

and Social Security double. That is what is going to happen. We know it. It is not a projection. The people are alive. They have been born. They are living today. They are going to retire, and they are going to be eligible. And it is going to cost the Government a lot of money, much more than we are currently having to pay out.

So let's be cautious. Yes, let's be conservative. The conservative thing to do is emphasize more debt reduction and to curtail our appetite to spend and curtail our appetite to have tax cuts, which are both living for the moment. It is fun to live for the moment; especially if you are a politician, there is nothing better than to have tax cuts and spending. That is the best of all worlds. The problem with that is that we have a need to be responsible to future generations. Our generation ran up this debt. We have the obligation to pay it down and to do it before we start to retire. Goodness, the last thing we ought to be doing is shoving this debt on to our kids. We ran it up. We ought to retire it.

Mr. President, with that, I yield the floor.

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, I have nothing further to say. I do not think there is anyone on our side who wishes to speak. If the Senator is ready, we can yield back our time.

Mr. CONRAD. Yes. We are prepared to yield back our time on our side.

Mr. DOMENICI. I yield back any time we have reserved under the previous order.

Mr. CONRAD. I do as well.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motions are agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. NELSON of Florida) appointed Mr. DOMENICI, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. NICKLES, Mr. GRAMM, Mr. BOND, Mr. CONRAD, Mr. HOLLINGS, Mr. SARBANES, and Mrs. MURRAY conferees on the part of the Senate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico.

Mr. DOMENICI. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. VOINOVICH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. VOINOVICH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there now be a period of morning business with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

APPRECIATION OF SERVICE BY THE DRUG ENFORCEMENT ADMINISTRATION, UNITED STATES CUSTOMS SERVICE, UNITED STATES COAST GUARD, AND THE NATIONAL GUARD

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, as chairman of the Senate Caucus on International Narcotics Control, I rise to highlight some of the recent interdiction and investigative successes by the men and women of the Drug Enforcement Administration, DEA, the United States Customs Service, the United States Coast Guard, and the National Guard.

These men and women, and their agencies, are dedicated professionals committed to protecting our great nation from the devastating affects of the illegal drug trade. They are frequently called to place their lives in harm's way in an effort to keep our national secure.

As announced by the Attorney General in January 2001, DEA successfully concluded a 10-month narcotics trafficking investigation named Operation White Horse, that involved the movement of heroin by "swallowers" from Colombia to the United States via the cities of Philadelphia and New York. Sixty-five members of the organization, from the Colombia headquarters of the street-level dealers, were arrested in what was described as a "wholesale dismantling" of the smuggling organization.

The United States Customs Service also had an impressive spring 2001, including a recent week on the Southwest border that netted 61 drug seizures, yielding 5,449 pounds of marijuana and 82 pounds of cocaine, as well as 16 export violations, 6 seizures of prohibited medications, and additional seizures of undeclared merchandise, stolen vehicles, counterfeit credit cards, and illegal fireworks. The Customs Service is rapidly distinguishing itself with the front-line use of X-ray, Gamma-ray, and other non-intrusive technologies at their inspection stations and ports of entry. Customs also completed major domestic and international child pornography cases involving Germany and Russia, as well as continued interdiction of large amounts of the drug Ecstasy.

Coast Guard successes, supported by the Department of Defense, include a 6-day period in February 2001 when it seized 28,845 pounds of cocaine and arrested 24 smugglers, on numerous vessels in both the Caribbean and Eastern Pacific. To date, the Coast Guard has seized 60,636 pounds of cocaine, 20,194 pounds of marijuana, as well as interdicted 1,681 illegal migrants at sea, all in a period of 10-percent operational reductions due to budget constraints.

Finally, I appreciate the superb job the National Guard does in operating the four domestic counterdrug training schools, and hopefully soon a fifth one in Iowa, throughout the country that provide much needed training of Federal, State, local, and community personnel in various counterdrug topics.

I am extremely proud of these successes and the personnel involved. As we consider the budgets for these agencies in the weeks ahead, we need to remind ourselves from time to time that it is real, flesh-and-blood individuals out there on the front lines and not bland numbers on spreadsheets and in our briefing books. Their commitment does us all proud.

NURSING SERVICES QUALITY IMPROVEMENT ACT

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, on April 6 my colleagues and I introduced the Medicare and Medicaid Nursing Services Quality Improvement Act of 2001. This legislation is intended to help address a problem currently facing nursing homes in North Dakota and Wisconsin and potentially other nursing homes across the country.

We all know that nursing homes nationwide are facing a looming staffing crisis that is expected to worsen as the baby boomers reach retirement. An American Health Care Association report, entitled "Staffing of Nursing Services in Long Term Care," estimates that the need for registered nurses will grow 66 percent between 1991 and 2020 and the number of licensed practical nurses needed will grow by nearly 72 percent over the same time. Likewise, the number of nurse aides who will be necessary is projected to grow by 69 percent.

In my State, nursing home administrators have a thousand open nurse aide positions that they have been unable to fill. A number of nursing home administrators in North Dakota have told me that they have had to refuse patients because they do not have adequate staff to care for them.

Unfortunately, a problem has arisen in my State that will exacerbate this staffing shortage. By way of background, North Dakota nursing homes have been using trained resident assistants—called feeding assistants in North Dakota,—to help feed nursing home patients. This has been the practice for the last decade with positive results. The data in North Dakota indicates that our nursing home patients experience less weight loss and dehydration than patients nationally, and nursing home officials in North Dakota attribute this to the use of resident assistants.

The problem, however, is that the Health Care Financing Administration has told North Dakota and other nursing homes that they can no longer continue to use these trained resident assistants because they lack certification. In North Dakota, this means that hundreds of resident assistants may need to be laid off later this year, even while my State's nursing homes are experiencing difficulty finding certified staff.

The bill that I introduced along with Senators KOHL and CONRAD would allow

North Dakota and Wisconsin to continue using resident assistants for feeding and hydration, while a demonstration project is conducted in our states and others to evaluate what kind of impact the use of these staff has on the quality of feeding and hydration services provided to nursing home patients and on the recruitment and retention of nursing staff. If after the three-year demonstration project, the Secretary of Health and Human Services determines that the use of resident assistants does not result in a reduction in the quality of feeding and hydrating of nursing home residents or in a decrease in the recruitment and retention of nursing staff, other nursing homes around the country would be allowed to use resident assistants to help with feeding and hydration tasks.

This legislation includes a number of safeguards designed to protect nursing home patients. For instance, nursing homes are prohibited from using resident assistants to replace existing nursing staff or to count these assistants toward minimum nursing staffing requirements. In addition, resident assistants would have to complete a state-approved training program related to the feeding and hydration tasks they would be performing. Of course, nursing homes would not be able to use resident assistants to administer medication, provide direct medical care, or perform other nursing tasks.

I recognize that this bill is not the only answer or the whole answer for addressing the staffing crisis in nursing homes. I want to work with my colleagues in Congress, nursing homes, and advocates for nursing home residents to address this larger issue of the staffing shortage.

The staffing shortage in nursing homes is not the only reason for malnutrition and dehydration of patients, but it certainly contributes to the problem. A June, 2000 Commonwealth Fund study estimated that 35 to 85 percent of nursing home patients are malnourished, in part because they do not receive enough assistance from aides while eating because the aides must assist as many as 15 to 20 patients at mealtime. According to a Los Angeles Times article earlier this week, a University of California-San Francisco professor who observed 100 nursing home residents with eating problems found that nursing home workers were often so rushed that they "shoveled" food into their patients' mouths, causing choking and coughing.

The resident assistants in North Dakota provide compassionate care and often have more time to coax their patients into eating, something that overworked certified nurse aides generally don't have time for. I am convinced that if we reduce the number of staff in North Dakota nursing homes, which is what will happen if long-term care facilities can no longer use resident assistants, then patients in North Dakota will suffer.

One resident assistant in North Dakota told me about a patient she feeds who has difficulty holding her head up when she eats. The resident assistant said that when she was on vacation, her patient lost seven pounds. Fortunately, after a few weeks back on the job, the resident assistant got her patient's weight back up to where it needed to be. However, if this resident assistant was forced to leave her post permanently, that weight loss may have been long-term and ultimately life-threatening.

I believe the Medicare and Medicaid Nursing Services Quality Improvement Act is a step that Congress can take to address both the staffing shortage and the malnutrition of patients. This is not the only solution and it may not be the best solution, but I hope my colleagues will work with Senator KOHL, Senator CONRAD and me to tackle these serious issues confronting long-term care facilities and their patients.

MILITARY PERSONNEL DETAINED BY THE PRC

Mr. THOMAS. Mr President, I rise today as the Chairman of the Subcommittee on East Asian and Pacific Affairs of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to speak to S. Res. 66.

As we are all now aware, at 9:15 a.m. local time on April 1, 2001, a collision occurred between a United States military EP-3E Aries II reconnaissance aircraft flying off the coast of the People's Republic of China, PRC and one of two F-8 jet fighters from the People's Liberation Army-Air Force sent to intercept it. Both countries agree that the collision occurred in international airspace over the South China Sea near the Chinese island province of Hainan. Due to the damage incurred in the accidental collision, the F-8 and its pilot were lost at sea and the EP-3E was required to make a "Mayday" distress call on the internationally recognized emergency radio frequency.

In fact, the damage to our plane was so bad that it effectuated an emergency landing at a military airbase at Lingshui, Hainan. Upon landing, the twenty-four United States military personnel aboard the EP-3E were removed from the aircraft by Chinese military personnel and detained in an undisclosed location, notwithstanding the fact that the crew of an aircraft forced to land on foreign soil in an emergency is considered under international norms to have sovereign immunity.

Chinese authorities then unnecessarily prevented United States military and consular officials from meeting with the crew members until April 3, 2001, and even then permitted only a short, supervised visit. There is absolutely *no* reason why we should not have been allowed at the very least telephone access to our military people. China is not a technologically backward country without phone service; our people are not being held in

some isolated mountain village in the middle of a jungle. China's behavior in this case in purposefully keeping us from contacting the aircrew is, to me, disturbing.

In addition, I am also concerned that in contravention of international norms, Chinese officials have boarded the aircraft and have apparently removed portions of the equipment from it. International law recognizes both the right of the crew of an aircraft in distress to land safely on foreign soil and the inviolable sovereignty of an aircraft in distress that has landed on foreign soil; it also recognizes the right of a nation which has had an aircraft land in distress on foreign soil to have its citizens and aircraft returned safely and without undue delay.

China's flaunting of these conventions disturbs me not just because of the ramifications in this particular case, but also because it has the capability of wrecking greater havoc on the overall bilateral US-PRC relationship, a relationship I believe to be our most important in Asia along with Japan and South Korea. The Chinese government needs to realize that this issue is bigger than just this crew and this plane. This is about trust, about whether the PRC can be trusted to live up to its word, to live up to international agreements which it has signed, and to be a part of the world community of nations. So far, they have turned their backs on those agreements, and on their obligations. They have shown me, and other Members of Congress, that whether they can be trusted is presently open to question.

If this matter is not resolved immediately and satisfactorily, then the Congress needs to rethink whether Beijing can be trusted to fulfill its obligations as a member of the WTO. And while I have previously stated that I believe it would be a mistake to include such materiel as Aegis-equipped destroyers in this year's weapons sales to Taiwan, if Beijing remains intransigent and continues to violate norms of decent international behavior in this case, then I—for one—will begin to reassess whether Taiwan is not justified in its mistrust of the PRC and whether such sales might not now be justified. It would truly be a shame if, at the beginning of a new Administration, an Administration that has not even had a chance yet to formulate or articulate its China policy, this situation poisoned the well.

The resolution is simple. It expresses our regret over the damage to the aircraft and the loss of life resulting from the collision. It calls on the Chinese government to release the crew, who are, of course, utmost in our thoughts and concern; the aircraft, and the equipment from the aircraft. Finally, it supports President Bush in his efforts. I am pleased that the resolution has a bipartisan list of seventy-five cosponsors, including the ranking member of the East Asia Subcommittee [Mr. KERRY]; the very distinguished