missions and domestic bureaus to ensure that the State Department is performing with maximum efficiency and using resources appropriately. Certainly the inspector general can, and should, continue to concentrate in these areas. But criminal investigations are far more complex and sensitive than routine audits and inspections.

I think many of my colleagues would be surprised at the type and scope of investigations that the State Department inspector general undertakes, and, frankly, at the number of matters that get referred to the Justice Department for further action which the Justice Department declines to take up.

The inspector general currently decides when and who to investigate. There are virtually no checks—none—on the office once it has commenced a criminal investigation.

While the State Department inspector general's office is supposed to be a neutral finder of fact, experience shows that historically that office has acted in a highly adversarial manner trying to establish cases that can be referred to the Justice Department.

I happen to believe, as an aside, that the inspector general's handling of matters relating to Ambassador Richard Holbrooke unnecessarily delayed the consideration of his nomination to the Senate and at additional taxpayer cost.

Let me, however, commend the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee for the very thorough but expeditious manner in which he has guided the Foreign Relations Committee deliberations of that particular nomination.

I would also like to call to the attention of the Members the final report of the independent counsel appointed to investigate the so-called ''Clinton passport matter,'' which arose in the course of the 1992 Presidential elections. Joseph diGenova, the independent counsel in that case, took the State Department Office of the Inspector General to task for the sloppiness and lack of professionalism with which it conducted the initial investigation of this matter. He concluded by saying that this matter should never have been referred for criminal prosecution, nor should an independent counsel have been appointed.

It is not my intention to push this amendment to a final vote. I know the managers of the bill and the members of the Governmental Affairs Committee have some questions about this amendment as it is currently drafted. I respect their judgment tremendously. At the very least, however, I believe there is a need for an independent agency, the General Accounting Office, to take a long and hard and serious look at the practices of the inspector general's office with respect to criminal investigations and assess whether these offices are the appropriate places for criminal matters to be looked at.

These offices were set up to conduct and perform certain valuable and important functions. In my view, as with so many other offices, once they get started they go off into areas they lack expertise in and conduct investigations which are questionable, at best. This has happened, with little or no checks and balances.

Even under the independent counsel law, I point out, a person is entitled to know what they are charged with and given a chance to respond to the allegations raised. Under the Inspector General's investigations, a person is not given those rights.

Fundamental due process would seem to insist everyone be given the opportunity to respond to charges leveled against them.

I think this is a serious matter. I am hopeful the matter can be corrected without having to go through a legislative route. I think it can be done administratively. I urge the State Department, the Secretary of State, and others to make these corrections. If not, I will come back with this amendment next year. I will offer it in committee and I will offer it on the floor to legislatively deal with this issue.

I am anxious to hear other thoughts and ideas on how to correct this problem. I take it seriously when the careers of individuals can be ruined and destroyed by opening up one of these investigations without providing that individual with an opportunity to respond to those charges.

I ask unanimous consent to withdraw the amendment I offered a few moments ago.

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

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will now stand in recess until the hour of 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 1:11 p.m., recessed until 2:16 p.m.; whereupon, the Senate reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer [Mr. INHOFE].

FOREIGN RELATIONS AUTHORIZATION ACT, FISCAL YEARS 2000 AND 2001—Continued

AMENDMENT NO. 692

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, how many minutes are assigned to the distinguished Senator?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On the Feingold amendment, 5 minutes equally divided—amendment No. 692.

Mr. HELMS. And Senator LUGAR has some time?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. It is 5 minutes equally divided. Senator LUGAR would have 2½ minutes.

Mr. HELMS. I thank the Chair.

I see both Senators on the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wisconsin.

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Anne Alexander, a fellow in my office, be accorded the privilege of the floor during the remainder of the debate on the State Department authorization bill.

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

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, before my time begins, I ask unanimous consent to add the Senator from North Dakota, Mr. DORGAN, as a cosponsor of my amendment.

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

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, my amendment does not kill the National Endowment for Democracy, nor does it cut off one penny from its budget. Rather, this amendment reforms the grant-making process of the NED.

The NED seeks to promote democracy around the world. I believe it is only just and fair that its grant-making process be open and competitive on a level playing field for all applicants. Mr. President, 65 percent of NED's grant money is automatically allocated to four so-called ''core grantees,'' while everyone else has to compete for the remaining 35 percent of the budget. I really do not think this is fair.

The core grantees have done good work in promoting democracy abroad, but are the programs sponsored by the core grantees so superior to all the other programs we have that we must assume they should automatically get the full 65 percent while everyone else has to compete for a much smaller piece of the pie?

My amendment does not cut funding for the NED or even necessarily for these four grantee groups. It just phases out, over a 5-year period, the automatic bonanza these groups get every year. This amendment will simply level the playing field so these groups have to compete for funding like everybody else.

So I urge my colleagues to understand this does not cut a penny. It does not change the basic mission. It just says we have reached the point, with these taxpayers' dollars, where it really should be phased down to the point where everything is done on a competitive basis.

I urge my colleagues to support the amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana.

Mr. LUGAR. Mr. President, I rise to oppose the amendment of the distinguished Senator from Wisconsin.

The National Endowment for Democracy for the last 18 years has made grants to organizations all over the world to boost democracy in the most critical areas. It came about during the Reagan administration, in which the genius of the plan, of pulling together representatives of the Republican Party, the Democratic Party, the National Chamber of Commerce, and AFL–CIO, brought checks and balances within our own political spectrum but