

The Secretary of State has justified this intervention on three grounds: that it is vital to the survival of NATO, a strange proposition when we have gotten NATO into this position largely ourselves and largely by accident; second, that there are humanitarian reasons to save the victims of this civil war, a justification which will also require us to enter a civil war in Africa, and perhaps in Afghanistan, and in Lord knows how many other places around the world; and the ancient domino theory that if we don't stop this fighting here, it will next go over into Macedonia, into Greece, and into Turkey. But if we were to defend Macedonia, at least we would be defending a sovereign nation.

Mr. President, I am convinced that before the President commits our Armed Forces to combat in Kosovo that he should be required to seek the advice and consent of both of the Houses of the Congress of the United States. I am convinced that this is a matter on which the views of this body should be known formally after a debate, and by a vote. I am convinced that the amendment sets the issues in this case in stark and appropriate context. And I am convinced, Mr. President, that we should vote in favor of that Smith amendment; that we should not risk the lives of members of our armed services and the prestige of the United States to an undefined cause for undefined and secondary ends in a way in which those ends are highly unlikely to be met, or at least highly unlikely to be met without a permanent investment in both our money and in our Armed Forces.

THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business yesterday, Thursday, March 18, 1999, the Federal debt stood at \$5,639,558,556,809.78 (Five trillion, six hundred thirty-nine billion, five hundred fifty-eight million, five hundred fifty-six thousand, eight hundred nine dollars and seventy-eight cents).

One year ago, March 18, 1998, the Federal debt stood at \$5,537,179,000,000 (Five trillion, five hundred thirty-seven billion, one hundred seventy-nine million).

Five years ago, March 18, 1994, the Federal debt stood at \$4,554,111,000,000 (Four trillion, five hundred fifty-four billion, one hundred eleven million).

Twenty-five years ago, March 18, 1974, the Federal debt stood at \$471,215,000,000 (Four hundred seventy-one billion, two hundred fifteen million) which reflects a debt increase of more than \$5 trillion—\$5,168,343,556,809.78 (Five trillion, one hundred sixty-eight billion, three hundred forty-three million, five hundred fifty-six thousand, eight hundred nine dollars and seventy-eight cents) during the past 25 years.

SAFE DRINKING WATER FOR RURAL AMERICA

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, as the Congress works to provide billions of dollars to address a crisis affecting our neighbors abroad who have had their lives disrupted overnight by raging waters, I have become more and more concerned about another water-related crisis occurring every day in this nation. That crisis is the lack of a safe, reliable supply of drinking water for millions of rural American families. Since 1995, federal data outlining the sorry details of the safe drinking water crisis have been available and, yet, year after year, adequate funding for water and wastewater projects that would solve this crisis is not provided. Last night, my distinguished colleagues joined Senator STEVENS and me in sending a message to rural Americans that their crisis is not forgotten.

Yesterday evening, the Senate adopted an amendment offered by myself and Senator STEVENS to the supplemental appropriations bill that would provide \$30 million in additional funds for rural water and wastewater systems. This money would benefit the neediest of rural communities that are affected by extreme conditions that increase the cost of constructing water and wastewater systems, that have a high incidence of health problems related to water supply and poor sanitary conditions, or whose residents are suffering from a high rate of poverty.

Within the \$30 million in budget authority provided in this amendment, \$5 million would be allocated for loans and \$25 million for grants. The result would be a total program level of \$55,303,000. The reality of this funding is that this year, an additional 25 or more communities throughout the United States would get some relief from the fear of an inadequate, unsafe supply of drinking water.

Safe, reliable drinking water is not an amenity. Safe drinking water is essential to the health and well-being of every American. All life as we know it depends on the necessary element of water.

Most Americans take safe drinking water for granted. Most Americans just assume that when they turn on the faucet, clean water will automatically flow out of the faucet. They assume that there will always be easy access to an unlimited supply of clean, safe drinking water.

The terrible truth is that, in the United States of America, the health of millions of men, women, and children is made vulnerable by their reliance on a possibly contaminated water supply.

According to statistics from 1998, approximately 2.2 million rural Americans live with critical quality and accessibility problems related to their drinking water, including an estimated 730,000 American citizens who have no running water in their homes. Let me repeat that—an estimated 730,000 people have no running water in their homes. An additional five million rural

Americans are affected by grave, although less critical, water problems, such as water sources that are over-taxed or poorly protected, and by antiquated distribution systems. The very young and the elderly are placed at particular risk of illnesses caused by unsafe, unclean, drinking water, and many towns without a reliable supply of water cannot even protect residents from the threat of fire.

This funding provided in our amendment is desperately needed to address conditions in West Virginia and much of Appalachia, the Mississippi Delta, in rural and native Alaskan villages, the Colonias, and in Indian Reservations. Senator STEVENS has been working hard to get the necessary funds for an authorized program for rural development in several Alaskan Native villages. I understand that while the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is trying to help, funding simply is not there for the water and wastewater systems that are the backbone of any development proposal. Our amendment specifically directs funds through the national reserve in an effort to serve the deserving families in Alaska in a timely manner.

In my own state of West Virginia, families in towns such as Pageton, Belington, and Crum must deal with the normal family worries of providing food, shelter, and a sound education to their children. Can you imagine the frustration that these families face every day in having to further protect their children from a foul or unreliable source of water! I am not talking about water that smells bad or tastes funny. I am talking about water that must be boiled before consumption, or that flows—when it flows—like opaque brown sludge from their taps. This is water not fit to wash a car, let alone to cook with or to mix with baby formula. That simply should not be, in a nation as rich in resources as we are.

A good part of the supplemental provides assistance for disaster recovery in other nations. This amendment reaches out to Americans in crisis. It gives hope to rural America that a brighter future lies ahead, a future flowing as bright and clear as the water out of their tap.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

The following bill was read the second time and placed on the calendar:

H.R. 975. An act to provide for a reduction in the volume of steel imports, and to establish a steel import notification and monitoring program.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. DOMENICI, from the Committee on the Budget, without amendment:

S. Con. Res. 20. An original concurrent resolution setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal years 2000 through 2009 (Rept. No. 106-27).