is big enough, the United States is strong enough, we are sophisticated enough, and we are smart enough to serve more than one vital national interest at the same time.

In other words, we can be concerned about human rights, we obviously have to be concerned about our national security because no other nation will be, but we can also be concerned about our commerce with other countries, particularly the biggest country in the world, a country that has reduced, through this agreement, barriers for our goods to go to their country; in other words, setting the stage for a more level playing field because we already let a lot of Chinese goods into this country. There are very few restrictions.

We can take our commerce into mind, we can take human rights and national security into mind, and we do not have to compromise. We can and must have a national security policy that protects our vital security interests. When there is a breakdown that threatens our security, we must and will fix it. We can and must speak out for the oppressed who cannot speak for themselves, and we can and must advance our interests in open markets and trade liberalization.

We can and must do all these things at the same time. We can do this because trade, in and of itself, has so many different dimensions. Through trade, we export more than goods. We export more than manufactured products and services. When we have people-to-people relations that come about through commerce, we export part of our values, part of what makes America great: our American values. We also export, it seems, part of our society. That is why we must engage China commercially.

While I would like to see the Senate vote to approve permanent trading relations for China as soon as possible, the timing of this vote is not entirely in the Senate's hands.

First, China has to complete its remaining bilateral negotiations, especially with the European Union. The European Union may conclude a bilateral deal with China later this month. But some tough issues still remain between those two giants. So it is not clear when these bilateral talks will end.

If China finishes its negotiations with the European Union, China still has to conclude negotiations with 10 other trading partners, as well as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

Second, we have to complete work on the protocols that provide the underpinnings for the United States-China agreement that was signed last November and which is the basis for permanent normal trading relations between the United States and China. Several challenging protocol issues remain to be resolved.

In my view, we can only have the permanent normal trading relations vote after all these steps in the process are completed. Senators, including this Senator, of course, will want to carefully review—in fact we have the responsibility to make sure we carefully review—the results of the protocol working party, which may be held in March, and carefully look at all the details before we schedule the permanent normal trading relations vote.

As far as the Senate action on normal trading relations is concerned, I expect that every aspect of the agreement be transparent. That means everything besides the protocols—meaning the written protocols, including side letters, oral or even wink-of-the-eye understandings—must be put on the table before the Senate so that each of the 100 Senators are aware of them. That is what I mean when I say transparency.

As Senators, we cannot make the same mistake we made with the Canadian Free Trade Agreement, of being oblivious to the side letter, the agreement contents of which have been unfair to our wheat farmers ever since. Senators never knew about that until about 5 or 6 years after the Canadian Free Trade Agreement was voted on by the Senate. That is why, when it comes to normal trading relations with China—and it is very important we approve that agreement—everything has to be on the table.

On the issue of the World Trade Organization, the most shocking thing that happened in Seattle—apart from the riots and the mindless destruction—was that there was no consensus to move forward. No agenda was agreed to. This lack of consensus is especially shocking when you consider how much trade has helped bring unprecedented prosperity not only to the United States but around the world.

In 1947, when this all started with the first round of multilateral trade negotiations—that was called the Geneva Round—the total world value of trade was only $50 billion. Today, it is $7 trillion. It is hard to think of a moment in history when such prosperity has been generated in such a short period of time.

But despite this huge increase in our collective wealth, the world's trade ministers in Seattle could not reach agreement over how to keep this great economic engine going and create even more prosperity that will naturally result not just to the United States but to everybody in the world through freer trade. It does not take a rocket scientist to understand how much greater our national wealth is because of freer trade. Common sense dictates that we should continue down this path.

The mandated negotiations on agriculture and services, the so-called building agenda, are now underway in Geneva. We may even have a special agricultural negotiation process to continue the agricultural portions of the talks. But I do not think we will see any quick agreement on the items that were left on the table in Seattle or even on the question of whether to restart the negotiations on drafting a ministerial declaration.

Instead, I think we will see, in Geneva, a period of quiet consultation and consensus building. Considering the disaster that took place in Seattle, maybe it is easy to conclude that we do need a period of quiet consultation, and particularly consensus building, because nothing happens in the WTO except by consensus. So if everybody worries about America's interests being compromised at the WTO, just remember, it is done by consensus. If the United States does not agree to it, it will not get done.

Seattle, of course, was a huge shock to the World Trade Organization and the process. We must try to restore mutual confidence among all the parties. The negotiators will need some time, perhaps even a few months, to refine their positions after the start of consultations.

In summary, I see the next few weeks and months in Geneva as a period where we try to restore faith in the World Trade Organization and in each other and try to rebuild the groundwork for the process of establishing a consensus on trade. Progress may be incremental, but I believe we can achieve it.

When it comes right down to it, rebuilding this confidence is not just a job for the WTO or just for our negotiators; it is a challenge we will have to address in the Senate, particularly in the Finance Committee and in my trade subcommittee.

How can we get there? I believe there is one way. We must make a moral case for free trade. We must do a better job of making the case that free trade has helped us keep the peace, that free trade has brought freedom and prosperity to millions, that it has helped families and nations attain new levels of economic progress. I believe it is up to Congress to help make the moral case for free trade. The future of our international trading system may depend upon how well we do it. I intend to address this topic of the moral case for free trade many times this year. It may be one of the most important things we do this year in the Senate.

Mr. President, I notice there are no other Members who have come to speak, so I ask unanimous consent to continue on my time in morning business to address another issue. I ask unanimous consent for 15 minutes at the most.

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

THE ADMINISTRATION'S FARM ASSISTANCE PROPOSAL

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I come to the floor this afternoon to discuss the recent farmer assistance package outlined in the President's budget proposal. It is often the case that these proposals are complicated and difficult

to explain. But this proposal can actually be explained with one word. That word is ''awful.'' The administration's proposal is simply an awful idea.

I am not one to usually criticize anybody who brings ideas to the table that in any way will assist American farmers, but in this instance I believe I must call it what it really is—an awful proposal. In fact, I am embarrassed by the administration's proposals. I can think of all the Democratic Senators who have been on this floor over the last year—the last 12 months—who have chastised Republicans for not doing enough to help farmers, and doing it in the right way, being embarrassed by the paltry sum of money the President has included and, more importantly, the complicated formula by which they arrive at this assistance.

Just recently, we had the Vice President in Iowa stumping for political support in the famous Iowa caucuses. He told my fellow farmers he supports a ''sound, sensible farm policy.'' Those are his words. If this is what the administration means by ''sensible,'' they should have saved the effort put into this meaningless gesture and left it to individuals who actually know what is going on in rural Iowa and rural America.

While our Nation has enjoyed one of the longest periods of economic growth in our history, the agricultural industry has not fared as well in recent years. Just last year, prices of all kinds of livestock and grain commodities were at their lowest levels since the 1970s, and the outlook for next year is mixed at best. According to the Food and Agricultural Policy Research Institute located at Iowa State University, prices for corn are expected to hover around $2 a bushel this year and soybean prices will average near $4.50 a bushel. Prices have improved somewhat from last year but not significantly, and obviously it is still, at these prices, a losing proposition; in other words, a nonprofitable situation for farmers.

Last year, we in the Congress provided $8.7 billion in economic relief and disaster payments, simply keeping our promise we made to the farmers of America under the 1996 farm program of having an adequate safety net for farmers. We were just keeping our promise with that $8.7 billion. That was divided into three or four different parts. The largest part was the Market Loss Assistance Program payments, and these alone were $5.5 billion.

The administration's proposal is for $600 million compared to that $5.5 billion. It obviously believes that payments to farmers under the supplemental income assistance program will satisfy rural America's needs in this year of continuing low prices. The proposal definitely shows me and should show every farmer that the administration does not really care what happens to the family farmer. I could speak for hours about its shortcomings, but let me try to boil it down to three major points. Democratic Senators, speaking on the floor of this body last week, condemned this same proposal. I say this so people won't consider this a partisan shot. I associate myself with the remarks of some of those Senators who considered this to be a paltry and complicated approach to helping farmers and the Congress keep its promise to the American farmers made under the 1996 bill, that we would maintain a safety net for our farmers.

On the administration's approach, first, it attempts to establish a countercyclical program. The proposal seemingly is based on a system that pays out when the per acre national gross revenue for a crop falls below a set percentage of the 5-year average of the crop's per acre national gross revenue. The significant shortcoming of the administration proposal is that a program based on national revenue will not capture all regional disasters.

As an example from my own State of Iowa, everybody remembers the 500-year flood of 1993. It was a disastrous year for the vast majority of my State. Experts described this 500-year flood as something that is never going to occur again. But production throughout the rest of the Nation during the time that it was ruined in Iowa was strong enough that, under the President's proposal, no payment would have been made to Iowans in need of assistance. Iowans would have been left with absolutely no assistance in the midst of one of the worst natural disasters in decades.

I also draw awareness to the administration's belief that this grand plan assists small- and medium-sized producers. It does harm to these classes of farmers who, particularly, the other side of the aisle thinks we ought to have so much concern for—and we ought to have. The fact that their administration doesn't give concern to the small- or medium-sized farmer in their plan ought to be an embarrassment to my Democrat colleagues.

Well, if the payment was actually triggered and the farmer wasn't drawing more than a $30,000 Agricultural Market Transition payment, the individual would be subject to the $30,000 combined payment cap. This means that the sum of regular AMTA payments plus the payments under the supplemental income assistance program could not exceed $30,000. In my opinion, this program actually hurts the small farmer and mortally wounds the medium-sized farmer. If we want to guarantee the failure of the medium-sized farmer in the Nation, the farmer who is big enough that he doesn't have time to have nonfarm income but not big enough to weather all the natural disasters that one can have or 3 years of low prices, the President's program is the best way to accomplish the failure of the medium-sized farmer in our Nation.

It is simple math that brings me to this point. A farmer with a corn base of 600 acres would receive an AMTA payment of approximately $19,800 this year. But if the market crashed and he qualified for the maximum amount of assistance under the administration's proposal, he would only receive an additional $10,200. Regardless of how much money a farmer has lost, the most he could hope to receive is $10,200.

In comparison, the same farmer would have received $19,000 in economic assistance last year due to the Market Loss Assistance payment Congress voted late last year. The administration's approach is $9,600 less for that farmer than he could have received under Congress' approach last year. If we were to revisit historic lows this summer, which could trigger the SIAP-type payment that the President is proposing, the small- and medium-sized producers could not receive more than that $30,000 cap. Due to this cap, the administration's approach ultimately limits potential assistance to small- and medium-sized producers.

Some people might think I am comparing apples and oranges when I talk about the two packages, but in the end, the important factor is how much aid are we willing to provide to the farmer. The administration has said that assistance wouldn't be paid to the largest producers. But at the end of the day, it is not just the larger growers who will be left out in the cold, it is going to be pretty darn cold for everyone in the middle and chilly for the smaller producers as well.

This proposal reminds me of what a number of Iowa pork producers called the ''4–H'' payments. Remember SHOP 1 and SHOP 2 payments to the pork producers last year? Those payments didn't amount to much either. The administration billed that as a significant measure to help pork producers facing abysmal prices, a 60-year low in hog prices last year. Yet today the number of pork producers has dropped by 3,000, since we experienced these historic lows.

Ultimately, the largest producers will still have $40,000 due to the AMTA cap, and the smaller guys will have a $30,000 cap, a $10,000 bonus to the larger farmer the President says he does not want to help, compared to what the small- and medium-sized farmer gets. Does it really matter what the assistance is called? Was that the administration's goal, of hurting the smaller and medium-sized farmers?

My final point is this: Who is the administration really then trying to help? It is true that farmers with 450 acres or less in corn base could possibly double their AMTA payment. That is the same approach Congress used last year under the administration's proposal. In fact, this is probably a great deal for all those producers with 100 acres or less. But the fact is that a person who is farming 450 acres or less is probably, to make ends meet, also engaged in some occupation other than farming.

I am not saying that most farmers don't have jobs off the farm. In today's

economy, more and more farmers are taking jobs off the farm just to help pay the bills. But as I see it, the medium-sized producer, the producers with 500 to 1,000 acres, are almost entirely dependent upon the profitability of their crops. If they don't receive much-needed assistance, they are probably going to have a hard time staying on the farm, and the administration's proposal does almost nothing to help these individuals.

Now, as I indicated earlier, this is by no means a complete list of all the problems with the administration's approach, but these are a few of the issues that I expect Congress will have to consider. The fact is that if the administration really wants to help farmers, it will immediately announce it will block any efforts to waive the Clean Air Act's oxygenated requirements by the Environmental Protection Agency. If the President would do just this, ethanol can replace MTBE, which is poisoning the ground water now, and it would increase farm income by $1 billion per year—it would do it from the marketplace, not from the Federal Treasury—and create 13,000 new jobs in America in the process.

The Senate may not be able to unilaterally agree upon exactly what should be done to assist family farmers this year, but I think we can probably agree that the administration's proposal is off base and, most frankly, out of touch with real America. It does not accomplish the goals that they want to accomplish of saving the small and medium-sized farmers and not helping the well-off farmer.

So I look forward to working with my constituents, various agricultural groups, commodity groups, and my colleagues in Congress to give family farmers the economic security that they deserve.

I yield the floor.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. WELLSTONE. 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. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from Wyoming for his graciousness. I will take 3 minutes at the most. I appreciate him giving me some Republican time for this.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, the Senator is recognized for 3 minutes.

THE CAPITOL HILL POLICE

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I have made a commitment that I would come to the floor every day to speak about the Capitol Hill police but also about the public. Again, I want to repeat what I have said the last couple of days. As did many of my colleagues, I went to the service for officers Chestnut and Gibson. It was an unbelievably horrible and painful time—first of all, for their families. I do believe, at that time and since then, we made a commitment for our police officers, and for that matter for the public, that we would do everything we possibly could—albeit nothing is 100-percent effective—to make sure such a tragedy would never happen again.

I have come to the floor several times to point out that at too many posts, or at least at some times at some of our posts, we only have one officer. When you have lots of people coming in and you have one officer, if, God forbid, you have somebody who is deranged, that officer is in real peril and so is the public.

I know we have made the commitment over and over again to have two officers at every post. I am not pretending to be the expert as to all the budgets, where the money has been spent, but I know this: We can do better by the Capitol Hill police officers, and we should. We can do better by the public. Whatever it takes, we need to honor our commitment and we need to make sure we have the necessary resources so we have two officers at these posts.

There are many other issues. I am not going to get involved in these other issues because I am not the expert. I know what I have observed. I know the police officers with whom I have talked. I know the commitment we made to these police officers. So I am going to continue to speak about this a couple of minutes every day. I am hoping the appropriators and others will come through.

I thank my colleague from Wyoming. I think all of us are in agreement on this; I believe this is not a Democrat or Republican debate at all.

So I thank my colleague from Wyoming and yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KYL). The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, I believe this next hour is allocated to the majority party, is that correct?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct.

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, we are pleased to have a little time to talk about some of the issues that will come up, some of the issues that are on the agenda and some that are not. I appreciate the comments of my friend from Minnesota. Certainly that is an issue we are all interested in, and I appreciate the effort he is making on that.

Mr. WELLSTONE. I thank my colleague.

THIS YEAR'S AGENDA

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, in this coming session—which is going to be relatively short, as it always is on election years, but particularly this year—we have to focus if we intend to accomplish things. I hope we do. As is often the case in election years, there are times when people are more interested in creating the issue than they are in resolving the issue. I think we will see a considerable amount of that, of course, going out towards the Presidential election and trying to find the issues the party will be for—which is all part of the system. But I am hopeful we can concentrate and focus on the issues that we think are most important.

We have had some experience, unfortunately in the last several weeks, and certainly even last year, that quite often the minority chose to bring up issues they knew would not be resolved but brought them up continuously to diffuse the issues on which we have been working. In this body, that is easy. One person very readily can hold up things, unless we can get 60 votes to do something different.

In any event, I am hopeful that will not be the case. We are going to focus on some things that we have decided upon. This will be more refined as time goes on, but certainly education will be one. The issue of education, of course, is not whether we try to improve it, but how we fund those improvements. I do not believe that we should have one-size-fits-all regulations that come from some bureaucracy in Washington. We should distribute our education funding in a manner that allows the States and local school boards to make those decisions.

Certainly the needs in Pinedale, WY, are going to be different than in Philadelphia. That is as it should be. We need to allow for this type of flexibility.

Another area that we will be focusing on is health care. We did some work last year on strengthening Medicare, doing something particularly in rural areas so outpatient care can be better financed. We intend to continue to do that, at the same time doing whatever is necessary to ensure Medicare continues to provide the benefits it is designed to provide.

Certainly one of the issues that will be difficult and controversial, yet I think most people want to do something about, is providing the opportunity for everyone to have pharmaceuticals available if they cannot afford them; hopefully to protect the programs we have now, to encourage and in fact assist people who now get their own supplementals, but be able to help those people who are not able to do that.

Social Security will continue to be an area of great concern. We have made some progress in not spending Social Security money in the operational budget. However, that is not all that is necessary. If the young people who will start making Social Security payments at their first job can expect some benefits 30, 40, 50 years from now, then things will have to be done differently. Obviously, we have alternatives. We can increase taxes—but not many people are for that. Social Security payments are one of the highest taxes