

and gone. What many have long suspected about the Palestinian leadership is being confirmed: They are not committed to peace, they are committed to victory.

Unfortunately, the reaction of the international community to the violence in the Middle East has only emboldened Yasser Arafat. For proof we need look no further than the one-sided, dishonest U.N. Security Council resolution that passed last weekend. The resolution ignores the role of the Palestinians in the violence now taking place. It unfairly blames Israel for sparking the violence, forgetting that it is the right of any person of any religion to visit the Temple Mount. The United States' failure to veto this resolution is an embarrassment—a sell-out of our friends, a sell-out of the peace process.

Arafat insists on an international inquiry into the violence before he will call for its cessation. But is it any wonder that Prime Minister Barak is reluctant to accept such an inquiry when the international community has ranged itself so clearly on one side. Condemn first and ask questions later.

The actions of Arafat and the Palestinian Authority on the question of treatment of holy sites are equally troubling. First, the use of Ariel Sharon's visit to the Temple Mount and the use of that holy site to incite violence: How can we believe any commitment to allow access to all people of all faiths when the Palestinians believe it is their right to sow mayhem after one visit?

Second, the sacking of Joseph's Tomb. Palestinian police stood by as a mob of Palestinians destroyed Joseph's tomb in Nablus—a location from which Israeli forces had retreated in an attempt to calm the situation. They ripped apart Torah scrolls and desecrated a holy place. I have heard it said that the authenticity of the site has been questioned. I can just picture the mob looking for that certificate of authenticity before they went ahead and destroyed a holy book of the Jews.

There is no excuse—no excuse—for the behavior of the Palestinians or their leadership. Prime Minister Barak has offered concessions previously through taboo by most Israelis. Chairman Arafat has responded by demanding yet more and using violence to get it when negotiations failed. He has broken every agreement made in the past months and years, and has released dozens of notorious Hamas and Islamic Jihad terrorists in recent days. Perhaps Israel's intensified reaction following the mob killing of three Israeli soldiers will convince Arafat that he cannot win with violence. But I wonder.

And for the United States, being an honest broker does not necessitate our staying neutral. It should mean embracing a policy of honesty and telling one side when enough is enough. Instead, the Clinton-Gore Administration has shied away from the kind of frank-

ness needed from our nation, and has stood aside in the face of an international political assault on our most important friend in the Middle East.

That lack of resolve is noticed. It has been noticed by those who defy sanctions on Iraq. It has been noticed by the Palestinians. And it was surely noticed by those who attacked the U.S.S. *Cole* and murdered six, maybe more American servicemen. When will this nation show the resolve needed to crush the cowards and criminals who threaten us and our allies?

I hope that the diplomatic efforts underway can lead to a calming of the situation and that the future will see a lasting peace between Israel and the Palestinians. However, for this peace to be truly lasting—and truly be peace—it must come when the parties are ready, on a timetable agreed by them. More important, it can only come when the Palestinians are ready to take upon themselves the mantle of nationhood and abandon their legacy of terrorism. And finally, peace will come when those who stand with the United States know that they have a forthright and loyal ally and those who stand against us fear our resolve.

ALASKAN SLED DOGS

Mr. STEVEN. Mr. President, I wish to speak about some Good Samaritans.

Recent fish disasters in Alaska have made it extremely difficult for Alaskans along the Yukon River and the surrounding areas of that river.

Dog mushers rely upon protein-rich chum salmon to feed their families, as well as their sled dogs. It takes about 100 chum salmon a year to feed one sled dog.

As a result of the fish disaster, an alarming dilemma has confronted the dog mushers. They watch their sled dogs starve or they shoot them. Now that is a terrible dilemma. Healthy Alaskan sled dogs ought not to lose their lives because of a shortage, but that is the situation that we faced. The alternative to end their misery is not one that a dog musher wants to face. It is totally unacceptable as far as I am concerned. Working with my staff, I have tried to find a solution to this problem.

Villages along the Yukon rely upon sled dogs for the transportation of goods. Use of sled dogs in rural Alaska is equivalent to the use of a vehicle in most of our Nation. Today I am able to announce, thanks to the generosity of Jim von der Heydt, executive vice president of Ralston Purina, 22½ tons of dog food will be donated by that company to Alaska's Native people from Purina's Iowa plant. It is the plant in Clinton, IA.

That food is now going to be shipped to Alaska by Lynden Transport with the assistance from the Totem Ocean Trailer Express, which we call TOTE, and the Alaska Railroad. I am extremely grateful to Jim Jansen of Lynden, Robert McGee of TOTE, and

our former Governor, Bill Sheffield, who is now the head of the Alaska Railroad, for agreeing to deliver this relief to the dog mushers.

The dog food will be distributed to the dog teams by the Alaska Federation of Natives. Julie Kitka, the head of the Alaska Federation of Natives, has agreed to take on this task. I am grateful for her support and cooperation.

Lastly, let me commend James Lee Witt, the head of FEMA, for his personal assistance in this effort.

I think this is good news. I am happy to be here to talk about good Samaritans for a change.

I yield the floor.

TRANSPORTATION RECALL ENHANCEMENT ACCOUNTABILITY AND DOCUMENTATION ACT

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, yesterday, the Senate took an important and critical step forward to improve our Nation's motor vehicle safety laws by passing H.R. 5164, the Transportation Recall Enhancement Accountability and Documentation (TREAD) Act. The bill is in response to the more than 100 deaths associated with defective Bridgestone/Firestone tires. During the debate, I intended to include a letter from Congressman BLILEY, chairman of the House Commerce Committee clarifying the intent of a provision of the bill relating to the ability of the Department of Transportation to request material from manufacturers. I ask that the letter be included in the RECORD at the conclusion of my remarks. The letter makes it clear that the provisions would not enable manufacturers to conceal or destroy information requested by the Secretary.

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

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE,
Washington, DC, October 11, 2000.

Hon. JOHN MCCAIN,
Chairman, Senate Committee on Commerce,
Science, and Transportation, Washington,
DC.

DEAR JOHN: I am writing to clarify the intent of section 3(b) of H.R. 5164, the TREAD Act, as passed by the House last night.

I understand that there are concerns about the Committee's construction of the amendment to section 31066(m)(4)(B) of title 49, United States Code, relating to the Secretary's ability to request information not in possession of the manufacturer. This provision provides, in relevant part, that the Secretary may not "require a manufacturer * * * to maintain or submit records respecting information not in the possession of the manufacturer." This restriction was not intended to provide manufacturers with an easy way to withhold information from the Secretary by destroying or transferring the possession of records; rather, it is intended to ensure that the Secretary does not promulgate requirements that require the manufacturer to submit information not reasonably within its possession or control.

Further, any orchestrated effort to withhold information from the Secretary with the intent to mislead him, whether through

an intentional "transfer" of possession or other method, is precisely the kind of activity that could potentially subject a manufacturer to the criminal penalties under section 4 of the bill. The fundamental purpose of this legislation is to ensure that the Secretary receives the information he needs to identify defects related to motor vehicle safety at the earliest possible opportunity.

I hope that you find this explanation helpful.

Sincerely,

TOM BLILEY,
Chairman.

NEED FOR ACTION ON DEBT RELIEF

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, in the last days of this Congress, as we scramble to complete our work, I am worried that one of the most important issues before us may slip through the cracks.

Last week, I attended an extraordinary meeting at the White House, where President Clinton called together religious and political leaders to discuss the urgent need to provide debt relief for the poorest countries of the world. Looking around the table, it was clear that this was no ordinary issue, no ordinary meeting.

Just a partial list of the people in that room speaks volumes about this issue. There were bishops of several denominations, and a rabbi. The Reverend Pat Robertson was there, as was the Reverend Andrew Young. Democratic Congresswoman MAXINE WATERS was at the table, not far from Republican Congressman SPENCER BACHUS. A few seats from the President himself sat near the rock star Bono, who has become one of the most prominent spokesmen for the cause of debt relief.

President Clinton called us together because the need for debt relief is great, the logic of debt relief is compelling, and time left for us to pass debt relief legislation is alarmingly short. Failure to act now would be nothing less than a failure of the United States to lead what could be the most important international effort to bring the poorest nations of the world into a more positive, constructive role in the world economy.

Here are the facts, Mr. President. Around the world today, many poor nations actually pay more in interest payments to advanced industrial nations, and to international development banks, than they do on childhood immunizations, primary education, and other essential services.

Tragically, Mr. President, many of these countries are suffering through an AIDS epidemic that dwarfs any public health crisis the world has ever seen. No responsible person can argue that we have no interest in helping such countries fight against communicable diseases that are just a jet flight away from our cities. No moral person can argue that we should sit idly by while a continent loses a generation to disease.

The debts these countries owe are often the legacy of earlier govern-

ments, propped up by lending that suited the purposes of Cold War geopolitics, but that did precious little for the poorest of the poor in those countries. Today, the prospects of repayment by these countries is so small that the loans are now carried on our books at just a few cents on the dollar. A sensible business decision—made every day in this country and around the world—is to simply write off bad debts, and let both borrower and lender move on.

Following that sound economic logic, with the leadership and commitment of the United States, the major creditor nations of the world agreed several years ago to forgive some of the debt owed by the poorest of these countries. That program, known as the HIPC Initiative—for the "Highly Indebted Poor Countries"—requires significant commitments by the poor countries if they are to qualify. They must commit to market-oriented economic reforms, reduce corruption, and use the savings from debt relief for essential poverty reduction programs.

Already under way in several countries, the HIPC program has achieved tangible results—the kind of results we all want to see, and the kind of results that will be put at risk if we fail to fully fund our participation. In Uganda, money saved by debt relief under the HIPC program has allowed the government to end the fees for primary school students, fees that had kept enrollment down. Over the last four years, primary school enrollment there virtually doubled. That is what a well-designed debt relief program can do.

Because those debts are such a large part of the poor countries' income—often as high as thirty or forty percent—and because those same debts are realistically worth so little to us, a relatively small financial commitment on our part buys important economic assistance many times over. And because we are the leading economy in the world, Mr. President, our leverage is even greater. Other nations are waiting for us to act—the only prudent course for creditors working out this kind of deal—and that means that our relatively small contribution will trigger a major international initiative.

But that leverage works both ways. Without us, the viability of the whole initiative remains in doubt. Our inaction has stalled any further action on debt relief in Latin America, and will prevent all but a few eligible African countries from participating.

Something more than sensible, effective foreign policy is at stake here, Mr. President, which brings me back to that extraordinary meeting at the White House. The world's religious leaders, from the Pope to Billy Graham, in an interfaith, ecumenical unanimity rarely seen on any issue, have joined to challenge our nation's conscience. They have asked us to face the embarrassing fact that while we talk about providing assistance to the poorest nations—while in fact we do send a

tiny fraction of our own record income and wealth abroad—at the same time we continue to collect interest payments on those nations' old debts.

They have challenged us to follow the Biblical injunction to lift the burden of debt, in effect to put our money where we say our values are. They call on us to deal with the least fortunate in the way all of the world's great religions command. Now, when we are enjoying the best economic times in our history, as we stand as the most fortunate of nations, surely we can underwrite less than four percent of the overall cost of debt relief. That's right, Mr. President: our share is less than four percent of the total cost of the whole HIPC program.

For that contribution, we will assure the full implementation of nearly 30 billion dollars of debt relief for the poorest 33 countries of the world.

This program presents us with a powerful combination of economic logic and moral imperative. Here, in the last days and hours of this session of Congress, we must not let this opportunity slip away.

Earlier this year, the Foreign Relations Committee passed full authorization of two key funding mechanisms for our participation in the HIPC program. First, we authorized use of the balance of the funds made available through a revaluation of the IMF's gold holdings, to provide them with the resources to finance their share of the debt forgiveness—an action that will have no budgetary impact, that will not cost us a dime.

The Foreign Relations Committee also authorized the appropriation of \$600 million for our share, between 2000 and 2003, of the HIPC initiative. Senator HELMS, Senator HAGEL, and Senator SARBANES and I agreed on a set of conditions that would hold the Administration accountable for policies that will promote more focused, better monitored international financial institutions. But we agreed, in the end, that the program was too important to impose unworkable conditions or to require the kind of delay that could be fatal. It took compromise and good faith to achieve that agreement, which was reported out of our committee unanimously.

Mr. President, I am here today to say that those principles must guide any final agreement. That means there must be no new, unworkable demands for overhauling international financial institutions like the IMF and the World Bank before debt relief can go forward. That will require the spirit of bipartisan accommodation that we achieved in our committee.

So far the Senate has only appropriated \$75 million for debt relief. This is only a place holder for a final amount, now under negotiation. The House has done somewhat better, but is still far short of the mark. One of the problems is that full authorization has not reached the Senate floor, where I