

a freeze of all bank that precluded the paying of suppliers and subcontractors. This issue, along with the ongoing currency crises, made for an extremely precarious business environment as described by the executives.

Senator CHAFEE and I visited the Jewish Community Center and the site of a 1994 terrorist attack that killed eighty-four people. Upon our arrival to the Community Center, it was explained to us that the line in front of the building was persons visiting the visa office applying for travel to Israel as an escape from the Argentine economic situation.

On January 10, 2002, Senator CHAFEE and I proceeded next to Montevideo, Uruguay for meetings with President Jorge Batlle and the Chief of Staff and National Drug and Anti-Terrorism Coordinator Leonardo Costa. We were accompanied by Ambassador Martin Silverstein, a Pennsylvanian, who is serving with distinction.

We met with President Batlle for over one and one-half hours discussing Argentina, International Patent Rights (IPR), free trade issues, and narcotics. Regarding the Argentine economic crisis, the President was generally optimistic, providing that the new government follows the programs of the newly-installed Economic Minister Jorge Lenikov. President Batlle stated that President Duhalde appeared to have a strong majority within the Parliament.

On International Patent Rights, the President expressed disagreement with the U.S. Government's approach to IPR legislation. While he favors drug legalization, he would not implement such a policy without an international consensus. I took the opportunity to praise the President's support for Free Trade Area of the Americas and free trade, pointing out that this seemed to contrast with the government's unwillingness to enact a strong copyright bill, which is an essential tool for attracting investment.

On January 11, 2001, we traveled to Brasilia, Brazil where our first meeting was with representatives from the Brazilian Ministry of Health to discuss the government's response to HIV and AIDS. A comprehensive presentation by Claudio Duarte da Fonseca and Rosemeire Munhoz with the Health Ministry detailed Brazil's national response to their growing numbers of HIV and AIDS cases. Governmental lead efforts include prevention campaigns, mass media campaigns, behavioral interventions, condom distribution, and a policy of universal and free-of-charge access to ARV drugs.

Our meeting with General Alberto Cardoso, the counterpart to our National Security Adviser, provided assurances of cooperation from his country with the U.S. and Israel efforts to oppose financing of Hezbollah terrorism from an enclave at the border of Paraguay, Argentina, and Brazil. There was no reason to believe that support has come from residents of that area

for the bombing of the Israeli Embassy in Argentina in 1992 and the Jewish Community Center in Buenos Aires in 1994. With the worldwide focus on cutting off terrorist funding, the tri-border area is under international scrutiny.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut is recognized.

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, first of all, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business for 2 minutes.

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

THE LATIN AMERICA TRIP

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I wanted to commend our colleague from Pennsylvania who took a trip to Latin America. He talked about it and I commend him for doing that. A lot of attention is being focused—rightfully so—on Southwest Asia because of events since 9-11. I think it is refreshing that a couple of colleagues took the time to visit this hemisphere and the countries they did and to bring back to the U.S. Senate their own observations about events in Cuba, Chile, Uruguay, and Brazil.

I commend our colleague from Pennsylvania. I believe our colleague from Rhode Island, LINCOLN CHAFEE, was along on that trip, and others may have been there also. I thank him for reporting to us on their observations.

CLOSING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, I rise today, as we near the end of Black History Month, to focus attention on the widening gap between those Americans who use or have access to telecommunications technologies, like computers and the Internet, and those who do not. Surprisingly, there are those naysayers who suggest that the "digital divide" does not exist, that it is a myth or fabrication of consumer and civil rights advocates. Perhaps it is because the term "digital divide" has been so over-used and, in some instances, mis-used that it causes some to doubt its existence. Perhaps the term has so thoroughly infiltrated our everyday discourse that it causes skeptics to under-estimate its very real and powerful consequences.

No matter the reason for these naysayers' doubt, the unequivocal answer to their question "is there really a digital divide" is a resounding "YES." A series of reports issued by the U.S. Department of Commerce not only confirms that the "digital divide" exists; it suggests that, while the number of Americans accessing the Internet has grown rapidly in recent years, the technology gap between poor and minority communities, on one hand, and other Americans, on the other, is actually widening.

Take this seemingly encouraging example: from December 1998 to August 2000, the percentage of African-Amer-

ican households with Internet access more than doubled, from 11.2 percent to 23.5 percent—an encouraging development, by any measure. But during that same time period, the percentage of total households nationally with Internet access soared to 41.5 percent. And the access rates for White Americans and Asian-Americans/Pacific Islanders—46.1 percent and 56.8 percent, respectively—significantly outpaced that national average. As a consequence, the already substantial gap between African-American Internet usage and national usage grew 3 percentage points. The gap was even greater when comparing African-American usage with that of White Americans or Asian-Americans and Pacific Islanders. Similarly, during that same 20-month period, the gap between Hispanic households with Internet access and the national average grew 4 percentage points.

The effect: What was once a gap is now swelling into a chasm. Just this morning, the Wall Street Journal reported that, in 1997, ten percent of Americans earning less than \$25,000 a year used the Internet, compared with 45 percent of those earning more than \$75,000. By 2001, despite increased usage by both groups, the "gap" had grown to 50 percentage points.

Yes, the "digital divide" exists, and that fact should concern us greatly. In today's information age, unequal access to the national information infrastructure affects nearly every part of our lives. Access to these networks increasingly dictates the ease with which we can pursue education, conduct our financial affairs, apply for a job, or participate in the political process. Lack of access will only reinforce and magnify already existing inequalities in these important areas of life.

Against that backdrop, I am shocked by the Bush administration's apparent efforts to dismantle many programs designed to eliminate the inequality of access to technology. These programs, including the popular E-Rate Program, have a demonstrated record of success connecting roughly 1 million public school classrooms and 13,000 community libraries to modern telecommunications networks. Moreover, the vast majority of the funding is dedicated to low-income communities, and significant dollars flow to schools under the Bureau of Indian Affairs. By all accounts, these initiatives are working, yet the Administration is maneuvering to eliminate them one by one.

Don't be fooled: This is not a debate about electronic gadgets or computer megabytes. It is a debate about who gets to speak and who gets to listen. At its heart, it implicates the very nature of our democracy.

It is a debate about who among us, as the information revolution takes off, will be left behind. Electronic commerce has become a critical factor in determining future economic development and prosperity. Communities and individuals without access to the Internet will be excluded from that growth.

The sadness, however, is that, by leaving some behind, we impoverish not only those individuals, we also impoverish ourselves. None of us will enjoy sustained economic growth unless we expand the information revolution to all parts of our society.

With that in mind, we cannot afford to make technology decisions based on dated and ill-conceived perceptions about the interest or ability of minorities and poor people to purchase certain "high-end" technology. Nor can we simply bypass low-income and minority communities, where the telecommunications and electronic network infrastructure may be older and, therefore, less able to provide more sophisticated services. To the extent that technology, including the Internet and telecommunications services, is deployed in a way that avoids poor and minority communities, we must do all that we can to deter this form of redlining.

Toward this end, the administration should keep its promise to invest \$400 million to create and maintain more than 2,000 community technology centers in low-income neighborhoods by 2002. The role that community technology centers plays in helping to bridge the digital divide cannot be overstated. Community technology centers are instrumental in closing the information technology divide, and, by tapping demand for these services, supporters of community technology initiatives can open up new markets for companies that serve the Internet economy.

The development of information technology holds great potential to strengthen and invigorate American society. That potential cannot be fully realized, however, unless we pay attention to the hundreds of thousands of individuals, many of whom reside in largely minority and/or low-income communities, who have no, or limited, access to our burgeoning national information infrastructure. We can, and must, inform decisionmakers about the true value of minority markets receptive to advanced services. We must provide private industry with incentives to deploy in these markets. And, perhaps most important, we must continue to make public investments in underserved communities. Our failure will only dampen private sector and philanthropic efforts, and, more tragically, handicap a generation of Americans for years to come.

TESTIMONY OF RICHARD PERLE BEFORE THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, Mr. Richard Perle is currently Resident Fellow at American Enterprise Institute and chairman of the Defense Policy Board of the Department of Defense, and served as Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Policy in the Reagan administration. He gave this testimony at a Senate Foreign Re-

lations Committee hearing this morning on the subject of "How do We Promote Democratization, Poverty Alleviation, and Human Rights To Build A More Secure Future?" Mr. Perle's testimony was superb, and I commend it to all.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that this statement by Richard Perle be placed in the RECORD.

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

STATEMENT OF RICHARD PERLE, FELLOW, AMERICAN ENTERPRISE INSTITUTE, BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS, UNITED STATES SENATE

Mr. Chairman, I appreciate your invitation to participate in the Committee's hearing which poses the question "How do we promote democratization, poverty alleviation and human rights to build a more secure world?" These three ideas, poverty, democracy and human rights that are often linked as we try to think our way through the vexing problems of national and international security.

The phrase "a more secure world" is almost certainly prompted by the discovery, on September 11, of how insecure we turned out to be on that day. In any case, hardly any discussion takes place these days that is not somehow related to terrorism and the war against it. For my part, this morning will be no exception.

Let me say, at the outset, that the idea that poverty is a cause of terrorism, although widely believed and frequently argued, remains essentially unproven. That poverty is not merely a cause, but a "root cause," which implies that it is an essential source of terrorist violence, is an almost certainly false, and even a dangerous idea, often invoked to absolve terrorists of responsibility or mitigate their culpability. It is a liberal conceit which, if heeded, may channel the war against terror into the cul de sac of grand development schemes in the third world and the elevation of do-good/feel-good NGO's to a role they cannot and should not play.

What we know of the September 11 terrorists suggests they were neither impoverished themselves nor motivated by concerns about the poverty of others. After all, their avowed aim, the destruction of the United States, would, if successful, deal a terrible blow to the growth potential of the world economy. Their devotion to Afghanistan's Taliban regime, which excluded half the Afghan work force from the economy and aimed to keep them illiterate as well as poor, casts conclusive doubt on their interest in alleviating poverty.

Poverty—or poverty and despair—is the most commonly adumbrated explanation for terrorism abroad—and crime at home. Identifying poverty as a source of conduct invariably confuses the matter. We will never know what went through the mind of Mohammed Atta as he plotted the death of thousands of innocent men, women and children, including a number of Moslems. We do know that he lived in relative comfort as did most, perhaps all, of the 19 terrorists—15 of them from affluent Saudi Arabia.

If we accept poverty as an explanation we will stop searching for a true, and useful, explanation. We may not notice the poisonous extremist doctrine propagated, often with Saudi oil money, in mosques and religious institutions around the world.

If we attribute terrorism to poverty, we may fail to demand that President Mubarak of Egypt silence the sermons, from mosques

throughout Egypt, preaching hatred of the United States. As you authorize \$2 billion a year for Egypt, please remember that these same clerics are employees of the Egyptian government. It is not a stretch to say that U.S. taxpayer dollars are helping to pay for the most inflammatory anti-American ranting.

So when you hear about poverty as the root cause of terrorism, I urge you to examine the manipulation of young Muslim men sent on suicidal missions by wealthy fanatics, like Osama bin Laden, whose motives are religious and ideological in nature and have nothing to do with poverty or privation.

Mr. Chairman, this hearing is about building a more secure future; and I know it will come as no surprise if I argue that doing that in the near term will require an effective military establishment to take the war on terrorism to the terrorists, to fight them over there because they are well on the way to achieving their murderous objectives when we are forced to fight them over here. For once those who wish to destroy Americans gain entry to the United States and exploit the institutions of our open society, the likelihood that we will stop them is greatly diminished.

This is why President Bush was right to declare on September 11 that "We will make no distinction between the terrorists who committed these acts and those who harbor them." This was not the policy of the last Democratic administration or the Republican one before it. It is not a policy universally applauded by our allies. But it is a right and bold and courageous policy and the only policy that has a reasonable prospect of protecting the American people from further terrorist acts.

Dealing effectively with the states that support or condone terrorism against us (or even remain indifferent to it) is the only way to deprive terrorists of the sanctuary from which they operate, whether that sanctuary is in Afghanistan or North Korea or Iran or Iraq or elsewhere. The regimes in control of these "rogue" states—a term used widely before the last administration substituted the flaccid term "states of concern"—pose an immediate threat to the United States. The first priority of American policy must be to transform or destroy rogue regimes.

And while some states will observe the destruction of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan and decide to end their support for terrorism rather than risk a similar fate, others will not.

It is with respect to those regimes that persist in supporting and harboring terrorists that the question of the role of democratization and human rights is particularly salient. And foremost among these regimes is Saddam Hussein's Iraq.

The transformation of Iraq from a brutal dictatorship, in which human rights are unknown, to a democratic state protecting the rights of individuals would not only make the world more secure, it would bring immediate benefits to all the people of Iraq (except the small number of corrupt officials who surround Saddam Hussein).

I believe that this is well understood in the Congress, which has repeatedly called on the administration to support the Iraqi National Congress, an umbrella group made up of organizations opposed to Saddam's dictatorship. The INC is pledged to institute democratic political institutions, protect human rights and renounce weapons of mass destruction. As we think through the best way to change the regime in Iraq, it is precisely the proponents of democracy who deserve our support, not the disaffected officer who simply wishes to substitute his dictatorship for that of Saddam Hussein.

I hope, Mr. Chairman, that the Congress, which has been well ahead of the executive