

role European Governments will wish to play in a military and financial capacity. Hot on the heels of this dilemma will be the question of IRAN. How will the new US administration wish to address this issue? Will it be happy to let the Europeans take the lead or will it wish to take a more active approach as some suggest should be done?

Linked to both these questions is the overall pursuit of peace in the MIDDLE EAST. What has become of the initiative to bring European and American involvement together to make progress in the Broader Middle East? Should for example the roadmap be resuscitated?

Last but not least is the question of ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE to both Afghanistan and Africa (a potential priority for the G8 next year). How should this best be coordinated by the two major global donors—the EU and the US—who contribute about 80% of the world's assistance programmes?

This is all enough to cause indigestion. Certainly more questions are posed than answers are available. Even if cooperation is seen to be highly desirable, with the aim of moving from a transatlantic community of values to a community of action, how can it be done?

The best chance available to the incoming administrations is, as they say, not to start from here. These problems have been around for many months and will be around for many more.

A recently released document published by the Transatlantic Policy Network (TPN) lays the groundwork for a potentially successful approach to deepening joint cooperation between the EU and the US.

At the outset, it recommends a strategy which articulates a common purpose, building on strengths and reinforcing linkages while accommodating differences. This is based on the recognition of growing linkage between the partners' economic, defence and security, and political interests.

In short, should strengthened partnership be a shared goal, if so a bold new agenda for economic collaboration needs to be linked with a commitment to enhanced joint action on the highest shared political priorities.

What does this mean? Avoid well known areas of dispute such as a free trade area (FTA) and focus instead on what already exists to a large degree—the transatlantic market. The TPN document recommends deepening and broadening the transatlantic market, with a view to its completion by 2015.

An accelerated 2010 target date should be set for financial services and capital markets; civil aviation; the digital economy; competition policy and regulatory cooperation.

Furthermore, there should also be provision for a broad security partnership between the EU and the US, together with a mutually reinforcing interface between the EU and NATO.

Last, but not least, there should be put in place, by 2007, an enhanced basis for cooperation between the two partners—a transatlantic partnership agreement—building on the 1995 New Transatlantic Agenda and reflecting the strategy proposed.

Is this approach realistic and practical? Maybe surprisingly, the broad outlines of this approach have already been approved by the European Parliament in May 2004.

The economic option has the great advantage that most of the elements are already in place: the administrations are jointly consulting stakeholders as to how to remove the remaining barriers to trade and investment. Given the more than quadrupling of cross investment over the past 10 years, the process of interdependence between the EU and the US is not likely to slacken.

The vital ingredient for the success of this proposal is the factor of political will. Will

transatlantic leaders take a fresh look at how to bring the EU and the US together before getting sucked into the daily grind of politics?

Perhaps the best advice for the incoming Commission President would be to pay a short informal visit in early January to Washington. This should be not just to compare notes but also to put forward a joint plan which will allow Europeans and Americans to work as closely as possible in the interests of their peoples in the years ahead.

H.R. 5365

Mr. GRAHAM of Florida. Mr. President, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 5365, a bill that will ensure the continuation of YMCA pension plan that has provided participants retirement security for more than 80 years. The Senate passed a bill, S. 2589, that Senator BUNNING and I worked to move earlier this year. The House of Representatives has now sent over a bill introduced by Representatives ENGLISH and POMEROY that closely follows the intent of the Senate bill. I am pleased that this effort has been a bipartisan one in both bodies of Congress. I hope this legislation will be enacted promptly.

I also thank Finance Committee Chairman GRASSLEY and Ranking Member BAUCUS for their assistance in bringing this bill to the floor today. The YMCA pension plan is an excellent example of how retirement security can be provided through employer-sponsored plans.

This is a bill about protecting the retirement security for thousands of YMCA employees and retirees. There are 27 YMCA's in Florida, over 977,843 members and over 4,400 plan participants and retirees. The retirement security provided by the YMCA pension plan is critical to these people and their families, as well as over 80,000 plan participants across the country.

This country could learn much from the retirement security provided by the YMCA pension plan. As I have stated, the YMCA pension plan is a very significant part of each YMCA employee's compensation package, most of who are modestly paid. The YMCA pension plan exemplifies how our Nation should think about providing solid, substantial retirement security.

I also want to extend my thanks to the Treasury Department and IRS, for their patience while the Congress worked through finding a solution to ensure the YMCA pension plan could continue to offer the benefits to its participants and retirees.

In closing, I encourage all of my colleagues in the Senate to support this bill, and I am pleased that we are moving forward with this legislation today and look forward to its enactment soon.

REAUTHORIZATION OF THE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, much of the Senate's attention this week was

consumed with completing lingering business, be it, appropriations bills or debt extension. In contrast, I rise today to ask my colleagues to cast their eyes forward to a new matter that we must focus on when Congress reconvenes in January—the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act. As most know, I consider the Violence Against Women Act the single most important legislation I've championed during my 30-year tenure in the Senate. I care deeply about this law, and take seriously my responsibility to ensure it is funded and renewed.

After more than 5 years of hearings, and legislative drafts and redrafts, in September 1994, the Congress passed and President Clinton signed into law the Violence Against Women Act. The Violence Against Women Act created new Federal criminal laws addressing domestic violence and rape, and established discretionary grant programs within the Department of Justice and the Department of Health and Human Services for State, local, and Indian tribal governments and non-profit service organizations. The Violence Against Women Act of 2000 renewed these programs, made targeted improvements to certain provisions and introduced new initiatives.

Since the bill was enacted, we've witnessed an incredible transformation in State and Federal criminal and civil law enforcement, communities' victim services, and societal attitudes towards domestic violence and sexual assault. In 2004 alone, Congress spent \$520 million for Violence Against Women programs. Over the past decade, nearly \$3.8 billion has been appropriated to make women's homes and communities safer.

We've made extraordinary progress in ending violence against women and its devastating impact on families. With the passage of the Violence Against Women Act we started talking about that dirty little secret that no one wanted to say out loud. A rape victim or battered wife can now turn to a trained police officer, an emergency room nurse, or a 1-800 Hotline operator. We transformed private "family matters" into public crimes with true accountability and meaningful victim services.

The Violence Against Women Act is working. Since its enactment, domestic violence has dropped by almost 50 percent. Incidents of rape are down by 60 percent. The number of women killed by an abusive husband or boyfriend is down by 22 percent. More than half of all rape victims are stepping forward to report the crime. Over a million women have found justice in our courtrooms and obtained domestic violence protective orders. The signs of success abound.

But progress is not enough. Sadly, domestic violence and sexual assault persist. As more and more brave women are stepping forward to report a rape or seek a restraining order against an abusive husband, more demands are

placed on women's shelters, state prosecutors, courtroom victim advocates, and other resources. We cannot let the Violence Against Women Act become a victim of its own success. Instead, it must be soundly and quickly reauthorized next year.

Despite best efforts, a complete bill reauthorizing the Act is not yet ready for introduction today. However, a draft is near completion. I am listening closely to those on the front lines—police, trial judges, emergency room nurses and many others—and making targeted improvements to existing grant programs and tightening up criminal laws. We are learning about the new challenges and the persistent problems of old. A wide variety of groups are working with me to put together the next iteration of the Violence Against Women Act, including the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, the National Network to End Domestic Violence, the Family Violence and Prevention Fund, the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape, Legal Momentum, the National Alliance to End Sexual Violence, the American Bar Association's Commission on Domestic Violence, the National Association of Attorneys General, the National Center for Victims of Crime, National District Attorneys Association, the National Council on Family and Juvenile Court Judges, the National Association of Chiefs of Police, the National Sheriffs' Association and the American Medical Association.

The Violence Against Women Act of 2005 that I intend to introduce at the commencement of the next Congressional session is a comprehensive and ambitious bill that will move our country forward in our fight to end family violence. The reauthorization will include at least nine titles. Major components of title I on the courts and crime include provisions to: 1. renew existing foundational programs for law enforcement, lawyers, judges and advocates; 2. stiffen existing criminal penalties for repeat federal domestic violence offenders; 3. appropriately update the stalking criminal law to incorporate new surveillance technology like Global Positioning Systems (GPS); and 4. ensure that offender re-entry programs develop procedures and resources for prisoners with a history of family violence. Title II on victim services would, among other items: 1. create a new dedicated program for rape crisis centers; 2. reinvigorate programs to help older and disabled victims of domestic violence; and 3. strengthen existing programs for rural victims and victims in underserved areas.

I am particularly heartened by new titles that deal with children and teenagers. Reports indicate that from three to ten million children are experiencing domestic violence in their homes each year. Treating children who witness domestic violence, dealing quickly with violent teenage relationships and teaching prevention to children and teenagers are keys to ending the violence.

In some instances, women face the untenable choice of returning to their abuser or becoming homeless. Indeed, 44 percent of the Nation's mayors identified domestic violence as a primary cause of homelessness. In response, efforts to ease the housing problems for battered women are contained in my draft bill.

Doctors and nurses, like police officers on the beat, are often the first witnesses of the devastating aftermath of abuse. As first responders, they must be fully engaged in the effort to end the violence and have the tools they need to faithfully screen, treat and study family violence. My bill would strengthen the health care system's response to family violence with programs to train and educate health care professionals on domestic and sexual violence, foster family violence screening for patients, and more studies on the health ramifications of family violence.

Leaving a violent partner often requires battered women to achieve a level of economic security. The next iteration of the Violence Against Women Act should seek to help abused women maintain secure employment, insurance coverage, and child support resources.

In addition, my bill would improve and expand the immigration protections for battered women. I am very appreciative of Senator KENNEDY's leadership and expertise on this issue. In addition, it would ensure that victims of trafficking are supported with measures such as permitting their families to join them in certain circumstances, expanding the duration of a T-visa, and providing resources to victims who assist in investigations or prosecutions of trafficking cases brought by State or Federal authorities. Finally, my bill will focus more closely on violence against Indian women and suggest ways to better coordinate services to Indian women.

I am pleased to be working on such a thorough effort to renew the Violence Against Women Act. I believe this bill raises important issues, and pushes local and federal policymakers to ask what more should be done for battered women and their children. In the coming weeks, I look forward to working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to craft a compromise measure. Senator HATCH and the Judiciary Committee's new Chairman, Senator SPENCER and Ranking Member Senator LEAHY, have long supported the Violence Against Women Act and I am confident that we will work together to create an effective reauthorization bill. I also appreciate the efforts in the House of Representatives including those of a long-standing champion of the Violence Against Women, Representative CONYERS.

ACCOUNTABILITY FOR THE ABUSE OF FOREIGN DETAINEES

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, nearly 7 months after the world learned of the

atrocities at Abu Ghraib, those of us in the Congress who strongly believe that oversight and accountability are paramount to restoring America's reputation as a human rights leader remain stymied in our efforts to learn the truth about how this administration's policies trickled down from offices in Washington to cellblocks in Abu Ghraib.

The Bush administration circled the wagons long ago and has continually maintained that the abuses were the work of "a few bad apples." I have long said that somewhere in the upper reaches of the Executive branch a process was set in motion that rolled forward until it produced this scandal. To put this matter behind us, first we need to understand what happened at all levels of government. It is the responsibility of the Senate to investigate the facts, from genesis to approval to implementation and abuse. However, this Senate, and in particular the Judiciary Committee, continues to fall short in its oversight responsibilities.

Several of the investigations into U.S. detention policies are now complete. They provide additional insight into how the prison abuses occurred, but their narrow mandates prevented them from addressing critical issues. Overall, these investigations collectively suffered from a lack of scope and authority, leaving key inquiries into issues like contractor abuses and "ghost detainees" unexplored.

Ultimately, what emerges from the reports is a striking contradiction. The reports state that there was no official policy of abuse and they do not recommend punishment for high-ranking officials. And yet, the reports show that decisions made by top officials, including the President himself, led to the abuses that occurred in the fields of battle.

Recently, a Federal judge, recognizing the importance of government accountability, ordered the Bush administration to comply with a Freedom of Information Act—FOIA—request and release all documents related to the detentions at Abu Ghraib prison. Many of the documents released by the Administration are heavily redacted, yet reveal enough information to raise serious concerns.

One of the released documents, an FBI report dated May 19, 2004, illustrates a troubling pattern in this scandal. The redacted version of this document states that FBI employees at Abu Ghraib reported witnessing incidents such as "military personnel retraining a detainee who was 'spread eagle' on a mattress on the floor yelling and flailing . . . a detainee, either naked or wearing boxer shorts, lying prone on the wet floor . . . [and] detainees who were ordered to strip and then placed in isolation with no clothes." These practices potentially violate the Geneva Conventions and clearly violate the FBI's own interrogation rules, yet the agents did not believe they "rose to the level of misconduct or mistreatment."