

considering that issue in their legislative bodies. Finally, S. 96 would provide state and local governments protection from punitive damages arising from a Y2K action. Only six states and the District of Columbia have already passed legislation protecting themselves and their localities from Y2K liability. To the extent that state and local governments could become defendants in Y2K litigation and have not protected themselves from liability, this bill would provide such protection and could result in a savings.

Estimated impact on the private sector: S. 96 would impose a new private-sector mandate by requiring prospective plaintiffs in legal actions related to Y2K computer problems to notify prospective defendants of their intent to file suit and wait up to ninety days after such notification before filing. The notice must identify the cause and size of the prospective plaintiff's loss, the remedy sought, and the legal basis for the suit.

For a single prospective plaintiff, the cost of complying with the mandate, the expense incurred in drafting and delivering the notice, is relatively small. The notice is, in effect, a summary of the suit to be filed, so that preparation for the suit is also preparation for the notice. CBO cannot, however, produce an estimate of the aggregate costs of the mandate, largely because we have no way to predict the number of Y2K lawsuits.

Estimate prepared by: Federal Costs: Susanne Mehlman; Impact on State, Local, and Tribal Governments: Lisa Cash Driskill; Impact on the Private Sector: John Harris.

Estimate approved by: Robert A. Sunshine, Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.

ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I rise to observe the Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day which takes place on April 24. Each year we remember and honor the victims, and pay respect to the survivors we are blessed to still have with us.

During the periods 1915–1918 and 1920–1923, approximately 1.5 million Armenians perished under the rule of the Turkish Ottoman Empire. The Armenian people fell victim to deportation, expropriation, torture, starvation and massacre. We signify April 24, 1915 as the day of remembrance because of the more than 200 Armenian community leaders who were systematically hunted down in Constantinople on this date.

The Armenian genocide was the result of a consciously orchestrated government plan. The United States Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, Henry Morgenthau, stated at the time that, "When the Turkish authorities gave the orders for these deportations, they were merely giving the death warrant to a whole race; they understood this well, and, in their conversations with me, they made no particular attempt to conceal the fact . . . I am confident that the whole history of the human race contains no such horrible episode as this."

In an effort to further our understanding of this tragic period, one of my constituents, Mae Derdarian, has written an important survivor's account of the Armenian genocide. Her book, *Vergeen*, recounts a thirteen-year old girl's deportation from her

home, the atrocities she survived, her escape from her tormentors, and her ultimate triumph over the horrors she witnessed and which were perpetrated on her. In a review of Ms. Derdarian's book, *The Detroit Jewish News* wrote "Every now and then a book comes along that haunts the reader long after the last page is turned. *Vergeen* is one of those stories . . . Mae Derdarian has created a page-turner, combing *Vergeen's* memoir and her own mother's recorded accounts of what both women endured as survivors of the first genocide of the 20th century." Such first-hand accounts from survivors are critical to our understanding of genocide, and help us all to recognize and honor the lives of the victims.

Mr. President, each year we remember the horrors suffered by the Armenian people during the periods 1915–1918 and 1920–1923 under the Ottoman Empire. However, it is not enough to simply remember those who have perished. We must dedicate ourselves to see that tragedies such as the Armenian Genocide are not revisited on our planet. This is the highest tribute we can pay to the victims of any genocide.

The Armenian people have earned our enduring admiration for withstanding the horrors of two world wars and several decades of Soviet dominance in order to establish modern Armenia. The United States must continue its efforts to support freedom, prosperity and stability in Armenia as we honor and remember the victims of the Armenian Genocide.

ARMENIAN GENOCIDE COMMEMORATION

Mr. TORRICELLI. Mr. President, I rise today to commemorate the 84th anniversary of the Armenian genocide. This is an event that has defined the Armenian people for the past 84 years, and my thoughts and sympathies are again with them as they remember these events.

It is with a great sense of sorrow that we mark the 84th year since the tragic genocide and exile of the Armenian people. The Turkish Ottoman Empire expelled nearly 1.5 million Armenians as part of a staged campaign. In doing so, the world witnessed one of the most sobering events in modern history. As the first genocide of the 20th century, the period between 1915 and 1918 deserves our attention and respect, and it should remind us of the need to keep all those who perished during the Genocide alive in our memory.

While humankind has the ability to sponsor acts of great kindness and sacrifice, we also have the capacity for great evil. By pausing to commemorate the Armenian Genocide, we ensure that it will never slip into the recesses of history. Along with the Holocaust, the Armenian Genocide signifies our ability to promote evil, but if we close our eyes to the tragedies of the past, we risk the chance of repeating them in the future.

Sadly, the Armenian American community has its roots in the Armenian Genocide. Many individuals living here in the United States either lost family members at the hands of the Ottomans, or are survivors themselves. They have risen above adversity to become prominent and successful citizens despite a tragic past. The Armenian American community has been vocal in expressing its anguish about the Genocide. It is my hope that their perseverance in marking this event each year, as well as our own efforts here in the United States Senate, will be enough to allow us to remember the lessons of the Genocide. We are constantly forced to relearn the effects of evil unchecked, but I hope, in this case, we will be guided to a better future.

SECURITY AT AMERICA'S NUCLEAR LABORATORIES

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, I would like to talk briefly on the critically important hearings being conducted in Congress regarding the alleged national security breaks at our Department of Energy nuclear weapons laboratories. As a member of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, I am committed to finding the answer to what may have happened and ensure that our national security is just that—secure.

I share the concern of most Americans that starting during the Reagan Administration, Chinese spies reportedly stole secrets from New Mexico's Los Alamos National Laboratory to assist China in developing advanced nuclear weapons. I am also concerned with the perceived inaction by individuals and agencies within our government for almost ten years. However, I strongly discourage my colleagues and others in framing this issue in partisan terms because the timeline we are discussing here today includes three Administrations of both parties. The goal of placing blame on Republicans or Democrats is counterproductive to the ultimate need of finding answers that lead to solutions.

The American public is entitled to know whether critically important secrets were stolen from our nuclear laboratories. We, as citizens of a democracy, also have the right to know what steps our government took—or failed to take—to protect our interests and livelihood. The accusations surrounding the Los Alamos Nuclear Laboratory have shaken the trust Americans have in our national security, our government, and our developing relationship with China, the most populated country in the world. It is the responsibility of this committee, Congress as a whole, and the Administration to provide the American public with the answers they deserve.

Accountability and accuracy must be established in this matter. However, knowing what happened and who was responsible is not enough. I am hopeful that out of this committee hearing and

subsequent investigations by other Congressional committees and governmental agencies, we can make sure our national security secrets are safe in a world where it is inevitable and necessary that scientists from different countries work together.

Action must be taken if it is found that security lagged and individuals failed to respond in a timely and appropriate manner. Action must also be taken if it is found that foreign governments actively spied in our nuclear laboratories. However, we will not know what action is necessary until all the information is presented. I look forward to working with my colleagues on this issue and will continue to work to ensure that important questions are answered fully.

RECENT EVENTS IN GEORGIA

Mr. BROWNBACK. Mr. President, I rise today to mark a milestone in the history of the Georgian nation towards consolidating its independence and sovereignty and the progress Georgia has made in moving towards becoming a democratic government with a free market economy.

On the 9th of April 1999, Georgian Orthodox Good Friday, Georgia commemorated a tragic anniversary: ten years ago on that day in 1989, twenty-two people died for daring to express their desire for the independence of their country. During a peaceful demonstration in Tbilisi, Soviet troops moved in on the unarmed crowd with tanks. Soldiers carrying field engineer spades bludgeoned these brave people to death—all of them were unarmed and many of them were women. The troops also used an unknown type of poisonous gas which put thousands of people in hospital. These people paid a heavy price for expressing their desire for independence.

This week, almost exactly 10 years later, Georgia is celebrating another major step towards the goal of full independence for which those people died: this time economic independence. On April 17th, Georgia celebrated the inauguration of the Baku-Supsa oil pipeline. With this step, Georgia has gained another significant measure of independence.

This is a long way to have come in just ten years. And these have been very tumultuous years filled with strife and hardship: assassination attempts against President Shevardnadze; pressures from Russia which continues to harbor Igor Giorgadze, the mastermind behind the 1995 assassination attempt against President Shevardnadze; ethnic conflicts, over 300,000 refugees from Abkhazia, and tremendous economic hardships for the Georgian people.

This refugee problem is one which should resonate with all of us. The television pictures and the stories told by the Kosovar refugees of ethnic cleansing, people pushed out of their homes and villages is a sight which shocks us

and has galvanized the United States and the west to action. Similar scenes were taking place in Georgia which in a very short time had to assimilate over 300,000 refugees driven out of Abkhazia as part of ethnic cleansing in that part of the country. Had there been TV cameras there the world might have reacted. But there weren't and Georgia has been left to deal with this difficult problem on its own.

Despite this difficult backup, President Shevardnadze and the reformers in the Georgian parliament have started and made significant progress in building a new nation. What we are witnessing in Georgia is truly that: the building up from scratch of a new state. This is a daunting task and one which requires immense fortitude and persistent commitment.

There is no quick formula for building a state, no blueprint to follow which will smooth the way. In fact, the road is anything but smooth and there have been wrong turns along the way. But it is taking place. There are a number of indicators.

One is the regaining control of borders. After much negotiating, and persistence, Georgia is starting to regain control of its borders: in the strategic sea-port of Poti, the northern border as well as parts of the border with Turkey. Georgia is also scheduled to take control of the entire Turkish-Georgian border in Ajara in 1999.

Another is in the area of basic legal reforms. Not only have President Shevardnadze and the reformers in Parliament tackled problems systematically, they have clearly demonstrated their commitment by passing legislation which will set the foundations for a free and prosperous society. A recent example is the overhaul of the judiciary. Most of Georgia's judges are being forcibly retired and replaced by new ones chosen by competitive examinations. This is a bold move in the right direction. While the reform of the legal system is moving forward at a fast pace, one area of concern is the recent decision to return to the Soviet system of appointing lay judges for high crimes' sentencing. These judges don't have to pass tests or meet the same standards as federal judges. This is a dangerous road to go down as it could slow down the pace of legal reform and open the door to corruption. Nevertheless, on the whole Georgia should be proud of this wonderful step forward. In a civil society, the legal system should work for the society and not for the benefit of the authorities. The overhaul of the judiciary sets Georgia on that course.

Another is the fight against corruption. The reformers in Georgia have also taken on one of the most pervasive problems which is the legacy of 70 years of communism: corruption. Recent examples of the commitment to take on this overwhelming problem can be found in a number of decisions relating to the areas in which corruption is the most prevalent in any society.

Georgia has hired foreign companies to take over areas which are traditionally the richest sources of bribes and corruption: the distribution of electric power in Tbilisi and the customs service. In another bold move, the Georgian government will be taking procurement away from the ministries: a law passed recently requires that as of 1 July 1999, all government procurements beyond 20,000 lari must be subject to tender by the Ministry of Economy. This law is most significant and will be further enhanced by establishment of a system for third party procurement. The Ministry of Economy working with seasoned western companies can make these tenders work for the government and not for individual people looking for their own personal gain. Leading the way in this effort is the military and the border guards. This will concretely contribute to the more efficient use of Georgian government resources and reduce the temptation of corruption.

The progress made to date has not come easily and has not necessarily been smooth; mistakes have been made along the way. But we must remember that there is no easy map to chart the way from the economic shambles Georgia and the other former Soviet republics inherited to a full blown free market economy and democratic institutions. Building them takes some time, determination and perseverance.

Mr. President, once implemented, the Georgian people will surely begin to see that they are on the right track toward a serious improvement in their circumstances. I congratulate President Shevardnadze and the parliamentarians who have stood up for the freedom and long-term wellbeing of their country.

Mr. President, the geostrategic importance of Georgia to the United States is clear and has been mentioned often. It also has another claim on our attention and support: the progress toward democratization and free market economy there is a strong example to the other countries in the region. Georgia deserves our support as well as our congratulations.

TRIBUTE TO ADMIRAL ROY LEE JOHNSON, USN (RET.)

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, our nation has lost a truly great American in the recent passing of Admiral Roy Lee Johnson, USN (Ret.), who died March 20th in Virginia Beach, Virginia at the age of 93. My Senate colleagues should know that he was the father of Jo-Anne Coe, long-time top aide to Senator Bob Dole. We all join in sending our deepest sympathy to Jo-Anne and her family.

Admiral Johnson had a distinguished Naval career of over 38 years, culminating in his appointment as Commander in Chief of U.S. Naval forces in the Pacific (CINCPACFLT) from 1965-67 at the height of the Vietnam conflict. Prior to this, he was Commander, U.S. Seventh Fleet. In his capacity, he gave