

stay is a court injunction which automatically arises whenever anyone declares bankruptcy. Earlier in this Congress, as part of the authorizing legislation for the Chemical Weapons Convention, I authored an amendment which gives the Government an exception to the automatic stay so that public health and safety regulations can be enforced. So, the philosophical question posed by my amendment is this: Which policy should win out, bankruptcy policy or public health and safety policy? For me, that choice is simple. I want to protect the American people from unsafe food and unsafe airlines. But many in the bankruptcy community believe that Congress should make the opposite choice.

When we begin the process of bankruptcy reform, I will be looking to find other instances in which the Bankruptcy Code harms the public so that Congress can make changes to protect the public.

The broad themes that I believe will dominate bankruptcy reform in the 105th Congress, include the following: Promoting personal responsibility; protecting consumers, debtors, and the public; promoting international commerce; and protecting States' rights where possible.

I look forward to coming before the Senate next year with a good bankruptcy reform bill which promotes these themes. I hope to do that in a bipartisan manner. I yield the floor.

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. KEMPTHORNE. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. KEMPTHORNE. Mr. President, I thank the Chair.

(The remarks of Mr. KEMPTHORNE and Mr. CHAFEE pertaining to the introduction of S. 1180 and S. 1181 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. KEMPTHORNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there now be a period for the transaction of morning business with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 5 minutes each.

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

THE BOSNIAN ELECTIONS

Mr. BIDEN. Last weekend the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina went to the polls to elect municipal governments. These local elections had been postponed from last year because of tampering with registrations, chiefly by the Bosnian Serbs.

I am happy to report, Mr. President, that this year's municipal elections were a success. Despite dire threats of violence against refugees and displaced persons who wanted to cross over to their former homes to vote, over 2 days not one single incident of serious violence occurred in the entire country.

Why? Because SFOR, led by recently reinforced American troops, made clear to all parties that violence would not be tolerated.

Every single time over the past several years when the West has been forceful in its behavior, the ultra-nationalists in Bosnia have backed down.

The elections were carried out by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe [OSCE], in which the United States is an active member. The OSCE deserves a great deal of credit for its successful labors.

The results of the elections will not be known for several days. Already, however, some encouraging signs are emerging. In Tuzla, the Muslim Party for Democratic Action [SDA] conceded defeat by Mayor Selim Beslagic's multi-ethnic joint list. I met Mayor Beslagic last month. He represents just the kind of democratic, tolerant, pragmatic politician that can rebuild Bosnia.

Until now the three ethnically based parties that profess to represent the interests of the Muslims, Serbs, and Croats have dominated the airwaves and the patronage system. Tuzla—and perhaps other cities in both the federation and the Republika Srpska—show that if SFOR and the international community guarantee equal access, their monopoly on power can be broken.

Moreover, it is likely that thanks to absentee voting and to the protection offered by SFOR to returning refugees, the election may reverse the vile ethnic cleansing of the war. For example, the town of Drvar in western Herzegovina was 97 percent Serb until the town's inhabitants were driven out in the fall of 1995. Last weekend the Croats who displaced the Serbs did their best to harass returning Serb voters. International election officials from the OSCE, however, insisted that the Serbs be allowed to vote.

Several other towns like Jajce and Srebrenica, site of the largest civilian massacre in Europe since World War II, may see their former inhabitants, in these two cases Muslims, forming the governments.

The international community is now faced with the stark question of whether it will enforce the results of the elections by guaranteeing that the newly elected councils not remain governments in exile.

Enforcing the election results, of course, means that the right of refugees and displaced persons to return must be honored. In most cases that would be able to be accomplished only by the international community under the protection of SFOR.

Mr. President, I believe we have no choice in this matter. Both for moral and practical reasons we must move rapidly to enforce resettlement of refugees. This will be a difficult task, and time is short before the onset of the Balkan winter. Most likely we will have to begin with highly visible demonstration returns in one to two selected towns. But we must keep the democratic momentum going.

Rebuilding shattered Bosnia is an immense undertaking. Now for the first time in years, there has been a string of successes. The United States has been the prime mover in these, and we must continue our valuable and honorable work.

I thank the Chair and yield the floor.

THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business yesterday, Monday, September 15, 1997, the Federal debt stood at \$5,388,983,472,859.37. (Five trillion, three hundred eighty-eight billion, nine hundred eighty-three million, four hundred seventy-two thousand, eight hundred fifty-nine dollars and thirty-seven cents)

Five years ago, September 15, 1992, the Federal debt stood at \$4,033,874,000,000. (Four trillion, thirty-three billion, eight hundred seventy-four million)

Ten years ago, September 15, 1987, the Federal debt stood at \$2,353,169,000,000. (Two trillion, three hundred fifty-three billion, one hundred sixty-nine million)

Fifteen years ago, September 15, 1982, the Federal debt stood at \$1,113,183,000,000 (One trillion, one hundred thirteen billion, one hundred eighty-three million)

Twenty-five years ago, September 15, 1972, the Federal debt stood at \$436,866,000,000 (Four hundred thirty-six billion, eight hundred sixty-six million) which reflects a debt increase of nearly \$5 trillion—\$4,952,117,472,859.37 (Four trillion, nine hundred fifty-two billion, one hundred seventeen million, four hundred seventy-two thousand, eight hundred fifty-nine dollars and thirty-seven cents) during the past 25 years.

HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, it is with great pleasure that I join with my colleagues in celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month.

Since 1968, we have formally recognized and celebrated the tremendous contributions of Hispanic-Americans to the history, strength, security, and development of our great nation. This year, we once again embark on this