

dedication to this issue reminds us that our work here is not confined to the headline grabbing issues of the day but extends to the quiet pursuit of humane working conditions everywhere.

S. 1052 is a bill to amend the legislation enacted by Congress in 1976 through which the Northern Mariana Islands became a Commonwealth of the United States. This bill provides for a transition period during which the Commonwealth will be incorporated into our federal system of immigration laws. The 1976 covenant enacted by Congress extended U.S. citizenship to CNMI residents, but it exempted the Commonwealth from the Immigration and Nationality Act. Over the years it has become clear what a mistake that was.

Today the immigration situation in the Commonwealth contributes to some very grave social problems. Over the past twenty years, the number of citizens of the Commonwealth has doubled, while over that same period of time the number of alien workers has multiplied twenty-fold. This huge demographic change, and the absence of effective immigration control, has led to deplorable conditions for many of these alien workers.

Senator AKAKA addressed the Senate in October to describe the tragic circumstances in which many alien workers are held as virtual prisoners and are not permitted to leave their barracks during non-working hours. He reported that the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division had obtained criminal convictions of defendants who had forced alien women into prostitution and held them in what has been described as "modern day slavery." I was personally moved by his report. This bill will immediately help to change the circumstances that contribute to these terrible conditions while at the same time minimizing any negative effect on the Commonwealth's legitimate businesses in the local tourism industry. In fact, the bill calls for the Secretary of Commerce to provide the kind of technical assistance that will help to encourage the growth and diversification of the local economy and promote the Northern Mariana Islands as a tourist destination.

This is a first step toward ensuring that every man and woman who works under the U.S. flag works in conditions we can all be proud of. As Senator AKAKA knows, we should do more. We should also guarantee the minimum wage for workers in the Commonwealth, and if the Democratic minimum wage proposal is passed, we will do just that. But we should not let what we know to be the best solution forestall our resolve to implement a good solution, and so I am very proud that the Senate passed this much needed legislation and I thank Senators AKAKA, MURKOWSKI and BINGAMAN for their fine work in this important endeavor.

CIVILIAN PLUTONIUM AGREEMENT

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, a front page article in yesterday's New York Times announced an agreement that will halt Russia's production of plutonium from spent fuel used in its civilian power reactors. In exchange for a Russian moratorium on plutonium reprocessing, the United States will provide a \$100 million joint research and aid. I strongly support these efforts and believe that this proposal will help to reduce the threat of proliferation from nuclear materials in Russia.

However, as we pursue new initiatives to better safeguard Russia's civilian plutonium, we must not waver in our support for the more urgent task of disposing of their weapons plutonium. The 50 tons of military-grade plutonium that Russia has agreed is surplus could fuel more than 6,000 modern weapons. I'm pleased that the Administration is also recognizing that the lower-grade, civilian, plutonium presents some risk—but we must continue to place our highest priority on their military materials, which represent a significantly higher risk.

Currently, Russia possesses 30 tons of separated civilian plutonium at Mayak and continues to accumulate 2 tons per year from reprocessing at that facility. This is in addition to the 150 or more tons of weapons plutonium in the Russian complex.

First, we must ensure that these materials are safeguarded. Second, any burn capacity Russia has should be committed to first eliminating military-origin plutonium as mixed-oxide (MOX) fuel. Until the threat from weapons plutonium is eliminated, Russia has no use for this reprocessed fuel, and its continued production represents a proliferation risk, albeit less than the risk from weapons-grade materials. This agreement will help address immediate needs.

As part of this agreement, the United States will contribute \$45 million to improve control and accounting of civilian-grade plutonium already stored at the Mayak site and build an additional large dry storage facility elsewhere in Russia. Another \$30 million will ensure adequate safeguards—protection, control and accounting—on the existing materials. The balance of U.S. contributions—\$25 million for research on proliferation-resistant fuel cycles and permanent geological storage—is conditioned on Russia ending its sales of nuclear technology to Iran.

Mr. President, while I support this new initiative to temporarily halt Russian extraction of plutonium from their spent nuclear fuel, I want to be sure that my enthusiasm is not interpreted as support for stopping reprocessing on a global scale. Some nations, like Japan and France, have decided that reprocessing of spent fuel is key to their nuclear power plans. By this reprocessing, they not only recycle plutonium back into reactors, they mitigate the hazard associated with their nuclear wastes.

In contrast, the U.S. has stuck to an old, 1977, decision to simply bury our spent fuel—plutonium and all. That not only increases the health risk from our spent fuel relative to that in France or Japan, it also means that we are proposing to bury a significant energy resource that our own future generations may need. The origin of the 1977 decision, fear of proliferation of reactor-grade plutonium, is certainly not without validity. But reprocessing can be done, as the French and British have demonstrated, with sufficient care to ensure that proliferation does not occur.

Reprocessing is not something that the U.S. should embrace today—it really wouldn't be economical with today's cheap uranium prices. But I've worked with Senator MURKOWSKI to introduce provisions into his current Nuclear Waste bill to require that we study advanced reprocessing and transmutation systems that would both minimize proliferations concerns related to spent fuel, and also study technologies that minimize hazards from spent fuel for the public and for workers. I will encourage that Russia continue to study these same technologies, because they have great expertise in these areas. Sometime in the future, we may need to use reprocessing to regain use of the energy content in spent fuel.

Thus, I believe we should keep future options for civilian fuel reprocessing open even as we focus attention in Russia on burning military-origin plutonium. Certainly for now, any attempt to burn civilian-origin plutonium in Russia only delays progress in decreasing Russia's excess weapons plutonium stockpile.

Let me return briefly to the more urgent matters associated with military-grade plutonium. As the Chair of the Senate Plutonium Task Force, I have pushed hard for completion of a U.S.-Russia agreement on military plutonium. In 1998, I led the charge to appropriate \$200 million for implementation of such an agreement.

I understand that negotiations for this plutonium agreement are very near completion. This agreement will outline a framework within which the U.S. and Russia will dispose of 50 tons of excess weapons plutonium. This framework will address timetables for progress, rates of disposal, and reciprocal verification of compliance. This agreement will turn the U.S. and Russian political commitments regarding irreversibility into a physical reality.

However, I've been dismayed that the Administration has recently chosen to remove \$49 million from the \$200 million set aside for disposition of weapons-plutonium to fund other priorities. That is very short sighted reasoning. The full \$200 million has served to keep pressure on the negotiating teams to finalize the disposition protocols. We send a completely inappropriate message when funds are withdrawn from that account. I intend to work in the next few months to restore this \$49

million. Furthermore, I will continue to oppose any future use of these funds by the Administration for anything other than their intended purpose.

The Administration's new initiative can work in tandem with the efforts focused on military plutonium. I urge the Administration to make quick and quantifiable progress on both of these fronts. The threat of proliferation from the Russian nuclear complex continues to grow. And it continues to be one of the greatest threats to U.S. security today.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that this New York Times article be printed in the RECORD.

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

[From the New York Times, Feb. 7, 2000]

MOSCOW TAKES STEP TO EASE U.S. FEARS ON PLUTONIUM USE
(By Judith Miller)

In a major agreement aimed at safeguarding nuclear fuel that could be used to make weapons, Russia has promised to stop making plutonium out of fuel from its civilian power reactors as part of a \$100 million joint research and aid package from the United States, Clinton administration and Russian officials say.

While the administration has several collaborative programs that enhance the safety and security of plutonium produced by Russia's military, this is the Energy Department's first major attempt to secure Russia's huge civilian stockpile of plutonium, from which 3,000 nuclear weapons could be made.

"It's a bold initiative to reduce a 30-ton plutonium threat from Russia's civilian nuclear sector," Secretary of Energy Bill Richardson said in a telephone interview. His department is to make public Russia's moratorium on plutonium reprocessing today when it unveils its budget for the next fiscal year.

Administration officials and arms control experts were particularly pleased with the deal, more than a year in the works, because it comes at a time of growing strains in relations with Russia over its war in Chechnya, policy toward Iraq, and access to Russian nuclear facilities.

The agreement is also likely to place added pressure on other nuclear powers like Japan, Britain and France to follow suit, arms control experts said. Because of concerns about the environment and the spread of nuclear materials to countries like Iran, Iraq and North Korea, the United States has not reprocessed fuel since 1978.

Part of the accord—\$25 million for long-term joint research that is most attractive to Russia—is contingent on an end to new sales and transfers of nuclear technology to Iran. Washington believes that those transactions are helping Tehran acquire nuclear weapons.

"The money for this research will be in our budget," said Ernest P. Moniz, the Undersecretary of Energy, who was in Moscow last week to discuss the agreement. "It's now up to Russia to decide if they want it."

But the bulk of the money will be given in exchange for Russia's decision to halt reprocessing nuclear fuel from its 29 civilian power reactors. That will include, if Congress approves, \$45 million to better secure spent fuel already stored at Mayak, a once closed nuclear complex in the southern Urals, and to build a large dry storage site elsewhere in Russia.

Yevgeny Adamov, Russia's atomic energy minister, insisted in a telephone interview

from Moscow that despite the agreement, Russia would not stop competing to sell new lightwater power reactors to Iran.

At the same time, he said, Russia has lived up to the commitments made to Washington last year not to provide sensitive material or technology to Iran. But it was willing in principle to discuss additional safeguards and "more commitments for greater transparency to remove American concerns."

Mr. Adamov also stressed that Russia was not abandoning its belief that plutonium, which is produced by all nuclear reactors, could eventually be used to fuel a generation of "safe" reactors, not yet developed, that would produce waste more difficult to recycle into weapons.

"We're talking in terms of decades," for the moratorium on plutonium reprocessing, he said. "At least two may be enough."

Russia, officials said, already possesses about 150 metric tons of plutonium and 1,200 metric tons of highly enriched uranium, both of which can be used in nuclear weapons.

Given that, said Thomas Graham Jr., a former arms control negotiator who now is president of the Lawyers Alliance for World Security, an arms control group in Washington, "it is important to stop the accumulation of material that some rogue nations would love to get their hands on."

"This is a very important agreement," he added.

In 1998 alone, Energy Department officials said, Russia's 29 civilian reactors produced 798 metric tons of spent fuel. Normally, Russia would send this material to Mayak for reprocessing—that is, the separation of plutonium, which can be used in weapons, from the rest of the fuel.

But under the new agreement, the plutonium will not be separated out. Instead, the unprocessed material will be stored at a new site somewhere in Russia that the United States will finance.

The location and ultimate cost of the site are still not determined, but Mr. Adamov said he was leaning toward Krasnoyarsk-26, a once closed nuclear city where the Russian military made plutonium.

William C. Potter, the director of the Monterey Institute's Center for Nonproliferation Studies, in California, particularly praised an allocation of \$3 million in the aid package aimed at helping Russia reacquire Soviet-era fuel from countries like Belarus, Ukraine and Yugoslavia. He fears that the material is vulnerable to diversion or military use.

Since the end of the cold war, the United States has spent billions of dollars to protect nuclear materials in Russia and the former Soviet Union and to prevent them from falling into the hands of Iran, Iraq or other aspiring nuclear powers. As of this year, Washington has spent about \$1.2 billion to help prevent the loss or theft of material that could be used in nuclear weapons.

At Mayak, the United States is already financing the construction of a warehouse to protect bomb-grade plutonium extracted from nuclear warheads. A recent American visitor there said that some plutonium was still being stored in milk-pail-size canisters in a wooden storage shed secured mainly by a padlock.

Since 1993, Washington has bought 500 metric tons a year of highly enriched uranium from Russian weapons, sales worth more than \$400 million a year to Russia. The uranium, which is blended down and sold as reactor-grade fuel for power production, meets about half of America's nuclear power fuel requirements.

The new aid package for Russia would provide \$45 million for the dry storage site and security upgrades for the stockpiled civilian plutonium and \$30 million for new efforts to safeguard material from the military sector.

It would also provide \$20 million for collaborative research into devising reactors and fuel that cannot be used to make weapons, and \$5 million for research into the design and development of a permanent geological repository to store used fuel. Administration officials stressed that only those last two items, which are longer-term projects, hinge on an end to Russian nuclear sales to Iran.

Mr. Adamov said on Saturday that Washington would be "wrong" to believe that a \$100 million assistance package would prompt Russia to forgo revenue from future reactor sales, each of which could be worth up to \$1 billion dollars.

"These are huge orders for our industry, and we'll aggressively pursue these orders and win them," he said.

Mr. LUGAR. Mr. President, in the fall of 1998 our majority leader named a bipartisan group of members to a Task Force on Plutonium Disposition to advise the Senate and the Administration on actions with respect to U.S. policy and approaches to bilateral negotiations with Russia on the disposition of weapons-excess plutonium. I was pleased to be invited to join the group and Senator DOMENICI was chosen to chair the Task Force.

Mr. President, Senator DOMENICI has been a pioneer in the area of nuclear weapons material safety, security and elimination. He has spent a great deal of time researching this initiative and engaging our Russian colleagues on the issue. He was instrumental in creating a bilateral dialogue on plutonium disposition that led to the protocol on plutonium disposition signed in September 1998 at the Moscow Summit. This Protocol has led to ongoing negotiations to finalize a bilateral agreement to dispose of large quantities of weapons material.

The need for leadership in this area was clear. Unclassified sources estimate that the United States has 100 tons of plutonium and Russia has more than 160 tons of plutonium. Most of this material is in pit form, or classified weapons shape. In other words, the material could easily be returned to weapons status. The U.S. and Russia have each declared that portions of their respective stockpiles are surplus. This material represents thousands of nuclear weapons on each side, including Russian weapons that until a short time ago were pointed at American cities.

Mr. President, the United States has been working with Russia to dismantle their nuclear arsenal through the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction program. All over Russia American firms are cooperating with Russian counterparts in deactivating nuclear warheads and dismantling long-range ballistic missiles, strategic submarines and bombers. The U.S. secured Russian agreement to remove the material from these warheads to safe and secure storage at the Fissile Material Storage Facility under construction at Mayak, Russia. But, the U.S. was still left with the challenge of how to get rid of the plutonium, to ensure that this material would never again threaten the American people.

Through Senator DOMENICI's discussions it became evident that a wide gulf separated the views of the Administration and Russian leadership with regard to the appropriate disposition actions. The Russians hold the position that plutonium has great value, and want to ensure that any actions extract the energy resource remaining in the material by using it as reactor fuel. The U.S. was considering both recovery of this resource and immobilization. Immobilization mixes the plutonium with ceramic material and surrounds it with vitrified, high-level waste for long term storage. Some scientists and some Russian leaders have noted that immobilization may be a less secure means of disposition than use as a reactor fuel.

Senator DOMENICI encouraged a solution wherein both nations would pursue the reactor fuel option, with so-called mixed oxide or MOX fuel. In addition, the U.S. can use immobilization for some of its less pure materials that would require significant purification to incorporate into reactor-grade fuel. This solution has been embraced in the current negotiations by both countries. Now both nations are moving toward parallel reductions in amounts of plutonium.

Our Task Force has been briefed by the Departments of State and Energy on the current status of negotiations on a Framework Agreement to implement a plutonium disposition process in Russia and the United States. A U.S.-Russian agreement to dispose up to 50 metric tons of weapons grade material on each side is proceeding in a very positive direction. I am hopeful that they will soon produce a draft agreement. There are still important issues to be resolved and hurdles to be cleared but it is clear that we would not have enjoyed this significant progress if it were not for Senator DOMENICI's leadership. His efforts in cooperation with Senator STEVENS, the Chairman of our Appropriations Committee, to secure forward funding for the implementation of this agreement was crucial in securing Russian participation.

I commend my good friend, the senior Senator from New Mexico, for his leadership in this area and thank him for what I hope will be a tremendously valuable national security program. We will all watch the negotiations proceeding in Moscow and hope for a positive conclusion. When this agreement is finalized and implemented, which I believe it will be, each of us will owe Senator DOMENICI a debt of gratitude for making the world safer for our children and grandchildren.

RETIREMENT OF GEORGE T. COSTIN

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I wish to take this opportunity to commend and congratulate George T. Costin, Library Technician, upon the occasion of his retirement from the Senate Library

on February 8, 2000. For 32 years—27 in the Office of the Secretary of the Senate—George has labored selflessly every day supporting the work of the Senate. George left his home state of North Carolina in 1963 and a brief stop over in Washington lasted for more than three decades.

George began his Senate career with the Sergeant at Arms in 1967 and joined the Library staff in 1972. He has made our duties far easier and throughout the years he has been the Ambassador of Goodwill with his wonderful smile, kind words, and unmatched style. He was always proud of being part of the Senate Family.

George will be very busy in retirement with church activities, a demanding golf schedule, and the joy of a new grandson. Along with all of his friends, I commend George for his loyalty and dedicated service to the United States Senate. I know that all Senators will join me in thanking George, his wife Gloria, and his three children, Angie, Samantha, and George, Jr., for his dedicated and distinguished service. It is with deep appreciation that we extend our best wishes for many years of health and happiness.

FUNDING FOR THE NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I am pleased to join my colleagues, Senator SPECTER, as primary cosponsor of a sense of the Senate resolution, introduced yesterday, that puts the Senate on record that funding for NIH should be increased by \$2.7 billion in Fiscal Year 2001. NIH is the premier medical research institution in the world—research funded by NIH is key to maintaining the quality of our health care and key to finding preventive measures, cures and the most cost effective treatments for the major illnesses and conditions that strike Americans.

Two years ago, our Appropriations Subcommittee provided NIH with a \$2 billion increase to set us on a five-year course to double NIH funding over five years. Last year, our Subcommittee was able to secure a \$2.3 billion increase for NIH—continuing on the course to double NIH funding over five years. A \$2.7 billion increase for NIH in Fiscal Year 2001 would keep us on track to double NIH in the five years.

I was disappointed that the President's budget which we received today only requested a \$1 billion increase for NIH. Funding biomedical research is especially important now when research on stem cells and progress made on the Human Genome project offer such promise. I hope to work closely with Senator SPECTER this year to build on last year's increase for NIH as we move to doubling funding for NIH by 2003.

THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business yesterday, Monday,

February 7, 2000, the Federal debt stood at \$5,693,618,340,748.18 (Five trillion, six hundred ninety-three billion, six hundred eighteen million, three hundred forty thousand, seven hundred forty-eight dollars and eighteen cents).

Five years ago, February 7, 1995, the Federal debt stood at \$4,806,973,000,000 (Four trillion, eight hundred six billion, nine hundred seventy-three million).

Ten years ago, February 7, 1990, the Federal debt stood at \$2,988,020,000,000 (Two trillion, nine hundred eighty-eight billion, twenty million).

Fifteen years ago, February 7, 1985, the Federal debt stood at \$1,682,610,000,000 (One trillion, six hundred eighty-two billion, six hundred ten million).

Twenty-five years ago, February 7, 1975, the Federal debt stood at \$489,675,000,000 (Four hundred eighty-nine billion, six hundred seventy-five million) which reflects a debt increase of more than \$5 trillion—\$5,203,943,340,748.18 (Five trillion, two hundred three billion, nine hundred forty-three million, three hundred forty thousand, seven hundred forty-eight dollars and eighteen cents) during the past 25 years.

MEASURE PLACE ON THE CALENDAR

The following bill was read the second time and placed on the calendar:

S. 2036. A bill to make permanent the moratorium on the imposition of taxes on the Internet.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, which were referred as indicated:

EC-7432. A communication from the Chairman, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled "Budget Estimates and Performance Plan," Fiscal Year 2001; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-7433. A communication from the Director, Office of Regulations Management, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Eligibility Criteria for the Montgomery GI Bill-Active Duty and Other Miscellaneous Issues" (RIN2900-AI63), received February 7, 2000; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

EC-7434. A communication from the Secretary of Labor, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the Andean Trade Preference Act; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-7435. A communication from the Secretary of Labor, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the Caribbean Basin Economic Recovery Act; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-7436. A communication from the Chief, Regulations Unit, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Travel and Tour Activities of Tax-Exempt Organizations" (RIN1545-AW10), received February 7, 2000; to the Committee on Finance.