I want to work out an agreement where everybody can feel that we have a good national policy, and their interests are protected. If there is a legitimate concern about full and fair competition, if people are in any way concerned that the Air Force is going to tilt the competition to benefit private contractors at the expense of depots, which I don't believe because I think every pressure will be in the opposite direction, but the point is, if people are concerned about that, I am willing to sit down and work with them and come up with an ironclad system.

I am willing to bring private accounting firms into the certification process to guarantee that it is a fair competition. I am willing to do whatever we have to do to safeguard the competitive process. But I am not willing to let what I perceive to be special interest treat defense spending as welfare and say this belongs to us, even if we can't do it better, even if we can't do it cheaper, that the fact that we have done it means that we ought to have it forever.

We all have to resist that. We all have to represent our States. That is why we are elected. But we have to also look at the overriding national interest.

I wanted to come down today and go over all these issues because someday, the Senate is going to have to reach a decision on this. I think as it stands now, this decision will be made in conference. I hope that we can, in conference, preserve the ability to have price competition. I am hoping that next year, we can sit down and work out an agreement where everybody believes and is confident, to the degree we can make people confident, that their individual interests are protected.

But the issue here is not preventing base closures. We are going to close the bases. The flags are coming down. We are already moving people. Nobody is disputing that. Despite all the political rhetoric to the contrary, we are closing these bases. The question is: Should we use price competition to determine whether some of their functions go to other bases or whether they go to the private sector? And the Base Closing Commission recommended that we do that. So nobody is here trying to override the Base Closing Commission. What we are here trying to do is to implement the Base Closing Commission recommendations.

We all, obviously, look at an array of facts, and we often try to take the facts that bolster our case. I think that is only human nature. But I believe that if a person gathers all the facts and cuts through all the irrelevant issues and gets to the bottom line on this issue, it is: Do we believe in competition? Do we believe that we can maximize the effectiveness of national defense by having public-private competition where the best provider at the lowest price wins? I believe we do. I believe that is the principle that most Members of the Senate and the House believe in.

I wanted to take the time today—and I thank my colleagues for their forbearance in this lengthy speech—to at least get on the public record what one Member believes the facts to be. I yield the floor.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Who seeks time?

Mr. DODD addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 1998

The Senate continued with the consideration of the bill.

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I offer my congratulations to my friend and colleague from South Carolina, the distinguished chairman of the committee, and Senator LEVIN and others who have done, I think, a wonderful job in putting this bill together. I commend them for it. It is comprehensive, from a parochial standpoint. There are issues in my State that are addressed in this defense authorization bill which I think are extremely important from a national security standpoint, maintaining an industrial base, the teaming approach, the creative approach that the Defense Department has come up with that Electric Boat Division and Newport News in Virginia have joined together in a teaming process for the next generation of submarine technology that will allow both of those industrial bases to maintain their viability well into the next century.

Mr. President, stepping back a bit and looking at the Defense authorization bill as a whole, I'd like to complement my colleagues, Senator THURMOND and Senator LEVIN, the chairman and ranking member of the Armed Services Committee for bringing to the floor a bill that provides for the Nation's defense in a sound and fiscally responsible manner.

Let me comment on several provisions of the bill in particular.

First and foremost, this bill supports the submarine teaming plan which will save hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars and keep our current submarine industrial base viable for the near future. The Navy estimates that this teaming plan will save $650 million, or about half a submarine, when compared to straight competition. That's a fact, and it has not been disputed. In this era of cost cutting, teaming on submarines is clearly the best course. Moreover, if at some point in the future there is enough work for full competition between two submarine builders, only the teaming plan will ensure that two submarine builders still exist.

It is far too early, however, to become complacent on this matter, for high hurdles remain, but I plan to do my utmost to make sure that this plan, fully backed by the Navy, becomes law.

On a related matter, I'm glad to see that we are on track in authorizing funds to complete the third and final *Seawolf* submarine. Just last week, Electric Boat in Groton, CT, turned over to the Navy the U.S.S. *Seawolf*, the first submarine in the class and the most advanced submarine in the world. It once again demonstrates that the Nation looks to Connecticut to produce the world's finest equipment for the world's finest fighting forces.

This bill also calls for 36 UH–60 Blackhawk helicopters, a testament to the continued need for these versatile aircraft used by nearly every branch of the Armed Forces as well as a host of countries around the world. Also, these helicopters are ever-present in disaster relief operations, from the wildfires in California to the floods in the Dakotas. This bill will ease a bit the National Guard's massive shortfall in modern helicopters. Any National Guard adjutant general will attest to the outstanding capabilities of these helicopters, especially when compared to the aging, Vietnam-era UH–1 Huey helicopters many units may be forced to continue to use for the coming years.

Finally, this bill holds off on more rounds of base closures and I support that position. Although I've stood behind base closure rounds in the past, we don't have a good handle at this point on the costs and benefits from those previous rounds, so I'm disinclined to go forward. The GAO has found that, while there are probably eventual savings that accrue from BRAC rounds, the specific amounts cannot be pinned down from the available data. Furthermore, GAO has found that environmental cleanup costs have been underestimated and revenue from land sales has been overestimated—both resulting in lesser savings than DoD had initially calculated.

That is why I have signed onto an amendment offered by Senator DORGAN that has the support of both the majority leader and the minority leader. The amendment simply requires that we closely examine the data from the four previous base closure rounds as well as the shutdowns scheduled over the next year before we go forward with additional rounds. This doesn't seem too much to ask when we consider the difficulties that confront communities that surround a military base on the closure list. We owe it to those communities to provide accurate estimates rather than the more familiar overstatements of savings used to justify their extreme hardship.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DODD. 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. DODD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the pending amendment be temporarily laid aside.

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

AMENDMENT NO. 762

(Purpose: To add a subtitle relating to Persian Gulf War illnesses)

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I send an amendment to the desk and ask for its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Connecticut [Mr. DODD] proposes an amendment numbered 762.

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that further reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

(The text of the amendment is printed in today's RECORD under ''Amendments Submitted.'')

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, very briefly, this is an amendment that was adopted in the other body's consideration of the authorization for the Armed Services of this country, adopted 417–0. But I thought it was worthwhile for this body to speak as well to this issue.

I speak of the gulf war illnesses, Mr. President, that virtually every Member of this body and others have expressed deep concern about to the members of their own States who served in the gulf war. We know now that at least 10 percent of the 700,000 that served in the war may have been afflicted with a gulf war illness of one kind. To the credit of General Schwarzkopf and others who testified in recent weeks, it was suggested this matter ought to be pursued.

It is mystifying and disturbing to many exactly what kind of exposure those men and women were subjected to. I do not know that anyone can tell you categorically what the answer is yet, but this amendment tracks some of the conclusions reached by the General Accounting Office that they revealed in a recent report about the gulf war illnesses. The author of the amendment in the House, as well as myself, tracked that report, drafted this language, and are asking our colleagues to support it so that we might not only get to the bottom of this and provide the kind of treatment that our veterans deserve, but also maybe minimize in future situations being faced with the kind of difficulties that we have all heard about in various hearings that have been held in this body and the other over the last number of months regarding this issue.

This amendment, as I mentioned a moment ago, will provide, I think, some real solace, not to mention significant help, particularly help to the 700,000 members of the Armed Forces who served in the Persian Gulf war. And perhaps as many, as I said, as 10 percent of them who may be suffering from some form of these Persian Gulf war illnesses. It is a modest attempt to help those people.

In a $268 billion defense bill, I do not think we ought to find it too difficult to provide $4.5 million, which is what this amendment does, to study the most effective treatments of gulf war illnesses and encourage efforts to replicate those treatments. If there is one thing I think this body and this Nation can agree on, it is to do better by our gulf war veterans.

Clearly, our colleagues in the House recognized the imperative here. That body approved an amendment 417–0.

Mr. President, let me just briefly describe this amendment and why I think it is necessary.

This amendment will require the Defense Department and the Veterans Administration to work together to determine what is working in the treatment of gulf war illnesses. While the DOD and VA have taken an important step of offering examinations to all who fought in the Persian Gulf war, those agencies have not examined the adequacy and effectiveness of treatments after those initial examinations.

Mr. President, let me, just as an aside here, suggest as well utilizing the forum of this body to urge the gulf war veterans to visit their veterans hospitals in their States to be examined. There are 5,000 people in my State who served in the gulf war. Only about 400 to 500 have showed up at the veterans hospital in West Haven to be examined to determine whether or not they may be suffering any of the effects of the gulf war illnesses.

Many have had no effects whatsoever. But we are being told by experts that some of the reactions are delayed reactions, and they may not be showing up in the normal predictable course of events in a timely fashion. But if more people would just go for that half an hour examination, I am confident that the overwhelming majority will not find that they suffered any consequence, but it would be helpful for them and their families, but it would assist us immeasurably as we try to get to the bottom of this issue.

This, as I said, is an amendment that would help us identify some of the treatments that are working. This is based on the General Accounting Office report that was recently released and called ''Improved Monitoring of Clinical Progress and Reexamination of Research Emphasis Are Needed.'' It clearly asserts that neither the DOD nor the VA has a mechanism in place to monitor the effectiveness of treatment after those initial exams. This amendment would provide such a means, one that I feel is long overdue.

But it is not enough, in my view, to take just a close look at the present treatments. I think we must look ahead to make sure we do not repeat the mistakes. And this amendment will take steps on that front as well.

For example, the Defense Department has been unable to provide the location of military units at certain times during the Persian Gulf war. Specifically, we are apparently uncertain of troop movements in the proximity of the ammunition depot at Khamisiyah when it was destroyed.

That is why this amendment, I think, would be helpful in requiring the Defense Department to develop a plan to collect and maintain information regarding the daily location of units engaged in a contingency or combat operation. Had we done that during the gulf war, we would know where our troops were when the emissions of chemical or biological agents occurred. That is vitally important information.

Furthermore, both the General Accounting Office and the President's Advisory Committee on Gulf War Illnesses have highlighted the loss or incompleteness of military medical records. Now, years later, as researchers attempt to determine who is and who is not suffering from an illness that resulted from their service in the Persian Gulf war, the fact that in many cases they cannot piece together medical histories does not allow them to make an informed decision.

This amendment, Mr. President, would therefore require the Department of Defense to put a system in place that would accurately record the medical condition of service members prior to their deployment and retain such data in a centralized location to ease future access. Again, this is a modest proposal that would have prevented, I think, our current difficulties had it been in place prior to or during the Persian Gulf conflict.

Concerning the fact that troops in the Persian Gulf were given drugs that did not yet receive FDA approval for usage, this amendment would require that members of the Armed Forces at least be notified when they receive an investigational new drug. That way, if such drugs are required, at least our troops will not have any mistaken impressions about them.

Finally, Mr. President, I urge my colleagues to support this amendment. It gives the Defense Department and the Department of Veterans Affairs wide discretion and simply guides their action in areas where I think there have been some shortcomings.

The final objective is a better understanding of the best treatments of these illnesses and to guard against similar problems in the future.

Again, even though we have passed legislation banning the use of chemical weapons—the treaty—I think we all realize that this may be a reoccurring problem in the future. And this modest amendment, I think, would go a great distance to alleviating some of these problems.

Again, I emphasize that this has been adopted by the other body unanimously. I think it would be worthwhile

if this body were to express its opinion on this issue as well.

For those reasons, Mr. President, I offer this amendment and urge its adoption.

Mr. President, I am not asking for a rollcall vote on this. One may be necessary.

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, I am proud to cosponsor this amendment to the Department of Defense authorization bill. This amendment would better coordinate DOD's and VA's response to Persian Gulf war illnesses and would provide a plan to better protect the health of our troops during future deployments.

At the outset, it is important to note that DOD and VA have made a lot of progress on the important issues surrounding the illnesses suffered by veterans of the 1990–91 Persian Gulf war. They have coordinated their efforts in areas of evaluation, research, and outreach in ways that will benefit gulf war veterans as well as veterans of future deployments. But I think we all agree that there is still much to be done. This amendment builds on the coordination and progress that has been made so far. Therefore, I encourage all of my colleagues to join in support of this important measure.

As ranking member of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, I have witnessed firsthand the human costs of the gulf war. It is my belief, and that of many others, that the casualties of this war continued long after the battles were over. This is true of many wars, but the chronic health problems of many of the men and women who served in the gulf war have been particularly devastating as they have had to continue to fight to be heard and to get the care and benefits they have earned. Their battles should have been over by now, but their struggles are still ongoing. This amendment would go a long way to help address some of their concerns, and it puts some measures in place so that hopefully, we will not repeat our mistakes with the next deployment.

This amendment is important because it would require a joint plan from the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for providing appropriate health care for veterans of the gulf war, including those serving in Reserve units. It would require that this care be appropriate to the specific health problems or illnesses of gulf war veterans and that the quality and effectiveness of their health care be carefully monitored.

This amendment also attempts to address some of the lessons we have learned form the gulf war. It calls for DOD to improve medical tracking of service members deployed overseas in contingency or combat operations through the use of pre- and post-deployment medical examinations and through improved recordkeeping of immunization and health records. It calls for a plan to improve collection and maintenance of troop location information so we can better reconstruct risks and exposure data when unanticipated exposures such as Khamisiyah occur. It also would provide that service members receive timely notice of use of unapproved or investigational drugs, and it would require adequate record keeping of the administration of such drugs.

This amendment would authorize $4.5 million for the funding of clinical trials to evaluate the effectiveness of treatment protocols for gulf war veterans who present with ill-defined or undiagnosed conditions. It would call for a review of the previous Federal research efforts examining gulf war illnesses, as well as recommendations for the direction of future research efforts.

In my rule as ranking member of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, I have witnessed the struggles of America's gulf war veterans. I have heard their testimony in our hearings and I have met with them in hospitals and in their homes. I have received testimony from representatives from DOD and VA and I have heard their concerns and explanations. The course of events stemming from the gulf war, the resulting health problems, and our Federal response have contributed to a lack of public trust on this issue. This amendment is a step toward making things right and restoring our veterans' trust. I am proud to cosponsor this amendment and I encourage my colleagues to support it as well.

Mr. McCAIN addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona is recognized.

Mr. McCAIN. Mr. President, I think the amendment of the Senator from Connecticut is a very worthy one. I have been asked to review it, and other members of the committee asked to review it, including a Democrat member. And so, if it is agreeable to the Senator from Connecticut, we will have the amendment in line. Whether it is accepted on a recorded vote, we will know later on this afternoon.

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from Arizona.

Parliamentary inquiry. I would not have to at this moment then make a request for a recorded vote, but I could wait on that if that became necessary?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct.

Mr. DODD. I thank the Chair, and I thank my colleague.

I would like to move to another two matters, if I could, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut is recognized.

AMENDMENT NO. 765

(Purpose: To commend Mexico on the conduct of free and fair elections in Mexico)

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, on behalf of myself and my colleague from Arizona, I send an amendment to the desk and ask for its consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, the pending amendment is set aside.

The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Connecticut [Mr. DODD], for himself and Mr. McCAIN, proposes an amendment numbered 765.

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that further reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

At the appropriate place in the bill add the following new section:

SECTION. .

(A) Congress finds that—

(1) on July 6, 1997, elections were conducted in Mexico in order to fill 500 seats in the Chamber of Deputies, 32 seats in the 128 seat Senate, the office of the Mayor of Mexico City, and local elections in a number of Mexican states;

(2) for the first time, the federal elections were organized by the Federal Electoral Institute, an autonomous and independent organization established under the Mexican Constitution;

(3) more than 52 million Mexican citizens registered to vote,

(4) eight political parties registered to participate in the July 6, elections, including the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), the National Action Party (PAN), and the Democratic Revolutionary Party (PRD);

(5) Since 1993, Mexican citizens have had the exclusive right to participate as observers in activities related to the preparation and the conduct of elections;

(6) Since 1994, Mexican law has permitted international observers to be a part of the process;

(7) With 84% of the ballots counted, PRI candidates received 38% of the vote for seats in the Chamber of Deputies; while PRD and PAN candidates receive 52% of the combined vote;

(8) PRD candidate, Cuauhtemoc Cardenas Solorzano has become the first elected Mayor of Mexico City, a post previously appointed by the President;

(9) PAN members will now serve as governors in seven of Mexico's 31 states;

(B) It is the sense of the Congress that—

(1) the recent Mexican elections were conducted in a free, fair and impartial manner;

(2) the will of the Mexican people, as expressed through the ballot box, has been respected by President Ernesto Zedillo and officials throughout his Administration;

(3) President Zedillo, the Mexican Government, the Federal Electoral Institute, the political parties and candidates, and most importantly the citizens of Mexico should all be congratulated for their support and participation in these very historic elections.

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, this is an amendment that I offer on behalf of myself and my colleague from Arizona. This really is an amendment commending the people of Mexico, the Government of Mexico, and the people of Mexico as well, for this remarkable election that occurred just last Sunday which, for the first time in 68 years, has changed the political landscape of that country.

One might ask, ''Why are we offering a resolution on this? They had their election. So be it.''

Mr. President, for over the last number of years, the only time the issue of Mexico has come up on the floor of the Senate has been in a usually highly critical way having to do with the issue of drugs, narcotics, and our concern there. We had a debate on the North American Free Trade Agreement; obviously, that provoked a lot of criticism.

I thought it might be worthwhile for this body to take a moment out to say to our neighbor to the south, we applaud you as a people and as a Government for the election that you went through last Sunday.

To those who were victorious, we congratulate them. To those who lost, we express our regrets for you. We commend President Zedillo for having embraced the results, who saw to it that a process was in place that would not allow the corruption that occurred in the last election when apparently people who were legitimately elected were denied those victories.

The people of Mexico voted in strong numbers. There is a new mayor for the city of Mexico. Mexico, in the past, has not had freely elected mayors.

So while we as a Congress have been critical of Mexico in the past, I think it is worthwhile to take a moment out to say, ''Well done,'' and that Mexico has done an excellent job here. It is the first election. We hope there will be many more like it in the years to come. Obviously, one election is only the beginning of a process, but it is good for those of us who wanted to see improved relations between ourselves and our neighbor to the south.

My colleague from Arizona has spent a good deal of his time as a Member of this body interested in Mexico, not just from a geographical standpoint, although the State shares a border with our neighbor to the south, but because of his concern, as well, over the issue of narcotics and trade, the border issues which his State and other States in the Southwest face all the time.

We are not reluctant, as a body, to raise our voice where criticism is due. It is worthwhile to take a few moments out and to offer praise where praise is due. The people of Mexico, the Government of Mexico, the candidates and the parties involved, I think, are worthy of taking a moment out to congratulate them on their election last Sunday and to urge they continue in that process in the years ahead.

I urge the adoption of this language, and on this amendment, at some point, I will want to get a recorded vote because I am sure it will be unanimous, and I think it may be worthwhile to have such a recorded vote when it is appropriate and proper to do so.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I want to congratulate the Senator from Connecticut on proposing this amendment.

As he has pointed out, quite often when something goes wrong in Mexico, we and our colleagues are quick to take the floor and criticize, which is our role. But I think, as the Senator from Connecticut also pointed out, when something good happens, it is also important for us to take the floor and encourage our neighbors to the south in continuing the very difficult process toward a free and open society, which has been very difficult and arduous.

I also agree with the Senator from Connecticut we ought to have a vote on this amendment to tell the people in Mexico and their leaders of our support and our interest. Quite often, as I travel, especially in Latin America with my friend from Connecticut, I continue to be surprised at how much attention is paid to what we say here, how much attention is paid to what we do here. Quite often, we will do a unanimous-consent agreement, it comes to the floor, and it will make headlines all over that particular nation which is affected. Usually it is in the negative.

I cannot elaborate on what the Senator from Connecticut said except to point out again—I believe the first time the Senator from Connecticut and I traveled together was in 1987. If, 10 years ago, he and I had been in a conversation and I said, ''Guess what? In Mexico, an opposition party is now the mayor, a member of the opposition party is now the mayor of Mexico City,'' which has the largest concentration of people in Mexico, ''that many of the Governorships have been taken over by both opposing parties, both on the right and on the left, and that by all judgments that it was a free, fair, and open election,'' the Senator from Connecticut and I would have been accused of irrational thinking, to say the least, because it was not in the realm of possibility 10 years ago.

Now what has happened in Mexico, we are seeing a transition which, by the way, will be characterized and fraught with great danger and perhaps violence because of the inequities that exist in Mexico that we are all aware of, but a major step forward was made. It is an important landmark election in the history of the country of Mexico where the ruling party not only allowed but encouraged a free and fair process, which we all know was not the case before.

I think that we, the representatives of the American people, should do everything in our power to applaud, appreciate, and encourage such actions. I want to thank the Senator from Connecticut, whose long involvement of many years on these issues is important, and it has been an honor and a privilege for me to have the opportunity of working with him, as we have seen our neighbors to the south, not just Mexico but the other nations in Central and Latin America, make a transition for which I think holds a prospect for the peoples of our hemisphere which most observers thought was highly unlikely, if not impossible, in the recent past.

Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays on this amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

Mr. DODD. There is a good editorial in the Hartford Courant, entitled ''Mexico's Bloodless Revolution.'' I ask unanimous consent that that article be printed in the RECORD to underscore the point the Senator from Arizona and I have made with this amendment.

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

MEXICO'S BLOODLESS REVOLUTION

It's hard for most Americans to grasp the momentous nature of Mexico's election last Sunday.

Imagine if the same political party controlled Congress and the White House for almost 70 years. Imagine if the party won successive elections through fraud and ruled in a manner as imperious as a dictatorship. Then imagine that the party, in spite of its tremendous power, lost an election.

That's what happened in Mexico. Ever since its founding in 1929, the Institutional Revolutionary Party, known as PRI, has run the government as a fiefdom. The party's long rule was unnatural. In a healthy democracy, voters usually prefer periodic change if only to remind officeholders who is in charge.

Until recent years, Mexicans lived under a quasi-democracy. Although people voted for president, Congress and municipal officers, the outcome was pre-ordained.

As democracy swept through Latin America and the rest of the world—even Russia—Mexicans became convinced that their system stood out as a democracy in name only. To their credit, President Ernesto Zedillo and his recent predecessors understood the necessity of change, albeit much too slowly.

Mr. Zedillo helped form an autonomous election council that included no government officials and was not dominated by PRI. To minimize fraud, every voter's photograph was included on an identity card. Polling officials received special training and political parties and candidates received campaign funds from the treasury.

The turnout was estimated at 75 percent of the 52.2 million registered voters, and the elections were judged by independent observers to be clean. Unofficial results showed PRI losing its majority in the lower house of Congress.

Mr. Zedillo could become the first Mexican president since 1913 to face an opposition legislature. Even though his party, PRI, lost, he proclaimed that ''all Mexicans can say with pride and with unity that democracy has been institutionalized in our country.''

One honest election does not institutionalize democracy, but it's a big step forward. Mexico's northern neighbors can only be pleased by this historic development.

Mr. DODD. I thank our colleagues on the Armed Services Committee. Certainly a case can be made that this is not directly bearing on the dollar amounts here, but there is a security issue involved.

AMENDMENT NO. 763

(Purpose: To congratulate Governor Christopher Patten of Hong Kong)

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I have an amendment that will not require a recorded vote. The reason I am offering it here is for the sense of timeliness. Again, I appreciate the indulgence of the members of the Armed Services Committee.

I ask unanimous consent that the pending amendment be temporarily set aside.

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

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I now send the amendment to the desk and ask for its consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Connecticut [Mr. DODD] proposes an amendment numbered 763.

Mr. DODD. I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

At the appropriate place in the bill at the following new section:

SEC. . (a) CONGRESSIONAL FINDINGS.—The Congress finds that—

(1) His Excellency Christopher F. Patten, the now former Governor of Hong Kong, was the twenty-eighth British Governor to preside over Hong Kong, prior to that territory reverting back to the People's Republic of China on July 1, 1997;

(2) Chris Patten was a superb administrator and an inspiration to the people who he sought to govern;

(3) During his five years as Governor of Hong Kong, the economy flourished under his stewardship, growing by more than 30% in real terms;

(4) Chris Patten presided over a capable and honest civil service;

(5) Common crime declined during his tenure and the political climate was positive and stable;

(6) The most important legacy of the Patten administration is that the people of Hong Kong were able to experience democracy first hand, electing members of their local legislature; and

(7) Chris Patten fulfilled the British commitment to ''put in place a solidly based democratic administration'' in Hong Kong prior to July 1, 1997.

(b) It is the Sense of the Congress that—

(1) Governor Chris Patten has served his country with great honor and distinction; and

(2) He deserves special thanks and recognition from the United States for his tireless efforts to develop and nurture democracy in Hong Kong.

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, for reasons that will become obvious as I engage in these remarks on why I am offering this amendment at this time, this amendment congratulates Chris Patten, who served as the Governor General of Hong Kong. We can wait, I suppose, a few weeks, and it might lose its sense of timeliness.

I think Chris Patten did a remarkable job in Hong Kong. He was the source of a lot of criticism within the People's Republic of China and elsewhere because he spoke up on behalf of democracy in Hong Kong and established the first freely elected assembly in Hong Kong, which we are hopeful will be reinstituted based on commitments that have been made.

I thought it might be worthwhile for us as a body here to express our appreciation for the job that Chris Patten did during his tenure as a Governor of Hong Kong. It was a remarkable and historic tenure.

Before the July 4th recess, I spoke at some length about Chris Patten's accomplishments as the last Governor of Hong Kong under British rule. Much of what I said at the time I have sought to incorporate in the sense-of-the-Congress amendment.

Mr. President, we all watched the pomp and circumstance on Monday, June 30, as the clock in Hong Kong ticked toward midnight. At 1 minute before midnight Hong Kong time we witnessed the Union Jack being lowered for the last time, and the unfurling of the People's Republic of China flag in the night sky.

That was truly a historic occasion. Appropriately, the events were attended by representatives from governments around the world. July 1, 1997, will at the very least, become an important footnote in the history of the 20th century.

Having said that, I think the U.S. Senate should also acknowledge what preceded those events—the very impressive accomplishments of the Governor, Chris Patten, during his tenure in Hong Kong. We should thank him, I think, for his service to his own country, but more importantly, in many ways to the people of Hong Kong. Simply put, that is what my amendment seeks to do.

I hope my colleagues support this expression of our appreciation and congratulate him for a job well done on behalf not only of his own nation, the people of Hong Kong, but for all democracy-loving people around the globe.

I ask for the adoption of the amendment at the appropriate time. I will reserve the yeas and nays. I do not want to take up time for a recorded vote unnecessarily.

Mr. ASHCROFT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the pending amendment be set aside and I be allowed to speak as in morning business.

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

Mr. ASHCROFT. I ask unanimous consent I be able to proceed until I complete my remarks, which will be 20 or 25 minutes.

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

CHINESE MILITARY EXPANSION AND UNITED STATES NATIONAL SECURITY

Mr. ASHCROFT. Mr. President, no one did more to bring peace and prosperity in our time than our 40th President, Ronald Reagan. President Reagan's economic and foreign policies gave us the longest peacetime expansion in our history and, indeed, did fulfill an ambition of this country to make the world safe again for democracy. But more than that, Ronald Reagan called us to our highest and best; we never spoke with more certainty or sat taller in the saddle than when Ronald Reagan was riding point.

In his second inaugural address, Reagan spoke of the danger of simple-minded appeasement, of accommodating countries at their lowest and least. ''History,'' said President Reagan, ''teaches us that wars begin when governments believe the price of aggression is cheap.'' Having seen the death and destruction of five wars in his lifetime, President Reagan's was a lesson learned at some expense. It was a lesson which he refused to repeat. And from his experience was borne the policy of peace through strength—a strategy that recognized that wishful thinking about our adversaries is a betrayal of our past and a squandering of our freedom.

But today, the administration seems to have forgotten this costly lesson. It seems driven not by foreign policy so much as by foreign politics, willing to pursue that which sounds historic rather than adopting policies that are historically sound.

Nowhere is this administration's failed thinking more apparent than in United States policy toward China. As I noted on the floor 2 weeks ago, Beijing has embarked on a military buildup that may soon threaten security interests in Asia, including our own. China already has the world's largest military at 2.9 million and is taking steps to enhance its force projection capabilities, including the acquisition of a blue water navy and a 21st century air force.

China is not an enemy of the United States. I sincerely hope that Washington and Beijing can develop a forthright and an enduring relationship. For such a relationship to develop, however, security issues must be addressed and fundamental questions about those issues must be answered.

What does it mean when China engages in a dramatic military buildup aimed at achieving superpower status? What does it mean when China proliferates technology for weapons of mass destruction and signs a $4.5 billion arms deal with the terrorist State of Iran? What does it mean when China fires missiles in the Taiwan Strait and seizes small islands in the South China Sea? For this belligerence suggests a China bent on regional domination.

While China's official military budget is roughly $8 billion, Beijing effectively conceals military spending through off-budget funding and revenue. Reliable estimates place China's military spending from 4 to 10 times the official budget. Russia alone, has made over $7 billion in arm sales to China since 1990, and hundreds, perhaps thousands, of underemployed Russian nuclear engineers have been hired by China in the last several years.

Mr. President, the People's Liberation Army of China, has 20,000 companies, business enterprises, that funnel revenue into the military's coffers. These PLA companies are not the kind of competitors we want to welcome to the American market. Companies with ties to the PLA benefit from their special relationship with Beijing and have been involved in criminal activities ranging from smuggling assault weapons onto the streets of San Francisco to stealing defense-related technology.

So what, then, has this explosion in military spending wrought? First, a missile program that will soon give China the capacity to build hundreds of highly accurate ballistic missiles. Second, short- to medium-range ballistic