

same amendment, there ought to be nothing for conferees to reconcile.

But here we are with an omnibus bill that does not include our amendment to suspend enforcement of the Cuba travel ban. How did this happen?

It wasn't the conferees. Thirteen of the 16 Senate conferees were supportive of our amendment. The conferees would not have stripped out the amendment.

But the congressional leadership would. And they did, before even submitting the bill to the conference committee for consideration. They pointed to a phony veto threat—not made by the President—to justify a blatantly political move calculated to improve their standing with a small number of constituents in Florida.

This, despite a recent poll by the Miami Herald and St. Petersburg Times that found that most Florida voters favor lifting the ban on travel to Cuba—by better than a 2-to-1 margin.

Is this democracy in action? Is this the example we are setting for the rest of the world? Is this the example of participatory government that we hold to the Cuban dissidents as the beacon of freedom and liberty?

If this ugly episode were the only consequence of this administration's obsession with retaining the failed Cuba travel ban, that would be bad enough.

But it is not the only consequence. Far worse, the administration's pandering to its south Florida allies is undermining U.S. efforts to fight terrorism.

The Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control, OFAC, is charged with enforcing sanctions against foreign countries, terrorist networks, international narcotics traffickers, and those involved in proliferating weapons of mass destruction.●

(At the request of Mr. DASCHLE, the following statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD.)

WILLIAM JOHNSON'S RETIREMENT

● Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, I wish to recognize William Johnson's retirement after 33 years of teaching in the Brandywine School District. His dedication has won him the respect of two generations of faculty and students alike, along with the gratitude of many in our State. He has been, and remains, a trusted friend.

Mr. Johnson has spent much of his life in public service. He served honorably in the United States Army for 6 years, from 1965–1971. His teaching career at Hanby Middle School in Wilmington, Delaware, where he has taught Earth and Space Science for 23 years comes to an end this month. He will be sorely missed there.

Mr. Johnson received his bachelor's degree in Education from Delaware State University and his Master's in Education from Antioch University. He has also taken advanced studies classes at the University of Pennsylvania and

has completed all the classes needed for a doctorate degree with California Coast University. He will be dedicating much of his time after his retirement to working on his dissertation in Earth and Space Science.

Having taught at Hanby since 1980, there are many attributes that make Mr. Johnson a great teacher. He has an unparalleled commitment to his craft. He stays after school on a regular basis to work on experiments with his students, teaches remedial classes with the same expectations as every other class, and ensures his students have a lot of hands on experience in the classroom. In 1997, Mr. Johnson led a group of six students in an inventor's club as they tried to come up with inventions for the Duracell Battery Company. With his leadership and guidance, the students came up with several creations, including a curb sensor to help cars detect curbs behind them, a laser device that takes atmospheric and meteorological measurements, and a computer program that analyzes satellites and orbits around the earth. These inventions are extraordinary for middle school students.

In addition, in October of 1998, Mr. Johnson was honored and certified by then-Vice President Al Gore as a teacher of the Global Learning and Observations to Benefit the Environment Program. Some 500 people were honored with the certification, which enables the teachers to teach students how to view environmental images and read globe data in hopes of determining the effects of global warming.

Mr. Johnson is a member of the Delaware Teachers of Science, National Science Teachers' Association, American Federation of Teachers and the Satellites Educators' Association. Over the years, Mr. Johnson has received many awards and honors including Who's Who Teacher of the Year, FAME Teacher of the Year, as well as Hanby's Teacher of the Year candidate. He also serves as a representative for the United Negro College Fund—UNCF—in the Brandywine School District, coordinating donations from teachers and administrators. The fund goes to support various black colleges across the nation.

Mr. Johnson is married to the former M. Patricia Durnell. The two were married in West Chester, PA in August, 1981, and now reside in Chadds Ford, PA. His hobbies and interests include reading, jogging, collecting baseball cards and jazz albums, baseball, golf, and alto saxophone.

Mr. Johnson is forever the consummate professional. He works hard at his job, works hard for his students, and never desires the spotlight or recognition for all his contributions. Through his tireless efforts, he has made a profound difference in the lives of thousands of students and enhanced the quality of life for an entire state. Upon his retirement, he will leave behind a legacy of commitment to public service for the generations that will

follow. On behalf of each student whose life Mr. Johnson has touched, let me express our heartfelt gratitude. We congratulate him on a truly remarkable and distinguished career, and we wish him and his family only the very best in all that lies ahead for each of them.●

RECOGNIZING THE UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA ROTC

● Mr. ALLEN. Mr. President, I am pleased today to recognize the outstanding work of the Reserve Officers' Training Corps cadets at the University of Virginia who participated in a 24-hour vigil on September 15–16, 2003 in honor of National POW/MIA Remembrance Day. The POW/MIA Vigil specifically honors those men and women who defended our nation and never returned with a 24-hour, tri-service honor ceremony.

The ROTC cadets at the University of Virginia started their POW/MIA vigils in 2000 when Air Force cadet Elizabeth McGraw served as Arnold Air Society Deputy Commander. Subsequent vigils were commanded by Cadet Christopher Tulip in 2001, Cadet Tara Graul in 2002, and Cadet Jeremy Porto in 2003.

This year's Vigil planning committee included Cadets James Hayne, Joshua Becker, Alina Sullivan, Dan Barton, and Nic Skirpan. U.S. Air Force Colonel John C. Vrba, commander of AFROTC Detachment 890 at Virginia, supervised the ceremony, which began with a solemn precision drill performance by members of the AFROTC Drill Team: Cadets Suzanne Hahl, Jacklyn Noveras, Brandon Bert, Timothy Farwell, and James Hayne. Air Force and Army Cadets, and Navy Midshipmen from the three ROTC detachments then marched in solemn 15 minute "honor shifts" guarding the American flag which was displayed prominently on the back wall of the University of Virginia's Amphitheater.

One of the MIAs that these young Cadets honored was U.S. Army Captain Humbert Roque "Rocky" Versace, a 1959 graduate of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. On July 8, 2002, I had the distinct honor of being present at the White House for the posthumous awarding of the Medal of Honor by President George W. Bush for Rocky's conspicuous gallantry at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty while a captive of the Viet Cong from October 29, 1965, until he was executed on or about September 26, 1965. His captors took his life after they had given up trying to break Rocky's indomitable will to resist interrogation and indoctrination, his unshakable faith in God, and his steadfast trust in his country and his fellow prisoners.

When I visited the White House last year for Captain Versace's Medal of Honor ceremony, I was among many of Captain Versace's West Point classmates and family members. One of those classmates was John Gurr, who

worked tirelessly to get approval for the creation of the Captain Rocky Versace Memorial Plaza and Vietnam Veterans Memorial in the Captain's boyhood neighborhood in the Del Ray section of Alexandria.

At the conclusion of this year's POW/MIA Vigil, Mr. Gurr made a powerful speech to the UVA ROTC cadets on the great history of honor by Vietnam POWs, which produced five Medal of Honor recipients, and made Rocky Versace the only Army POW to receive the Medal of Honor for his heroism while in captivity during the Vietnam War.

Mr. President, I'd like to enter John Gurr's inspiring words as an extension of my remarks:

I am indeed grateful for this opportunity to speak for my comrades in arms and I would thank you for this opportunity were it not axiomatic in the military profession that you never thank a soldier for doing his duty. You can commend him or her, and I herewith commend wholeheartedly the ROTC cadet corps of the University of Virginia for the vigil you have mounted in memory of our nation's POWs and MIAs. It was your duty to do so, and you did it well. I will share with you up front that I came to this amphitheater last night at around 0200 to witness your vigil for myself. I stood in the deep background for over a half an hour and watched your sentinels, and I thought about what message I will carry to you today.

Here it is in a nutshell, young men and women: the heroic legacies of our fighting men and women, most certainly including those men who suffered so terribly yet endured with honor in the torture chambers of the Vietnamese communist forces, the heroic legacies of those predecessors are soon to pass to you. Be ready, because they are sacred. Duty, Honor, Country. Duty—be professionally ready, do your duty well; do something extra. Honor—guard and cherish your personal honor. Country—stand ready to ever defend this great democracy, which is a unique bastion in a dangerous world.

A bit of background on the POW situation as it developed and ended in Vietnam. There were 771 Americans captured or interned in the Vietnam War, far, far fewer than in any of our major interventions since World War I. 113 of them—almost 15%—died in captivity. The vast majority of POWs were officers, most of them aviators shot down in the north, and the vast majority of them were held in North Vietnam. There were some 19 such prison camps, where a rough total of some 550 men were held. In the north, brutal tortures were the rule, and the death rate was about 5%.

In the much smaller and equally scattered prison camps in South Vietnam and Laos, hunger and disease and brutality were common, but torture was much less systematic. Even so, the death rate in the southern camps was about 20%—four times higher than in the north where food and medical care and the support of fellow prisoners made the chances of survival better.

As to the purpose of torture in the northern camps, let me quote from Vice Admiral James Bond Stockdale, who suffered 7½ years in captivity there and was the ranking man in the camps. I quote from his "Afterword" in the famed book *Honor Bound* which details the experiences of American POWs in Southeast Asia:

"I was the only wing commander in that long war to lead prisoner resistance and therefore the natural target for Major Bui—'The Cat'—Commissar of the North Viet-

namese prison camps. The business of the Commissar was extortion. He had to continually intimidate—to break—a number of POWs so that he had Americans at the ready to parade before press conferences for foreign 'dignitaries' (often Americans from the anti-war movement) and to exploit for propaganda statements favorable to the communist agenda. Our job was to hold out as long as we could, to make it difficult for The Cat to exploit us. To do this, he hired experienced 'torture guards' who in 40 minutes or so, with bars and ropes, could reduce a self-respecting American officer to a sobbing wreck."

Admiral Stockdale and his fellow prisoners in the north early decided that their goal was to resist as best they could and return to the U.S. with honor. I say again, "with honor." Thus the title of the book from which I quote, "Honor Bound." The American POWs were "Honor Bound." Under circumstances that will draw a tear if you understand. Admiral Stockdale was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor upon his return. Duty well done, Admiral! Well done!

As to the prisoners in South Vietnam, I will speak with an indirect credibility of the experience of a West Point classmate of mine, Captain "Rocky" Versace. I will speak with a passion because "Rocky" was a friend of mine, and he, too, won the Congressional Medal of Honor for his resistance and leadership as a prisoner of war. A difference is that Versace was executed for his stubborn, and often even argumentative and aggressive resistance to the communist effort to break him for propaganda purposes. The Medal of Honor was presented posthumously, to "Rocky's" family in the White House on July 8, 2002, in the presence of 250 people which included 89 of his West Point classmates. As we said to ourselves at the time, "We came for you 'Rocky.' We were late, but we came." "Rocky" Versace's story is one of a young man of exceptional physical endurance and truly extraordinary mental toughness. He was deeply religious, and he had come to love and admire the South Vietnamese people for whom and alongside whom he had fought for almost 18 months before he was severely wounded in battle and captured in October 1963. For the first five months of his captivity in the Delta of South Vietnam he was held in a small camp with only two other American prisoners. Successive teams of Viet Cong indoctrinators sought to break "Rocky," to get him to make statements rejecting the South Vietnamese effort to resist a communist takeover, and they tried to get him to make recordings or quick movies opposing America's intervention on behalf of the South Vietnamese forces. Fluent in Vietnamese and French, he argued so credibly with his indoctrinators that they had to switch to English because they began to notice that the enlisted communist guards were starting to nod their heads in agreement with some of "Rocky's" rebuttals. "Rocky's" fellow prisoners heard him say in one of the indoctrination sessions "You can make me come here, and you can make me listen, but frankly I don't believe a word you say and you can go to hell." On another occasion they heard him say "I know that if I am true to myself and to my God, that something better awaits in the hereafter. So you might as well kill me now."

"Rocky" attempted escape four times and was captured, beaten and leg-ironed in a stifling bamboo cage after each such unsuccessful attempt. Only three weeks after his capture and on his first attempt, he had to drag himself through the jungle on his belly because he had taken three rounds in his right leg in the battle in which he'd been captured, and he could not walk. As a captain and the ranking man in his POW camp, he sought to

encourage his somewhat separated fellow prisoners by singing "God Bless America" and other popular or patriotic songs, frequently inserting a stray word or two to communicate with his men. "Rocky" set the example, and he took the heat off his fellow prisoners.

After five months, "Rocky" was deemed to be an incorrigible propaganda prospect, and he was taken from the camp and held in isolation. That's where he was held for the last 18 months of his 23-month captivity. Alone, emaciated by hunger and disease, his head swollen and yellow from jaundice. There were occasional reports during that time from villagers who said that "Rocky" was frequently led or dragged through their villages as a sad example of what the American fighting man looked like. Even so, they said that "Rocky" sometimes interrupted the propaganda diatribes in the village centers, refuting and embarrassing his captors in his fluent Vietnamese. He was beaten, and one report said that, as he went down, he smiled. "Rocky" Versace was a winner.

He was executed in September 1965, ending not only his life but his imminent plan to leave the Army and return to South Vietnam as a Maryknoll missionary. He had been accepted to become a priest-candidate at the Maryknoll Order in Tarrytown, NY. But he never made it there.

Thus ended the life of a decent man, a courageous and unbreakable soldier, and now the only Army man to get the Medal of Honor for conduct as a POW during the Vietnam War.

And now let's turn to you. What you've just heard is a part of your legacy. You must not let it down. Last night there was just one old soldier sitting there in the back of this amphitheater, watching you, watching your vigil, and witnessing the changing of the guard. In a few short months or years, your turn will come to bear the mantle of Duty, Honor, Country. And there will be a ghostly phalanx of old soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines who will always, I repeat "always," be watching you. You cannot fall short of the standard that has been set.

I appreciate this opportunity to speak for my past and present comrades, we commend you for doing your duty so well, and my last words to you are:

Be ready. Be ready.

Mr. President, I would like to commend John Gurr and the ROTC cadets at the University of Virginia for their dedicated service to our Nation and for their work to honor those like Captain Rocky Versace who paid the ultimate sacrifice in defense of America and its ideals. I wish them Godspeed as they stand strong for freedom.●

(At the request of Mr. DASCHLE, the following statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD.)

The PASSING OF MEYER "MIKE" STEINBERG

● Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, on December 4, 2003, an outstanding example of the American Dream ended with the passing of Meyer "Mike" Steinberg. Mike was a young 84 with a personal vitality and clarity of mind that many far younger people would envy. He was recently stricken with lung cancer even though he had given up smoking more than 30 years ago. He was an individual admired and beloved by those who had the good fortune to know him in his lifetime. This past