

war, as Iraqi Shiite rebels took refuge in the remote communities of the Marsh Arabs, Saddam turned his army on this community. In the last 3 years, thousands of Marsh Arabs have disappeared, never to be heard from again, and entire villages have been burned to the ground. This time, the genocide was accompanied by an environmental outrage, as Iraqi engineers drained thousands of acres of marshlands in order to reach remote villages, wiping out a fragile ecosystem and obliterating the centuries-old way of life of the Marsh Arabs.

The Kurds, too, continue to suffer at Saddam's hand. They narrowly escaped a new round of massacres at the end of the gulf war in 1991, thanks to the intervention of the United States and our allies. Today, although the Kurds of Iraq govern the northern provinces autonomously under the protection of Operation Provide Comfort—a cooperative effort by the United States, Britain, and France—they remain subject to an internal blockade by Saddam's forces, as well as the U.N. embargo against all of Iraq, and periodic Iraqi attacks against Kurdish towns and individuals.

No Member of this body has done more to publicize and address the plight of the Kurds than the distinguished ranking member of the Foreign Relations Committee, Senator PELL. Thanks in large part to his efforts, and those of the distinguished Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, Senator HELMS, over 18 tons of Iraqi Government and secret police documents detailing Iraq's genocidal campaign against the Kurds—after being captured by Kurdish rebels in 1991—were brought to the United States for research and analysis. The result has been a well-documented history of Iraqi atrocities against the Kurds, including the horrific use of poison gas.

On this tragic anniversary, I want to commend Senator PELL and Senator HELMS for their leadership on this issue. I hope that the United States will continue to take a leadership role in working to ensure a better life for the Kurds of Iraq, both until and after Saddam Hussein is driven from power.

THE BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, on numerous occasions I have mentioned to friends that evening in 1972 when I first was elected to the Senate. When the television networks reported that I had won the Senate race in North Carolina, I was stunned. Then I made several commitments to myself, one of them being that I would never fail to see a young person, or a group of young people, who wanted to see me.

I have kept that commitment and it has proved enormously beneficial to me because I have been inspired by the estimated 60,000 young people with whom I have visited during the 23 years I have been in the Senate.

A large percentage of them have been concerned about the Federal debt

which recently exceeded \$5 trillion. Of course, Congress is responsible for creating this monstrous debt which coming generations will have to pay.

Mr. President, the young people and I almost always discuss the fact that under the U.S. Constitution, no President can spend a dime of Federal money that has not first been authorized and appropriated by both the House and Senate of the United States.

That is why I began making these daily reports to the Senate on February 25, 1992. I decided that it was important that a daily record be made of the precise size of the Federal debt which, at the close of business yesterday, Wednesday, March 13, stood at \$5,025,887,532,178.79. This amounts to \$19,076.70 for every man, woman and child in America on a per capita basis.

The increase in the national debt since my report yesterday—which identified the total Federal Debt as of close of business on Tuesday, March 12, 1996—shows an increase of nearly 9 billion dollars—\$8,603,940,268.76, to be exact. That 1-day increase is enough to match the money needed by approximately 1,275,792 students to pay their college tuitions for 4 years.

STATEMENT BY THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE FRIENDS OF IRELAND IN THE U.S. SENATE

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, The Friends of Ireland is a bipartisan group of Senators and Representatives opposed to violence and terrorism in Northern Ireland and dedicated to maintaining a United States policy that promotes a just, lasting, and peaceful settlement of the conflict. The latest developments for peace and the need for an immediate restoration of the IRA cease-fire make this year's St. Patrick's Day a particularly critical time in the peace process.

I believe all our colleagues will find this year's statement by the Senate Executive Committee of the Friends of Ireland of interest, and I ask unanimous consent that it be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

STATEMENT BY THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE FRIENDS OF IRELAND IN THE UNITED STATES SENATE, ST. PATRICK'S DAY, 1996

On this St. Patrick's Day, the Executive Committee of the Friends of Ireland in the United States Senate join the people of Ireland, North and South, in welcoming the latest developments for peace and in demanding an immediate restoration of the IRA cease-fire.

We welcome the Joint Communiqué issued on February 28 by Irish Taoiseach John Bruton and British Prime Minister John Major proposing steps to renew the peace process for Northern Ireland and pledging to begin all-party negotiations on June 10.

Friends of Ireland everywhere were outraged by the end of the IRA cease-fire last month and by the subsequent bombings in populated London which took the lives of three people and injured many others. Our hearts go out to the victims and the families

of those killed and injured in these terrorist attacks. We condemn unequivocally the IRA violence, and we call for an immediate restoration of the cease-fire. We commend the Loyalist paramilitaries for maintaining their cease-fire in spite of the IRA's resumption of violence.

We are greatly encouraged that the political leaders of Ireland and Great Britain have recommitted themselves to achieving a lasting peace. They clearly have a mandate from the vast majority of the people of Ireland—North and South, Protestant and Catholic alike—who recently turned out in large numbers to condemn the recent violence and demand a return to peace.

Many of the Friends of Ireland had the opportunity, during the recent visit to Northern Ireland by President Clinton, to see at first hand the determination of people of all traditions to seize the opportunity for peace. This was reaffirmed by the recent rallies in which people turned out in large numbers across Ireland to condemn the recent violence and demand a return to peace. As preparations are made for the commencement of all-party negotiations on June 10, there is an obligation on all parties to ensure that this widespread commitment to peace is turned into a reality for all the people of the island.

Friends of Ireland who accompanied the President on his trip also had the opportunity to observe the excellent work of the International Fund for Ireland, which continues to create jobs and promote understanding in both communities.

In 1994, at the strong urging of responsible leaders in Northern Ireland and Ireland, many of the Friends of Ireland wrote to President Clinton to suggest an encouraging gesture be made towards Gerry Adams, by giving him a limited visa to visit this country, in hopes that it might bring dialogue and an end to violence. John Hume later called the visa, "crucial" to achieving the subsequent cease-fire. We believe that the participation of Sinn Féin in all-party negotiations is vital for the success of the peace process, but Sinn Féin cannot take its place at the peace table without the restoration of the cease-fire.

In an effort to move beyond the pre-condition that weapons be handed over prior to all-party negotiations, an international commission led by former Senator George Mitchell was established by the British and Irish Governments to assess the issue and make recommendations to overcome the impasse. We commend Senator Mitchell and the other members of the commission for the outstanding job they have done. The commission found that turning in weapons in advance of talks would not occur and suggested constructive alternative ways forward.

When the Irish and British Governments launched the Mitchell Commission last November, they had agreed to "the firm aim" of achieving all-party negotiations by the end of February. Unfortunately, that target date was missed, due to the introduction of a new pre-condition by Prime Minister Major that elections must occur before talks can take place. The insistence by the British Government that elections precede all-party negotiations created unnecessary delays in the process and aroused concern in the Nationalist community of a return to the days when the Unionist majority imposed its will through the Stormont Parliament.

We are also disappointed by the lack of willingness, on the part of the leaders of the largest Unionist parties in Northern Ireland, to participate in good faith in the peace process, despite the fact that the process so clearly has the support of the people of their community. The Friends of Ireland urge the leadership of the Ulster Unionist Party and the Democratic Unionist Party to engage

fully in the search for a fair and comprehensive settlement. There is now a unique opportunity for all sides—Nationalists and Unionists—working with the two Governments to advance the cause of peace.

We pledge to continue to do all we can to support the peace process. On this St. Patrick's Day, we rededicate ourselves to working with all those who continue to be genuinely committed to the achievement of a lasting peace for Northern Ireland.

FRIENDS OF IRELAND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE,
UNITED STATES SENATE

Edward M. Kennedy.
Claiborne Pell.
Daniel Patrick Moynihan.
Christopher J. Dodd.

U.S. CONSUMPTION OF FOREIGN
OIL? HERE'S TODAY'S WEEKLY
BOX SCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, the American Petroleum Institute reports that, for the week ending March 8, the United States imported 7,315,000 barrels of oil daily, 506,000 barrels less than the 7,821,000 barrels imported during the same period 1 year ago, but 986,000 barrels more than the 6,329,000 barrels imported the previous week, March 1, 1996.

Americans now rely on foreign oil for more than 50 percent of their needs, and there are no signs that this upward trend will abate.

Anybody else interested in restoring domestic production of oil—by U.S. producers using American workers? Politicians better ponder the economic calamity that will occur in America if and when foreign producers shut off our supply, or double the already enormous cost of imported oil flowing into the United States—now 7,315,000 barrels a day.

CHINA AND TAIWAN

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, during the past 3 weeks, several unfortunate events that threaten peace and stability around the world have occurred. In Israel and in the skies off the Cuban coast, innocent men, women, and children have lost their lives as a result of those tragedies. Moreover, countless others continue to suffer the consequences of increased tensions between countries and groups of people who have long been separated by ideological or religious differences.

Like many of my colleagues, I have already expressed my outrage at the unnecessary tragedy in the Straits of Florida and the unconscionable suicide bombings in Israel. I want to take this opportunity to voice my strong concerns about the recent escalation of tensions between the People's Republic of China and the Republic of China on Taiwan.

In the past week, China has taken several actions intended to intimidate the people of Taiwan and influence its upcoming presidential elections. On March 5, Beijing announced its decision to conduct guided-missile tests near Taiwan. Three days later, China

launched the first three missiles in tests it intends to conduct until March 15. On March 9, China announced its plans to conduct live-ammunition war exercises in the Strait of Taiwan until March 20, just 3 days before Taiwan's presidential elections.

As Secretary of State Warren Christopher indicated recently, these actions are "risky, and smack of intimidation and coercion." China's actions create grave risks to stability in that region. I urge China's leadership to halt these dangerous and provocative actions immediately.

Make no mistake, the risk is real. China's missile tests and military exercises are dangerous in and of themselves, and they increase the chances of an accident that could cause tensions to spiral out of control.

When China conducted similar missile tests in July and August of last year, the target areas were 85 and 80 miles north of Taiwan, respectively. By contrast, the target zone for the surface-to-surface missiles fired last week are only half as far from Taiwan, and far too close to major airline and shipping routes.

Of the three missiles launched last week, two landed near the port of Keelung which is only 23 miles from Taiwan's northern coast and approximately 30 miles from Taipei, Taiwan's capital. The third missile landed in a target zone near the port of Kaohsiun, which is only 35 miles from Taiwan's southern coast.

Thankfully, the three missiles fired last week and the one fired this week landed where the Chinese intended. However, China intends to conduct similar missile tests in the same zones. If one of these missiles should stray off-course and mistakenly land in Taiwan, or hit a ship or an airliner, the repercussions would be severe. Needless to say, under such circumstances, Taiwan could not be expected to sit idly by, and the Clinton administration has continually warned that if an accident occurs, China "will be held accountable." I would like to lend my voice to those warnings.

Even if China's missile tests and military exercises go as planned, the inevitable result is greater difficulties in the day-to-day lives of the Taiwanese people. Taiwan's stock market has already experienced a great deal of volatility, and the fluctuations would have been greater had it not been for government initiatives. Flights for commercial airlines will also be disrupted this week when aircraft will be forced to change routes to avoid China's military exercises, and shipping has been delayed or diverted to avoid the missile test zones.

Despite the heroic efforts by President Lee to keep the people of Taiwan calm during these trying times, China's threatening actions will continue to inject fear into the daily lives of the Taiwanese people. Beijing's time and efforts would be far better spent trying to communicate with Taiwan in a non-

threatening and peaceful way rather than carrying out reckless missile tests and military exercises.

Finally, Mr. President, there should be no misunderstanding that if China's missile tests and military exercises should develop into actual military action against Taiwan, the United States is well prepared to respond. The carrier U.S.S. *Independence*, accompanied by three warships, was recently ordered to move near Taiwan. Moreover, the U.S.S. *Nimitz* and five to six additional ships are expected to arrive near Taiwan before the upcoming presidential elections.

The irony is that China is conducting missile tests and military exercises in order to curb support for Taiwan independence. The fact of the matter is, most Taiwanese, as well as a majority of their elected leaders, are committed to reunification, but only reunification achieved through peaceful means.

United States policy, as spelled out in the 1979 Taiwan Relations Act, stipulates that the future relationship between China and Taiwan should be determined by peaceful means. I sincerely hope China will not miscalculate United States resolve in this regard. With the leadership of President Clinton, the United States stands ready to assist Taiwan if necessary. Again, I urge the People's Republic of China to cease its intimidation of Taiwan and to resolve its differences with the Taiwanese peacefully.

NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES
FOLLOW-UP REPORT ON AGENT
ORANGE

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I would like to call to our colleagues' attention important new findings on the relationship between Agent Orange exposure and certain health conditions. Earlier today, the Institute of Medicine [IOM], which is part of the National Academy of Sciences [NAS], released an update to their 1994 report, "Veterans and Agent Orange: Health Effects of Herbicides Used in Vietnam." These reports were mandated in the Agent Orange Act of 1991 (Public Law 102-4), which I authored with Senator JOHN KERRY, Senator ALAN CRANSTON and Representative LANE EVANS.

This report confirms what Vietnam veterans have long known: The Vietnam war is still claiming innocent victims.

Unfortunately, the findings announced today validate veterans' worst fears about Agent Orange—that their children are suffering serious health consequences as a result of their parents' military service.

The report found evidence suggestive of an association between veterans' exposure to Agent Orange and the presence of a severe form of spina bifida in their children.

This type of spina bifida is an incurable birth defect characterized by a deformity in the spinal cord that often results in serious neurological problems, which require lifelong medical