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Senate

The Senate met at 1 p.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore [Mr. BYRD].

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The prayer today will be led by our guest Chaplain, Brigadier General David Hicks, Deputy Chief of Chaplains, U.S. Army.

General Hicks, please.

PRAYER

The guest Chaplain, Brigadier General David Hicks, offered the following prayer:

Lord of Hosts, our Nation continues to heal from so recently being attacked. In such a time as this, give us the moral courage to examine both our strengths and our shortcomings. As we recover, make us justly proud of our democratic processes, our history of liberty, and our striving to forge a nation built upon equality. However, make us also bold to confess that we have often been heedless of Your power in giving us these national blessings. Rather than seeking first Your kingdom, we have often tried to add "all these things" unto ourselves through our own strength. Remember not our tendencies to place ourselves before You, O Lord. Rather, as with David, let our prayer for America be that "I have set the Lord always before me and because he is at my right hand, I shall not fall."—Psalm 16:8.

We ask that as Your servants, called upon to lead this Nation, You would always give these Senators "eyes to see and ears to hear" the way in which You have us to walk as a people. Aid us, O Lord, that we would prosecute this current war with an eye toward establishing a future peace and that through our example other countries would be emboldened to value freedom, to cherish their own people, and to enact Your kingdom through our common lives together. In the power of Your name do I pray. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable ROBERT C. BYRD led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will now be a period for the transaction of morning business not to extend beyond the hour of 2 o'clock, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Nevada is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, you have announced that until 2 o'clock today there will be a period of morning business. At 2 o'clock the Senate will resume consideration of the economic recovery act, H.R. 622. The majority leader has asked me to announce that at approximately 5:15 p.m. the Senate will vote on a judicial nomination. So there will be a vote today at 5:15 p.m.

MASKING THE TRUE SIZE OF THE DEFICIT

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I take just a minute this morning to talk about something that I think is very important. We had a debate not long ago; there was a movement to have a con-

stitutional amendment to balance the budget. I can remember when I raised the first objection to that during the time Senator Mitchell was majority leader, indicating in my amendment that if we were going to have a constitutional amendment to balance the budget, then we should not count Social Security surpluses. We were able to prevail in defeating that mischievous amendment which would have locked into the Constitution this, in my opinion—it is my word—"phoney" way to balance the budget, using these huge Social Security surpluses for people to say we had a balanced budget when we really did not.

For many, many years the Social Security surpluses were used to mask the deficit. During the last 3 years of the Clinton administration, we decided to no longer do that, that we would have an honest budget process whereby you would not count the Social Security surpluses. We were able to have a balanced budget not using that method of accounting. In fact, we were able to pay down this huge debt that accumulated to some more than \$5 trillion. So I have some disappointment that the budget sent to us by President Bush now goes back to using that same method of accounting, using the Social Security surpluses to mask the deficit.

One of the reasons for the deficit is the war. I know that. But it is not the only reason. There are other reasons, and they are economic in nature, for why we have this unbalanced budget.

There will be time spent this week on examining the President's budget just released today. I am very concerned, as I have mentioned, that we are now witnessing a counting of the Social Security trust fund to hide what we are doing here. But it does not really hide it. We all agreed the last few years that the surpluses which we had in the Social Security trust fund would not count against the yearly deficit. It is a surplus that is being run to provide for the retirement of the baby boomers. It

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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