in Sharm El Sheikh, and since then contacts have been maintained both with the Israelis and Palestinians.

6. Our ties with Libya are normal relations between neighbors in the context of the respect of UN Resolutions. Our influence has been a moderating one.

All these points have been clearly explained by President Mubarak to distinguished members of Congress he met on various occasions, and thereofre, I do not believe that there is any justification in raising from the dead arguments and misrepresentations that had been laid to rest by the reality as recognized by most Egypt has been and continues to be a pioneer of peace, an anchor of stability in the Middle East, and a fierce defendant of the rule of law and legitimacy for which we fought side by side. Without its contribution and its courageous stands, as well as its cooperation with the US, it would not be envisageable to move towards achieving our common goals of peace and prosperity, and overcome the hurdles which Egypt is working very hard to overcome.

Best and warm regards,

Sincerely,

AHMED MAHER EL SAYED.

Mr. BYRD. Madam President, I yield the floor.

Mr. GRAMS addressed the Chair.

## NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 1998

The Senate continued with the consideration of the bill.

Mr. GRAMS addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota is recognized.

AMENDMENT NO. 420

Mr. GRAMS. Madam President, I inquire of the business now before the Senate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The pending question is on the Cochran amendment No. 420.

Mr. GRAMS. Madam President, I rise this morning to strongly oppose the amendment by my colleague and friend from Mississippi, Mr. COCHRAN, first for jurisdictional reasons, and most importantly because it is a seriously, I believe, flawed policy.

As chairman of the International Finance Subcommittee of the Senate Banking Committee, I object to the consideration of this matter, since it is within the jurisdiction of my subcommittee and the Committee on Banking. This is a very controversial issue and it should be heard and debated in the normal congressional process, by the proper committee of jurisdiction, not by a floor amendment with little opportunity for opponents to be heard. Many Members of this body may have already returned to their States and will not even have the opportunity to listen to the debate today.

The Senate has not had an opportunity to have a full debate on export controls in the last few years. Members need the benefit of time to fully analyze changes in an area that can have such a negative impact on U.S. companies and on U.S. jobs.

What really concerns me, Madam President, is that this amendment turns back the clock on technology. This amendment indicates it is directed at supercomputers, but computers at the 2,000–7,000 MTOPS level are not supercomputers, a point I will discuss later. The amendment reverses 2 years of effort to decontrol computers that are generally available. You will hear all sorts of talk today about how this amendment improves national security. But it does not. If the goal is to stop the sale of high performance computers to questionable end users in Russia, China, India, Pakistan, and Israel, it will stop the sale of United States computers to those end users—but it will not stop our allies from making those sales.

It is true that there are two companies currently under investigation for alleged sale without license to a questionable end user. Those investigations are still pending and should be pursued, so it seems premature to, in effect, have the Congress find them guilty. Let us let the process work. If they are guilty, they will be penalized. The U.S. companies selling computers abroad at this level are few; they are reputable and they do care about selling to questionable end users. The investigations have also had a positive effect in that they have encouraged companies to seek more validated licenses for uncertain end users. I disagree with my colleagues who believe businesses care only about the almighty dollar, and not national security.

This amendment will bring us back to the cold war days when export controls were required for computers sold in drug stores. A computer at 2,000 MTOPS, which is the level we would control, is a low-end work station which is widely available all over the world. We would establish unilateral controls on any computer over this capability. Our companies would have to