

of legislation to that being held at the desk. There is no reason, in my judgment, why the Senate should not expeditiously act, as has the House of Representatives, to get this bill to the President for signature as quickly as possible.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

EXHIBIT 1

[From the Washington Post, June 16, 1996]

NAVY OFFICER, HUSBAND DIE AFTER SHOOTINGS AT ANDREWS AIR FORCE BASE

(By Steve Vogel and Arthur Santana)

When military police at Andrews Air Force Base received a warning early yesterday that a man was on his way to the military installation to kill his wife, they raced to close the gates to the base. But a short time later, both husband and wife, a Navy petty officer, lay dead inside their home, and an Air Force police officer was seriously wounded.

The slain woman was identified by Air Force officials as Melissa Comfort, 28. Her husband was Michael Comfort, 34. The couple's two young daughters and another adult, who were inside the home for several hours after Michael Comfort arrived, were unharmed, authorities said.

Just before 2:30 a.m., someone called 911 and reported that Melissa Comfort's life was in danger. Officials have not identified the caller.

After police dispatchers altered the base about the call, military police sealed off Andrews to try to prevent Michael Comfort from entering, according to Air Force officials. But it is possible that he already may have been on the grounds. Michael Comfort, who is not in the military, did not live with his wife on the base, according to Lt. Karl Johnson, a Navy spokesman, who said Michael Comfort was barred from seeing his wife by a protective order.

"Unfortunately, the individual got in before they locked down, or he jumped the fence," said Mike Beeman, a base spokesman. Beeman said Air Force police took action "moments after" the warning was received.

Two members of Air Force Security Police were sent to check on Melissa Comfort and her daughters in the town house-style duplex in the 4600 block of Maple Court on the western edge of the base. But upon arrival, a man fired a shotgun at the officers, officials said.

"One guy opened fire and then retreated inside the house," Beeman said.

One of the military police officers, security Airman 1st Class Michael Blagoue, was struck in the face and abdomen by shotgun pellets, Johnson said. Blagoue was in stable condition at the base hospital, where he was expected to stay the night, officials said.

The military police fired back at Comfort, Johnson said. "Whether they hit the suspect, we don't know," Beeman said.

Additional gunfire was heard soon afterward from inside the house. Military police surrounded the home and evacuated nearby homes, officials said.

The couple's girls, ages 4 and 2, were inside the home, along with a woman, a family friend who has been stationed overseas. It was not immediately clear whether the woman entered the home before or after Michael Comfort arrived.

"We were told he was holding everybody hostage," Beeman said.

After several hours without contact with anyone inside the town house, police forced their way into the home at 6:10 a.m. and found the friend and the two children unharmed and both Comforts dead from shotgun wounds. Officials could not immediately say why the friend did not try to con-

tact police in the three hours before police entered the home.

"We don't know why they didn't exit the home earlier," Beeman said.

Air Force spokesman could not say in which rooms the dead couple, the children and the friend were found or the location of the children at the time of the shootings.

Johnson said Melissa Comfort, a petty officer second class originally from Fairmont, N.C., who joined the Navy in 1986, was assigned to the Office of Naval Intelligence in Suitland.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, has the Pastore rule expired for the day?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Yes, it has.

Mr. BYRD. I thank the Chair. Time is not controlled?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Time is not controlled.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, WEST VIRGINIA

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, most people in this city, the majority of my colleagues in this Chamber included, will walk around this harried town today and breathe deeply the sultry air of summer that has settled in upon us, registering only the mingling of Maine Avenue fish markets, tour-bus fumes, and suburban barbecues.

I, however, nudge open my office window and am greeted by the fragrances of breezes that have swept across the Appalachians, up and down the Alleghenies, and have gently settled into the Potomac Valley. My lungs fill with the spicy scents of cool sylvan settings and the sweet bouquet of mountain laurel.

The sounds that most others hear today may be just the clacking of Metro trains, the clamor of commuting workers, and the roar of circling airline traffic.

But through the urban din, I hear the sounds of string bands flowing down the hollows and over the hills, the rush of river rapids, and the laughter of adventurous climbers, scaling Seneca Rocks.

Mr. President, to most, today may mark merely the beginning of another long, sticky summer but to me it is a date that tugs at my soul, calling me home.

This day is the 133rd anniversary of the birth of West Virginia, my beloved home State.

At the time West Virginia was admitted to the Union, America was in the midst of a cruel and bloody civil conflict and West Virginia herself was gripped by a vicious type of guerrilla warfare which saw brothers and sons and neighbors and longtime friends, facing one another across battle lines in mountain skirmishes.

Fortunately, at the war's end, we remained one Nation—bound more strongly than before—and West Virginia, having recovered from her divisive beginnings and settled comfortably into this more solid union, went on to mature into a graceful, independent-minded State.

West Virginia is where I long to be—the land where saffron shafts of sunlight pierce through the early morning mists in spring; where hymns from the religious song books speak louder than guns, and the attendance at family reunions can still swell into the hundreds.

It is a land of hardworking, honest, loyal, patriotic God-fearing people who care about their communities and each other. Since the moment of her birth, West Virginia has undergone great change; yet, as I so often like to boast, she has never lost her grasp on the "old values" that continue to set her apart among the 50 States.

Today, faith resides in her hills just as surely as it did when I was just a boy, living in her southern coal mining communities.

Faith is what has kept us going when hope has been in short supply. But it is hope that shapes our vision of the future and drives us to achieve our dreams.

Mr. President, today, as we celebrate West Virginia's 133d birthday, it is appropriate that we should reflect upon her past. But it is also fitting that we should take this time to measure her progress and look toward her tomorrows.

Therefore, on her birthday, my wish for my State and her people is for the availability of quality education to prepare our workforce for the jobs of the future; access to adequate health care; a continuation of a comfortable quality of life; construction of a more modern, safer transportation infrastructure; and further development of a robust business climate; protection of her natural resources; a comfortable quality of life, and the preservation of those "old values" that will guide her on a successful and honorable path into the next millennium.

While West Virginia may adapt and modernize and enjoy the fruits of economic prosperity, I hope that she will always be the sort of place that fills her native sons and daughters with a longing to be home.

Happy birthday, West Virginia. You are always in my heart.

Mr. President, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. THURMOND. 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. THURMOND. Mr. President, I yield to the distinguished Senator from Rhode Island.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. PELL. Mr. President, I thank my friend and colleague.

CHURCH BURNINGS

Mr. PELL. Mr. President, to burn a church is to destroy more than a building. Burning a church strikes at the

soul of a community, at its most sacred place. These fires bring terror and tears to communities that often have known all too much of both. And we are all diminished in spirit by the despicable doings of a hate-filled few.

Yet even from such a cowardly and vile act, great good has sprung. I note that upon the publicizing of these burnings, there has been an outpouring of support for the beleaguered congregations, both to fund the rebuilding of the churches and to assist in the apprehension of the perpetrators. Reconstruction of the churches has become a community affair, with volunteers from across the Nation.

Those who would burn a church should remember that to do so serves only to awaken a moral imperative to speak out and act against such violence. George Washington reflected the spirit of the Nation when he wrote in a letter to the congregation of Touro Synagogue of Newport, RI, that the Government of the United States "gives to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance." Today, 206 years later, Washington's words echo with renewed fervor across an outraged land.

THE DEATH OF LE MAI, VICE FOREIGN MINISTER OF VIETNAM

Mr. PELL. Mr. President, I wish to note with regret the sudden death last week of Le Mai, the Deputy Foreign Minister of Vietnam. Le Mai hosted me for dinner just 3 weeks ago when I was in Hanoi. I found him to be warm, intelligent, and above all eager to continue the process of improving relations with the United States.

Mai's death comes at a particularly difficult time in Vietnamese politics. The Communist Party is scheduled to hold a crucial party congress at the end of this month, where several important decisions regarding the near future of the country will be made. Mai would have been a strong force pushing Vietnam toward a more open economic system. He told me in Hanoi that Vietnam's biggest mistake so far was imposing a demand economy. He argued that the laws of capitalism "just are" and that Vietnam has developed much since economic reforms were started in the late 1980's. He also would have been a strong force pushing his government toward more friendly relations with the West. He recognized that his country needed political, as well as economic reforms and said he wanted closer relations with the United States in part to help his fellow countrymen better understand our system.

Le Mai was one of the principle architects of the normalization process between the United States and Vietnam and his dedication to moving that relationship further forward was evident in our discussions. He stressed the need for the United States to have an active presence in Southeast Asia, economically, politically and even militarily. He understood the lingering problems that many in both countries

have with the bilateral relationship because of the war, but argued that it was important for governments to try to forge policies to get past people's emotions. He recognized, too, the responsibility that he and other leaders in both countries had in creating those policies, telling me that "our generation fought the war, so it is our duty to solve the problems" that resulted from it.

His death is a loss to his country and to the ongoing process of improving relations between our two countries.

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. NUNN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the quorum call be rescinded.

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

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 1997

The Senate continued with the consideration of the bill.

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

Mr. NUNN. Mr. President, on behalf of Senator JOHNSTON, I request that a member of his staff, Comdr. Paul Gonzales, a congressional fellow, be allowed floor privileges for the duration of debate on the Defense authorization bill.

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

Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, I wish to express my support for S. 1745, the Defense authorization bill for fiscal year 1997. The Armed Services Committee has done an outstanding job by bringing to the full Senate a bill that responsibly addresses this country's national security needs.

Fortunately, the end of the cold war has reduced the most immediate threat of nuclear war. And while it is natural to feel relief that the struggle against Soviet expansionism has been won, it would be naive and short-sighted to conclude that real threats to our Nation's security no longer exist. The end of the cold war has uncapped a host of long-simmering regional conflicts around the globe. Combined with the proliferation of nuclear and missile technology as well as chemical and biological weapons, these limited conflicts carry the potential for far wider consequences. We must recognize that the world is still a dangerous place and that maintaining an adequate level of military preparedness must continue to be a national priority.

The fact is that funding for national defense has been on a dangerous downward track for over a decade. Funding for national defense has fallen by 41 percent in real terms since 1985. The fiscal year 1997 defense budget will be at its lowest level since the Korean war buildup began in 1950.

Even more alarming is the fact that military procurement has dropped by

71 percent over the last 10 years. The practical result is that our service men and women are forced to use aging equipment which will increasingly impair military readiness. The defense budget submitted by President Clinton for fiscal year 1997 would unwisely continue this neglect of our military hardware and would—not for the first time, I might add—postpone spending for critical weapons modernization programs into the future.

The Armed Services Committee deserves credit for crafting a responsible bill that addresses the need for modernization and provides the necessary resources. The \$12.9 billion added by the committee to the administration's defense funding request is mainly for additional procurement items including one DDG-51 destroyer, four F-16 fighter planes, six F/A-18's, and one C-17 cargo transport. Nearly 30 percent of the \$12.9 billion added by the committee is for accelerated research and development for programs such as missile defense, the new attack submarine, and a new arsenal ship armed with cruise missiles. These add-ons reflect the concerns and priorities of the military services themselves.

While upgrading and modernizing military hardware deserves a high priority, so too does ensuring that our Armed Forces personnel receive the benefits they deserve. The best military equipment in the world is of little value without the highly trained and hard-working service men and women on whom our national defense depends. I am therefore pleased that the fiscal year 1997 Defense authorization bill authorizes a 3-percent military pay raise and a 4-percent increase in the basic allowance for quarters.

Overall, the committee proposes a reasonable level of defense spending in the coming fiscal year, one which I believe acknowledges that defense resources are not unlimited. The committee's recommendation of \$267.3 billion in defense spending for fiscal year 1997 is only \$2.1 billion above the fiscal year 1996 level in nominal terms. Adjusted for inflation, the committee's recommended defense authorization level is actually \$5.6 billion below the current level of defense spending in real terms.

Mr. President, the people of Maine support a strong national defense and they have always been ready to do their part. Maine's Bath Iron Works is one of two private U.S. shipyards that build the Arleigh Burke class destroyer for the Navy. I am pleased that the fiscal year 1997 Defense authorization bill authorizes \$3.4 billion for four destroyers in fiscal year 1997 plus \$750 million in advance procurement for one additional ship in fiscal year 1998. The advanced procurement for a fiscal year 1998 destroyer is crucial to implementing the Navy's acquisition plan of building three ships per year in each of the 4 years from fiscal year 1998 through fiscal year 2001. As a result of this orderly and efficient procurement