

last night; the Senator objected to an order that the minority leader requested and refused to answer a question—refused, turned around and walked out. This place is deteriorating into a sorry condition. But I know the majority leader is working on it.

I think it is very important that people across the country hear that eight judges are not being appointed because of a piece of legislation that would prevent wife beaters and child abusers from getting guns. I think that is pretty important. I hope the public hears it and listens to it, and I hope the press hears it and listens to it.

I say to the majority leader, my apologies for this little tirade, but I had to kind of get it off my chest.

I thank the Senator.

Mr. LOTT addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent there now be a period for the transaction of morning business with Senators permitted to speak for up to 5 minutes each.

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

THE RUSSIAN ELECTIONS

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, on June 16, something happened that has tremendous implications for the American people and for people everywhere. On that day, Russia, which just a few years ago was the greatest threat to democracy in the world, held a democratic election to select its President.

That alone, Mr. President, is reason to celebrate. Despite calls from people across the Russian political spectrum who still do not understand what democracy is about to cancel the election, the Russian Government stuck by its commitment to democracy—

No decisions were taken by secretive Politburos.

Parties representing the full spectrum of political sentiment participated.

Candidates crisscrossed that vast country making promises to win the votes of ordinary people.

And in the end, most stunning of all, there was a graceful concession speech by the losing candidate, the leader of the Communist party that only a little while ago we regarded as the personification of tyranny, committing the party to challenge irregularities in the election "in the courts, not in the streets."

Mr. President, this was not a perfect election. There were irregularities. There may well have been instances of ballot box stuffing. I was quite concerned about the extent to which media coverage of the election appeared to favor one candidate. But it also occurred to me that, if I were a newspaperman covering an election in which one major party had a record of

advancing democracy and the freedoms associated with it and the other had a 70-year history of suppressing the freedom of newspapers like mine, I might have tended to advocacy rather than neutrality too. That is not an excuse, but despite the irregularities, there is general agreement that the will of the Russian people was heard in this election.

The Russian people voted for democracy, and the tremendous significance of that should not be lost on anyone. Despite all of the hardship they are experiencing. Despite the crime and corruption. Despite their loss of empire. Despite the fact that the standard-bearer of the forces of democracy has made many mistakes, the brutal war in Chechnya being the most egregious, and is in poor health.

The Russian people voted for freedom. Freedom to speak their minds. Freedom to associate. As ultra-nationalist Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, who is not someone I admire, put it in explaining why he would not support the communists: freedom to decide where to spend his vacation. For some, it came down to things as simple as that, things which we take for granted.

Mr. President, the world has changed profoundly in the last decade. Communism as a world force is gone. Whatever the future may bring in terms of the distribution of power in the world, the age of ideological confrontation between communism and democracy is over. While there remain many aggressive forces in the world, I cannot help but feel that the world will be a safer place when its two greatest powers are both committed to democracy and the protection of individual rights.

And I think we owe credit to President Clinton, Secretary of State Christopher, and Deputy Secretary Talbott. Over the past three years, they have braved the attacks by those, including some in this chamber, who cannot bring themselves to give up their cold war notions about evil empires and would have us focus only on the vestiges of the old and ugly in Russia and ignore all that is new and promising.

Where do we go from here? As the ranking member of the Foreign Operations Subcommittee, I have watched as funding for foreign assistance has been slashed over the past 18 months, including assistance to Russia. Assistance to Russia is being phased out over the next 2 years, even though it is obvious that it is going to take the Russian people at least another decade to be able to take control of their own lives instead of expecting the government to do it for them, and that our assistance would be valuable to them.

President Yeltsin has won the support of his people to continue reform. But the Russian economy remains a shambles. The Russian Government has no money to finance its reforms. Crime is rampant. There are still pensioners on the streets of Moscow hawking pairs of children's rubber boots in order to survive.

Aid from the United States cannot possibly solve these problems directly. The problems are so immense that only the Russian people working together will be able to.

But what our aid can do is show them the way. Most Russians still have only a faint notion of what a market economy offers. Most also still carry the perceptions drilled into them by their Soviet masters that Americans are their enemies.

I have not been fully satisfied with the results of our aid program in Russia. There has been confusion, a lack of strategic thinking, and boilerplate approaches that did not fit the unique conditions there. Too much of the money has ended up in the pockets of American contractors, without enough to show for it.

But some programs have given the Russian people hope for a better future. People-to-people exchanges are an example of how we can help change old ways of thinking. I believe the thousands of exchanges of ordinary citizens that we have sponsored over the last 4 years played a role in President Yeltsin's victory. Farmer-to-farmer programs. Business exchange programs. Academic exchange programs. Civic organization development projects. They have shown the Russian people what is possible.

Americans have learned from these exchanges too. We have learned that the Russian people are not ogres. Like us, they are mostly worried about the welfare of their families. But they are learning for the first time that it is possible to have a system of government whose primary aim is the defense of individual rights, and which actually serves them.

Mr. President, there remains much to criticize in Russia. The democracy that exists there is fragile, and the future unpredictable. There will continue to be setbacks, and instances when Russia behaves in ways that are inconsistent with international norms. I have been horrified by the brutality of the Russian military in Chechnya. While it has been reassuring to see the outpouring of protest against this barbarity by the Russian people themselves, President Yeltsin and his security advisors need to recognize that Chechnya's future is not going to be decided by bombing its people into submission.

Having said that, let us today recognize how much has changed for the better in Russia compared to just a few years ago. And I hope we will also reaffirm our commitment to support reform in Russia. We know how to put our aid dollars to good use there, and there is much good yet to be done.

TRIBUTE TO THE LATE HARRY M. "MAC" JOHNSTON

Mr. THURMOND. Mr. President, the emergence of South Carolina as a center for business and industry is due to many factors including a temperate climate, a trained and enthusiastic

workforce, cooperative government officials, and not the least significant, community leaders committed to bringing new jobs into their towns, cities, and counties. One of the fastest growing areas of the Palmetto State is the region known as the Upstate, and a gentleman by the name of Harry M. "Mac" Johnston, played a key role in business development in Union County, until his recent and untimely death.

Mr. Johnston served as the director of the Union County Development Board for slightly more than 2 years, a short tenure to be certain. Despite the brevity of his administration, cut tragically short by a stroke, Mr. Johnston managed to achieve several important accomplishments that will be of great benefit to his fellow citizens. Thanks to the efforts of the late Mr. Johnston, the historic Buffalo Mill was purchased and re-opened, Union County was named as the home of South Carolina's new Juvenile Justice facility, and Upstate residents will celebrate community spirit this fall at the first ever "Uniquely Union Festival." Without question, these are three excellent examples of Mr. Johnston's abilities as a civic booster and promoter of Union County, and had his life not been ended so abruptly, I am confident that he would have continued to have played an important role in the development of Union County.

Mr. President, the impact Mr. Johnston had in Union County was tremendous. He was a very capable and well liked man, and in memory of the many contributions he made to his community, the County Council recently voted to name the new county industrial park after this man. This is a fitting tribute to a person who dedicated so much of his efforts to making our State a better place to live. I commend the Union County Council on the honor they have paid Mr. Johnston and I extend my deepest condolences to his family on the loss they have suffered.

RETIREMENT OF AMBASSADOR DAVID COLSON

Mr. PELL. Mr. President, I take the floor today to pay tribute to a distinguished civil servant, Ambassador David A. Colson. Ambassador Colson is Deputy Assistant Secretary for Oceans in the Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs. He will retire from 25 years of Government service on August 2; his departure is a loss to the Department of State and a loss to our country.

Dave Colson's career is an exemplar of public service. In 1966, he graduated from college and joined the Peace Corps, serving for 2 years as a teacher in Liberia. Thereafter, he enlisted in the United States Marine Corps. Upon completion of his tour of duty in 1971, he returned to law school. In 1975, he began working for the Department of State, the organization which has enjoyed the benefits of his efforts ever since.

Dave progressed rapidly up the career ladder at State. First as Attorney-Adviser, then as Assistant Legal Adviser, and finally as Deputy Assistant Secretary. He received a career appointment to the Senior Civil Service after only six years working in the Legal Advisers office. Since 1991, he has served with the rank of Ambassador.

Mr. President, those are titles and ranks. They are impressive, but they speak little to Dave's accomplishments and service to our country. The true measure of his contributions lies in the body of international law that he leaves behind and the people whose lives are better because of his work. In these areas, his achievements are legion.

At the Foreign Relations Committee, Ambassador Colson is best known for his expertise in the area of living marine resources. In the past three Congresses, he appeared before our Committee to testify on numerous marine resource treaties. Each of these advanced the interests of the United States and its citizens. Each of them improved the conservation of in the world's marine resources. Each of them developed further the framework of international law that governs the use of ocean space. And each of them was brought about either in large or partial measure through Ambassador Colson's efforts.

Dave Colson's accomplishments are not, however, confined to living marine resources. As Deputy Assistant Secretary for the OES Bureau at the State Department, he has been extensively involved in a variety of issues including the Law of the Sea Convention, the London Dumping Convention, a number of maritime boundary negotiations, navigation issues, and a range of matter associated with the Arctic and Antarctic.

Simply put, Dave Colson became one of the leading experts in the world on oceans. He is to be commended for his invaluable and lasting contributions. I wish him all the best as he embarks on this new phase of his life.

THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business yesterday, Wednesday, July 31, the Federal debt stood at \$5,188,888,625,925.87.

On a per capita basis, every man, woman, and child in America owes \$19,550.80 as his or her share of that debt.

MAINTAINING OUR PARTNERSHIP WITH ISRAEL

Mr. PRESSLER. Mr. President, I want to take this opportunity to comment on our nation's continued support with its chief ally in the Middle East, Israel. Last week, the Senate completed action on the Fiscal Year 1997 Foreign Operations Appropriations Bill. The final legislation soon will be brought before us. This legislation rep-

resents the annual opportunity for Congress to demonstrate its clear support for the people of Israel.

This year is no exception. Both House and Senate bills would continue last year's investment levels to Israel—\$1.2 billion for economic assistance and \$1.8 billion in military aid. I commend the House and Senate Chairmen of the Foreign Operations Appropriations Subcommittee—Senator MCCONNELL and Congressman CALLAHAN for their efforts to maintain our full commitment to the people of Israel.

I have been a strong critique of foreign aid excess. However, I firmly believe that one of the wisest investments we can make is to the economic viability and national security of Israel. Failure to maintain that commitment could pose even greater costs in the future—costs in lost jobs, lost opportunities and far worse, even lost lives.

I have been concerned of late with the proliferation of advanced weapons to nations that traditionally have been hostile to Israel's existence. In the past year, Iran has acquired advanced cruise missiles from China, and has engaged in an aggressive campaign to develop a nuclear weapons and ballistic missile program. It also recently was reported that Syria may have obtained advanced ballistic missile technology from China. It is no secret that Syria is seeking to develop a far more capable ballistic missile than the Scud missiles that rained down on Israel during the Gulf War. Given these developments, it is crucial that Israel maintains a technological edge in its defense systems. Our continued support of Israel's defense, therefore, is vital.

Mr. President, as we all know, just a few weeks ago, a joint session of Congress was held in order to hear an address by the newly elected Prime Minister of Israel, Binyamin Netanyahu. We witnessed a stirring speech. Prime Minister Netanyahu deserves our congratulations for articulating a thoughtful vision for the people of his country.

Perhaps most important, the people of Israel deserve our congratulations for demonstrating their commitment to democratic values. For nearly a half century, the people of Israel have built and preserved a democracy despite constant hardship and hostility. The recent elections are proof that the people of Israel are determined to withstand pressures from without and within to maintain a democracy, build a vibrant economy and achieve peace and security in the entire region.

Prime Minister Netanyahu came to Washington as Israel's first popularly elected Prime Minister. Rather than be the choice of a governing coalition, Prime Minister Netanyahu is the people's choice. The people chose him to lead the Israeli government, rather than the government itself.

The Prime Minister's speech to Congress demonstrated his appreciation and understanding of the American-Israeli partnership—a partnership that