

DC, to look over applications and to run audits, and each of which requires a corresponding bureaucracy in our States and in our local school districts to ask for the money and to account for how it is spent.

I have proposed, and a majority of the members of the health committee are now proposing, to add to this Federal formula a bill that I call Straight A's to inject what I consider to be some common sense in the way in which we help our schools in Washington, DC.

Straight A's will give to States all across the United States an opportunity to change from a process of accountability to a performance accountability. Instead of spending their time filling out forms to show that they have spent their money exactly as Congress has dictated, a State which elects to come under Straight A's will be able to take one to two dozen of these narrow categorical aid programs, combine them into one, and get rid of all the forms and most of this process accountability on the basis of one's promise. That promise is: Let us do what we think best for our kids, and we will do a better job. Our kids will do better. We will have standardized tests in our States and we will prove they are doing better, because we are allowed to make more of our own decisions or you can cancel the whole thing and take it back. It is as simple as that.

It is the provision of trust in people who are putting their lives and their years into the education of our kids, the people who know our kids' names, rather than a group in the Department of Education in Washington, DC, or in this body which so often seems to feel it can and should act as one nationwide school board.

I have heard a lot from the defenders of the status quo over the course of the last 3 years. One of the first who criticized my earlier proposal said: My gosh, if we let them do that, they will spend all the money on swimming pools. Another said it might be football helmets.

All of them had one common thought: We don't dare let our educators and our school board members make up their minds; They would make mistakes; We know more than they do; We know more than the people in your hometown, Mr. President, in Kansas, or my people in the State of Washington, or the constituents of the Senator from the State of Virginia. Somehow we know the cure for 17,000 school districts across the United States.

The biggest of the present Federal programs is title I, originally passed 35 years ago to narrow the gap between underprivileged children and privileged children. The gap has not narrowed in that 35 years. Is it not time we give some of our States and some of our school districts the opportunity to say they think they can do it better? We think those right on the ground in our schools can do it better than taking di-

rection from the Senate, the House, the White House, and the Department of Education in Washington, DC.

That is the opportunity we 100 Members of the Senate are going to be given very soon, I am convinced, by the action of a committee under the leadership of the distinguished Senator from Vermont, Mr. JEFFORDS, and other dedicated members of that committee. I am disappointed the work they have been doing for the past couple of weeks has not gotten wider publicity and attention than it has received. I am now convinced that committee is going to present the most profound reform, the most hopeful new direction in the field of Federal education policy than we have received in a generation.

All 100 Members are going to have an opportunity to make those changes ourselves. I look forward to that opportunity. I congratulate the committee for the work it has already done.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The distinguished Senator from Virginia is recognized.

KOSOVO AMENDMENT TO THE FY2000 SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I thank the distinguished Presiding Officer.

I ask unanimous consent to have an amendment appended at the conclusion of my remarks.

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

(See Exhibit 1.)

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, the Presiding Officer is familiar with the matter I bring to the attention of the Senate, and I thank him for his advice and willingness to participate in the undertaking to prepare the amendment which I will now address.

I rise today to advise the Senate of a proposed amendment on Kosovo, a form of which I and other cosponsors intend to offer when the Senate considers the fiscal year 2000 Supplemental Appropriations Act. An experienced group of colleagues have worked together, and we will continue to work together on this legislation. I thank Senators STEVENS, INOUYE, ROBERTS, and SNOWE for joining me as cosponsors in this effort.

I inform the Senate about this amendment now so that other colleagues, officials in the administration, and, indeed, our allies and other nations and organizations will have sufficient time to study and provide constructive comment on this legislation prior to the Senate's consideration of the supplemental later this month.

This is a vital issue, as our Presiding Officer knows full well. It is critical to the men and women of our Armed Forces that the U.S. Congress face up to this issue. It is equally critical to the brave troops of other nations serving in Kosovo. It is critical to the future of NATO, and it is critical to future peacekeeping missions.

There are an ever-increasing number of problems in the world today. It is a

far more complex and dangerous place than it was a decade ago or a decade before that. Indeed, as I look back on the cold-war era, there was a certain amount of certainty within which we were able to structure our forces, lay down a strategy, and perform our missions. Today, it is greatly different. The challenges posed to our national leaders, and particularly the men and women of the Armed Forces, have little precedent. Likewise, the diversity of the threats have now proliferated throughout the world. They are less and less nation sponsored, state sponsored; oftentimes, they are just small groups. There are conflicts in ever-increasing numbers, prompted by cultural, ethnic, and religious differences.

As I publicly stated regarding this amendment, my intention in offering this legislation is to ensure that our European allies have stepped up to meet their share in providing the necessary resources and personnel for the civil implementation in Kosovo, the efforts to which we have all pledged as a group of nations to fulfill. Once the military mission was completed, then we committed among ourselves to take the next step to ensure the peace that was given as a consequence of the sacrifices and the professionalism of the men and women who promulgated that combat action for 78 days.

During that period of combat, the United States bore the major share of the military burden for the air war, flying almost 70 percent of the total strike and support forces at a cost of over \$4 billion to the American taxpayer. Many, many aviators and others took high personal risks. We were joined in that combat operation by another seven or eight nations that indeed did fly, willingly and courageously. However, it was the United States only—how well our colleagues know—that had the high-performance aircraft, the guided missiles, that support the transport aircraft. NATO did not have it. Those elements of our military, whether they were in or out of NATO, were brought together to promulgate this successful military operation.

In return, the Europeans then promised to pay the major share of the burdens to secure the peace. So far, they have committed and pledged billions of dollars for this goal. I acknowledge that. They have come in diverse amounts at diverse periods of time, but the problem is not enough money has been put up thus far in a timely fashion to make their way to the Kosovo problems, and then begin to solve those problems.

Why the delay? The troops and the public are entitled to know. As a result, our troops and other troops are having to make up for the shortfalls of failing to provide the police force—something we all agreed upon long before the first shot was fired. The troops today, therefore, are having to make up for those shortfalls by performing basic police functions, such as running

towns and villages, acting mayors, settling all types of disputes, and guarding individual houses and historic sites. The distinguished Presiding Officer visited this region just a month or so ago, as did I, and witnessed this.

The troops are functioning in areas for which they were not specifically trained. However, there is an extraordinary learning curve for men and women in the Armed Forces of the United States of America and, indeed, other nations. The Presiding Officer and I know; we were privileged to wear uniforms ourselves at one time. We know how well these young men and women can adapt to challenges.

They were not specifically trained, but they are doing the job, and they were doing it very well, but at a great personal risk, I say to the Presiding Officer, at a great personal risk. We have seen in the past few weeks, in Mitrovica and other areas, outbursts, we have seen woundings, we have seen deaths.

That was not a situation we anticipated would take place if there had been a timely sequencing of the military actions and the placing of a civilian police force, infrastructure adjustments, and all the other things needed to bring together Kosovo as an operating society.

Our troops engaged in a high-risk mission, along with others. Their courage, their professional work, as I said, was witnessed by the Presiding Officer and myself, on my trip, and by many others in the Senate. I credit the large number of Senators for taking the time to go over and visit with our troops to see for themselves the complexity of the situation and the risks that are being taken.

As I said, our troops accept that risk. Indeed, the American people thus far have accepted that risk. But it is now incumbent upon the Congress of the United States to begin to exercise its authority and to show some leadership, hopefully in partnership with the administration. We need to show leadership to make certain, regarding the commitment made by our allies and other organizations—whether it be the United Nations, the E.U., the OSCE, or many others who are working in governmental organizations—that we are pulling on the oars together. I am proud to say our country, as best I can determine, has met in a timely fashion its obligations. But the purpose of this amendment is to draw the attention of our allies to the fact the record does not show that they are likewise fulfilling their commitments in a timely way.

We braved those 78 days of combat. Along with other nations that participated we laid the foundation for peace in Kosovo. What we cannot and must not allow to happen is for the risk to our troops to endlessly drift on because of the failure of our allies to live up to their share of the commitments. This is the bottom line of this amendment.

The amendment is simple and straightforward. Half of the funding in-

cluded in the supplemental for the U.S. military operations in Kosovo—over \$1 billion; that is one-half; it is a total of \$2 billion—would be provided up front, ready for prompt disbursal to stop the drawdown of the readiness accounts. This would pay for the expenses accrued by our military in Kosovo since the start of the current fiscal year, way back on October 1, 1999.

The remainder of the money, roughly another \$1 billion, would be available only—and I underline “only”—after the President of the United States certifies to the Congress that the European Commission, the member nations of the European Union, and the European member nations of NATO have provided a substantial percentage of the assistance and personnel which they themselves have committed to the various civil implementation efforts in Kosovo.

This is an important point that needs to be emphasized. In this legislation we are not seeking an arbitrary or unachievable standard. We are holding the Europeans accountable for the pledges and commitments which they have made. Recognizing that nations have different fiscal years and different procedures, we are not asking for full compliance within the context of this legislation. We expect eventually full compliance.

In the critical areas of humanitarian assistance, support for the Kosovo Consolidated Budget—the money needed by Dr. Kouchner, to whom I will refer later; he is the head of the U.N. mission—to run Kosovo and the police for the U.N. international police force, the Europeans must provide 75 percent of the money or personnel which they committed to provide before additional U.S. taxpayer dollars for military operations in Kosovo would be disbursed.

That is a formula I devised along with the others who worked with me on this, and the intention is to lay down the figures of who has done what, when they did it, and what is left to be done. Unless our President, through his leadership, and other world leaders, can bring this rough formula into play, then we have the triggering mechanism by which the President, if he desires not to certify, or cannot because the facts do not justify a certification. Then I will spell out what happens to the balance of that money.

As I mentioned, on the reconstruction side—I wish to repeat that; it is important—it is a more long-term endeavor. We are requiring the Europeans to provide a third of the money they pledged for the 1999 and 2000 period.

I will readily admit I do not know if a third of the reconstruction money is a good benchmark because that is the category of aid for which I am having the most problem getting accurate data. I cannot tell you the hours and hours involved in consultation, trips and travel to the U.N. and elsewhere, to the Departments of our Federal Government, indeed, consultations with the White House. I found everyone trying to be constructive.

We had a meeting at the White House with the Secretaries of State, Defense, the chairman of the Budget Office, the National Security Adviser. Trying to assemble the data is an awesome task. This amendment forces that task to be undertaken by that individual best qualified to do it, and that is the President of the United States, working in concert with these organizations and the other allies.

It is so difficult to get the data, but we have plowed ahead as best we could. We know, for example, that billions have been pledged at two international donor conferences for Kosovo reconstruction, but I have not been able to find within the administration, at the U.N. or at the E.U., anyone or any document or fact that could advise me and inform the Senate on how much of that money has actually been disbursed.

To put it in the vernacular, where are the canceled checks for what has come in already? It is as simple as that. The American people understand there has to be a record. That is part of the body of fact this Congress needs—and that is required by this legislation—as we decide whether or not to support a continuation of our military deployment, the U.S. troops which are part of the KFOR military structure.

Again, I compliment that KFOR structure. It is working. It is meeting unanticipated problems. It is doing the best it can. There have been some problems recently. Our committee has had General Clark in, just a week or so ago. We went over this, carefully provided oversight about every 3 months or less on this situation.

What happens, I ask, if our allies do not fulfill their commitments and the President is not able to make the certification required by this amendment? If the President cannot make the required certification by June 1, then the remaining \$1 billion contained in the supplemental for military operations in Kosovo may be used only for the purpose of conducting a safe and orderly and phased withdrawal of U.S. military personnel from Kosovo.

There it is. That is the bottom line. It has to be said. Someone has to say it. And I said it. I am very pleased with the support I have gotten from a number of individuals to step up and take on this responsibility.

Further, no other funding previously appropriated for the Department of Defense may be used to continue the deployment of U.S. military personnel in Kosovo. We have to seal that up. It had to be said. I thought long and hard on the time and the moment I would come to this floor and state it. But I did it.

We are not setting a deadline for the withdrawal of our troops. It is up to the President and his military advisers to decide how best a safe, orderly, and phased withdrawal should be done. Under this legislation, the President would have to submit his plan for the withdrawal to the Congress by June 30. In my opinion, that withdrawal should not take more than 18 months.

The bottom line is it is not fair to our troops, to their families at home, to the other troops, to remain indefinitely in Kosovo with the political structure, be it our President, the Congress of the United States, the legislatures of the other nations and their leaders, not to take some strong, positive action now to ensure this peace.

We cannot ask those people in uniform and, indeed, many civilians who are associated in this effort—there are a lot of volunteer organizations there—we cannot ask them to take the ever-increasing share of this burden and the risks, personal risks, simply because the nations are not willing, in a timely way, to provide the funding or personnel they promised for civil implementation in Kosovo.

Some will criticize this legislation. That is all right. I am prepared to receive it. But what is a better solution than what we have devised? If there is a better one, please come forward and give it to us. I invite constructive criticism. I invite suggestions. Those who worked with me on this join me.

Some may claim it holds the U.S. military deployment in Kosovo hostage to the actions of our allies; that we are in effect letting others decide whether or not our troop presence in Kosovo will continue by their inaction. I address that allegation now and say, quite respectfully, that our President has already made that connection. The exit strategy for our troops in Kosovo—as it is for our troops in Bosnia—is directly linked to the actions of the U.N., the E.U., the OSCE and others in achieving their goals on the civil implementation side.

Our President said on October 15 in a letter to the Congress:

The duration of the requirement for U.S. military presence (in Kosovo) will depend upon the course of events. . . . The military force will be progressively reduced based on an assessment of progress in civil implementation and the security situation.

This legislation uses the same link, the same tie to the actions of others already adopted in concept by this administration.

In Kosovo, the U.N., E.U., and OSCE are the groups charged with the civil implementation responsibilities. Up to this point, I must say quite plainly, these organizations are not doing the job they committed to do in a timely manner in Kosovo. The successful NATO-led military operation in Kosovo was undertaken—at personal risk to our troops and those of other nations, and with billions of dollars in costs to the American taxpayers and the taxpayers of other nations—with the understanding in America and, indeed, throughout Europe that the U.N. and other organizations would promptly move in behind and consolidate the military achievements. Now, as a result of little progress in that consolidation, U.S. troops and troops from over 30 nations, are required to perform almost all the tasks and are facing an indefinite deployment and indefinite risk in Kosovo.

Personal bravery, international bonds of commitment, and prudent NATO leadership won the war in Kosovo, but will the slow pace of follow-on actions result in the loss of the peace? That is what we are facing.

Recent events in Mitrovica show how fragile the peace is in Kosovo and how time and unfulfilled commitments play into the hands of those who oppose the peace, and there are several factions that oppose this peace.

During a hearing in the Senate Armed Services Committee on February 2 with NATO commander General Clark as the witness, I and other Members signaled our intention to take legislative action in connection with the upcoming Kosovo supplemental to be proposed by President Clinton. It has not as yet arrived in the Senate. It is to revitalize the near stagnant situation in Kosovo. That is the purpose of this amendment.

Congress has a coequal responsibility with the executive branch, and we now must exercise leadership, again I say, hopefully in partnership with the administration. This is not a political document. Many went in with the best of intentions, but it is time we recognize that no matter how sincere those intentions may have been, we are not collectively, as a group of nations, fulfilling our responsibilities.

We, a growing number of Senators, state:

Other nations and organizations must follow through on their commitments if U.S. troops are to remain a part of the Kosovo military force.

The United States has far too many commitments around the world. Our military is stretched too thin as it is. We cannot have an open-ended, possibly decades-long military deployment in the Balkans.

We, together with other nations, went into Kosovo with the best of intentions—to stop the slaughter of tens of thousands of innocent people, to restore peace and stability to that region, and to help the people of Kosovo rebuild lives shattered by war and ethnic cleansing. But what has the situation achieved? What has this coalition really achieved? Clearly, the military has fulfilled its mission. To the extent possible, given the continued ethnic animosities—and how extraordinarily they persist—the military has stopped the large-scale fighting and created a relatively safe and secure environment, from a military perspective. However, unacceptable dangerous levels of criminal activity continue and put our troops and many others at risk. Therefore, we have little time left in which to address this problem. We have to figure out, given the precious little progress that has taken place to date, what we can do in the future. This is one idea by a very conscientious and thoughtful group of Senators.

We must recognize the U.N. bears its share of the responsibility. We only say that because the U.N. cannot share all the blame or accept all the blame for

the slow pace of progress in Kosovo. But we are mindful of the fact that international organizations are dependent on timely contributions of money and personnel from member nations. In other words, the U.N. acts as a funneling of these funds as they are contributed pursuant to commitments by the various nations. These contributions have been severely lacking, severely delayed in the case of Kosovo.

When I was in Pristina in January, I had the opportunity to meet with Dr. Kouchner—an extraordinary man—the head of the UNMIK, the U.N. mission in Kosovo. He is a very dedicated and committed individual. He has given up much of his private life to go into that area to do the very best he can.

We conducted that meeting with General Reinhardt at the KFOR headquarters, the headquarters, I might add, which on that particular night did not even have running water and the electricity was flickering. It is just an example of the inability to deliver the very basic necessities.

I remember Dr. Kouchner said that night—he was bitterly cold—that there were people literally huddled in their homes without adequate food, heat, shelter, and the like, and it could have been alleviated, to some degree, had these nations stepped up and met their commitments.

As I said, I was impressed with the professionalism and dedication of the general and Dr. Kouchner.

Dr. Kouchner sounded a consistent and urgent theme. He desperately needed money if the U.N. was to achieve its goals in Kosovo. Dr. Kouchner has been going from capital to capital across Europe and, indeed, in this hemisphere—he visited here just a few days ago—urging nations to live up to the commitments they made, to send the money for his mission. General Reinhardt has been supporting Dr. Kouchner in his efforts, since the general understands the KFOR troops continue to bear the full burden if the U.N. mission does not succeed and the missions of all the organizations. According to General Reinhardt:

The problem for Bernard Kouchner is that he doesn't get the money to pay for what he knows he needs and wants for Kosovo. . . . The international community—the same governments that decided to get us here—doesn't give him what . . . he needs, and it has a direct impact on my soldiers.

On Monday, March 6, Dr. Kouchner and General Reinhardt, as I said, were at the U.N. to report to the Security Council on the situation in Kosovo. Dr. Kouchner told the Security Council:

If we hope to build democracy in Kosovo, we must do more than ensure the safety of its residents. We must allocate the necessary resources to accomplish the job.

I agree. Foreign donors must deliver immediately, as the United States has done, on their commitments and promises.

My greatest concern is with the international police. The U.N. has said it needs an international police force of

4,718. To date, only 2,359 police have arrived in Kosovo. It is interesting, just about half of what was projected. The United States has done its share. We have already deployed 481 police, and the remaining police pledged by the U.S.—for a total of 550—will arrive in Kosovo shortly. Others, particularly Europeans, have to do their share by providing the necessary police forces. Overall, nations have pledged over 4,400 police. They must now deliver on these pledges. Pledges do not help with the current violence. We need to put it in words that Americans understand: “Cops on the beat.”

I commend my distinguished ranking member, Senator LEVIN, who has constantly hit that theme in open sessions over and over again. To a large measure, he joins me in the purport of this amendment. Hopefully, in the weeks to come, with his advice, and with others advice, we can, to the extent necessary—maybe not necessary—reconfigure some of the language of this amendment.

We had a meeting today with officials of our administration in the Armed Services hearing, again, to show the amendment and to urge them to come forward and give us such suggestions as they wish to make.

I spoke, by phone, with Secretary Cohen and National Security Adviser Berger. It is not as if we are out here operating on our own. We are trying to do our best. But remember, Congress has coequal responsibility and must exercise its best leadership.

NATO's soldiers must get out of the business of policing. That will not happen until enough police arrive. Our troops are not policemen. They were not specifically trained, as I said, to perform these tasks. It should not be a part of their continuing indefinite mission.

Since the air war began almost a year ago, the United States has spent over \$5 billion for our military operations in Kosovo—\$5 billion. It was for a good cause. But \$5 billion is desperately needed by our military today for its modernization. The distinguished chairman of the Appropriations Committee, at lunch—and the Presiding Officer was there—recounted program after program in terms of the airlift, the aging C-5, the aging C-41, the need to up the buy of the C-17. That is where these needed dollars are required.

The annual price tag for the military commitment is over \$2 billion in Kosovo. This is a heavy burden on the defense budget, but we are going to, hopefully, get it in the supplemental so that we do not take it, as we say, out of their operating accounts. That is the importance of this supplemental. Plus, it is a heavy burden on the American taxpayer.

In addition to these significant sums of money, I am concerned, again, about the safety and welfare of the men and women in uniform. I will come back to that on every single page. Each day

that I am privileged to be a member of the Armed Services Committee—and now as its chairman—I think and begin every day asking myself: What is my obligation to work with this committee to better the lot of the men and women of the Armed Forces and their families?

They are patrolling these towns and villages—as you and I are in this Chamber, and others—subjecting themselves to substantial personal risk while performing their duties. They are taking the risks. The American people take the risks.

I believe we have reached a point in time where it is the responsibility of the Congress to take action to ensure that others step up and fulfill their commitments—other nations and organizations—and that the U.S. military commitment to Kosovo not remain an endless commitment.

I place this draft in the Senate RECORD of today, rather than formally filing the amendment, to show our determination to put forth a constructive approach, not a “cut and run”—there is never any intention to do that—but accountability for all trying to secure a lasting peace in Kosovo. That is the bottom line. I did not file it, so that, if necessary—if we get a good set of suggestions—we can change this document and improve it.

I believe the American people will continue to support the U.S. involvement in Kosovo. I know they will if they know that our President and their Congress are acting in partnership, in concert, to get this job done that is fair to all. They want to see our allies also step up and be accountable and to do their part.

I think—and I say this humbly—this proposal will help do just this. We invite the comments and suggestions of all.

I thank the Presiding Officer, and others, for joining me in this effort.

I yield the floor.

EXHIBIT NO. 1

AMENDMENT NO.—

(Purpose: To limit the use of funds for support of military operations in Kosovo)

At the appropriate place, insert:

SEC. _____. (a) Of the amounts appropriated in this Act under the heading “OVERSEAS CONTINGENCY OPERATIONS TRANSFER FUND” for military operations in Kosovo, not more than 50 percent may be obligated until the President certifies in writing to Congress that the European Commission, the member nations of the European Union, and the European member nations of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization have provided at least 33 percent of the amount of assistance committed by these organizations and nations for 1999 and 2000 for reconstruction in Kosovo, at least 75 percent of the amount of assistance committed by them for 1999 and 2000 for humanitarian assistance in Kosovo, at least 75 percent of the amount of assistance committed by them for 1999 and 2000 for the Kosovo Consolidated Budget, and at least 75 percent of the number of police, including special police, pledged by them for the United Nations international police force for Kosovo.

(b) The President shall submit to Congress, with any certification submitted by the President under subsection (a), a report containing detailed information on—

(1) the commitments and pledges made by each organization and nation referred to in subsection (a) for reconstruction assistance in Kosovo, humanitarian assistance in Kosovo, the Kosovo Consolidated Budget, and police (including special police) for the United Nations international police force for Kosovo;

(2) the amount of assistance that has been provided in each category, and the number of police that have been deployed to Kosovo, by each such organization or nation; and

(3) the full range of commitments and responsibilities that have been undertaken for Kosovo by the United Nations, the European Union, and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the progress made by those organizations in fulfilling those commitments and responsibilities, an assessment of the tasks that remain to be accomplished, and an anticipated schedule for completing those tasks.

(c) If the President does not submit to Congress a certification and report under subsections (a) and (b) on or before June 1, 2000, then, beginning on June 2, 2000, the 50 percent of the amounts appropriated in this Act under the heading “OVERSEAS CONTINGENCY OPERATIONS TRANSFER FUND” for military operations in Kosovo that remain unobligated (as required by subsection (a)) shall be available only for the purpose of conducting a safe, orderly, and phased withdrawal of United States military personnel from Kosovo, and no other amounts appropriated for the Department of Defense in this Act or any Act enacted before the date of the enactment of this Act may be obligated to continue the deployment of United States military personnel in Kosovo. In that case, the President shall submit to Congress, not later than June 30, 2000, a report on the plan for the withdrawal.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey is recognized.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, I understand that we are in morning business and that Senators may be recognized for 5 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. I ask unanimous consent that I be given up to 10 minutes to make my remarks in morning business.

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

THE NEED TO CLOSE THE GUN SHOW LOOPHOLE

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, I want to discuss a subject that is not terribly different than the remarks made by the distinguished Senator from Virginia just now. He talks about our responsibilities, what we have to do to protect our citizens. He talked about it in a slightly different way than I am going to discuss it now.

But we are at a point in time, Mr. President, when there are 43 days on the calendar left until the 1-year anniversary of the shootings at Columbine High School in Colorado. On April 20, 2000, it will be 1 year since the country listened, in shock, to the news that two high school students, Eric Harris and