

Let me close with the astute words of Dr. Alan P. Zelicoff, Senior Scientist, Sandia National Laboratory, as stated during his testimony before the Foreign Relations Committee in a March 2002, on the threat posed by chemical and biological weapons. Dr. Zelicoff has spent a considerable amount of his distinguished career developing technology and solutions to assist the medical and public health communities identify natural and deliberate disease outbreaks. According to Dr. Zelicoff,

When all is said and done, should would-be perpetrators of bioterror know that the effects of their attack would be blunted if not eliminated, they might well re-think their strategy in the first place. A multi-national cadre of clinicians and nurses, exchanging up-to-the-minute information is our single best defense, and we have the resource—now—to so equip them. All that is required is a policy shift emphasizing and strengthening this lynchpin capability.

While we are supportive of the public health benefits of this Act, we should not lose sight of the intent of this legislation—to combat bioterrorism and enhance U.S. national security. I look forward to working with the Bush administration and members of Congress to secure funding for these invaluable activities directed towards global pathogen surveillance and monitoring.●

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Biden amendment at the desk be agreed to; that the bill, as amended, be read a third time and passed; that the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table; and that any statement relating to the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

The amendment (No. 4468) was agreed to, as follows:

AMENDMENT NO. 4468

On page 3, line 1, insert “, including data sharing with appropriate United States departments and agencies,” after “countries”.

On page 5, strike lines 9 through 14, and insert the following:

(1) To enhance the capability and cooperation of the international community, including the World Health Organization and individual countries, through enhanced pathogen surveillance and appropriate data sharing, to detect, identify, and contain infectious disease outbreaks, whether the cause of those outbreaks is intentional human action or natural in origin.

On page 5, line 17, insert “, and other electronic” after “Internet-based”.

On page 6, line 5, strike “including” and all that follows through “mechanisms,” on line 7, and insert the following: “including, as appropriate, relevant computer equipment, Internet connectivity mechanisms, and telephone-based applications.”

On page 9, line 15, insert before the period the following: “, provide early notification of disease outbreaks, and provide pathogen surveillance data to appropriate United States departments and agencies”.

On page 17, line 12, insert “(and information technology)” after “Equipment”.

The bill (S. 2487), as amended, was read the third time and passed.

(The bill will be printed in a future edition of the RECORD.)

ENCOURAGING THE PEACE PROCESS IN SRI LANKA

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 516, S. Res. 300.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:
A resolution (S. Res. 300) encouraging the peace process in Sri Lanka.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution, which had been reported by the Committee on Foreign Relations with an amendment and amendments to the preamble, as follows:

[Omit the part enclosed by boldface brackets and insert the part printed in italic.]

Whereas the United States has enjoyed a long and cordial friendship with Sri Lanka;

[Whereas the people of Sri Lanka have long valued political pluralism, religious freedom, democracy, and a respect for human rights;

[Whereas the Government of Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam have waged a protracted and costly war for the past 19 years;

Whereas for the past 19 years, the Government of Sri Lanka has fought a protracted and costly war against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, a group labeled as a foreign terrorist organization by the Department of State;

Whereas an estimated 65,000 people have died in Sri Lanka as a result of these hostilities;

Whereas the war has created an estimated 1,000,000 displaced persons over the course of the conflict;

Whereas 19 years of war have crippled the economy of the north and east of Sri Lanka and resulted in low growth rates and economic instability in the south of Sri Lanka;

Whereas the economic impact of the conflict is felt most severely by the poor in both the north and the south of Sri Lanka;

Whereas efforts to solve the conflict through military means have failed and neither side appears able to impose its will on the other by force of arms;

Whereas the Government of Norway has offered and been accepted by the parties of the conflict to play the role of international facilitator;

Whereas an agreement on a cease-fire between the Government of Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam was signed by both parties and went into effect February 23, 2002; and

Whereas both the Government of Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam [have agreed] *are now in the process of agreeing* to meet for peace talks in Thailand: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) notes with great satisfaction the warm and friendly relations that have existed between the people of the United States and Sri Lanka;

(2) recognizes that the costly military stalemate that has existed between the Government of Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam [can only] *should* be resolved at the negotiating table;

(3) believes that a political solution, including appropriate constitutional structures and adequate protection of minority rights and cessation of violence, is the path to a comprehensive and lasting peace in Sri Lanka;

(4) calls on all parties to negotiate in good faith with a view to finding a just and last-

ing political settlement to Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict while respecting the territorial integrity of Sri Lanka;

(5) denounces all political violence and acts of terrorism in Sri Lanka, and calls upon those who espouse or use such methods to reject these methods and to embrace dialogue, democratic norms, and the peaceful resolution of disputes;

(6) applauds the important role played by Norway in facilitating the peace process between the Government of Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam;

(7) applauds the cooperation of the Government of Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam in lifting the cumbersome travel restrictions that for the last 19 years have hampered the movement of goods, services, and people in the war-affected areas;

(8) applauds the agreement of the Government of Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam in implementing the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission;

(9) calls on all parties to recognize that adherence to internationally recognized human rights facilitates the building of trust necessary for an equitable, sustainable peace;

(10) further encourages both parties to develop a comprehensive and effective process for human rights monitoring;

(11) states its willingness in principle to see the United States lend its good offices to play a constructive role in supporting the peace process, if so desired by all parties to the conflict;

(12) calls on members of the international community to use their good offices to support the peace process and, as appropriate, lend assistance to the reconstruction of war-damaged areas of Sri Lanka and to reconciliation among all parties to the conflict; and

(13) calls on members of the international community to ensure that any assistance to Sri Lanka will be framed in the context of supporting the ongoing peace process and will avoid exacerbating existing ethnic tensions.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the committee amendment to the resolution be agreed to; that the resolution, as amended, be agreed to; that the amendments to the preamble be agreed to; that the preamble, as amended, be agreed to; that the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table, en bloc, with no further intervening action or debate; and that any statement relating to the resolution be printed in the RECORD.

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

The committee amendment was agreed to.

The resolution (S. Res. 300), as amended, was agreed to.

The amendments to the preamble were agreed to.

The preamble, as amended, was agreed to.

(The resolution, as amended, with its preamble, as amended, will be printed in a future edition of the RECORD.)

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS RESEARCH, EDUCATION, AND BIO-TERRORISM PREVENTION ACT OF 2002

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Veterans Affairs Committee be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 3253 and

the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 3253) to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for the establishment within the Department of Veterans Affairs of improved emergency medical preparedness, research, and education programs to combat terrorism, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, as Chairman of the Committee on Veterans Affairs, I urge the Senate to pass this legislation that would help VA—and our entire Nation—prepare for the potential medical consequences of another terrorist attack.

As Congress seeks ways to avert the threats posed by biological, chemical, radiological, and other potential terrorist weapons, we must make certain that we use our existing national resources as efficiently as possible. I thank Ranking Member SPECTER and his staff for their efforts in helping to ensure that VA—the Nation's largest integrated healthcare system—is prepared for the role that it can and must play during emergencies.

The pending measure is an omnibus bill that would improve VA's ability to fulfill its responsibilities to veterans, its staff, and communities during disasters, and would also address VA nonprofit research corporation activities.

"The Department of Veterans Affairs Emergency Preparedness Act," as reported, which I will refer to as the "Committee bill," acknowledges VA's role in offering health care and support to individuals affected by disasters, and would give VA staff the tools that they need to continue serving veterans during emergencies.

The committee bill would establish four medical emergency preparedness research centers within the Department of Veterans Affairs health care system. VA researchers possess expertise in the long-term health consequences of biological, chemical, and radiological exposures, and sustain an unparalleled clinical management research program. The centers authorized by this legislation would make the most of these resources to learn how best to manage—or prevent—the mass casualties that might arise from the use of terrorist weapons.

The committee bill also includes provisions requested by the Administration that would create an office, directed by an Assistant Secretary, to coordinate preparedness strategies within VA and with other Federal, State, and local agencies. I strongly believe that this new office represents an essential step in helping VA improve emergency preparedness while maintaining its primary mission of caring for the Nation's veterans.

Another emergency preparedness provision within the committee bill would create no new responsibilities or missions for VA, but would authorize VA's

enormous contribution to public safety and emergency preparedness. In 1982, Congress charged VA to care for active duty military casualties during a conflict or disaster. Since then, VA has taken a much larger share of the Federal responsibility for public health during emergencies, supporting mass care as part of the Federal Response Plan for disasters and serving as a cornerstone of the National Disaster Medical System.

VA has responded to every major domestic disaster of the last two decades with personnel, supplies and medications, facilities, and—when necessary—direct patient care for overwhelmed communities. VA health care providers who care for disaster victims serve not only as part of the Federal response to emergencies, but as part of the communities in which they live. The committee bill would acknowledge VA's emergency response missions by authorizing VA to provide medical treatment for individuals affected by or responding to disasters.

The committee bill also makes changes in law affecting VA's nonprofit research corporations. The first allows employees of nonprofit VA research and education corporations assigned to approved VA research, education, or training projects to be considered VA employees for purposes of the Federal Tort Claims Act. The other provision clarifies that VA Medical Centers may enter into contracts or other forms of agreements with nonprofit research corporations to provide services to facilitate VA-approved research and education projects. These changes would further VA's research and education missions.

In conclusion, I urge my colleagues to support these research and emergency preparedness enhancements for VA. This bipartisan commitment to our Nation's veterans and VA represents a small investment with potentially enormous rewards.

I ask unanimous consent that a summary of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

SUMMARY OF S. 2132: THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS ACT OF 2002

MEDICAL EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS CENTERS IN THE VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION

Authorizes VA to establish four centers for medical emergency preparedness within existing VA medical centers.

Directs centers to carry out research on the medical management of injuries or illnesses arising from the use of chemical, biological, radiological, or incendiary or other explosive weapons or devices in coordination with national strategies for homeland security.

Allows centers to provide medical consequence management education and training to VA health care professionals, and to non-VA providers at the Secretary's discretion.

Authorizes VA to provide laboratory, epidemiological, medical, or other assistance to Federal, State, and local health care entities by request during a national emergency.

REORGANIZATION OF VA PREPAREDNESS FUNCTIONS

Increases the number of authorized assistant secretaries from six to seven, and adds "operations, preparedness, security, and law enforcement" to their authorized functions.

Increases the number of authorized deputy assistant secretaries from 18 to 20.

AUTHORIZING VA TO PROVIDE MEDICAL CARE DURING DISASTERS

Authorizes VA to furnish medical care to individuals—regardless of enrollment status—affected by a major disaster or presidentially declared emergency, or following activation of the National Disaster Medical System.

Allows VA to provide care to individuals affected by disasters before any other group except service-connected veterans and active-duty military casualties, and would allow VA to be reimbursed for care provided to employees of other Federal agencies.

VA NONPROFIT RESEARCH CORPORATION ACTIVITIES

Authorizes VA to contract with VA nonprofit research corporations in order to conduct VA-approved research, training, or education.

Allows employees of nonprofit VA research and education corporations assigned to approved VA research, education, or training projects to be considered VA employees for purposes of Federal Tort Claims Act.

Removes the sunset date of December 31, 2003, currently established in 38 USC §7638, for authority to establish nonprofit VA research and education corporations.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I understand Senator ROCKEFELLER has a substitute amendment at the desk which is the text of S. 2132 and has been reported by the Veterans Subcommittee. I ask unanimous consent that the substitute amendment be agreed to, the bill, as amended, be read three times, passed, the motion to reconsider be laid on the table; that the title amendment be agreed to; and that any statements relating thereto be printed in the RECORD, with no intervening action or debate.

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

The amendment (No. 4469) was agreed to.

(The text of the amendment is printed in today's RECORD under "Text of Amendments.")

The bill (H.R. 3253), as amended, was read the third time and passed.

(The bill will be printed in a future edition of the RECORD.)

The title amendment (No. 4470) was agreed to, as follows:

"A Bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to enhance the emergency preparedness of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes."

EXECUTIVE SESSION

DELIMITATION OF A MARITIME BOUNDARY BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES AND THE GOVERNMENT OF NIUE—TREATY DOCUMENT NO. 105-53

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session to consider Executive Calendar No. 5, treaty with Niue;